THE JOURNAL OF JAZZ & IMPROVISED MUSIC

CODA MAGAZINE

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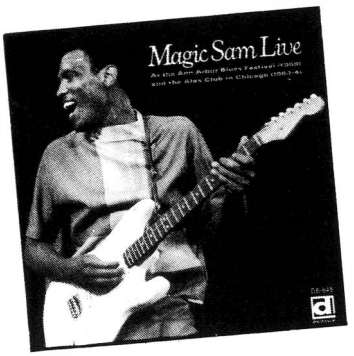
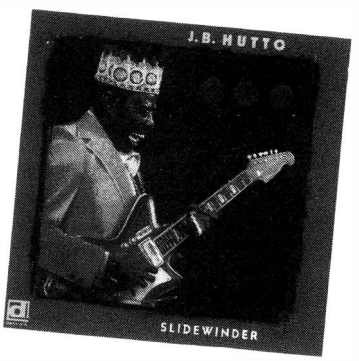


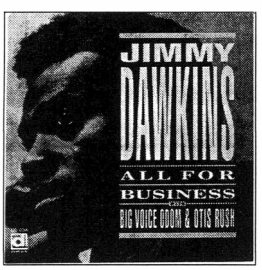
MAGIC SAM Live — DE 645

Magic Sam died at the age of 32 in 1969 just as he began to gain national prominence. The classic album *West Side Soul* (Delmark 615) had received a rave review in *Rolling Stone*. Sam toured Europe, had several West Coast tours, gave a surpassing performance at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, and only two weeks before his sudden death marked the release of his second album *Black Magic* (Delmark 620). The recorded quality of these live sets is not the best, however, musically this may be the best live Chicago blues performance ever recorded. Check out Sam's vocal passion on "Every Night About This Time." Sam adds a long and flaming guitar solo, sustaining and hammering the strings of his borrowed Strat into blues heaven. The CD running time is 74 minutes and the 16-page booklet contains thorough notes and photos. Awarded the W.C. Handy Award for the 1981 Vintage & Re-issue Album of the Year (U.S.). Still available on LP and CHROME cassette. (UPC Bar Code Numbers 38153-0645-2 CD, 38153-0645-4 CHROME cassette, 38153-0645-1 LP)



J.B. HUTTO Slidewinder — DD/DS/DC 636

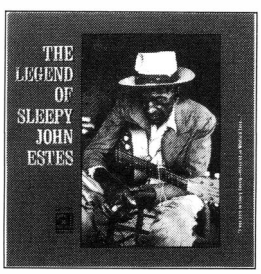
The late J.B. Hutto will always be known as one of the masters of the electric slide guitar. Hutto was "one of the rawest and most powerful urban blues shouters to come out of the post-war Chicago scene." *Chicago Reader* All eight selections here are Hutto originals and reveal J.B. to be an unusual, sensitive lyricist. Of course, there are some instrumentals giving the band a real workout. Critic Robert Palmer referred to *Slidewinder* and *Hawk Squat* (Delmark 617) as "two fine albums." An original Al Brandtner illustration makes this re-package quite attractive. We've added new notes written by Dave Weld, who knew J.B. personally. Now available again after being out-of-print for about seven years. (UPC Bar Code Numbers 38153-0636-2 CD, 38153-0636-4 CHROME cassette, 38153-0636-1 LP)



JIMMY DAWKINS All for Business — DE/DS/DC 634

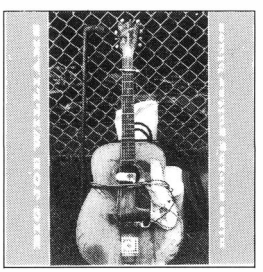
Recorded in October and November of 1971, *All For Business* was Jimmy's second Delmark LP. Four weeks after the session, Jimmy was in France receiving the Grand Prix du Disques de Jazz by the Hot Club of France. His first LP *Fast Fingers* (Delmark 623) had been selected as the best release of 1971 thus becoming only the third blues disc to be so honored in the 42-year history of the award. *All For Business* has lots of stinging west side blues guitar from Jimmy and featured sideman Otis Rush especially on the 3 instrumentals. The vocal spotlight here is on "Big Voice" Odom, one of the best blues singers in Chicago then and now. On the title track Odom "booms out in a gospel-tinged wail, and the album's tone of noble, righteous blues is established." ★★★★ *Down Beat* The CD has three bonus tracks and runs nearly 60 minutes. *All For Business* returns after being out-of-print for nearly a decade. ". . . a definite winner." *Living Blues* (UPC Bar Code Numbers 38153-0634-2 CD, 38153-0634-4 CHROME cassette, 38153-0634-1 LP)

Masters of Country Blues



SLEEPY JOHN ESTES The Legend of — DD 603

The late Sleepy John Estes' recording career began in 1929. Shellac rationing and the 1942-43 recording ban virtually ended "race" recording and Estes dropped from sight. It was Big Joe Williams who informed Delmark that he was living near Brownsville, TN. John came to Chicago in 1962 for some concerts and it was decided to record. "Estes' impact on the blues has been his songs — vivid, poetic images of very near surreal quality drawn from the many experiences of his life." *Rolling Stone* Still available on LP/CHROME cassette. (UPC Bar Code Numbers 38153-0603-2 CD, 38153-0603-4 CHROME cassette, 38153-0603-1 LP)



BIG JOE WILLIAMS Nine String Guitar Blues — DD/DL/DC 627

Big Joe's guitar was so unique that Delmark named an album after it. It is a big flat-top Sovereign acoustic, amplified as an afterthought. Masking tape holds the body together and keeps the pick-up from falling out. An extra set of pegs is attached to the top of the head, and holes are drilled in the bridge to accommodate the three extra strings. *Nine String Guitar Blues* offers ten more tales from one of the masters of country blues. Back in print now after being unavailable for seven years. (UPC Bar Code Numbers 38153-0627-2 CD, 38153-0627-4 CHROME Cassette, 38153-0627-1 LP)

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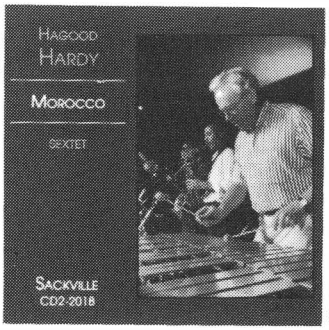

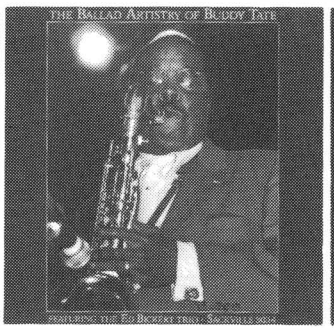

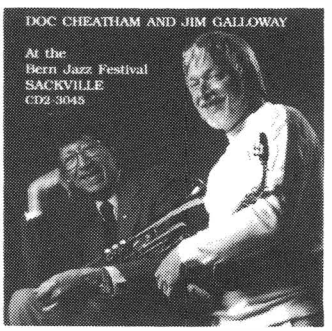

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CONTENTS

TIME FLIES OUT

TIME FLIES
The Third Annual Celebration of
Contemporary Jazz & Improvised Music
Vancouver East Cultural Centre
November 8-11 1990

Treat (noun) - An Unusual pleasure or gratification

It has often occured to me, and indeed is a great part of the motivation to publish this magazine, that although in general much of the music we love takes place in large urban centres, many of the people that love it do not. So information that one writes is serving a funciton, often moreimportant for the rural and small town dweller, than say the New Yorker, who can, on any given night, walk around the corner to any one of a number of venues and have their desires fulfilled. Apart from the descriptive illusions that appear in magazines, the recorded music, available by mailorder, also serves as a source of investigation. To hear the music in any form, is of course a joy, but ultimately one is overpowered by the need to be there, by the need to gather together with others of like intent and share the experience of being alive.

For my own journey to the nearest city, it is necessary to spend five hours or more travelling, so the event has to be of more than casual consequence. Time-Flies is such an occasion.

Now in its third year, this event is not just another festival, for it has taken on the responsibility of introducing and developing a taste for music that, even if you lived in most urban centres, you could not hear. Music that stands outside of the popularized notion of imitating history. An attitude that is so prevalent today.

The Coastal Jazz & Blues Society, even though they do produce a corporate sponsored summer festival, realize, even if only for their own tastes, that they cannot wait until a music has been sanctioned by the "jazz Media" (whatever that may be), but must present ideas more daring than a three piece suit, must indeed, as often as possible, walk on the high wire without the aid of a safty net.

Four elements constitue the make-up of Time-Flies.

The main concert venue: Vancouver East Cultural Centre (VECC).

The art space: Western Front

The jazz club: The Glass Slipper

Workshops: Vancouver Community College

As I was in deadline with the last issue of **Coda**, it was only possible to attend two days of this event, thus missing Bill Frisell & Wayne Horvitz, Claude Ranger & The Jade Orchestra, Bill Clarke's sextet, and Direct Sound with David Moss, Carlos Santos and Anna Homler.

Wintertime and the rains descend from the heavens continuously, the church-like interior warmth of the VECC welcomes us like a friend's embrace, the pre-show bar is filled with familiar faces. hello you. . . hi-howyadoin. . . fine night to be inside. . . heard you were in town. Happy expectaions.

FRIDAY * NOV. 9TH

As has become the style of presentation these days, the double bill consisted of a Canadian band, Tom Walsh & N.O.M.A., with Bernie Nix as guest guitarist, and the New York-based trio of Marilyn Crispell, Reggie Workman and Gerry Hemingway. This turned out not to be a happy pairing. N.O.M.A., being a large electrically generated group, styled in the harmolodic systems of Ornette Coleman (hence Bernie Nix) did not project in the natural acoustics of the room's high-beamed wooden structure, resulting in a muddy confused blob. NO edge to the soloists, NO clear rhythm, NO Bernie Nix. Left to the visual aspect was almost as disastrous, especially a drumer & a bassist who appeared to be professional poseurs. Ah well, perhaps a beer will ease the disappointment.

There seems to be a steadily growing problem with sound engineers (?), who for some unknown reason feel they can "enhance" the music, and who for the most part simply do **not** understand that this is **not** rock music, that jazz music relies a great deal on the subtle nuances produced within it. The trio, that performed in the second half of the concert, are artists that I would consider to be master musicians, whose delicate interplay, and kaleidoscopic dynamics, create the whole that their music is. Music, that although rhythmic in a body language sense, and melodic in the way of tunefulness, has a special quality because of the spontaneous decisions that are occuring in a continuous stream. So for the piano to be so metalic, and the bass to sound like an overloud rubberband, immediately accelerated my adrenalin in a negative manner. Fortunately it was possible to focus on Gerry Hemingway's sensitive, articulate percussion and submerge frazzled emotions into his startling abilities. It took some time to become accustomed to the dreadful sound system, but once the mind had risen above its mediocrity, the music was superb. Of course, it should not be necessary to make these adjustments, for that is rather like living in the flight path of a major airport and boasting that after a while you don't hear the aircraft anymore.

SATURDAY * NOV. 10TH

Returning to VECC tonight with even higher expectations, for on this night are two saxophonists with quite

GERRY HEMINGWAY, REGGIE WORKMAN & MARILYN CRISPELL (Photograph by Bill Smith)

VANCOUVER REVIEWED BY BILL SMITH

different reputations. A number of people had told me of Daniel Kane, a young free improvising powerhouse, they said. Expectations high. And beside that, a friend, Tony Wilson, is the guitarist. Suitably positioned at the end of a row, so that should (and it did) the "quality" of the sound from the previous night persist, then it would be possible to move around the hall and find a suitable position in which to hear clearly. At the side of the stage, ten feet from the band, behind the speaker blare, was eventually the only place where the sound was clear. Too late, So perhaps another time, Daniel Kane.

The advertisements had read: the Peter Brotzmann trio, with Uli Gumpert (piano) & Babe Sommer (drums), the highest order of German improvised music, and indeed my main reason for wanting to attend Time-Flies. However, due to financial difficulties, Peter Brotzmann arrived in Vancouver alone. In most Canadian cities this would have posed a problem, as the high energy, freewheeling character of Peter's saxophone style is not a system of playing that has developed here. Albert Ayler is not thought of much in our country. However, in Vancouver two players, who are my favourite rhythm section, reside: bassist Clyde Reed and percussionist Greg Simpson. An afternoon get together (?) and they are ready. The magic was astounding. Brotzmann, alternating between clarinets and saxophones, and even his legendary taragoto was displayed, could move into any sound or rhythm zone he imagined, for there, always aware, sometimes environment, often pushing, was the bass and drums. Similar in result as Marilyn Crispell's trio, although most assuredly different in content, the same sense of cooperative spirit, the same split second decisions flowing in a continuous stream, prevailed. Each of the half-dozen pieces, although not tunes in the tin pan alley sense of tradition, were compositions, where the song was the opening statement and the form was the comradeship of three superb players whose purpose was to be as one. Wonderful.

Enough music for one night. Time for a beer back at the hotel. So Peter and I, with Ken Pickering and Sheila, share a brief moment all together and catch up on things since the last times. Time Gentlemen Please. My how time flies. - *Bill Smith (In Exile)*

T.I.M.E. OUT Festival
Euclid Theatre, Toronto
October 3rd to 6th, 1990

October is always a peak season for the new music community and this year has proved to be no exception. The consolidation of the Victoriaville Musique Actuell Festival and the appearance of the New Music America in Montreal created an unusually fertile matrix for the Quebec / Ontario creative music communities to demonstrate again, this year within the view of the itnernational media eye, their mastery of the new forms. At the same time, an unusual paradox took place in Toronto. The Toronto International Music Event OUT, a four night series of international musicians, was virtually invisible in the news media despite pre-concert media attention created by the two (largely volunteer operated) community radio stations. Produced by Bruce Rosensweet and Mike Dyer, the T.I.M.E. OUT festival presented eight concerts of far-reaching creative music by performers from both outside and inside this country, in what was a major showing of improvisors yet a disaster in terms of attendance. The promoters face substantial losses and at the time of this writing have been forced to abandon other presentations in the immediate future. It is an indication of the music's vitality and life force that they were willing to undertake such a risky proposition in the first place.

The music at T.I.M.E. OUT was some of the best presented in this city this year. Equally worth noting was the uncompromising nature of the music with most programs bearing little relation to the jazz traditions currently being paid lip-service by large circulation magazines in North America. With the exception of the Montreal trio, Evidence, who performed a selection of Thelonious Monk's lesser-known compositions, the ensmebles featured at T.I.M.E. OUT approached the jazz traditions from a distance, alluding to its creative history though not in a direct way. The mainstream media attention (or the lack of it) is understandable given their past track record. There were no enfant terribles on stage, no expensive suits, no trends other than fierce creativity. The lack of attention paid to this festival underlines a question: Why is the mainstream press willing to identify one thread of this music and celebrate it as though it represented the entire fabric? Inventiveness, daring, and discovery of the sort T.I.M.E. OUT displayed in abundance are rarely seen, and it is this rarity that makes this festival important.

OCTOBER 3rd JUSTINE/ EVIDENCE

Two ensembles from Quebec opened the festival in grand style and further demonstrated the current high-level of improvised/composed musique

TOM CORA (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

TORONTO REVIEWED BY STEVE VICKERY

being generated in the modern French sound culture. Justine, an ensemble previously known as Wondeur Brass, shown as the festival's opening act, presenting a highly-evolved electronic music for quartet using conventional instrumentation. Their music has much in common with recent tape compositions by René Lussier but where Lussier favours the rapid jump-cut technique, Justine pursue extended montage effects, long streams of interrelated materials. A refreshing element of the quartet's sound was the use of unaccompanied four-part singing midway through the set, contrasting the electronic force of their instrumental work. Justine will take a brief hiatus this winter as alto saxophonist / synthesist Joane Hétu gives birth. A cassette and CD of new material has just been released to fill in the intervening time.

Evidence is the current project to occupy the time of Jean Derome, an alto saxophonist who should require no introduction to **Coda** readers. With bassist Pierre Cartier and percussionist Pierre Tanguay, Evidence has grown from an enjoyable sideline attraction in small Quebec venues to become a full-fledged unit, with this appearance being their Toronto debut. Surveying Monk's music without a piano (or any chordal accompaniment) is a venture that requires ever-present alertness. Evidence's approach underlines the minimalism that is at the core of Monk's music, playing the material with a measure of self-editing that is admirable.

The groundwork laid over the past five years by trombonist/ composer Tom Walsh in his ensembles has been a hybrid of gritty funk and harmelodic logic. With N.O.M.A., Walsh's current ensemble, the music tumbles out over the stage in a dense, colourful groover where direction and form of the composed materials blend invisibly into improvisation. Guest soloist Bern Nix was featured on this concert as a prelude to the octet's performance at the Victoriaville festival. Recent changes in the ensemble (two drummers, Pierre Tanguay and Peter Dosammos, have joined along with bassist Linus Yaw) have resulted in this unit being Walsh's most authoritative rhythm section, stamping out the pulse. One is where **you** hear it.

SLAWTERHAUS

Slawterhaus, an ensemble led by drummer Peter Hollinger, made their Canadian debut at this festival. It was an auspicious one, with Hollinger's explosive drumming met head-on by violinist Jon Rose, who doubled on sampling keyboard. The contributions of trombonist Johannes Bauer and soprano saxophonist Dietmar Diesner were no less exciting in this music brimming with energy. Elements of N.Y.C. funk, Chinese opera, and the classicism of European orchestral music, were boiled up together in Slawterhaus' set. Much of the music making was generated in duo pairings within the quartet with some memorable exchanges taking place between Johannes Bauer and Jon Rose. Rose played more keyboard than violin in this performance, pulling out samples that were unusually appropriate to this mad configuration. Dialogue between the drums and soprano saxophone was also notable, Hollinger and Diesner (whose horn was altered with electronic harmonizer) carrying on a conversation rich with detail and tension.

I am unfortunately unable to comment on the Friday evening concert program of tenor saxophonist Glenn Spearman in duo with bassist Lisle Ellis sharing the bill with the British free music trio, the Recedents, due to previous work commitments. Talking the next morning with a friend, I asked him to describe the music, only to be met with a dumbfounded stare and eyes being averted to the ceiling as he muttered something about the pointlessness of such a description, after the fact.

October 6th RAINER WIENS - HAMITSA / CURLEW

Wiens' latest ensemble, Hamitsa, gave a hypnotic performance of original compositions and improvisations to begin this final evening of the festival. Guest bassist Lisle Ellis sight-read through several devilishly complicated pieces without losing any of his energy and directness of statement. Both tenorist Frank Lozano and trumpeter Jim Lewis gave strong solos, particualrly on the composition, *One For Shepp*. Rainer Wiens held the music together with his rhythm section partner, Richard Bannard allowing bassist Ellis to roam through the improvised sections of the pieces more freely. This concert was also performed in preparation for touring as Wiens and the ensemble embark on an East European tour. After the concert, Wiens' prized Fender guitar was stolen from the theatre. What could have been a catastrophe was eased by friends and supporters within the music community pooling funds together to buy the guitarist a replacement out of respect for his long standing efforts in the Toronto downtown scene.

CURLEW

As southern as they come, saxophonist George Cartwright's "just plain folks" manner was relaxed and engaging to introduce his unit CURLEW to the audience in this Canadian debut. The music was anything but relaxing. Loud, discordant and raw, Curlew blasted their way through the closing night final set. Cartwright on tenor and alto dueted with cellist Tom Cora on the themes of the compositions while the rhythm section played a largely blues / funk grind to accompany the first selections. After a few songs, the band loosened up considerably, Cartwright and Cora began to stretch the themes to their breaking point. Mention should be made of the drumming of Pippin Barnett, whose ability to lock in a rhythm pattern while developing a dissimilar figure was demonstrated throughout the show. Cellist Tom Cora's intensity and melodic resourcefulness were obscured in the first half of the show by guitarist Davey Williams' rock guitar riffs that filled up a large part of the cellist frequency range. I would look forward to seeing Cora again with the quartet he has formed with vocalist Shelley Hirsch, guitarist Hans Reichel, and drummer Barnett, a unit that extneds beyond the uneasy blending of sound forms of Curlew.

Many thanks to RedDoor productions and John Doe recordings for this festival of important modern music. Why was CBC not on hand to record the proceedings? It remains to be seen if the new music of the 1990s will capture the imagination of radio sponsors as surely as it has captured the ears of T.I.M.E. OUT's audience. - *Steve Vickery*

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Ray Sherman	Piano/Palmdale CA
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RIDING THE BASIE BAND BUS

Band guys have written many times about their experiences while riding on the many band buses, but let us not forget that there were ladies riding right there beside the men too. There were wives, lovers, singers, entertainers and musicians of the female gender who were "on the road again" on the band buses, however I have never read any of their stories. This essay will be my way of relating our side of this experience and at the same time I will compare the ride on the '50s bus with the ride on the '80s Basie band bus.

On Sunday, March 24, 1985, I was invited to Thad Jones' birthday party at Debbie Hall's condo. She had invited the Basie band and their friends. While sitting around enjoying the fun, I had a chance to talk to Freddie Green and used that time to ask him if he would consent to an interview for my forthcoming book. He said he would but we would have to work out a convenient time for both of us. Then he mentioned that the band would be playing two concerts in Pasadena, Tuesday and Wednesday, at the Ambassador Auditorium. He said if I wanted to ride out with the fellas on the bus, I should call Sonny Cohn and ask if it would be ok. I excitedly told him that I would love to do just that and I would call Sonny right away.

I tried to reach Sonny on Monday but he wasn't in his room. I had to restrain myself from calling him at the ungodly hour of 9 am Tuesday morning. Hey! I'm not crazy. But promptly at twelve noon, I called Sonny. He answered and I expressed my desire to ride out to Pasadena on the band bus. Sonny explained, "We have to leave early today because of the rehearsal. It would be better if you came out tomorrow, Wednesday." He went on to say I should be at the Hallmark Hotel at 6 pm. Oh well, one more day to wait.

The next day, my son Darrin got me to the motel exactly at six o'clock. I saw Bill Hughes coming out of the motel and I was about to ask him if he had seen Sonny Cohn, but before I could ask, I saw Sonny getting off of the bus. He told me to climb aboard. I did and sat in the front seat.

When Freddie Green got on, we greeted as if we hadn't just seen each other at the party on Sunday. The rest of the guys began to get on: Eric Dixon, Tee Carson, Bill Hughes, Johnny Coles, Kenny Hing, Danny Turner, Cleveland Eaton and Sonny. Also getting on was my friend Pat Willard, the writer, Eunice Pye and her friend Francine; and a trumpet player friend of mine, Tommy Cortez.

(Photograph by Brock May)

Sonny gives the driver the ok to close the door and depart. We slowly make our way from Sunset Blvd. to the freeway. It began to rain ever so softly but as we traveled down the freeway, the rain got heavier. The conversation got quieter. I guess everyone was lost in their own reverie or taking a nap.

As for me, I sat there watching the windshield wipers rush to keep the line of vision clear as possible for Willie, the driver. I noticed the slow, deliberate way Willie handled the big, flat sterling wheel as he manoeuvred his bus load of precious passengers down the rain-slick freeway. The rhythm of the wipers lulled me into the twilight zone and I began to remember the times I had ridden with Basie on the Basie band bus. . .

It was the early fifties, most of us were young and in our prime. Basie was ever so dap! Debonair! Suave! Macho! and all of the other adjectives I can't think of at the moment. The band was riding the crest of their hit album, ***Basie Swings, Joe Williams Sings*** and the hit song from the album by Joe Williams: ***Every Day I Have The Blues***. I'll be willing to bet that just about every house in L.A. had that album and every day you could hear it played as you walked down the streets.

Basie was playing a dance in San Bernardino and Sonny Payne, the drummer, asked me if I would like to ride there on the bus? Naturally, I said yes! The band was staying at the only black-owned hotel on the westside, Bill Watkins' Watkins Hotel. It was on the corner of Adams Blvd. and Manhattan Place.

When I arrived at the hotel, the bus was already parked outside, I checked to see if Sonny had gotten on. He hadn't, so I walked inside to the lobby. Some of the fellas were standing around talking to young ladies who would be called "groupies" by today's terminology. I chatted with Benny Powell and Jonesy (Renault Jones Sr.) I guess I missed seeing Sonny when he passed because when I got on the bus he was already seated with his lady friend. I sat with Jonesy. You have to understand when you ride on these band buses, that each one of the fellas has their own assigned seat. Basie got on and then Joe Williams, they sat up front.

The line-up that year was: trpts: Thad Jones, Renault Jones, Joe Newman and Wendell Cully. Trbs: Al Grey, Benny Powell, and Henry Coker. Saxes: Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Marshall Royal, Bill

CLORA BRYANT REMINISCES

Graham and Charlie Fowlkes. Bass: Eddie Jones. Gtr: Freddie Green. Drms: Sonny Payne. Voc.: Joe Williams. And who else but the one, the only, the Count of Basie on the piano. Wow! What a lineup!!

Even before the bus could pull away from the curb, the fellas were having fun and kidding around. The bus resounded with loud talking and laughter, when they discover that I am not a prude and that I love to laugh, they really put it on, or should I say, they "get it on". There were a couple of wives on the bus who rode quite often, so the guys knew how far to go when they were on the bus. In those days, the men still gave ladies respect, as far as profanity was concerned.

I think two of the guys should have been comedians because they were hilarious: Thad Jones and Bill Graham. But Basie was no slouch in the comedy department and neither was Joe Williams. They had me laughing so hard I was on my knees, beating the floor boards of the bus. Wave after wave of hearty laughter filled the air. . . they would razz each other and even play the dozens when they felt like it.

There were the times when some poor guy would be the butt of the 'big feet' jokes or some one was invited to a lady's house and he ate her out of house and home; don't forget the 'hot foot' prank. But most of all please don't sleep with your mouth open because you could wake up with a mouth full of pepper, orrrr, heaven forbid, there was the 'piece de resistance', you could wake up to discover and smell, much to your embarrassment, that the fellas had rubbed sardines all around your lips!!! Awful! But it would shake the bus up with laughs and excitement for about two miles down the highway.

In 1979, Joe Williams was interviewed by Stanley Dance for his book, ***The World of Basie***, and this excerpt is some of what Joe had to say about the '50s bus: "In the fifties with the Basie big band. . . working with musicians like Frank Wess, Joe Newman, Thad Jones, Marshall Royal and Benny Powell, there was never a lull. .. there wasn't one cat in the band who was a drag. There was real esprit de corps. .. we made some long trips, but they were fun too. I remember one of the Birdland tours. And one in particular in 1957 when we jumped from Los Angeles to Texas. That was a looonnnngg trip! There were no facilities on the bus to relieve yourself, so the bus would make what we called a 'Pittsburgh' stop. We have pictures of all the guys lined up outside the bus, and turned toward it to take a piss. We have pictures of Sarah Vaughn getting off the bus and running across a field to some bushes for the same purpose. Sometimes, when we were on a tight schedule, the bus driver would just open the door a crack and we'd stand there and wail and let go, because of the companionship. It was a lot of fun and there were a lot of jokes."

I think Joe's words and comments help to validate what I have been saying about the fifties' Basie band bus.

In comparing the '50s ride with the '85 bus ride, thirty years later, I find that neither the vibes nor the camaraderie is on the '85 bus and most of all, to my disappointment, the laughter is gone. No jokes, no kidding around, no pranks or anything. Perhaps it's because they were tired, then again, maybe we have to consider the fact that we all have gotten older.

But how I long to literally roll in the bus aisle, with laughter and feel the warmth of pure brotherhood that was on the '50s Basie band bus. Sure, times do change, and they say you have to change with the times. They also say you can't live in the past. But to those things I always say, as my father used to say to me, "You've got to know where you've been to get to where you're going." I know I can get an 'amen' to that from my four children: Charles, April, Kevin and Darrin or even from my oldest grandchildren: Chuckie, Sherry and Christina. The last three will know about that too when they get older because I believe very deeply in the 'oral tradition.'

As I float back to 1985 and the bus ride to Pasadena, I notice we are exiting the freeway, the fellas begin to come alive and prepare to get off the bus. The rain had stopped. The skies were blue, a quarter moon hung in the sky as if it were hanging in the Louvre in Paris. What a lovely night for being with my peers and to hear one of my favourite bands play and to hear one of my favourite singers sing. Willie parked the bus and the fellas quickly got off and moved inside to get ready for the concert.

The concert went beautifully. (My essay is about the comparison of the bus rides, not the performance or the performers.) But I must say that this concert was the one that gave me my first opportunity to hear a young lady by the name of Carmen Bradford. Boy! was the girl ever great! The girl is bbbaaaddd! Also the Basie band took care of serious biz under the direction of Thad Jones. Of course the romping singing of Joe Williams was out of sight. Nuff said, OK?

After the last sounds had faded into the never, never land of beautiful music of days and nights past, everyone rushed to get on the bus. Going back, I sat with Kenny Hing. We chatted about our careers and other music chit chat. The rest of the bus was subdued, some of the fellas were reading and some dozed off. No laughter, no kidding around.

On our arrival back at the Hallmark, the fellas wasted no time getting off of the bus and splitting for their rooms. Freddie Green really came to my rescue. When my son Darrin didn't show up to take me home, Freddie had his friend and mine, Carl Carruthers, take me home in his stretch limo. Hey! Hey! Hey! It was good jazz and good conversation all the way from Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood to 38th Dr. in the heart of the ghetto!

ONE MORE ONCE! FOR THE BASIE BAND BUS RIDE!

The year is 1989, the Basie band is in town for the beginning concerts of a tour package with the great Dizzy Gillespie and the dazzling Miss Della Reese. As in 1985, my son Darrin drops me off at the Hallmark Hotel where the band and Dizzy are staying. And again the concert is at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. Departure time is six o'clock. Darrin gets me there at 5:30. I walk into the hotel and Duffy Jackson comes into the lobby. We greet each other, then Danny Turner, Frank Foster and Sonny Cohn come in and we greet with hugs and kisses. I have cleared my bus ride with Dizzy this time and when I call the room, Byron Stripling answers and says, "Come to the room." Byron is ready but Diz has to put on his shoes. We go to the lobby, Diz and Byron stop to talk to friends but I go on out and get on the bus. Carmen is already in her seat. We hug and kiss, when I ask her which seat is Dizzy's? She points to the one across the aisle from her seat. I sit down and we begin to talk girl talk.

When the guys start to get on, the laughter

and the animated conversations begin. I feel right at home because the aura and the warmth in the air is the same as in the fifties. Getting on the bus is: Frank Foster, Sonny Cohn, Diz, Byron, Bill and Della Hughes, Mel and Carolyn Wonse, Duffy Jackson, Bobby Ojeda, Mike Williams, Johnny Williams, Ed Miller, Clarence Banks Jr., Robert Trowers and the new guitarist whose last name I can't remember but his first name is the same as my father's, my son's and my grandson's: Charles.

Fellas are standing in the aisles rapping. Dizzy walks to the rear of the bus and immediately the fun begins back there. When Sonny gives the nod to the driver to close the door and go, the kidding around, the cracking and facking and laughter gets down to 'the for real side.'

It's a beautiful fall afternoon, but we are leaving at the height of the rush hour traffic, so it will take longer to get to Pasadena. The driver inches along as we make our way to the freeway. Carmen and I converse enthusiastically almost all the way there.

Along the freeway we become aware of the police on the side of the hill. They are searching for someone or something and their dogs are trying to sniff out what ever it is. A little touch of the real side of L.A.

Finally we get to the auditorium, the concert is sensational and it's a packed house. Frank Foster and the band are fantastic! Carmen is truly outrageous! Dizzy is de-boppingly stupendous! Della is sublimely marvelous. What more can I say without analysing? That's not my job mon.

After the concert, because they don't have to wait for the equipment to be packed up, the band is out of the auditorium in a hurry and on the bus ready to leave. When Diz lags behind a little, all of the fellas start to jokingly jack him up, "Hurry up Father Time, I've got a heavy date waiting for me in the city," etc. etc. etc. Oh yeah, a good time was had by all. The adrenalin was still flowing and the fellas were up. So was I for that matter.

Carmen and I continue our conversation on the way back, but when she turns to speak to someone else I look across at her. I see this lovely, young, talented singer who is full of high hopes and dreams. Alive with energies and music, but I don't think she is aware, at this time, of who she really is, who she will be further on down the road and years later. I wonder if she is cognizant of the fact that she is walking in the shoes of ladies who have ridden on the Basie bus, too, and gone on to become legends, to name a couple: Billie Holiday, Helen Humes and Sarah Vaughn. I watch her eyes sparkle as she sets among all of this tradition and I think about the many times I, too, have shared the bus ride she is now sharing. I think how lucky she is that there is still a Basie bus for her to ride. I think how lucky she is to be able to hone her talent with one of the last swinging bands that was there at the beginning of swing and still here, working all year, taking care of much business.

Then I look around at the fellas in the band, and I wonder if they know how lucky they are to be a part of the Basie band and to be riding the Basie bus? Do they realize how many giants and legends of this band and our music have gone on before them? Well, let me name a few: Count Basie, Walter Page, Freddie Green, Pappa Joe Jones, Lester Young, Paul Quinechette, Sonny Payne, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Eric Dixon, Thad Jones, Renault Jones, Wendell Cully, Charlie Fowlkes and the list goes on and on.

Can they appreciate the fact that Dizzy Gillespie, the living legend, the innovator, the "king" of be-bop, is the man sitting back there goofing off with them just like one of the guys? Diz would have it no other way.

Lastly, as we pull up to the motel, I think how lucky for me, Clora Bryant from Denison Texas, that I am still here and sharing the tradition of riding Basie's band bus, which for me has lasted for over thirty years, and Sonny Cohn has advised me that I have "carte blanche" anytime to ride the Basie bus. "Thanks a bunch, Sonny!"

Yes, the '89 Basie bus was really happin! and like the fifties bus before it, there is lots of camaraderie, fun, laughter, warmth, brotherhood, and family.

As I bring this essay to a close, I'll be riding that doggone Basie bus into the year two thousand! Can I get an amen to that fellas? Amen!

Goodnight Count Basie and Countess Catherine, wherever you are. You're the most! and as Duke used to say, "We Love You Madly."

Or as I, my family and Dizzy say, "For Eternity!"

Trumpetistically, love, Clora Bryant '89

READER SURVEY

CODA MAGAZINE is only published six times per year, so it has become increasingly more difficult to publish the abundance of material that comes our way. Due to this situation, we have decided to enlist your help. From the list below, which is the normal content of the magazine, we ask you to select, in order of preference, the material you most enjoy.

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(Canada / USA / International)
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THOUGHTS AFTER LISTENING TO THESE NEW RECORDS

Oliver Lake, *Otherside* Grammavision 18-8901-1
Steve Lacy, *The Door* Novus 3049-1-N
Tisziji Munoz *Visiting This Planet* Anami - 001
The New Orleans Saxophone Ensemble / The Improvisational Arts Quintet
***The New New Orleans Music* rounder 2066**
David Murray *The People's Choice* Cecma 1009
Bert Wilson & Rebirth *The Next Rebirth* 9 Winds 0124
Jim Pepper *The Path* Enja 5087

Writing words about music is a near impossible task. Only a few have ever made any sense of it, with words. I have kept my music journalism confined to historical facts rather than any feeble criticisms. And even that is subject to my attitudes, as W. Eugene Smith wrote: "The first word I would remove from the folklore of journalism is the word objective. That would be a giant step toward truth in the "free" press. And perhaps "free" should be the second word removed. Freed of these two distortions, the journalist and photographer could get to his real responsibilities."

Brevity is another quality I admire in a writer. There is too much good stuff out there to read, to get bogged down too long with any one thing.

Truth is something contained within the individual, rather than merely a concept.

Toward that: Bill Smith sent me these records to review over 6 months ago. I listened to them, and nothing clicked. Only one of the records did I like unreservedly. The others bothered me. And I realized, that like Eugene Chadbourne pointed out in CODA over a dozen years ago, sometimes the problem with a music lies not with the music but with the reviewer.

Of course music listeners that have elevated their ears as far as jazz have that old "built-in shock-proof shit detector" that Hemingway talked about, and we routinely on a daily basis have to turn off the popular sounds of the money-making industry that surrounds us. In that case, the "problem" doesn't lie with us reviewers. But I'm to talk about these 7 records listed, that Bill Smith refers to as "The New Traditionalists." He's mentioned this idea to me several times. And the idea holds.

How can I forsake this music that so sustained us in the 70s? In fact, I can't find anything wrong with any one second on any of them. They just didn't do anything for me. I've been there before.

Are we (me) going to let these artists go fallow until a day when there's a "rediscovery" and resurgence of interest fed by nostalgia when we're old and gray? Do we expect these musicians to "change with the times" or to follow the aesthetic they set for themselves? And if they did completely change their attitudes, what does that say for us? That we were duped, like a bunch of chumps.

If these guys were out to burn us, they woulda picked an easier musical form.

I am glad that these records were made, and that the music was documented.

My 2 cents worth: a little word on each:

Kalamu Ya Salaam should produce more records. I have always found his writings over the years in ***Wavelength*** to be right on, as is this New Orleans album.

Good that **Steve Lacy** used the late **Sam Woodyard** on ***The Door***. One can almost hear lyrics to *Forgetful* tune.

This is the best record I've heard from **Jim Pepper**.

My Janet is always ferreting out the **Munoz** record and playing it. Very up-lifting album from this Toronto guitarist. My favourite is *A Spiritual Reunion*.

Very careful record from **David Murray's Chamber Jazz Quartet**. None of the fire breathing dragon solos on this I so look forward to.

Gawd how many of us would die to be back there in St. Louis and hear all that r&b funk **Oliver Lake** and company were laying down! Oliver did you ever cross roads with Ike Turner? those years when he was really mean. Despite all the bad press on Turner, he was one great band leader and wicked guitar player. Maybe he still is?

Surely, the next time I'm in Vancouver I'll look up saxophonist **Bert Wilson** in whatever his endeavours are. One great record. I especially liked the flute. The photo on the back, I think I'll prop up over here above my typewriter.

It's none of anybody's business which one of these records is my favourite. As if **my** observations are important.

Only us
out there
doing right,
will
get it.

- Mark Weber

JIM PEPPER (Photograph by Jerry Moresi)

TWO PROFILES

Photograph by Peter Danson

BENNY POWELL

Benny Powell was born in New Orleans. At the age of nine he started playing drums in school. When he was twelve years old he switched to trombone. "I discovered my uncle had a trombone behind his couch and he let me play it. I've been playing trombone ever since." Benny Powell is a very reserved and likeable man with a great sense of humour and he plays a mean trombone. I only had the pleasure of hearing Benny on records so it was a real treat to finally hear him in person.

"My earliest influence in music was my mother; she played piano. At that time growing up in New Orleans you were expected to play something. It was mandatory. My father died when I was seven years old." Benny reflected. Other influences for Benny were listening to Charlie Parker, Lester Young, J.J. Johnson and Dizzy Gillespie. "I was fascinated by bebop and swing!" Benny stated, "I am inspired by the total environment. I like the sound of the horns, especially the tenor sax. I draw from everything when I'm creating a certain sound on my instrument."

Benny went on to say, "I got my first professional gig in 1944 during the war years playing at the USO. I played a little better than they expected. I went to college at the age of fifteen years old. At sixteen I was living in Port Author, Texas and decided

to go on the road with a band called the King Colelites, from Chicago. After that I worked with a band from Oklahoma. In 1948 Lionel Hampton's band came through and needed a trombone player, so I joined his band. I was eighteen and wanted to get out there and experience what I thought was the big time. This was my first shot at playing with a professional big band." I was with Hampton for three years."

"I settled in Canada for a while, but when I came back across the border to check with the draft board, they wouldn't let me go back into Canada. I decided to stay around New York playing with different bands. I heard Count Basie was organizing his orchestra. I decided to check it out."

"I joined the Count Basie Orchestra in 1951 and stayed for twelve years, until 1963. A lot of the same musicians in the Frank Wess / "Sweets" Edison orchestra today, made up the Count Basie orchestra of then." What a great band; I learned a lot. Benny commented. "During that time I played with a lot of different artists.

I was playing with Broadway shows, Thad Jones and Duke Pearson's band and I did a lot of studio work. I also played with the *Merv Griffin Show* in the late 60s. It was because of the Merv Griffin Show that I moved to California. I stayed there from 1970 to 1980," Benny reflected. "Al Arrons, Marshal Royal, myself and a lot of other musicians from Basie's band started doing the *Ain't Misbehavin' Show* out in California. When the Show went to Europe, they took the band with them."

I asked Benny if he writes any of his own music and he replied: "I write some of my own music minimally for my own band and for my own recordings. I am more interested in playing, that's why I'm out here playing now." Benny is one of the choice trombone players of our time: his sound is mellow and sweet and builds to a roaring fire at the right time. Benny's phrasing is nothing less than wonderful. Benny went on to say, "I'm not part of any organized band purposely, because you get lost in the shuffle. Club owners don't consider you marquee value if your name isn't out front. Now I do mostly All Star groups."

I asked him what his latest endeavour is, and what he's recording. His reply was, "I'm working on a series of recordings with John Carter (clarinet). The works include a wide range of everything from Avant-Garde to swing era. The music traces black history from West Africa to present. I enjoy working with John Carter and Randy Weston because the music is so free! The recordings are about five in number and the label is Grammavision. One of the titles is **Fields**. Check it out, especially young musicians; this is a great chance to be exposed to your musical roots from great artists!

Benny's advice to young musicians is: "Treat the music business as a business. Be pleasant, make time, be on time and make yourself likeable. No matter how good a musician is, when you're out on the road with other musicians you don't need a lot of ego problems. You spend a lot of the time together and you want to work with someone who is easy to get along with. Each gig should help to bring you more gigs; this has to be instinctive. When you find out how important it's usually becuase you messed up and lost a gig. I also would advise them to stay away from drugs, because all the creativity comes from God not drugs!"

**Special thanks to Benny Powell for allowing me this interview during a very busy schedule, August 18th 1990 at the Concord Jazz Festival.*

BILLY MITCHELL

Billy Mitchell was "born in Kansas City, Missouri, bred in Detroit, & buttered all over." Mitchell was simply wonderful on solos such as *Whirlybird, Jumping at the Woodside* and *Battle Royal* at the Concord Jazz Festival on August 17th, 1990. "I first started playing clarinet at the age of ten. I play reeds: sax and clarinet. I played flute for a while until Frank Wess told me I sounded like a fart in a wind storm," Mitchell laughed. I personally find that hard to believe.

Mitchell went on to say, "My earlier influences were Don Byas, Lester Young, but I listened to everyone. Most of us get what we get from Gospel Music. It's bred in us. We belonged to a Sanctified Church. When I was a kid, everyone played something in the church for special programs. In the church, is where I became used to getting up in front of people; I used to sing in the church. My musical influences go back even farther than the church from our African heritage. There is a calling for music; it is a gift! I'm not a musician because I want to be, but because I have to be!

Over the years, Mitchell has worked with Nat King Cole, Jimmy Lunceford, Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton. Mitchell went on to tell me, "I worked continually from New Years Day 1958 to February 1961 with the Count Basie Orchestra. I also filled in to help the band for a couple of months at a time during 1966 and '67. Filling in now and then for Eric Dixon and Lockjaws Davis. I had my own band for about five years with Thad Jones, Elvin Jones and Tommy Flanagan. Some of our first recordings were recorded by Savoy Records and others by Dee Gee Co., a partnership company of Dave Usher and Dizzy Gillespie.

When I asked Mitchell if he had any advice for young musicians he stated, "I'm not in the habit of encouraging or discouraging anyone when it comes to playing music. You must have a calling. You do however need to make time, learn tricks and technique as well as the instrument.

I asked him how he keeps his music fresh. "The music just flows. I don't think about keeping it fresh. I'm not really a composer of music, but everyone composes something. I'm just a saxophone player."

Billy Mitchell, you're a lot more than that: outside of being one of the greatest saxophone soloists I've ever heard, you're a beautiful human being as well. Keep that music coming, because we're still listening!

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

JAZZFEST BERLIN 1990

November 1-4, 1990

Divinations galore can be extrapolated from the artistic domination of JazzFest 1990 by German musicians, coming as it did so close on the heels of reunification. All auguries aside, though, the fact remains that the homeboys from both sides of that border which no longer exists delivered more miracles per minute on JazzFest's stages than the sizable contingent of visiting celebrities who were, as is the norm, mostly American.

Quantitatively, 1990 was back to normal after 1989's pared-down single-venue roster, with the mega-productions in Philharmonic Hall once again augmented by late night twinbills at the Delphi and five nights of the Total Music Meeting at what used to be the Latin Quarter, to say nothing of a film premiere and a multi-stage evening in what used to be East Berlin.

Qualitatively, 1990 was easily up to snuff. Seemingly strange bedfellows were imaginatively mixed on any given evening's bills, assuring more than one bargained for if ears were kept open. One act did stick out like the sorest of thumbs, but more about her later.

First up was the Berlin premiere of Spike Lee's **Mo' Better Blues** on Halloween night. There's plenty of jazz in the film, but it is more a story about the perils of remaining loyal to lifelong friends than a story about jazz. Visually, it is well thought-out with some fascinating camera moves, and while violence is rare, it is presented in nauseatingly graphic fashion. The surest delight in it all is **Abbey Lincoln's** cameo. If only she had sung, instead of the woman cast as the singer.

Opening night at the Phil commenced with the Very Big (18 pieces) **Carla Bley Band**. The leader and her daughter, Karen Mantler, were the bookends, mom on piano and offspring on organ, with bass guitarist Steve Swallow looming centre stage, serving as

a veritable Gibraltar in unindicted co-conspiracy with drummer Victor Lewis close behind. A multinational assortment of horn players essayed several new compositions, including *Who Will Rescue You*, a crazed-be-the-Lord gospel tune, and *Lo Ultimo*, a Latin-Manhattan admixture of Bley's trademark picaresque sophistication.

Then came *Quatre*, with drummer Daniel Humair and bassist Miroslave Vitous anchoring trumpeter Enrico Rava and pianist Franco D'Andrea. Humair can be subtle, supple and surprising all at once, forever shifting but never straying. Vitous was thoughtful and muscular, having more to say than he did in his days with Weather Report, and certainly getting more of a chance to say it. Rava seems to be mellowing but he's not lost his wit. D'Andrea was the mild one among the wild cards. All in all, they are a quite satisfying combination of personalities who have established enough common ground to explore in a mutually creative way.

Berlin's own *Association Urbanetique* opened the Delphi-show, a young, fresh and predominantly fun-sounding quartet which got a lot more spirit out of the sax, trumpet, bass and drums lineup than a similarly-configured foursome two nights later, even if Rainer Robben ain't Max Roach. They knew when to lighten up, as well as how to be deep, as altoist Felix Wahnshuffle got in his *Waltz For Eric*, which would have made Dolphy smile.

Friday's Phil bill commenced with Klaus König conducting a 15 piece orchestra in his seven-part homage to Douglas Adams, author of **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** book series. This proved to be a match made in the heavens, for the young German composer shares with Adams an ability to present parts of multiple realities as constituents of a whole, rather like the paintings of Magritte, as if it were normal. Of course, with players as versatile as Kenny Wheeler in the ranks, pulling it off convincingly becomes easier.

Next up was **Gary Burton's** quintet, with Austrian Wolfgang Muthspiel on guitar, adding some Scofieldish fire to the usual pleasantries. With the years, Burton has become godfather to his own dynasty of passers-through, and he continues to wield his mallets with intent, especially on truly pretty tunes like Jay Leonhart's *Robert Frost*.

Pat Metheny closed the show in the company of Dave Holland and Roy Haynes, the rhythm section proving easily able to make an honest man of the guitarist. Metheny, like Miles Davis, sounds much more profound when confronted by peers or superiors than when surrounded by disciples. Burton joined in at the end for a mini-set, duetting with Metheny on Steve Swallow's *Falling Grace* and fanning the flames in quartet settings for two other tunes. Holland is the only bassist I've heard with Burton who didn't make me miss Swallow. Haynes could ignite anyone, and he did.

Staying for all that meant missing all but the encore of Daniel Schnyder's nine-piece amalgamation, The City, at Delphi, which sounded like a valid impression of contemporary New York as seen through the eyes of a skeptically

CARLA BLEY

bedazzled visitor from afar. Then came Gary Thomas' Seventh Quadrant, with someone from the audience shouting out after the first number that it sounded like shit. Thomas assumed the fellow was referring to the sound system, but may have been overly optimistic.

It was back to Delphi the next afternoon for Swiss guitarist Christy Doran's quartet with Freddy Studer on drums and literally double basses in the form of Bobby Burri and Olivier Magnetat, a grouping which had its moments, most often when Burri was dominating the bottom end.

Jazzorchester der DDR followed, stealing the show under the leadership of **Gunter "Baby" Sommer**, with all playing an assortment of heralds and fanfare horns, multi-barrel and multi-bell instruments which combine brass and harmonica sounds. The repertoire (ironically, a commission from the East German government before it was defunct) was worker's songs from the Weimar era which had been co-opted by the postwar Stalinist regimes, along with an inmates' song from the concentration camps of the Nazi era, which gave many thinking Germans pause.

Max Roach and quartet opened the evening Phil concert, tight and impressive if not particularly inspired, or inspiring, followed by **Tete Montoliu** and **Peter King's** quintet, a setting which did more for the latter than the former. **McCoy Tyner's** big band was on last, and were well worth waiting for. His tributes to Basie and Monk, the latter arranged by tuba titan Howard Johnson, were exquisite, with the characteristically busy pianist somehow managing to pare down his poundings in keeping with the relative minimalism of the honoured masters while still sounding very much like himself. Tyner's *Fly with the Wind* was the encore, with afterburners blazing all round the stage, closing a set which seemed to end all too quickly.

Up first at closing day's Delphi matinee was **Zentralquartett**, with Sommer back in the drummer's seat, Ulrich Gumpert on piano, Konrad Bauer on trombone and Ernst-Ludwig Petrowsky on alto sax. They've been an on-again off-again grouping for nearly 20 years, and their collective history combined with their diverse individual endeavours from the interims in a most energetic way, yielding German all-star results. Intricate interaction seemed to operate on a telepathic level, and not without wit and humour. Constant throughout both screams and whispers was a straight-from-the-heart sincerity, equally evident when down and dirty as when lofty and refined, and they covered it all. This was the week's strongest performance.

Petrowsky couldn't hang around too long after the gig, for he was due at the Phil for the opening act there, as part of the Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, with **Alex von Schlippenbach** conducting 17 others in four extended pieces, two of his own and one each by Misha Mengelberg and Kenny Wheeler. Having defined the outer edge of free jazz, as he did for so long, Schlippenbach was bound to move relatively inside if he moved at all, and he has, without forsaking any roots (with players like Wheeler, Petrowsky, Willem Breuker, Gerd Dudek and Aki Takase). Schlippenbach is hardly in danger of being confused for Lester Lening. His own *Marcia di Saturno* and *Rigaudon II* were the more adventurous pieces, while Mengelberg's *Salz* came off sounding conventional by comparison, but it was Wheeler's *Ana* that was ultimately the most satisfying, for it covered the widest breadth of the collected abilities of this international grouping.

All of which made **Henry Threadgill's** Very Very Circus sound rather anticlimactic. Even with two tuba players, I kept missing Bob Stewart's band, which gets down to business and goes about it more voraciously. Trombonist Curtis Fowlkes was along as much more than a mere passenger but couldn't carry the load along, try as he did more often than he should have had to.

Helen Merrill's set with pianist Gordon Beck was, simply put, an embarrassment. For all concerned. Compared to others who have delivered even less professional performances on that stage, the lady got off easy from an audience which can be mercilessly cruel.

Dizzy Gillespie's 15-piece United Nation Orchestra made all nice again by closing this year's JazzFest with full Afro-Latin-Bop delirium. He will eventually hire all of Irakere into this occasional grouping, which packs more collective punch than other such all-star assemblages.

Or so it seemed from the few tunes I caught before heading to the Quarter for the last night of the Total Music Meeting, catching a raucous set by X-Communication, with cornetist Butch Morris in the middle if not in charge. Drummer Paul Lovens sounded like he was having more fun than anyone else.

The next night, there was a sort of mini-North Sea at the House of Young Talent near Alexanderplatz, co-produced by JazzFest, FMP (the Berlin label sponsoring the Total Music Meeting) and a municipal group, Jazz Among Us. Threadgill's band and Chicagoans Billy Branch and Sons of Blues traded licks and stages with Trio de Clarinettes, Fun Horns and X-Communication.

It was a surreal scene with Branch smoking on his late-70s Windy City hit, *Tear Down The Berlin Wall* in the entrance hallway for a room full of people who are just now learning how to get down and boogie without constantly looking over their shoulders. It was crowded, though not as much as the two other venues, especially the cellar where the horn ensembles played, which was evidently modeled after the Black Hole of Calcutta.

The operation was a logistical nightmare for JazzFest Production Manager, Ihne Von Hasslert, who ended up renting portable telephones for his contingent of the house crew. Wall or no Wall, it still takes several hours to call across town, and productions of JazzFest's calibre depend heavily on instant communications. That's how they take care of that last 5% of the unforeseen which makes 95% of the difference between competence and professionalism.

Problems of this sort are bound to improve with time. Berlin is a different city now, experience a unique combination of growing pains as it undergoes major changes. JazzFest 1990 offered a reassuring constant of quality in the midst of so much unforeseeable flux. It's one thing that should be allowed to continue changing at its own pace.

SCOTT HAMILTON

Scott Hamilton's dramatic emergence on the international jazz scene in the mid-seventies produced an avalanche of publicity. Some was extraordinarily enthusiastic, some was snide. But all was tinged with amazement that a tenor saxophonist barely out of his teens should have been inspired, not by the giants of modern jazz such as John Coltrane, but by the major figures of the earlier era such as Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster.

Voted musician of the year by ***Jazz Journal International*** as early as 1978, Hamilton surprisingly began his profes-sional career as a harmonica player in a blues band. *"We were called the Hamilton Bates Blue Flames. We were just a little quartet, doing mostly Paul Butterfield Blues Band kind of things. I listened to guys like Little Walter and people like that.*

One of Hamilton's musical associates at the time was Duke Robillard, now a world-renowned blues guitar player. *I kind of followed him around and sat in with his group Roomful Of Blues a lot. My group kinda followed on their coat tails for a long time. We were playing maybe more jazz than them but they were a lot better than us really. Actually, playing with Duke Robillard kind of got me into playing jazz again, because when I went to his house to listen to records he would pull out all these Duke Ellington things and some blues records with more jazz influence: Jimmy Witherspoon and things like that. So I went out and got a saxophone. I was happy with the harmonica but I knew that unless I learned to play a chromatic harmonica I wouldn't be able to play any other tunes except for blues and I was starting to get interested in blowing on some different chords. The tenor seemed to be the most versatile of all the horns. With blues essentially, I was taking long solos after the vocal had finished, so I was basically treating it the same as playing jazz. But with jazz I had a little more variety, and I also feel less like I'm playing someone else's folk music.*

Hamilton is in no doubt who influenced his jazz playing the most. *My greatest inspiration always was Illinois Jacquet. Of all the guys that I saw when I was learning how to play he was the best. The way he handled the instrument, his control and his feeling for the music. And the excitement. He had everything. His technique was flawless. His sound was completely full at all times. In those days he was playing long, long solos that would go on for ever and ever and they just got better and better. It was the greatest listening experience of my life, really.*

Contrary to popular opinion Hamilton also listened to Charlie Parker's music. *He certainly turned me on harmonically. And rhythmically too. I've taking a lot of stuff from him. But the press has chosen to say that I ignored Charlie Parker. But I think that's just for the sake of good copy. Coltrane I've always admired but certainly never took very much from him. I never had much feeling for modal harmony. I think that's the main reason that I never went on that path.*

Leonard Feather famously dubbed the up-and-coming Scott Hamilton a "sax anachronism". *It didn't do me any harm at the time. I probably got some gigs out of it. I was happy to be identified with the people they were identifying me with, but I also felt silly about some of the press that I got. Sometimes if I paid attention to it, it made me feel like a novelty act. I just wanted to play jazz, that's all. But I didn't come in for too much adverse criticism, so I really can't complain. The main thing is I get work, and that's all I've really cared about.*

Many of Hamilton's heroes were afflicted by substance abuse. Was Hamilton tempted to follow their example? *I did my share of experimentation. Mostly alcohol, although I've done everything else at one time or another. I drank quite a large quantity of alcohol till 1981 at which point I really stopped drinking. There are some things about being drunk and playing that are good. You can be more emotional. But the*

problem is that you have to not get too drunk that you can't play. I was O.E. for four or five years but sooner or later your health starts to get bad and then you can't blow any more, and you start making an idiot out of yourself. So creatively I think it's bad for you; it dulls your mind too much. If you can control it, great, but the other thing is that a lot of musicians that we all love, that didn't have reputations as clowns or drunks, died of complications that came from drinking a lot of whiskey. I've seen too many guys die young from bad livers. My generation was really into drugs. I came up with ninnies. We were just getting zonked every night. Younger musicians now don't seem to have been affected by that at all. They all seem to be very clean, which I guess is great. They must be missing some kind of fun experience socially, but at the same time they're certainly a lot healthier and they won't have to go through the problems of trying to straighten out.

One of Hamilton's biggest breaks came when he was invited to join Benny Goodman in 1977. *I was extremely nervous, but I got extremely drunk and that solved the problem. Temporarily anyway. When I worked with him in '82 I enjoyed it a lot more 'cos I was seasoned and I knew what I was doing. It was a much more enjoyable experience.*

Some have described Benny Goodman as a hard man to work for. *He could be extremely difficult for some of the fellows in the rhythm section. But he used to leave the horn players alone for some reason, so it was kinda nice. He treated us well.*

In the eighties Hamilton played extensively with Woody Herman. *That was wonderful. He was a great guy and a great bandleader. He knew how to really excite the audience. I really enjoyed it, and I liked hanging out with him. He wasn't like a lot of other band leaders. He was a lot of fun to be with. He had a lot of stories to tell. And he was a good conversationalist. I enjoyed it a lot.*

Perhaps surprisingly Hamilton never learned to read music. *I didn't deliberately set out not to learn to read. It's just that it wasn't a necessary skill in any of the situations that I grew up with. I don't regret it at all really. I think it kept me out of situations that might have been musically boring sometimes. Studio work for instance. There's no danger of me ever being hired for studio work! And nowadays there's very little studio work around, so I'm glad I didn't take that route.*

Hamilton tours relentlessly. *At least two thirds of the year. I'm on the road almost all the time. If I travel it creates a lot more work for me and it makes my audiences larger. Guys who stay home have a lot of difficult in keeping their careers alive. When I'm out (on the road) I don't have everything that I want, but I've got one chance to do what I like to do every night. And I don't really have a whole lot else that I like to do.*

Hamilton now prefers working solo than as a sideman. *I don't like working for other people as much any more. I've outgrown that a little bit. I would love to travel with my own group, but that's really expensive and it's also not a very pleasant kind of duty. It's hard to be a nice guy and to be a band leader at the same time. I'm not so sure I want to take all that responsibility. You've got all these people's salary in your hand. You're no longer best friends any more; you're employer and employee. I don't know if I really want to get into that. Playing as a single with pickup groups, I'm just a free guy that comes in and does what he wants and leaves with everybody being friends. It's kinda nice. Responsibilities I've learned in my life are not all that fun. Maybe I've got the wrong attitude here!*

Hamilton sees his future realistically. *I'm going to keep on doing what I'm doing. Same thing. I don't have any grandiose plans at all. I would like to keep on doing basically what I'm doing.* A happy thought for the tens of thousands of jazz fans who have been Hamilton's appearances in Nice, Antibes, Montreux, Japan, Australia, Holland, Poland and all points in between!

THE PLAY OF IMAGINATION

Many young composers and instrumentalists rebel against our weighty jazz tradition, hoping to turn it upside down, expand it and transform it. But the tradition sits, immovable and unperturbed as the Cheshire cat, knowing that for all their chafing and posturing, the young Turks will eventually become part of the tradition, try as they might to reject it. And the tradition will not disappear.

Other musicians, perfectly happy to work inside traditional material, test their ingenuity against the tried-and-true approaches to standards, hoping that if they sing these songs with enough conviction and imagination, they will too stand apart from the crowd.

What really matters, though, is the play of imagination upon the material these artists address. With innovators such as Simon Nabatov, Steve Cohn, Errol Parker and the Tippett - Nichols - Tippett trio, the future of improvised music looks bright. Committed musicians such as these surface in each generation and help thrust the music ever more slightly forward.

As if to check their forward momentum, or even to lead us back into the reassuring familiarity of the jazz tradition, musicians such as John Campbell, Hal Galper, Bill Evans, Johnny O'Neal, Dave McKenna and Tom Gruzo remind us that the tradition ain't so bad, after all, and is worthy of continued celebration. Not by rehashing it, mind you, but by breathing life into the shells of old tunes. It can be done effectively, but it requires a master craftsman. The recordings that result testify to the play of their imagination.

And so to the young Turks.

The six selections making up **Errol Parker's *Compelling Forces*** form a single extended piece. Rarely varying in tempo or dynamics, Parker's determined, pushy music sings with a lyricism not of grace, but of robust masculinity. Consequently, Parker's keyboard sounds less like a piano than a percussion section as its many rhythms support and cross each other.

Parker is also a drummer, and his visceral style sets him apart from other pianists. During the last cut on side 1, the piano sounds out of tune, maybe because of his pounding. Parker constructs his sound from a rather spastic sounding left-hand accompaniment that lays down broken rhythms rather than a walking line. Parker's sinewy fingers nearly stumble over each other in their relentless forte drive.

With humorous imagination, Parker renders his *Baobab* as a hoe-down of sorts, an aural equivalent of a Breughel painting: rustics dancing in the village square.

Wonderful things happen with Parker, as they do when musicians of long mutual association (pianist **Simon Nabatov**, bassist **Ed Schuller** [a.k.a. the string gang] and percussionist **Arto Tuncboyani**) perform original music for the 50-minute LP ***Inside Looking Out*** (subtitled Nabatov, String Gang, & Percussion).

Nabatov contributed four tunes: the spare jazz waltz *So Near*, the Monk-inspired piano solo *Purple on Gold*, the roaring bebop *Say It*, and *Sundial*, where Nabatov solos with locked-hand rhythmic displacement.

Ed Schuller contributed the Spanish-flavoured *Clave for Collin* (Walcott), and *Inside Out*, of Cecil Taylor intensity and scrappiness. Nabatov even plays inside the piano, scraping the wires as the pulse accelerates and evolves into a fast bebop feel.

Percussionist Arto Tuncboyani penned *Bottom of the Mirror* so that instruments and voices complement each other. Its Zawinul-ish melody leads into a pull of tensions between unpredictable piano work and relaxed, free rhythms from the drums.

Drummer **John Betsch** shows off his accurate around-the-set playing, builds his larger ideas from smaller units and complements Tuncboyani's percussion with toys of his own.

Unusual timbres colour this music and that of pianist **Steve Cohn** as well. The continually shifting textures of ***Ittekimasu*** include the hichikiri, a Japanese double reed instrument, and the shakuhachi, an end-blown bamboo flute.

While hinting at Cecil Taylor's unique approach to ensemble interaction, yet staging distinct movements for the music to evolve through, Cohn scores each of ***Ittekimasu*'s** five movements as a separate domain and atmosphere, everything from dark Milesian abstractions to Asian moods suggested by marimba and wooden flutes.

Although loosely-structured abstractions rule the day, Cohn is not afraid to groove. If Cohn's music suggests Miles, it's because his piano suggests Herbie Hancock with his brief abstractions, his two-finger single lines.

Just as Cohn abandons the piano to play other instruments, **Thurman Barker** leaves his trap set to play marimba, which adds colour and sharpness to mellow moments and provides a ground for collective improvisation with chimes, shakers or muted tympani.

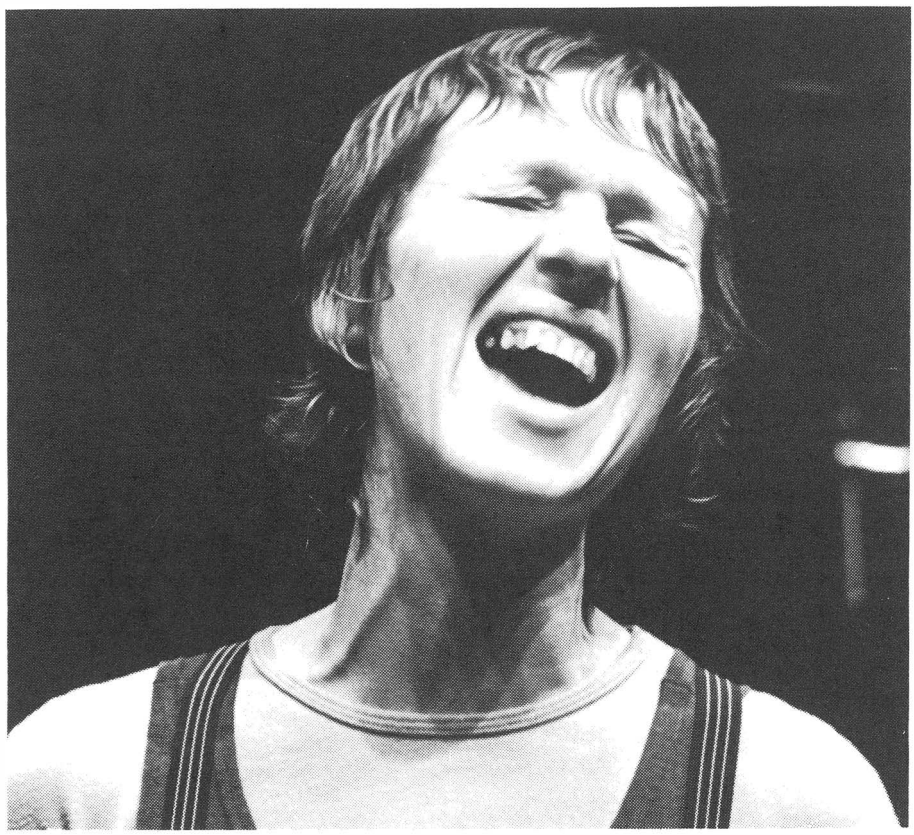
Like Cecil's bassist, William Parker, **Fred Hopkins** thrusts his instrument into the music's forefront and pulses with a metronomic drone. His low string anchors his upper-string melodies, and his tenuous arco overtones supplement Barker's celeste.

One occasionally hears musicians in Taylor's group vocalize, as part of the expressive process. But the only album in this set to actually feature vocalists, **Tippett Nicols Tippett** (a.k.a. Mr. Invisible and the Drunken Sheilas) celebrates the childlike urge to test one's voice, to make unusual noises for the sheer pleasure of it. Yet the complementary scatting of **Maggie Nicols** and **Julie Tippett** is luxurious and sensual, even during their squealing and guttural grunting.

One voice improvises in medium-high range to counter low-range singing. Although the scatting is almost entirely non-verbal, it suggests distinct visual images.

Chaotic as it may seem, the music grows out of structures: repetitive rhythmic cells,

John Campbell / ***After Hours***
Contemporary C-14053
Simon Nabatov et al. / ***Inside Lookin' Out*** / Tutu 888 004
Bill Evans / ***The Solo Sessions, vol. 1***
Milestone M-9170
Errol Parker / ***Compelling Forces***
Cadence CJR 1043
Tippett, Nicols, Tippett / ***Mr. Invisible and the Drunken Sheilas*** / FMP/SAJ-61
Steve Cohn / ***Ittekimasu***
White Cow WCR 1203
Johnny O'Neal & Dave Young / ***Soulful Swinging*** / Parkwood PW 110
The Hal Galper Trio / ***Portrait***
Concord Jazz CJ-383
Tom Gruzo / ***Say When***
Nine Winds NW 0123
Dave McKenna Quartet / ***No More Ouzo for Puzo*** / Concord Jazz CJ-365



MAGGIE NICOLS (Photograph by Delahaye)

a bluesy four-note descending motif, or a voice serving as a rhythmic and harmonic bass.

Keith Tippett, meanwhile, keeps changing the texture, tempo and volume, even preparing the piano with pencils and paper. Or a half-waltz, for example, will evolve into a country - and - western rap. Each segment lasts only a few seconds before jumping off in another direction: the volume might increase gradually to forte, then drop suddenly to nothing.

But Keith Tippett doesn't operate in a vacuum; he feeds ideas to the vocalists and in turn complements what they initiate, and he plays busily, not selfishly.

Another good team player, **John Campbell,** is carving out a career as a player of standards, rather than a composer or conceptual innovator. Well grounded in the swing and bop traditions, he chooses not to stray far. ***After Hours*** includes bop anthems *Donna Lee, Relaxin at Camarillo, Star Eyes* and *Hallucinations; t*he ballads *Beautiful Love* and *I Remember You;* R&B hit *After Hours;* Porter's *Just One Of Those Things;* and one tune by Terry Gibbs, *Lonely Days.*

Campbell renders the fastest (and tightest) *Donna Lee* I've heard, and hints at an affection for Bill Evans during *Beautiful Love,* leading the trio through some pleasing climax and resolutions. The trio (with **Todd Coolman,** bass; **Gerry Gibbs,** drums) has backed up vibraphonist Terry Gibbs on a few recordings and is more than ready for the big time. Now let's see whether Campbell will stand out among all the already-established pianists. This recording on a major label will surely open some doors for him.

One of the more important doors to open for pianist **Hal Galper** was his invitation to play in Phil Woods's band, where he still resides. Galper's own project, ***Portrait,*** like its predecessor, ***Naturally***, distinguishes itself through Galper's imaginative use of musical elements such as surprise, dynamic contrasts, and nearly telepathic ensemble work. One hears careful craftsmanship even in unexpected places such as introductory and transitional passages, as well as that hard-to-find balance of well-planned arrangement and loose, free improvisation.

Turning things on their heads, Galper plays the classic cutting-session vehicle, *Giant Steps*, as a relaxed ballad with altered chords: for all practical purposes, a different tune. *What Is This Thing?*, originally plaintive, comes kicking out of the gate as a raucous Afro-Cuban dance. Dave Brubeck's Pollyanna-ish *In Your Own Sweet Way* modulates from swing into a Cannonball Adderly-funk groove.

Galper's lush chordal voicings recall Erroll Garner and retain a classic bouncy swing feel. Galper pays close attention to dynamics as punctuation, and muscular riffs complete each chorus, and his light, almost tinkly piano improvisation belies the underlying power.

Billy Hart and **Ray Drummond** keep the groove light and transparent, and their interplay keeps the music moving. All three interact as equals.

John O'Neal, on the other hand, showcases his piano on ***Soulful Swinging*** as the feature instrument. He receives unobtrusive timekeeping support from bassist **Dave Young** and drummer **Terry Clarke**. O'Neal's lush introductions and Oscar Peterson-inspired arpeggios recall the work of Dave McKenna, as do his thick block chords and arabesques. He cooks at high speed, too.

O'Neal and Young hold their own, without drums, on *Close Your Eyes* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and Young gets a few solos. Drummer Terry Clarke trades some effective 8s with O'Neal one chorus on *The Masquerade.*

Bill Evans's ***Solo Sessions*** sounds as fresh as if conceived yesterday, even though recorded 10 months before President Kennedy was shot. Evans carries on quite well, even without Motian and LaFaro, maintaining interest through key changes, metrical play, and his trademark rubato introductions and arabesques.

Two medleys provide insight into his imagination. Rather than bogging down into maudlin romanticism, he makes *My Favorite Things / Easy to Love / Baubles Bangles & Beads* and *Spartacus Love Theme / Nardis* gritty and abrasive, with an inherent jumpiness that suggests the irritation one feels on the morning after a debauch.

Perfect calm, though, informs *When I Fall In Love*. When Evans sounds the first five notes and lets them decay into silence, one remembers one's first daydreams about how grand love must be. Evans evokes a nursery-rhyme sensitivity, one sees pastels

colouring each phrase.

Although **Dave McKenna** has described himself as a "saloon player," writers have praised his rhythmic drive, melodic inventiveness, his lush interpretation of a melody and his lyricism. McKenna, who turns 60 this year, brings to ***No More Ouzo for Puzo*** decades of experience playing with the best: Woody Herman's band 1950-51, later with Gene Krupa, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Bob Wilber and Scott Hamilton. McKenna has been credited with developing a true two-handed solo style.

This set of songs by Jerome Kern, Van Heusen, Chaplin, Fats Waller and the Gershwins serves as an excellent vehicle for McKenna's talent and demonstrates a couple of things: improvisation can still be very melodic, and a rhythm section can groove smartly while playing unobtrusively. (A good record to put on when you're having guests over.)

Gary Sargent's guitar reminds me of Kenny Burrell's chords and rhythm, with its twangy, plectrumed sound. Drummer **Jimmie Smith** takes several choruses alone on *No More Ouzo*, showing clean playing and reworking of motifs.

Although McKenna includes one original tune in his set, **Tom Gruzo** wrote all tunes and arrangements on ***Say When***, a project inspired by the sound of the classic Blue Note label. Although Gruzo's music is original, I feel comfortable including him with the pianist who interpret standards. His tunes fall within the style of decades gone by, and they might too have become standards by now if written earlier.

The most interesting pieces include *Installed But Not Serviced*, with its McCoy-ish flavour and strange waltz-time melody; the strange yet sweet *Holding Hands*, with its difficult melodic leaps (Monk meets Guy Lombardo?); and the clever smearing effects scored for sax and flugelhorn on *Frog Eyes* and *You Know Who.*

Bassist **Louis Spears** sustains some interesting arco solos and maintains interest by leading the band into groove changes, while drummer **Tootie Heath** trades precise fours with Gruzo.

Say When proceeds at a very deliberate pace and seems to lack a certain spark, as if the musicians had been over- rehearsed, but that's my only reservation.

THE JAZZ AGE - POPULAR MUSIC IN THE 1920S

The Jazz Age - Popular Music in the 1920s
Arnold Shaw
Oxford University Press, 350 pp. $9.95US

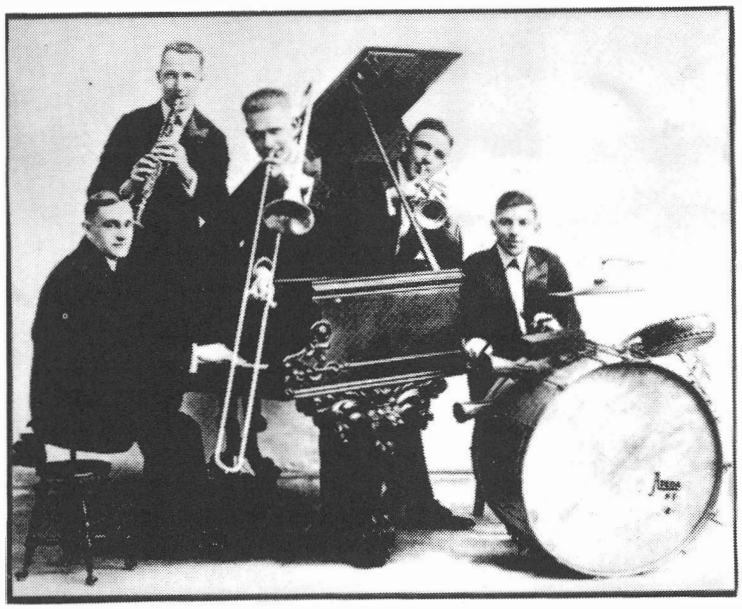
The colourful Jazz Age is symbolized by a plethora of dramatic images: **F. Scott Fitzgerald**, flappers, flaming youth, Prohibition, gangsters, bootleg liquor, and, of most importance, the music associated with the era. These were the factions that, collectively, personified the period. It was an escapist relaxation of wartime tensions by affluent young people; their excesses demonstrated an eagerness to defy the conservative society of their parents.

Fortunately, the music spawned during the revelry of **the lawless decade** has endured and has had a lasting impact on the course of popular music.

The Jazz Age is the late **Arnold Shaw's** graphic illustration of the turbulent, ephemeral period that began near the close of World War I. The musical scene was set by **The Original Dixieland Jazz Band** in 1917 when the young quintet appeared at Reisenweber's in New York City. It blossomed into a national phenomenon a few years later when a young **Louis Armstrong** left New Orleans to join his mentor, **Joe "King" Oliver**, in Chicago. The Jazz Age roared, unabated, into the '20s and continued through most of the decade.

The popular songs of the Jazz Age (*I Want To Be Happy, Let's Misbehave, Ain't We Got Fun*, etc.) were vivid musical reflections of the doctrine that philosophically propelled the Jazz Age. Its popular dances, *The Shimmy, The Black Bottom, The Varsity Drag* and *The Charleston*, clearly affirmed the moral guidelines that existed. The music was hot, the illicit booze was flowing, and a permissive attitude was the vogue.

Shaw's written tour of the Jazz Age, while it traverses few uncharted musical paths, provides many brief sketches of the celebrated protagonists: the musicians, composers, and entertainers who made the era important. It is generously sprinkled with footnoted quotes from familiar sources.



Despite many repetitive references and several inaccuracies, Shaw's compilation of material, though often redundant to seasoned fans, is an important reference work for the uninitiated and a valuable overview of the period. The index, augmented with a separate list of over 1000 songs mentioned in the text, is a vital tool for researchers. (The original hard cover publication of ***The Jazz Age*** won the coveted ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award in 1988.)

The chapter, *Tin Pan Alley*, covering almost one half of the volume, chronologically traces the musical direction of the Jazz Age. *The Harlem Renaissance,* surprisingly the shortest chapter, contains the most definitive material that will interest jazz fans. It includes details about black composers, publishing firms, blues singers, and Harlem night clubs. The brief references to **Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Eubie Blake, Luckey Roberts, Ethel Waters** and **Art Tatum** contain information often overlooked.

Of equal importance, the chapter titled *The Golden Age of the Musical Theater* explores the contribution of the producers. Florenz Ziegfeld, George White, the Shuberts, etc. In his longest and most explorative sketch, Arnold Shaw dubs **Cole Porter** *The Song Laureate of the Roaring Twenties.* He also provides deft biographical information about the efforts of Kern, Gershwin, Youmans, Berlin et al.

Ironically, the keynote song of the Jazz Age, *Happy Days Are Here Again*, was introduced on *Black Thursday*, the very day in 1929 when the market crash ended the superficial exuberance that had captured the nation. The high-spirited living came to an abrupt halt, and the Jazz Age was over.

Arnold Shaw's book fully captures the essence of this very colourful segment of America's musical history

- A book review by Floyd Levin

ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND

AROUND THE WORLD

USA

The Danish Jazz Center has published the ***1990 Directory of Jazz Festivals Part One: Europe***. The time frame of the festival, its location and the contact persons are listed. It's an invaluable reference work for both musicians and listeners. The book costs 115 Danish kroner and can be ordered from the Center at Borupvej 66B, DK4683 Ronnede, Denmark. The book is published with the collaboration of the International Jazz Federation.

Jazz Interactions has maintained The Jazz Line in New York for 25 years. Funding for this service has been terminated and its continuance is threatened. Your donation will help keep the jazz line open. Send your tax deductible donation to Jazz Interactions, P.O. Box 268. Glen Oaks, NY 11004.

Billy Taylor was honoured by the jazz ecucators at their annual convention in Washington in January for his fifty years of involvement in the jazz world. . . Dave Brubeck has signed a contract with MusicMasters for recordings in both the jazz and orchestral fields. . . Sotheby's offered for auction a handwritten manuscript by **Louis Armstrong** on the development of jazz in December. They were looking for bids in the $20,000 range. At the same time they were also auctioning one of Louis' trumpets and were looking for a similar bid on that as well!

The **Toshiko Akiyoshi** Orchestra began a Monday night residency January 7 at the top ofthe Village Gate. Sony America is underwriting a Carnegie Hall concert next September 20 to celebrate Toshiko's 35 years in the US. Look soon for a CD collection drawn from the many RCA recordings by the band in the 1970s. The orchestra's first out of town engagement in 1991 is at Olean, NY on May 3.

Errol Parker is now teaching a course on his own music at The New School for Social Research. . . The **Anthony Braxton** Quartet was heard in concert December 12 at Merkin Concert Hall. . . Italian tenor saxophonist Gianni Basso's quartet performed at Sweet Basil on January 16. .. Gutiarist Peter Leitch will be at Visiones February 13-14 and will then record for Concord with bassist **Neil Swainson** and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith.

On January 17 the N.O. Gallery in Accord, NY presented "Jazz A Visual Documentation", 17 years of the music in paintings, drawings, and video.

Gunther Schuller was showcased in two concerts at the New England Conservatory November 20-29. . . On December 9 veteran composer / trumpeter Mario Bauza was at Boston's Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center with the Harvard University Jazz Band in a program of his compositions.

The Ann Arbor, Michigan Hilton features jazz and related musics every Saturday night. Among those scheduled are evenings with groups led by Brad Felt, Henry Gibson, Janet Tenaj and Paul Vornhagen. . . **J.J. Johnson** will be artist in residence at Oberlin Conservatory in 1991. . . Herbie Mann, Jon Faddis, Ellis Marsalis, Kevin Eubanks and Nathan Davis were among the participants in the 20th annual University of Pittsburgh Seminar and Jazz Concert November 3. .. The AACM celebrated 25 years of music making at the end of November with three nights at the Getz Theater in downtown Chicago.

Joe Williams was featured guest with the University of North Texas' One O'Clock Lab Band November 20.

Los Angeles saxophonist Kim Richmond has reorganized his Concert Jazz Orchestra and they were heard November 14 at the Biltmore Hotel's Grand Avenue Bar. . . **John Carter** and **Vinny Golia** were heard on a live radio broadcast of their original compositions over KPCC FM on November 27. . . Benny Wallace's Quartet was at Catalina's November 20-25. .. The **Rova Saxophone Quartet** gave concerts in San Francisco and Berkeley as the year wound down. They featured new works written for them by Jack DeJohnette and Robin Holcomb.

The Phil Woods Quintet were in Japan in January before playing college dates in Louisville, Casper and Jacksonville. . . The 1991 Santa Fe Jazz Weekend takes place May 24-27.

APPLE SOURCE

Kevin Whitehead reports from New York.

The trio of singer **Jay Clayton**, sopranoist **Jane Ira Bloom** and percussionist **Jerry Granelli** goes by the name of **Outskirts**, a splendid pun. Clayton, with her dual free jazz and new classical backgrounds (has anyone else recorded with Muhal and Steve Reich?) has sure improviser's instincts and superb pitch control; her wordless flights don't swing like conventional scat, but she gives the music harmonic cohesion, especially when stitching together chords using a delay unit. Her colleagues likewise use electronics with restraint. Despite Bloom's fascination with harmonizers and echo-units, she has the good

JAY CLAYTON (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

sense to keep her sound-enhancers at low volume, so they never drown out or distract you from her liquid soprano sound; she has the most fetching ballad tone of any straight-horn player I know. Her right foot is almost constantly darting among her many trigger-pads, too; she never uses a single effect for long, and will abandon them altogether for stretches of time. Granelli's kit is a half-pads, half-drums hybrid, the halves so well integrated you rarely notice the electronic pads' limitations concerning dynamids and touch.

Rhythmically as much as harmonically, Outskirts is a highwire act. Granelli can set up swinging grooves but often chooses not to; you keep expecting the pulse to collapse, which gives his playing a sense of rhythmic anticipation akin but not identical to swing. Two highlights of their set at the Alternative Museum on December 5 were a hair-raisingly fractured *Well, You Needn't*, in which Bloom seemed in danger of falling a beat behind yet somehow always caught up in time, and Jane's round-the-world *Eighty Days*, in which Granelli played tabla from his pads, Clayton's microtonal ululations evoked Indian classical music, and Bloom played pentatonic lines so creatively varied, rhythmically and intervallically, they never suggested noodling on a piano's black keys or soundtrack-Asian cliches. This out chamber group will play Town Hall on April 2.

There was chamber music of a different sort at Town Hall November 31; scored works by **Roscoe Mitchell** and **Henry Threadgill**. Like other jazz instrumentalist / composers, they demand the right to write and perform music unbound by any one genre. Still, their audience is composed of folks who know them as jazz musicians, who (like myself) may feel out of depths when trying to evaluate what we hear. (Classical critics, it seems, stayed away.) Henry played with his WindString Ensemble: Pat Moore Louis, violin; Leroy Jenkins, viola; Akua Dixon, cello; Bob Stewart, tuba; Threadgill, alto and flute. The pieces he writes for them are an odd amalgam of his usual pumping, rhythmic jazz (iron man Stewart's role is pivotal) and modern European chamber music. Sometimes the sympathies were divided in the obvious way: strings vying for one esthetic, winds for the other. But on alto, Henry might dart back and forth, in the space of a few notes, between a soft academic tone and Air-y graininess.

Roscoe Mitchell presented some pieces with no jazz content: the splanky/romantic *8-8-88* for Joseph Kubera's piano, settings of three e.e. cummings' poems for Thomas Buckner. His most interesting pieces were colla-borations. The elaborate, thea-trical *Inventions* came off like a '60s happening that had got itself a grant; Mitchell played atmospheric percussion and occasional saxophone notes; Vartan Manoogian played wispy violin; Dennis Nachvatal painted broad human-eye patterns in black across a colourful abstract canvas, as dancer Eve Tai prowled one corner of the stage, sometimes poking out behind a slatted frame which, like herself, was adorned in a pattern that rhymed with the abstract painting. The best thing shout the piece was Steven Sylvester as "the inventor," who pedaled a mutant bicycle-windmill whose large prop mechanism could be configured to emit pleasing low hums, garbled-speech sounds or banshee screeches' occasionally he'd also swing noise-makers through the air like flyswatters. It was an inscrutable ritual, it was undeniably eye-appealing and entertaining, it went on for a while but not quite too long. For the finale, Mitchell combined his New Chamber Ensemble (Kubera, Buckner, Manoogian, the leader on tenor) with Threadgill's quintet plus percussionist Jim Pugliese and conductor Paul Dunkel, for Roscoe's new, wisely concise setting of Joseph Jarman's poem *Non-Cognitive Aspects of the City, Part One*. The massed forces' broader palette and cumulative energy paid off in the best notated Mitchell piece I've heard, rich with sentimental strings, Ivesian band percussion, rocketing melodies and a firm if subdued beat.

At the Vanguard December 4, **Red Rodney** was inducted into the ***DownBeat*** Hall of Fame by his mentor **Dizzy Gillespie** ("For once they didn't make a mistake"). Understandably pumped up, Red then did something that happens maybe once a decade, started a New York club set 15 minutes ahead of its appointed time. With Dizzy sitting ten feet away, there was no chance he'd slouch. On this night, Rodney favoured flugelhorn, on which he gets both a full dark tone downstairs and a trumpety-bright upper register. Included in his quintet (Dave Kikoski, piano; Chip Jackson, bass; Jimmy Madison, drums) is yet another 19-year-old bebop whiz, tenor and soprano saxophonist Chris Potter, whose playing's fluent, energetic and throaty and who, with luck, won't be spoiled by premature hype.

For over a year, **Don Byron** has been New York's most written about jazz musician who didn't have a recording contract. Finally, his quartet cut an album for **Nonesuch** this fall, and a Knitting Factory gig on November 21, the week they were in the studio, bodes well. Since their promising if tentative debut in May, bassist Reggie Workman was replaced by Lonnie Plaxico. This seems an unlikely improvement, but this is one band in which the subdued funk inflections Plaxico brings help tighten up the rhythm. The aggressive Ralph Peterson remain on drums. On guitar is the ubiquitous Bill Frisell. Byron's the only leader I know who capitalizes on Frisell's strengths as a calypso player. The band has a nice Caribbean lilt.

A final note: as a result of New York's budget crunch, the Mass Transit Administration has announced a cutback in subway service between 1 and 5 am, much to the consternation of those of us who use the trains at that hour and know how scant service is already at that time. (After a late club set, it can take more than 90 minutes to get from Greenwich Village to northern Manhattan.) Of course, folks who have to go to or get home from work in the middle of the night will suffer more than fans who'll no longer get to hang out at Bradley's till three-thirty. But it's hard to reconcile New York's central position in the jazz world with the MTA's new conception of the place, as a town that shuts down 'round midnight.

BLUES

Kenny Neal is to star in a new Broadway musical called ***Mulebone***. This was written in 1929 by Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Thurston but never performed. . . The Amsterdam Blues Festival takes place

March 15 and 16 with Johnny Adams, Johnny Copeland, Grady Gaines, Floyd Dixon and Joe Louis Walker among the participants. . . The Specialty reissues by such artists as Roy Milton, Joe and Jimmy Liggins, Jesse Belvin and Percy Mayfield have also been issued in England on Ace. . . Mr R&B Records (p1 8300, S-643 00 Vingaker, Sweden) has available an attractive catalog ofhis various reissue labels such as Route 66, Blues Boy, Crown Prince and Juke Box Lil.

ELSEWHERE

Graeme Bell's band was in China a few months back on an Australia / China goodwill mission. . . Trumpeter Bob Barnard was in Switzerland in November for concerts with the Henri Chaix Trio as well as a concert in Baden November 25 with pianist Ralph Sutton and Jay McShann. Barnard is one of the best "mainstream" trumpeters around and sounded particularly good in a set with Ralph Sutton. This was something of a reunion for the two players who several years ago collaborated on a recording in New York with Milt Hinton and drummer Len Barnard. They are still "Partners In Crime". . . Henri Chaix brought his trio to Villigen October 20 for a live recording session under the auspices of Jazz in der aula director Arild Wideroe. This recording, to be released on Sackville, cele-brates his many years of jazz activity as bandleader and ac-companist for many touring US musicians. . . Jazzomania is an excelelnt source for CDs and lps when in Geneva. It's a small, intense jazz enclave close to the train station at 10 rue du Temple . . . Pianist/con-ductor Esko Linnavalli received the annual Georgie Award from the Finnish Jazz Federation. Linnavalli has been conductor of UMO Big Band since its inception in 1975.

DEPT OF JUDGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Tex Wyndham missed the deadline for last issue's choices of favourite recordings of 1990. It would be a shame not to have his iconoclastic views represented in ***Coda***. He selected the following:

The Complete Commodore Jazz Recordings, Volume One
Mosaic MR 23-123 (23-LP set)
The Complete Commodore Jazz Recordings, Volume Two
Mosaic MR 23-128 (23-LP set)
The Definitive Eddie Condon and his Jazz Concert All-Stars, Volume One
Stash ST-CD-530 (CD)
Play Me A Trad Band Tune by Swing 'N Dixie
FLLM CM 2996 (audiocassette)
The Complete Scott Joplin - Volume One by Scott Kirby
Greener Pastures GPR-002 (CD)
Live In Concert by Ed Polcer
Alphorn ALH-107 (audiocassette)
Boogie Woogie And Blues by Bob Seeley
(audiocassette - no label or catalogue number)
The Definitive Fats Waller, Volume One: His Rhythm, His Piano
Stash ST-CD-528 (CD)
Blazin' by The Carleton Coon-Joe Sanders Original Nighthawk Orchestra
Broadway Intermission BR-146 (LP)
You're The Cats! by Barbara Lea and The Legendary Lawson-Haggart Jazz Band
Audiophile ACD-252 (CD)

Gosta Hagglof of Kenneth Records (Ramgrand 1, S-175 47 Jarfalla, Sweden) is trying to track down the existence of some rare Louis Armstrong recordings from the 1930s. "According to lingering rumours there is a B-take in existence of Pops' *Sunny Side* for Decca (1937) DLA 1085-**B**. As to the same rumour it was only released in Canada on Decca 3794. Therefore I would be very glad if you could connect me with a collector owning this piece. It doesn't have to be the B-take only someone could verify the existence of Decca **3794**."

LITERATURE

Schirmer Books celebrated the release of Burt Korall's ***Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz, The Swing Years*** with a party at BMI's headquarters to which many drummers were invited. The same company has also published the first biography of Gerry Mulligan. . . ***Notes Of A Hanging Judge***, a collection of essays and reviews by Stanley Crouch has finally been announced by Oxford University Press. . . Greenwood Press has published ***Basic Musical Library 'P' Series*** by Larry Kiner and Harry Mackenzie. It's a discography of the first 1000 recordings issued on the AFRS transcription label. . . From France comes news of a new book about Charles Mingus by Didier Levallet and Denis-Constant Margin titled ***L'Amérique de Mingus***. . . There is now a second monthly newspaper devoted to Traditional Jazz in the US. It's called ***West Coast Rag*** and covers the activities of the many semi-professional bands. You can obtain a copy by writing 1750 N. Ferris, Fresno, CA 93704.

U P C O M I N G RECORDINGS

Vanguard is planning a nine CD set of all the ***John Hammond Vanguard Sessions***. . . The Fantasy group has new recordings by Niels Lan Doky and Jimmy Smith ready for release. They have also signed Freddie Redd and Bill Easley to contracts with Milestone. Orrin Keepnews has recorded saxophonist Vincent Herring with Wallace Roney, Mulgrew Miller, Ira Coleman and Carl Allen. . . Tex Wyndham has recorded an album of violin and piano duets to be issued on cassette by Yerba Buena Jazz. Tex is also a member of the Rent Party Revellers who will have a Stomp Off CD/cassette called ***She Was Just A Sailor's Sweetheart*** ready for sale in May at the Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee.

NEW RECORDINGS

Both the Fraser MacPherson Quartet and Oliver Jones new recordings are out on Justin Time. Herb Ellis and Red Mitchell perform with Jones while Oliver Gannon, Steve Wallace and John Sumner are with MacPherson. . . Also new from Justin Time is a new recording by the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir. . . The most recent Unity release showcases the work of saxophonsit Kirk MacDonald (Unity 121). . . New Sackville releases are ***Ralph Sutton at Cafe des Copains***, a collection of solo performances drawn from the pianist's appearance there between 1983 and 1987 and a CD reissue of ***The Ballad Artistry of Buddy Tate***. There are three tunes added to the original lp issue.

Small individual companies continue to document much of today's creative music activity. From Acoustics (406 Washington St. Hoboken, NJ 07030) comes Mark Whitecage & Liquid Time. . . Warren Bernhardt's fourth recording for DMP is titled ***Ain't Life Grand***. The same label has issued

Brassworks by Garry Dial and Dick Oatts. . . Enja recorded Dizzy Gillespie and the united Nations Orchestra live at England's Royal festival Hall and this concert is now available on CD. . . GM Recordings has released a CD of works by William Russo and Richard Peaslee performed by Dizzy Gillespie, Studs Terkel and the London Jazz Orchestra. . . Also released on GM is a new recording by the New England Ragtime Ensemble titled ***The Art of the Rag***.

The Bill Warfield Big Band salutes New York in its new recording on Interplay Records. . . Guitrarist Rick Stone features pianist Kenny Barron in ***Far East*** on Jazzand Records (12 Micieli Place, Brooklyn, NY 11218. . . Bassist Jay Leonhart's newest recording is called ***Life Out On The Road*** and it's on Nesak International (P.O. Box 588, Florham Park, NJ 07932). . . ***Natraj: The Goat Also Gallops*** is a new CD on Accurate by soprano saxophonist Phil Scarff. From the same copmany comes ***Either/Orchestra***, an eleven piece band from Boston. . . Silkheart Records has released ***Breath Rhyme*** by the Rob Brown Trio (featuring William Parker and Dennis Charles).To keep up to date with the Jazzology family of recordings you can subscribe to Jazzbeat (GHB Jazz Foundation, Collectors Club, 1206 Decatur street, New Orelans, LA 70116). Among the new releases are Marty Grosz' Orphan Newsboys ***Extra***, The Hal Smith/ Chris Tyle Frisco Syncopators, Jim Cullum Jazz Band ***Hooray for Hoagy***, volume 5 of the Eddie Condon Town Hall Conerts, volume 1 of Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress recordings, a 2-CD concert recording of the Johnny Wiggs-Sammy Penn band with George Lewis and Louis Nelson and CD repackages of Lee Konitz and Don Friedman Progressive sessions.

The European Sonet label has reissued Albert Ayler's first recordings. They have also issued a new recording by the Paris Reunion Band titled ***We Remember Klook: Live at the Moonraker***.

Sunnyside's most recent releases are of Kenny Werner (***Uncovered Heart***, Armen Donelian, ***The Wayfarer*** and Bobby Routch, ***Something Old Something New***. .. Telarc has issued its live recording of the Oscar Peterson Trio at the Blue Note in New York.

Reissues continue to pour forth from the major companies. Recently out from Capitol are various Roulette titles. The most intriguing is the repackaging of Randy Weston's ***Uhuru Afrika*** and ***African Highlife*** lps from Roulette and Colpix. Other CDS include ***Stan Getz at Storyville***, Count Basie's ***Kansas City Suite***, Dinah Washington's ***Dinah '63*** and a Lee Morgan/ Thad Jones package drawn from the Birdland Story box. Newly recorded projects for Blue Note include a Christmas collection and new works from Renée Rosnes, Vince Mendoza, Bobby Watson, Charlie Haden and Rick Margitza. There are also three volumes of music by Dexter Gordon's Quartet live at the Keystone.

OBITUARIES

Bassist Major Holley died in New Jersey October 26 upon his return from a three week tour in Germany. . . Clarinetist / bandleader Peter Schilpercort died in Holland in November. He was founder and longtime leader of the Dutch Swing College Band. .. Trumpeter Bill Hardman died in Paris December 5 from a stroke. He was 58.

AS SIMPLE (OR COMPLEX) AS 1, 2, 3. . .

As an art for improvisers, jazz has been a resilient genre, especially so because of its unpredictability, in essence it has achieved a dynamic of its own, where instinct and design are at variance with one another. Put differently, jazz has evolved according to a dialectical relationship between form and content. Traditional values have always taught us that form determines content; in short, a form exists as a means of organization. Yet, in the last two decades, this apparently immutable causality has been overturned. Without a doubt, the emergence of free jazz, as well as its further elaborations amongst European improvisers, brought about this paradigmatic reversal, which posits that whatever (or however) one plays, can be justified in formal terms. To that effect, Cecil Taylor, a leading exponent of that reversal, had stated in a conversation with Nat Hentoff, published in ***Down Beat*** as far back as 1965, that "There is no music without order--if that music comes from a man's innards. But that order is not necessarily related to any single criterion of what order should be as imposed from the outside." By implication then, this means that form is by no means a de facto predicate to content. From that, it is also possible to say that forms, lose their status as constants, thus becoming variables, just as the contents are for their randomness.

In more concrete terms, form is likened to structure, as in a compositional framework, a means to generate specific contents. For instance, the song format and chord sequences are the most widely used formal systems around. Other means exist too, but they are frequently idiomatic devices conceived by certain performers / composers. What makes music interesting then, are the ways in which this dialectical relationship is actually achieved, and there are nowadays countless paths to be followed. Most importantly, though, the articulation of this duality depends to a large extent on the performative aspect per se, which, in jazz, is subject to the inherent variability of improvisation. As much as the individual musician can emit sounds from his own instrument, his interactions with others are essential to him and to the music as a whole, and not just as separate parts occurring simultaneously in time. Herein lies the strength of improvisation as an instinctive act, one which not only demands a performance from the artist, but a competence as well. This entails not only the mastery of one's instrument (i.e., technique), but it also involves a will to participate in a process, and to immerse oneself completely into it. And nowhere more evident is that challenge than in what has been known, for lack of a better term, as "improvised music", be it melodically oriented or abstracted into the realm of pure sound exploration.

BARRE PHILLIPS (Photograph by Bill Smith)

SOLOS NOW

The previous comments are pertinent in interactive situations, which supposes a minimum of two musicians. So what then, when the performance involves only one instrumentalist? In a live setting, the solo recital, the musician has an audience, a potential object of interaction, the potentiality depending on the artist's will to communicate, to act and react according to the surroundings. In the privacy of the studio, though, the musician has to become mirror of himself, so to speak. To that end, he frequently sets up a call-and-response scheme, so as to create variety through alternating tensions and releases.

In that most minimal of contexts, pianists are particularly privileged given their ability to produce many notes from each hand, the left punctuating the right with rhythmic figures, harmonic progressions or mere sound masses (clusters). An unabashed traditionalist, **Junior Mance** is imbued by the blues in ever turn of phrase on his keyboard. The blues, like all folk traditions, relies heavily on the call-and-response formula raised previously. In his newest release, ***Junior Mance Special*** (**Sackville** CD2-3043 59:47), he offers us a compendium of acoustic blues stylings ranging from the Boogie-Woogie of *Pinetop Special* to the best loved of Monk's 12 bar opuses, *Blue Monk*. For good measure too, there are a couple of swarthy ballads thrown in (*Sentimental Mood, If You Could See Me Now*) as well as a soulful original and an adaptation

of *Careless Love* to round off the program. In light of the opening comments in this piece, it is clear that there is commitment to well established forms whose contents follow a well-scripted plot of familiar gestures (licks). Out of this assimilation of content into form comes the concept of story-telling, so frequently reiterated by jazz musicians, especially those belonging to its mainstream, or tradition if you will.

The strategy of inventing seemingly endless variations on fixed forms is a well entrenched practice, though not the only one any more. Forms can now be rethought by content itself, the actual musical discourse unfolding in real time. As an exponent of this course of action, **Anthony Braxton** has never ceased to query and devise different means of formal organization. In fact, one could even ask the question whether he spends more time at elaborating new problems rather than wanting to solve them. A recent issue of his (***19 [Solo] Compositions 1988*** **- New Album** NA 023 CD 56:05) marks a return to his solo roots of the late 60s and early 70s. As the title indicates, the recital consists of small vignettes, each one dealing with a specific conceptual scheme or idea. A live recording, it contains excerpts from two concerts held in 1988. Though all applause has been deleted, the live setting is still felt via an occasional cough or a background murmur. Strangely enough, most pieces end unexpectedly, as though the cuts were truncated, which may leave the listener suspended on a dangling thought. Melodically linear at times, the music then gets twisted into rasping shards of sound. In its vignette-like presentation, the whole set is more effective, challenging, for sure, but avoiding overindulgence. The 16 originals plus three standards (*Round Midnight, You Go To My Head, Half Nelson*) can be likened in a way to a series of etudes, each one investigating specific areas of form and contents. Now, these areas are not easily decipherable to most listeners, and given the density of his written prose, one may also ponder on whether his Triaxom writings or his voluminous composer notes can be of help in understanding these demanding enquiries. Essentially, the contents of this disc are an accurate reflection of Mr. Braxton's concerns, as problematic as they may be.

The solo setting is, of course, the most difficult of situations, since the musician can rely on no one but himself. He may use familiar forms, but he must exhibit resourcefulness at every moment as he creates the contents of his performance. To that effect, technique has a bearing on the realization of a work. Of the many instrument families, stringed instruments are particularly fascinating since they offer two different techniques: the bowed and the plucked. With the exception of the guitar and its relatives (as well as the harp), violins, violas, cellos and contrabasses have been primarily bowed, the reason being their ability to better project. In jazz, the plucked, or pizzicato technique is the norm for playing the bass, by far the most frequently used instrument in this field). One must admit, that few jazz bassists are really capable of bowing satisfactorily, at times giving the listener the impression that they are sawing away at it! Lest we forget that added pickups on the bridge now have the unfortunate consequence, of magnifying mistakes.

As stated, musicians who use both techniques in jazz with equal ease are indeed rare, two examples being the expatriate American **Barre Phillips** and a Japanese counterpart, **Tetsa Saite**. Just last year, the former had toured throughout Canada, playing both solo and as part of a dance project in Montreal with guitarist and composer Tim Brady as well as John Surman. Now on record, a solo performance of his has surfaced (***Camouflage*** **- VICTO** CD 08 55:08). As a **complete** exploration of this large wooden box, Barre Phillips has succeeded in many ways, striking the body, rubbing the strings, even using a pre-recorded tape on one track to elicit other textures. Once again, forms stem from the contents of improvisation, non-fixed and open to one's perception. Due to its constant flux, the music remains unstable, moving at times into focus, then out at other moments. In short, an uneven mix of hits and misses by an otherwise very advanced musician.

Far less well known in our part of the world is Tetsu Saito. In his release, (***Tokio Tango*** **- Aim Records** AL-5002 CD 45:19), he alternates between pizz and arco playing from one cut to the next, creating an overall dual identity. Conceptually, Saito's explorations are closer to the universe of a Betram Turitzky than of a Dave Holland, for instance, but that does not mean that it is devoid of jazz overtones, as he demonstrates in *Running to Bird* which ends on a perfectly articulated reading of Bird's own *Donna Lee* at breakneck tempo. Worthy of noting too is the exceptional recording quality of this disc which brings out the natural resonance of the contrabass, further enhancing his mastery of the instrument. Too bad the liner notes are all in Japanese, though, but that is a small frustration amongst the many musical rewards to be reaped from this release which, most likely, may not be easily available on our side of the world.

TWO IS COMPANY

From the most minimalistic of situations, we move on now to the most basic interactive setting, the duo. As implied previously, solo performance is essentially an act of total self-determination; in contrast, the duet involves a process of co-determination, especially when it relies on improvisation as its main channel of expression. And when content overrides form in the interplay, then the music can be likened to a series of tenuously related gestures whose success depends as much on the musicians will to act and react to each others stimuli as on their ability to make sense out of them.

This whole approach has become a style in itself, whose many strands are lumped together under the very general heading of "European free improvised music". Of its many practitioners, British guitarist **Derek Bailey** has been one of its most dedicated exponents. Over the last 25 years, he has never ceased to challenge the standard conventions of music making, i.e., the precedence of form over content. Whether it be in his solo perambulations, his countless duets or his larger. Company undertakings, he has always defied customary approaches, those that invite habit and routine, in short, cliches. Over the years, he has always sought out new people with whom he can elicit novel interactions. Yet, he has become over the years a stylistic constant of sorts, whose partners can be identified as variables in his own personal equation, which can never be fully validated for its refusal of assuming formal pre-requisites.

This constant/variable relationship is given full bearing in a recent compact disc release on Bailey's own cooperative label (***CYRO*** **- INCUS** CD 001 39:52). Recorded in 1982 during a stay of his in New York

City, the guitarist encounters here the Brazilian percussionist Cyro Batista. His choice of partners may be surprising on first glance, thought it is not so much of one on second thought, because of his total openness to anyone willing to meet him on his own turf. And such is what happens here: since he rejects any set forms, patterns or licks for that matter, he produces sounds of all kinds, strumming and twanging at will (random?); his Third World partner, on the other hand, creates a wide variety of rattles and shakes from his collection of exotica, proposing shifting rhythmic patterns. Because of that, one gets the impression that the collaboration does not intersect, but occurs in parallel universes. What happens here rather is a series of attempts at bridging the gap between their two worlds, though they do not really come off. While the guitarist constantly challenges the percussionist to break away from his own conventions, the latter does not yield in his will to play rhythmically first and foremost. Because of that, the relationship here is clearly asymmetrical, since one man's intention to openly subvert the other's codes leaves a void, from where the music could have potentially emerged.

In its purest form, improvisation does not only relativize the notion of form, but also that of pitch, and nowhere more obvious is that when it comes to percussion. Were one to look for an area of agreement in the previous recording, then it could be heard in Bailey's percussive attack which points to the total abstraction of melodic line and harmonic direction. Such can also be said, at least for the most part, for sound sampler Nichols Collins's ironically titled disc, ***100 of the World's Most Beautiful Melodies*** (**Trace Elements** CD 61:01). First off, there are only 42 cuts, all duets, with a cross-section of the Downtown in-crowd of the Big Apple, the likes of Tom Cora, Peter Cusack, Ned Rothenberg, Shelly Hirsch, Peter Zummo, the always nefarious John Zorn and nine others for your listening pleasure. According to Collins, he collects sounds, because he deems himself incapable of creating any. His procedure is somewhat akin to pulling any ingredients at random out of the fridge in order to prepare some tasty treats. Depending on your constitution, these little hors d'oeuvres may tweak your taste buds or give you a severe (auditory) indigestion. And who needs other

courses to the meal when you'll have your fill after these?. . .

More expansive in its development is the quasi duo of Paul Rutherford and George Haslam, as heard on ***1989 - and all that*** on the latter's own label (**SLAM** CD 301 77:19). And the word "quasi" is meant here as a combination of three solos each and three duet performances put together on this very generous surface, though flawed in the pressing, yielding many audible clicks on a couple of tracks. While trombonist Rutherford stretches out his lengthy sound explorations, Haslam sticks much closer to linear melodic development on his horn, the baritone saxophone. In fact, he even uses Ellington's staple *Come Sunday* as a starting point for one of his improvisations. Clearly, his roots as a mainstream jazz musician are much more obvious than those of his partner, and according to an info sheet included with the disc, he had played in the tradition up until the late 70s when he made his move into the realm of free improvisation. You may indeed take a musician outside of jazz circles, but it is much harder to take the jazz out of him, and nowhere is that clearer than in these duets, where a stylistic gap between the performers is most apparent.

Different as they may be, the last two duet recordings reviewed here each feature a reeds and percussion tandem. The first of these combines the alto saxophone of **D.M. Visotzky** and the vibes, marimba, percussion and synthesizer of **François Volpé**. From their home base of Geneva, they have produced a series of airy pieces in ***One Eyed Cat*** (**Plainis Sphere** PL 267-37 CD 51:53). While the altoist plays carefully and well within the normal range of his horn, his partner sets the tone of the music with his delicate sounding vibes, at times overdubbing them or using his other instruments, with little dynamic contrasts however. In fact, once the pleasant title track is over, the remainder of the disc follows this low-key approach, lacking spark or surprises for that matter.

Also Swiss, yet established in France for many years, drummer extraordinaire **Daniel Humair** encounters the multi-reeds of **André Jaune** in a most musical set of 13 finely carved nuggets, as per its title, ***Pépites*** (**CELP** C3 49:54). Usually, the duo combination of sax and drums produces a rather volatile mix, somewhat like dousing a fire with oil! Rather than turning into the habitual confrontation of energies, this one offers a wide range of intensities. The number of cuts is also indicative of a sense of concision, the longest track being Coltrane's *Naima* at just under six minutes. Each piece works off an opening melodic statement, which serve only as pretexts for their tightly-knit exchanges. Somewhat akin to a series of topical conversations which never become self-serving. Along the way, each musician takes one solo spot for variety's sake, but they fit perfectly in the overall fabric of this session which balances out their individual freedom with a self-imposed discipline that prevents them from overstating their case.

THREE AS A CROWD

In numerical terms, then, the duo offers an egalitarian interaction. However, this equilibrium is immediately broken as soon as another musician is added: whereas the duo involves a purely linear relationship, the trio induces a geometrical structure, a triangulation of forces broken either into its constituent units or in asymmetries of two to one. In fact, the very notion of a "group" begins here, because it yields a matrix of possibilities which broaden the overall network of communication. To organize this matrix entails two strategies, one focused on form as a pre-requisite of content, its counterproposal stating, once more, that content can elicit form as a series of discrete sound events.

The latter option, of course, is practised in free improvisation. And such can be heard in yet another **INCUS** release ***Original Gravity*** (CD03 50:35) by the sax, guitar and

ROBERT DICK (Photograph by Gerard Futrick)

percussion unit of **Tony Bevan, Greg Kingston and Matt Lewis**. In the footsteps of the pioneering work of Bailey, Stevens and Parker, these successors opt for a more pointillistic approach, less energetic on the whole but more attentive to detail. Without any set indicators given by the musicians, it is essentially left up to the listener to make sense of their "sound events". If one cannot, then the title of cut four may say it the best: blah blah blah. . .

In what some writers have now been describing as the "mainstream free jazz tradition," a recent release by trumpeter **Paul Smoker** (***Come Rain or Come Shine* - Sound Aspects** CD 024 46:32) is an example befitting of that expression. With drummer **Phil Haynes** and bassist **Ron Robovit** in tow, the personnel is quite typical of the genre. Three long cuts plus a small three minute interlude fill up the side, all of which are loose interpretations built on thematical sketches, so to speak. The leader's broad tone and strong sense of projection as a soloist amply justify his name while his associates do not slavishly "accompany" in the traditional time-keeping sense. But, at the heart of it, this is still a rhythm section plus horn session, one where the brassman definitely carries a good part of the music by creating a wide variety of moods and textures. Incidentally, the title cut is indeed the Harold Arlen tune, but its treatment is highly abstracted, thus becoming a very open exploration on the evocative nature of the title rather than on its specific harmonic structure or melodic content.

As the previous recording uses some very schematic formal devices as points of reference in a mostly improvised whole, the structural imperative is much more evident in the music performed by **The New Winds** in their recorded opus, ***The Cliff*** (**Sound Aspects** CD 025-1 50:04). This trio combines the triple influence of contemporary music via the flute of **Robert Dick** with those of the jazz and New Music veins of multi-reedists **J.D. Parran** and **Ned Rothenberg** respectively. More than any of the previous releases, this one emphasizes a rigorous sense of construction in each piece, which results in a precise architecture of sounds that demand much attention and concentration on the listener's part. Even their readings of jazz staples like Ornette's *Beauty Is A Rare Thing* or Ellington's *Mood Indigo* eschew the obvious, opening these pieces to new and challenging dimensions for the listener.

In sum, it is almost an ingrained habit to establish more formal constraints as the numbers increase, at least if one strives for clarity. More than anything else, free improvisation has proven most successful in these small units, becoming more problematic in larger setting. As much as a solo, duo or trio can be enjoyable in its content, all of these situations engender their own difficulties and complexities, some of which may pose even greater challenges to many a larger ensemble.

THE BALD SOPRANO & CHANGES

In his book, ***Frames of Mind,*** Howard Gardner puts forward a theory of multiple intelligences and identifies a number of distinctly different kinds of intelligence: logical, musical, verbal, spacial, bodily-kinesthetic and so forth. He goes on to talk about how different cultures value different kinds of intelligence (and their combinations) in radically different ways. In some societies the combination of these different "intelligences" in a single artist is a central part of their artistic tradition. A classical Chinese poet was never out of reach of his brush and his zither. In western industrialized societies, this kind of combination is rare and when we come across it, as in these two books, it seems all the more striking. One is a portrait of a jazz musician, who is also a performance artist, by a friend of his who is also a painter, a musician and a poet; the other is a novel by a jazz musician, also a performance artist, as well as a visual artist and writer. Significantly, all three are performance artists. These are clearly artists who are not afraid to cross lines between disciplines.

Although these are two very different kinds of books, it is hard to miss the common ground between them, whether in the outlook expressed in the quotes above, or in the fact that they are about jazz musicians living outside the commercial centres of the music, or in the fact that both books are about jazz but wildly different from what you might consider the typical "jazz book".

The Bald Soprano, by Jeff Nuttall, is a portrait/biography /appreciation of English soprano saxophonist, Lol Coxhill. It is made up of alternating chapters of biographical sketches, appreciations of Coxhill's records, personal anecdotes and scenes from the jazz world of London in the '60s and '70s. It covers Lol Coxhill's career until 1978. A brief afterword by Coxhill himself outlines his activities since then. Instead of the typical musician's "autobiography", with the help of a ghost writer, ***The Bald Soprano*** is more of an appreciation by a close friend. In fact, it is more as if it is Coxhill himself who haunts the pages of this book. He contributes footnotes throughout, correcting Nuttall's factual errors and generally giving comment where it is due. For example, to Nuttall's description of the '60s theatre group, Welfare State, as "Foxy's hairy-arsed theatre tribe", Coxhill footnotes, "I doubt that many, if any of their arses are hairy as Jeff's. Though I don't speak as an authority on the subject." This gives the general tenor throughout. In fact it is the relationship between Nuttall and Coxhill, and Nuttall's closeness to the events he's describing, that make ***The Bald Soprano*** unique. It is certainly the first jazz biography I have read which debotes an emotional chapter on how the subject stole the author's girlfriend. (Did this really happen?)

Jeff Nuttall is a well-known poet and has been one of the leading exponents of multi-media performance in England since the '60s. He has also published chronicles of the English avant-garde in that period, including ***Bomb Culture***, an important critical study of the period. All this helps to explain why ***The Bald Soprano*** stands on its own as a wonderful book.

The chapters about Coxhill himself are a combination of biographical accounts of getting started in the '50s in Aylesbury and through the London music and alternative scene in the '60s and 70s. Interspersed with this are personal anec-dotes, descriptions of Coxhill playing in concert and reflections on jazz and improvised music. Among other things, it gives a vivid picture insight into British music in one of its most interesting periods. As to the opinions given about jazz and improvised music, most people will find something to disagree with. (As well as being a fan of improvised music, he plays trumpet in the style of Wild Bill Davison.) Somehow this doesn't detract in the end.

One of the many remarkable things about Lol Coxhill's background is the variety of different kinds of musical situations he has played in. As well as jazz groups, he played in some of the best blues and R'n'B bands of the '60s (he toured with Rufus Thomas), and a whole range of everything from folk music to solo busking, and of course improvised music with the most important British and European improvisors. This can be partly attributed to the situation in London at that time but, even more, I think it's a result of Coxhill's approach to music in general. It is the opposite of eclectic, completely focused on his music so that it remains unmistakable his own, no matter what the idiom.

The eight alternating chapters on Lol Coxhill's records take a unique literary / musical form. Not record reviews in any ordiary sense, they are more like surrealistic

And here we get to the nuts and bolts. In the midst of the total lies and insanity of the North American continent, no musician or any other artist is able to move us unless he can become integrated and honest in his own psychic motion and devise means to express whatever truth he knows, and he is able to do this with something approaching the psychic intensity of the napalm Bomb." Al Neil, ***Changes***

The fact that in a time when the globe is thoroughly mapped by a suicidal system of absurdity, suddenly the only moral ground becomes the exploratory voyage beyond the bounds of a fouled rationality. Jeff Nuttall, ***The Bald Soprano***

AL NEIL & DAVID LEE (Photograph by Chris Cameron)

TWO BOOKS REVIEWED BY ARTHUR BULL

narratives which follow the music on each record, passage by passage, in long unbroken sequences of poetic imagery. They read as if they were written to the music and as if they should be read that way. A typical cut,

The raconteur (fifth to tonic stride with a lyric top note) has a song or too in the back of his bald skull - ordinary panto lyrics are rising out of cracks in wartime concrete and a sob forgets them almost as soon as they've arrived - a sob become a whine, a swing to a sad birdflight across the lines long arc amen (plays out his breath). . . "

Not exactly Whitney Balliett, but reading these bits really makes you want to get hold of the records, so you listen and read togther. Many of which are unfortunately hard to find. (In particularly, ***Fleas In Custard***, with guitarist Gerry Fitzgerald, sounds like a good one.) The publisher has thoughtfully made available a 90 minute cassette of previously unreleased Lol Coxhill solo material, designed to accompany the book.

Nuttall manages, throughout these chapters, and in fact all throughout the book, to keep the emphasis where it should be, on the music of this remarkable player.

Where Lol Coxhill does not seem particularly interested in the subject of drugs and jazz, it figures very largely in Al Neil's ***Changes***, in particular heroin. As he puts it in his introduction, *"This manuscript is stuck like a shark in water it could not enter - where he was, who did what - and the appalling loss of hipsters to smack in the '50s."* We get the hero of this novel, Seamus Finn, scoring, getting hepatitis, getting busted and reflecting on the nature of junk, the relation of junk to music, to sex and so forth. We get benzedrine, methadrine, grass, and we get a close-up view of street life in Vancouver in the '90s. In the end, however, the subject heroin and its users (as well as those who want to romanticize it) is a very dreary one, that has been well enough documented elsewhere. Fortunately, although drug addiction is the condition that runs through ***Changes***, this book is in fact about something else altogether.

Although it is clearly autobiographical, Al Neil describes ***Changes*** more as an "episodic novel". Written between 1958 and 1964 and published in serial form in Vancouver's ***Georgia Straight*** in the late '60s, ***Changes*** is the chronical of a jazz pianist, Seamus Finn, in the world of Vancouver in the late '50s. It follows Finn's adventures in dope, sex and bebop through a sequence of anecdotes. Since its first publication fifteen years ago, ***Changes*** has not surprisingly acquired the status of a legend in certain circles in the Canadian art community.

Like ***The Bald Soprano, Changes*** combines a number of strands of different kinds of writing into a single fabric. Much of it follows the picaresque narrative of Seamus Finn through a sequence of adventures involving a cast of memorable and bizarre characters. Neil has a nice way with a story and he manages to make everything from going for a swim to getting a vasectomy into something worth telling. Interspersed with the narrative parts are sequences of more poetic writing, either in prose or verse, more abstract and imagistic. Finally, there are sections of reflective writing which, for me, are the most interesting and what really holds the book together. These bits give the rest their underlying context: an artist's spiritual development in a hostile and alien and often enjoyable world. ***Changes*** could have for its epigraph, the lines by Jakob Boehme that Neil quotes in the first chapter:

A limner portrays his own image and does thereby behold what he is and how his form and features are; a musician composes a curious lesson or song, and so plays and melodises with his life.

Although it is not a "jazz novel" in any conventional sense, ***Changes*** is full of insights into the world of bebop in the late '50s. Since Neil was in fact a very active bebop player in this period, performing with the likes of Art Pepper and Conte Condoli, there is the unmistakable ring of authenticity to his reflection on the state of the music in that critical period. The sense of the shift from bop forms to something beyond, something that was not yet clearly defined except as a spiritual need, is not surprising in retrospect, but Neil gives a sense of what it must have been like as a musician struggling on the edge of that astounding breakthrough. And some of Neil's observations on music still have currency in the '90s, especially when he is talking about the inherent conservatism of the jazz world.

Above all, it is Al Neil's presence which gives this book its strength. He is the kind of artist who remains unmistakably himself under any circumstances in whatever medium he chooses to use. If Canadian society had any value for its own art, it would recognize Al Neil as something of a cultural treasure, as they would say in Japan: a kind of cross between Emily Carr and Li Po.

Both of these books serve to remind us that jazz has provided a vehicle for expression for many artists who have brought their unique visions to the music. Aylesbury, U.K. and Dollarton, B.C. may not be the Big Apple, but it is clear that the real centres are wherever we care to find them.

Changes can be ordered from Nightwood Editions, Box 1426, Station A, London, Ontario N6A 5M2

The Bald Soprano and accompanying tape can be ordered from TAK TAK TAK, 46 Bailey Street, Old Basford, Nottingham, NG6 0HA

NEW MUSIC AMERICA IN CANADA

Montréal Musiques Actuelles
November 1-11 1990

For its eleventh edition (and most likely last one in its original format; see footnote below), New Music America finally made it north of the border, loosely transliterated on this occasion by the currently fashionable term of 'musiques actuelles', lest wenot forget the Victoriaville festival, this one-time event (locally) capped off a decade plus of this festival's history with a numerical reminder of sorts (1-11/11, 11 years). Numbers aside, this year's fest sparked much more debate amongst the cognescenti than in any of the large media outlets, whose coverage was spotty at best. Given the very fractured state of affairs in today's new Music, one shouldn't be surprised at the very fractious nature of its audience.

Like its predecessors, Montréal Musiques Actuelles was very much a composer's forum, with much room given to "contemporary music" ensembles. The most noteworthy examples to that effec were the Kronos Quartet, Toronto's Arraymusic and two well-known chamber orchestras in Montreal, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne and the one of the Société de Musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ). But thisi was not say that music with an improvisational bent to it was excluded; for the most part, it was an important ingredient to many performances, albeit integrated within broader compositional frameworks in the majority of cases.

Exceptions to the preceding fact were rare, but three events focused more specifically on improvisation. Leading the short list was Toronto's own CCMC, the Canadian "Decomposers" collective par excellence. An institution in its own right, it has retained its core members over the years (Michael Snow, Noburo Kubota, Paul Dutton, Al Mattes). Opening with two shorter episodes in variant combinations, these four middle-aged artists launched into a lengthy collage of vocal, acoustic and electronically sampled sounds (the latter by fifth member John Kamesvaar), creating a spontaneous "tour de farce" with equal doses of amusement and tedium along the way.

The duo of Paul Plimley and Andrew Cyrille also found its raison d'être in free improvisation, though clearly more rooted into a jazz mode. A percussion discussion in essence, their set began with a rather drawn out routing of striking everything around their instruments (floor included). When they actually got down to business, a pattern emerged whereby the drummer alternated between holding certain rhythmic grooves or playing in a much more free flowing and energetic style. Plimley, for his part, stuck closely to his partner in the former, without inciting him to change gears, while flying off in all directions in the latter, as though he was working parallel to rather than interacting with the drummer.

Two colo performances were set back to back, the first by cellist Claude Lamothe, the second by trombonist Alain Trudel. While the string player's half was short (marred by two excruciating feedbacks and some mugging on his part), the brassman's set was rather long and much of his music amounted to a lot of diffusde noodling, reminiscent of Kagel's theatrical piece for solo bone. Improvisation of a different sort also took place with turntable wizard Christian Marclay encountering Martin Tétrault, his local counterpart, for a vinyl scratch-up session, this happening taking place at the opening of a contemporary art exhibit entitled Broken Music.

As important as the mixing of various styles is to New Music, so are the ways in which improvisational (spontaneous) devices are interwoven within compositional (notational) structures. In some instances, these worlds confront themselves head on while, in others, they are integrated in a wider whole. The first of these alternatives was best represented at the festival by The Last Leg, a five-man one-woman group co-led by Tom Cora and Hans Reichel. Well know for his tinkered guitars, Reichel used his amplified freboards (a.k.a. "dachsophone") with two other musicians, forming a threesome of improvisers, as opposed to the cello trio of Cora that worked in and out of written scores. The resulting mix of percussive sounds from one side and the melodic lines from the other was fascinating. Somehow, the freedom of one meshed with the focus of the latter, with many sparks flying throughout, particularly by René Lussier, strumming and bowing madly next to Reichel, and Cora, showing his many techniques to great advantage.

As for the second alternative, the linkage (rather than confrontation) of improvisation and composition, violinist Leroy Jenkins' quintet, Sting, best represented this angle, at least in a jazz perspective. Despite a rather undistinguished rhythm section (the keyboardist and electric bassist filling in the background in a rather pedestrian manner), most of the interest was generated by the tandem of Jenkins and front line partner Terry Jenoure. Forever the thinker, Jenkins shaped his solos with edgy and unpredictable turns; Jenoure, in contrast, relied more on instinct and emotion. bowing fiery solos and adding dramatic vocal hollers aching with the pain of the blues.

Elsewhere in the festival, there were many double bills that paired groups which relied on compositions alone, and others that included improvisation of some sort, be it solo or group. The most striking contrast heard was the opening act of Anthony Coleman, followed by Jean Derome and René Lussier with their fifteen piece band LG-15 (LG as in their usual duet, Les Granules). The first group, a quartet with accordionist Gary Klucksevek, played a tame set of eastern-European folk influenced music in an intimate style that seemed to lose itself in the large hall of the Spectrum. At the other end of the dynamic spectrum, the big band filled the place with sound, creating at times a muddy din that seemed to be more a problem of amplification or acoustics of the rom than the music per se. In any event, much humour sharpened the blend of acoustic sounds and electronic ones (Fred Frith on electric bass and Bob Ostertag on keyboard samplings) with the co-leaders occuping centre stage (both literally and musically) throughout.

In the same vein, the double feature of the Scott Johnson Ensemble and keyboardist Wayne Horvitz's The President offered the same dichotomy as above, though with much less

satisfying results. Guitarist Johnson's program could have been best described as "chamber rock music", executed from precisely annotated scores, flawlessly performed but lacking stylistic or dynamic variety from piece to piece. Horvitz and cohorts, for their part, may have been more energetic than the first act, but it's pop rock sound made one wonder what it had to do with "New Music." If only there were some interesting solos in this built-around-the-guitar-of Stuart-Cutler-band (sorry folks, not Elliot Sharp this time), there might have been some excitement, but the performance did not lift the audience nor where there any ovations or encores for that matter. The leader, however, took one solo keyboard piece in the middle of the set, an abstract sound exploration that offered the only point of variety, though it sent many people to the exits.

A third matchup of this kind was to be heard in the bill featuring Arraymusic and Challenge, the latter being a trio with Anthony Braxton, David Rosenboom (on keyboards) and William Winant (percussion). Both sets were very focused on composition, though there was some improvisation in the latter group's performance. While the lines were often hazy between the two, they stirred up much energy in their non-stop presentation, which may have benefited from a few breaks along the way.

Before the festival's opening date, there was a much-talked about event, the 101 guitars of Rhys Chatham, a voluminous extravaganza of electrified minimalism that enchanted some while boring others. As for yours truly, I passed on this one, given an innate allergy to super-productions. Between that decibel-laden show and the equally vociferous one of Germany's leading industrial band, Einstürzende Neubauten, there was much more sound to be heard, and at all levels too; be it the massive church bell concert with choir to the intimacy of Korean komungo player Jin Hi Kim, or the metallic hammerings of Test Department to the langourously personal treatments of teh blues by guitarist Loren Mazzacane, there is no doubt that New Music is continuously expanding universe of sound possibilities, only a fraction of which were chosen amongst the many applications submitted. Like a modern-day Pandora's Box, it has many mazeways in it, some fascinating, some confounding, if not debatable. More than ever, New Music is a process of questions best left unanswered so as to not limit it its scope. Whether one likes it or not, New Music in its present state of constant upheaval is here to stay, the very reason why it is becoming a domain to be reckoned with in the "mainstream" culture. Owing its vitality to its precarious nature, New Music, or "Musique actuelle" (whichever you prefer) thrives by living on the edge, that being between solid ground and total void.

Footnote: Months before M.M.A. was to take place, the rumour had been going around that N.M.A. was to disappear after Montreal. The latest news has it that it will be back, but this time under much more modest proportions. Insiders are even talking of holding it twice a year, with a possibility of exporting such a concept of a downsized event for a European tour in a couple of years from now. Stay tuned for further developments. . . . - *Marc Chénard*

JOHN LEE HOOKER TRIBUTE

Madison Square Garden, New York City * October 15, 1990

The surging popularity of the blues was demonstrated without doubt this past October in New York with an All Star tribute to blues great John Lee Hooker. Proceeds from the Madison Square Garden event went to support the Delta Blues Museum in Mississippi.

Unlike the majority of Mississippi bluesmen who migrated to Chicago, Hooker arrived in Detroit in 1943. It was there that he made his mark on the music scene with his first hit, *Boogie Chillen.* Hooker's signature boogie style influenced blues and rock musicians through the decades up until the present day. Some of those musicians turned out on this special night to pay tribute.

After acoustic performances by Charlie Musselwhite and John Hammond, sone of the late great discoverer of talent, James Cotton rocked the Garden with a searing harmonica shuffle. Angela Strehli, Albert Collins and Huey Lewis all displayed their musical wares in honour of Hooker, backed by a rhythm section which included Mick Fleetwood, Chuck Leavall and Al Kooper. Supported by the same musicians, Bo Diddley performed spirited renditions of *I'm A Man* and *Who Do You Love.* Diddley's rhythmic grooves usually sound endless in recorded form, but in this live context the effect was truly exciting. Bo knows how to work a crowd.

At this point in the proceedings, Ed Bradley, popular American TV journalist, traced Hooker's development from his Gospel beginnings in Mississippi to his performances in Memphis Beal Street juke joints up until his arrival in Detroit. Bradley related how Hooker would record under pseudonyms such as Delta John, Birmingham Sam and Texas Slim for various small labels. These sessions usually occurred in the wee hours of the night and produced no royalties for John Lee. Yet 1990 was a year in which he received his first Grammy and Gold record for his album, ***The Healer.*** He also appeared in his first music video featuring the song, *I'm In The Mood,* a duet with Bonnie Raitt.

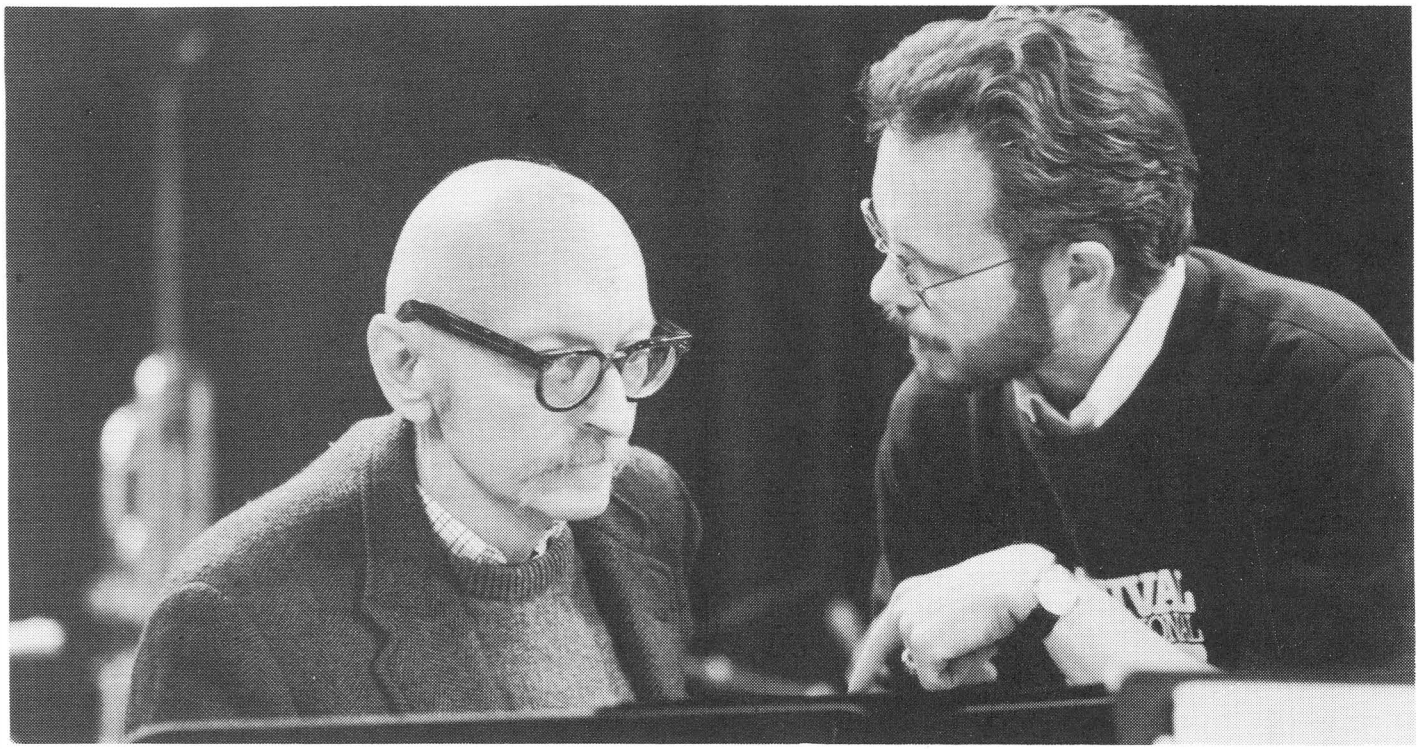
Donned in black hat and dark sunglasses, Hooker looked like some kind of urban blues Buddha, seated behind his acoustic guitar, soaking in the adoration of the noisy Madison Square Garden crowd. Bonnie Raitt joined John Lee for a gently rocking version of *I'm In The Mood.* Raitt's cutting slide guitar work maintained an effective backdrop for Hooker's booming voice.

The more than four hours of music continued with a virtuosic slide mandolin exhibition by Ry Cooder. Featuring a small corps of Gospel singers, the ensemble performed a stunning version of *Down In Mississippi* from Cooder's soundtrack to the film, ***Crossroads.*** Members of Little Feat and the Allman Brothers Band comprised the rhythm section for the next segment. Johnny Winter, Paul Barrere, Gregg Allman and Joe Cocker all paid their musical respects. But one of the highlights of the night had to be the appearance of blues legend Willie Dixon.

Dixon, a huge, charistmatic man with a gentlemanly, almost recitative vocal style, penned some of the classic blues songs of our time. A Mississippi native like Hooker, Dixon settled permanently in Chicago in 1936. After playing upright bass in various blues bands around the city for 18 years, Dixon wrote a song he thought might be suitable for Muddy Waters. That song was the classic *Hoochie Coochie Man.* Dixon went on to compose other trademark Muddy Waters tunes, including *I Just Want To Make Love To You* and *I'm Ready.*

On this night, replete with white hat and walking stick, Willie Dixon sang *I Just Want To Make Love To You* and *Wang Dang Doodle* to a crowd of appreciative fans. Hooker then resurfaced on stage, followed by most of the performers of the evening. They launched into a ten minute uptempo boogie, with shared vocals by the two blues elders present. To see either of these legends perform in any venue is a rare treat, but to see them performing on the same Madison Square Garden stage felt like something akin to history. And one left the hall with the feeling that one had witnessed just that, more than four hours of history. - *Review by Alan Strauber*

SUITE PEPPER AND MORE. . .



Not always knowing which way the winds of fate will blow the trajectory of a jazzman's fervor can make for unpredictable and exciting musical challenges. "A collaborative effort," as Steve Lacy once so aptly described jazz to me, "and the possibility for explorations within the texture of the idioms are stimulating for both participant and listener." Proposing the prospect of a Canadian Big Band being augmented by a veteran of legendary status is positive proof that jazz musicians relish the breaking of uncharted waters.

That proposition came into reality in 1984 at the now-defunct Blue Note club in Montreal. Wrought with the desire to provide a special guest for his Big Band's appearance there, trumpeter Denny Christianson consulted with jazz writer Len Dobbin and a favoured visitor came back to town. This was to be one of baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams' last live performance in Montreal, where he had played so many times.

Succumbing to cancer in September 1986, Adams' recordings measured close to 200, but it took this chain of events before he would be presented in a Big Band format.

"Residing in New York when I called him for the Blue Note engagement," relates Christianson, "I was unaware that he had suffered a sever leg injury the year before in a car accident. I hadn't known he was out of circulation because when I phoned him, he said he was ready to play. When I went to the airport, I couldn't believe it. He was on crutches, looking thin and pale. He was weak and could hardly hold his horn. During the first rehearsal, he sounded really rough and I was concerned. However, come showtime the next evening, Bang! He was there 180%. A phenomenal and wonderful player, one of the great things about Pepper was his concentration. It didn't matter what was going on around; he could pinpoint on exactly what he was doing."

A show for CBC Radio the next day followed the live performance.

Christianson continues, "I chose Pepper for this engagement because I felt his sound was compatible to my band and this would be a rare opportunity for them to perform with someone of his stature. It provided a special challenge for us."

Pepper Adams would return to the Christianson Big Band in 1986 and leave behind two recordings.

Because of Adams' long time association with Charles Mingus, his first Big Band recording with Christianson in part heralded the great bassists compositional work and was entitled ***Suite Mingus***. Christianson, though being well versed in horn arrangements through his extensive studio work in Los Angeles, enlisted the services of colleagues Curt Berg, Alf Clauson and Ken Richmond to provide material and arrangements for ***Suite Mingus***. "I consider these guys to be a part of my band," says the leader. An ambitious 16-minute version of Mingus' *Three Hats*, along with the complex *Fable of Faubus*, demonstrate the awareness the band had, to captivate the Mingus aura of intensity.

However, it was not a Mingus tune where Adams shook the foundation of the Just-In-Time studio, according to its' head, Jim West. "The highlight of that recording session was Pepper's playing on Richmond's arrangement of *My Funny Valentine*. It was a stunning piece and a long silence followed that one and only take."

"One of the things that struck me the most about Pepper," Christianson told me, "was how opinionated he was. He came right out and said he didn't like any straight eight rhythm. He disliked rock-and-roll. He didn't like Latin and if something didn't swing, then forget it. He also liked tunes with standard chord structures. He wasn't into any freeform types of jazz."

With material left over, it was back to the

Just-In-Time studio where a follow-up album entitled ***More Pepper*** was recorded. In spite of the favourable reviews which followed, albeit cherished events, are not indicative of the total spectrum of sound which can be found within the coterie. The band's debut album, ***Doomsday Machine***, released in 1986 before the Pepper dates, factualizes that belief.

Philosophically, Christianson sums up the Pepper Adams experience. "The thing I like best about the albums in the long run is that 20 year from now, people are going to look back at these recordings and realize that the focus wasn't that, "Wow, these are the greatest albums that ever came down the road." The focus was that nobody had ever done this with Pepper. In other words, build an entire big band album around him, having him as the featured artist. That's not the same as taking a bunch of charts out where he takes a solo now and then. That's not the focus. The focus is entirely around Pepper. It's the same as if I'd taken a big name singer and written charts around that. That person is the star of the album and the band shares the spotlight."

Speaking of singers, it was vocalist Diane Dufresne, a Quebec star, who was responsible for bringing Denny Christianson to Montreal, In order for Ms. Dufresne to obtain an American sound, she sought out the studios in Los Angeles, where Christianson was engaged. The subsequent album was a huge success and the trumpeter was summoned to Montreal to perform in concert with her. "At the time, I was looking to move out of L.A. and was considering Paris," says Christianson. "In Montreal I found a bit of Paris and New York; I liked that and decided to stay. That was in September of 1980. I received a lot of encouragement from people up here who said they'd like to see someone with my experience in Montreal." That experience included seven years and some 150 albums playing and writing horn arrangements for such people as Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Jermaine Jackson and even the old Jackson Five.

Up until this time, Christianson hadn't expressed an interest in leading a big band and I asked him what changed that? "After being in Montreal a year," he contemplated, "I missed the Big Band ensemble work I was used to in L.A. Things turned around when friends here heard some of Curt Berg's arrangements which he had been playing in L.A., and convinced me to put together an orchestra. I was in my thirties then and had never gotten into writing for that large a group. So I sought out the assistance of my associates Berg, Clauson and Richmond. They opened their vaults to me and I took about 30 charts that I felt would fit the players here in Montreal, plus satisfy my own musical needs. I got together some of the better musicians I could find and we began to rehearse. I'll never forget that very first session on August 5, 1981," laughs Christianson, "It was like a train wreck. Guys were asking me if this was going to work. The charts were extremely demanding, and it took about four months before we could appear in public. We did a gig for the musicians' union who had a club and it went very well. We were on our way as a band. During the summer of 1982, we performed at the Montreal Jazz Festival. Like I said earlier, I had no intention of starting a big band, I just missed the kind of playing I was used to, that intense level in L.A. So I tried the format and after about three years, I realized we could make this into a world class band."

A forerunner to the two Pepper releases was the band's initial album, ***Doomsday Machine***, which received good reviews publicly, but privately the band leader ran into skepticism concerning the lack of continuity within its framework. "What I was trying to say in that first album," Christianson counters, "is that if you listen to this band over the next several years, you're going to hear more than just one type of music. If we were fortunate to do seven, eight or ten albums in the history of this band, then ***Doomsday Machine*** represented a pot-pourri of styles which were capable of playing, and that bothers some people. I can see the validity of both sides. However, I was trying to convey the fact that I don't want to be rooted in the same type of focus album after album. That is why I love Miles Davis so much. He's forever changing." Asked if Miles was his biggest influence, Christianson emphatically says, "yes, along with Monk and Stravinsky. Actually, there's a lot of Monk in my writing. Some people don't realize that but I know where the Thelonious lies." Backing up that statement is Christianson's *Straight, No Half Tone*, his first big band composition which appears on ***Doomsday Machine*** and whose title is derived from Monk's ***Straight No Chaser*** score. The Monk influence continues to show in his latest arrangements.

Born in Rockford, Ill., in 1942, Denny Christianson's father was a part-time professional trumpeter and their home was filled with recordings from the Swing era, particularly Harry James and Benny Goodman, along with a couple of favourites of Christianson, the Woody Herman Band, and, of course, Armstrong. "I wore out a lot of albums when I was growing up, especially an Armstrong lp called ***Ambassador Satch***. As far as instruments go, I recall begging my father to borrow his trumpet when I was eight or nine. Later on I became more interested in the drums but my school band leader wouldn't let me play them and insisted I stick to the trumpet."

Then I asked the question so many people have asked over the years: "How did you get into Miles Davis?" His response, "It's funny you should bring that up because actually it was a fluke. At the time, I was around 17 and was ordering lots of records through catalogues. This particular time I had one more record to decide on to fill an order and not seeing anything I wanted, I chose Davis' lp ***Milestones*** and figured I wouldn't like it. I'd been hearing some of Miles, but wasn't digging him then. I couldn't figure out why people were fussing over his music. Sure enough, when I put it on the first time, it did nothing for me. I think I was reading and by accident I'd left the phonograph in the position where the record would repeat itself at the end of each playing. ***Milestones*** was on I believe its third revolution when Wham! Something kicked in, I started to really listen closely and began to understand his concept. I've been hooked on Miles ever since."

Aside from the band's three albums, touring has increasingly become a part of their agenda. The summer of '89 saw Christianson, with financial assistance from Canada's Department of External Affairs, take his 19-piece coterie on their second tour of Europe. However, it wasn't as easy as it sounds. "It takes four or five months of preparation, phone calls and letters to go on a short tour," says the band leader. Without a manager, the paperwork is the responsibility of Christianson. "No manager

will touch a big band. There is just no money available to pay that many people. The reason I do this is that if you sit around and wait for someone else to do it, nobody will. Beyond that, it seems all worthwhile when we're performing. I should add that Canada is very fortunate to have different programs to help fund the arts. The people here should be proud of that. If I were still living in the U.S., I wouldn't be able to afford touring with a big band. The funds for such a venture are just not available there."

England, Denmark, Sweden and Finland were among the highlights of the band's '89 tour. "In Finland," says Christianson, "we were part of a big band festival which featured Mercer Ellington's group. Also there was an underlying east-meets-west theme to the event. Mickey's Band, a band from the USSR, performed at the fest. It was the first time they were allowed to play outside of Russia. They went on stage just before us and technically, they were superb. You could tell they were classically trained. As good as they were technically, they couldn't swing. I think hearing our band after their performance must have really blown them away. All in all, we received a good reception in Europe and it's fun communicating with musicians from other countries. That's another part I like about touring."

Upcoming for the band was their first western Canadian trip in February, and this time funded by the Canada Council Touring Office. "I like to do about four or five big things a year with the band," adds Christianson. "We've already done a couple of tv shows and are planning another one to be broadcast in the spring. Of course, we will be performing at the Montreal Jazz Festival again and most likely at Ottawa's summer bash."

Meanwhile, outside the confines of the big band, Christianson has at least two more areas of exploration. One is concrete, the other in the planning stages. I'd like to do something production-wise similar to what Miles and Marcus Miller are doing, only more live and without all the overdubbing."

"Also," smiles the trumpeter, "I've recently completed a two-hour book musical which consists of a spoken dialogue and is now in the first stages of production. It will be funded by the Minister of Cultural Affairs and is entitled ***Nostradamus***."

The Denny Christianson Big Band, which needs to be heard live to be believed, consists of Christianson as leader on trumpet and flugelhorn; Joe Christie, Jr., lead alto, soprano, flute, pic., bari.; Patrick Better, alto, flute, clarinet bari; Richard Beaudet, tenor, flute, clarinet, bari' Jean Frechette, bari, Roger Walls, lead trumpet, flugelhorn, Jean Lebrun, tenor, flute, clarinet, bari; Lafleche Doré, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ron Dilauro, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jocelyn Lapointe, trumpet, flugelhorn; Patrice Dufour, lead trombone; Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyyr, trombone; André Verreault, trombone; Bob Ellis, bass trombone; Pierre Pilon, drums; Kenny Alexander, piano; Richard Ring, guitar; Vic Angelillo, acoustic and electric bass; and Paul Picard, percussion.

BOPPING ON THE BOTTLES

Looked upon as a novelty during the 20s, mallet instruments such as the xylophone, vibraphone and marimba were used mainly for special often comedic effects in a variety of settings from dance bands to vaudeville. In the early 1930s however, **Red Norvo** began to examine the improvisatory potential of the xylophone, eventually switching to the vibraphone around 1943. **Adrian Rollini**, best remembered as a bass saxophonist, also dabbled with playing jazz on the vibes, but it wasn't until **Lionel Hampton** brought his special brand of charisma and dazzling showmanship to the Goodman Quartet that the instrument gained a greater measure of acceptance among musicians and listeners alike. By the mid-forties **Milt Jackson**, who was brought to New York by Dizzy Gillespie, was adopting the be-bop lexicon to the vibes. Subsequently, groups like the Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ, of which Jackson is a charter member), the Mastersounds and various editions of the George Shearing Quintet opened the door for an ongoing roster of exceedingly inventive vibists. This handful of sides spotlights the differing approaches of several of these distinguished mallet masters.

Whether as part of the MJQ or on his own, **Milt Jackson** has always been a captivating performer. Unequalled in the art of interpreting a ballad, **Bags** is also capable of cooking up a storm, his solos imbued with the rich blues and Gospel inflections that stem from the very roots of the jazz tradition. Coming off as rather routine when compared to many of his earlier efforts, ***A London Bridge*** still provides an ample amount of pleasurable listening. The second of two sessions recorded live in 1982 at Ronnie Scott's London jazz club (the first being ***Memories of Thelonious Sphere Monk*** (Pablo 2308-235), it features Jackson fronting a quartet that includes an old pal from his Gillespie big band days bassist **Ray Brown**, pianist **Monty Alexander** and drummer **Mickey Roker** make up the other half of the group. The material for the most part offers little in the way of surprises. Trane's *Impressions* is taken at a break neck clip while a rousing version of Tadd Dameron's *Good Bait* whips up memories of Jackson's and Brown's early years with Gillespie. Considerably more subdued are a pair of standards namely *Flamingo* and *Close Enough For Love*. Both go a long way in accentuating **Bag's** natural feel for a ballad. Monty Alexander is responsible for *Eleuthera*, a sultry bossa nova, and the Caribbean flavoured *Reggae / Later*. An incredible technician, he traverses the keyboard with amazing ease nevertheless, his seemingly endless list of song quotes gets to become a bit tiring. *F.S.R.*, a Ray Brown tribute to Sonny Rollins, is built on the changes of *Doxy* and contains a memorable series of four bar exchanges between Ray and Monty Alexander. *Captain Bill* closes out the set. Another bluesy Ray Brown original, it catches everyone in tip top form. A paragon of taste and restraint throughout, Mickey Roker once again proves why he has become a long time favourite of both Jackson and Gillespie.

The self-explanatory title of Jackson's other session lets the listener know in no uncertain terms the nature of the music at hand. Direct and to the point, ***Be Bop*** is a titillating salute to one of the most innovative periods in the history of jazz. Surrounding himself with an all star lineup, **Bags** and company proceed to tear through a bunch of timeless bop classics (*Au Privave, Good Bait, Woody 'N You, Now's The Time, Ornithology, Groovin High, Birks' Works* and *Salt Peanuts*). Adding enhancement to the leader's soulful excursions is the grease lightning slide work of trombonist **J.J. Johnson** (a pioneer bebopper in his own right) the brawny tenor of **Jimmy Heath** and **Jon Faddis'** stratospheric declarations. The ever dependable **Cedar Walton** contributes mightily as both accompanist and soloist. Bassist **John Clayton** holds up his end by maintaining a steady pulse and **Mickey Roker** is again called upon to supply a strong, swinging foundation. This one's a sure winner on all counts.

Bobby Hutcherson has never been one to rest on his laurels. Productive affiliations with a host of celebrated giants regardless of their stylistic inclinations be it modern mainstream or the outer edges of the avant garde plus his numerous recordings as both leader and sideman readily attest to his constant pursuit of originality, diversity and innovation. ***Ambos Mundos*** marks yet another change in direction. A rich mixture of jazz and Afro-Cuban elements, it integrates Hutcherson's current local rhythm section with a trio of master percussionists (**Francisco Aguabella, Orestes Vilato** and **Roger Glenn**). But make no mistake, this is not just another one of those run of the mill

romps spruced up by superficial Latin window dressing. Hutcherson and his companions manage to maintain a true feeling of authenticity by injecting into the music a broad and ever changing assortment of moods, colours and rhythms. Joining Bobby in the front line are flautist **James Spaulding** (his pure tone and bright, airy attack make a most favourable impression) and guitarist **Randy Vincent** who is replaced on a couple of tracks (*Tin Tin Deo* and *Besame Mucho*) by **Bruce Forman**. Of the remaining five selections, four are from the pen of Hutcherson (*Pomponio, Both Worlds, Beep D' Bop* and *Poema Para Ravel*) while *Yelapa* is credited to drummer Eddie Marshall. Successfully merging the percussive and melodic strains of both idioms, Hutcherson's solos flow with a natural elegance. Of particular note is the warm woody sound he coaxes from the marimba on *Besame Mucho.* This project represents a refreshing departure for one of today's most dynamic vibists.

Hutcherson's input brings a boost to **Barney Kessel's** ***Red Hot And Blues***. Flexible and immensely satisfying, it is in the same league with the guitarist's 1969 offering, *Feelin' Free,* which also featured Bobby along with bassist **Chuck Domanico** and **Elvin Jones**. This time the game plan calls for a quintet and **Kenny Barron** is drafted to fill the piano slot. Careful so as not to clash harmonically with the guitar, Barron is a savvy pro who knows how to assert his individuality without distracting from the contributions of his teammates. With **Rufus Reid** setting the pace and the incomparable **Ben Riley** supplying the snap, crackle and pop, vibes and guitar create an exquisite blend as the band swingingly updates such old favourites as *It's You Or No One* and the closing barn burner *By Myself.* Two other familiar gems, *You've Changed* and *I'm Glad There Is You*, are given the sombre, reflective, wee small hours treatment while *Rio*, a sunny bossa nova by the leader, and Laurindo Almeida's *Barniana* are guaranteed to lift one's spirits.

The blues always seem to turn up on jazz jams of this sort and Barney's *Blues For Bird* and *Messin' With The Blues* run neck and neck when it comes to choosing the pick of the litter. When all is said and done, Barney Kessel still remains a force to be reckoned with.

Another of Hutcherson's more fruitful relationships has been with pianist **Andrew Hill**. Having proven their compatibility on a couple of Hill's earlier Blue Note recordings (***Judgement & Andrew***) they are reunited on ***Eternal Spirit***, a superb date that signals Hill's return to the Blue Note fold. As always, the pianist's idiosyncratic solos and uniquely crafted compositions yield a special charm. While Hutcherson favours a more conservative stance here than on the previously mentioned sides, he negotiates the quirky rhythms and sudden shifts in direction with little difficulty as does young alto sax sensation **Greg Osby**, whose angular thrust and unconventional phrasing fit Hill's concept like a glove. Making a welcome return, the ace rhythm team of **Rufus Reid** and **Ben Riley** introduce and sustain a churning undercurrent that helps to promote a complex interaction between all the members of the unit. Of the leader's half dozen originals, my particular favourites include the gorgeous *Samba Rasta* (the kind of tune that stays with you long after it's over), *Tail Feathers,* an arresting off-beat blues and the fragile ballad, *Bobby's Tune.*

Coming to New York in the mid-forties to study at Juilliard, vibraphonist **Teddy Charles** was soon gigging professionally with the likes of Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman and Buddy DeFranco. By the time the fifties had rolled around, he was also building a considerable reputation as a composer, arranger and record producer. An appetite for adventure led him down the experimental path followed by other abstract musical thinkers like George Russell, Jimmy Giuffre, Hall Overton etc. Eventually forsaking the jazz life, Charles pursued the career of a charter boat captain. Now, after quite a few years of musical inactivity, he has reportedly hit the comeback trail. Originally released in 1956, this intriguing re-issue deals with the fresh, futuristic sounds of Charles' Tentet, a band that was definitely ahead of its time. Using the vibes as his main focal point, Charles went on to construct a disciplined, medium-sized ensemble that could easily handle large, complex themes as well as exhibit the freedom, flexibility and drive of a much smaller combo. In addition to the leader's pair of originals (*The Emperor, Green Blues*) and his clever arrangement of *Nature Boy*, there are exciting works by Mal Waldron (*Vibrations*), the aforementioned George Russell (*Lydian M-1*) and Jimmy Giuffre (*The Quiet Time*) and a cool, imaginative rendition of *You Go To My Head* arranged by Gil Evans. Charles and his squad of heavy hitters punch these charts out with confidence and precision as they merge intricate horn lines with shouting riffs and forceful dialogue. Sharing solo honours with the vibist are such world-renowned players as **Art Farmer, Gigi Gryce, J.R. Monterose, Jimmy Raney** and **Mal Waldron**. With most of Charles' previous material long out of print, this re-release becomes all the more significant.

Unlike several of his recent collaborations with clarinetist Buddy DeFranco, which at times come off sounding a bit rigid and formulaic, **Terry Gibbs'** ***Bopstacle Course*** has that loose, swinging, spur of the moment feel of an after hours jam. This is due in no small part to the quality of his sidemen, all of whom were carefully handpicked by one of the most astute jazz producers in the business, Don Schlitten. Working closely with Gibbs on this July 10, 1974 session are pianist **Barry Harris**, the late bassist **Sam Jones** and the very tasty but underappreciated **Alan Dawson** on drums. The title cut, yet another variation on those oft-used *I Got Rhythm* changes, kicks off at a speedy gallop as Gibbs tips his hat to Hamp, Harris shows his affection for Bud Powell and Dawson's short solo echoes the melody line. Once considered the exclusive turf of the tenor saxophone, *Body And Soul* is treated with a tender reverence. Here Terry exploits the dynamics of his instrument to good effect by skilfully manipulating the damper pedal and by occasionally rolling his notes in much the same manner as when playing the marimba or xylophone. *Waltz For My Children* sparkles as the result of radiant solos by both vibes and piano. A dancing bass and drums intro prompts Gibbs and Harris to toy with the theme prior to sinking their teeth into *Softly As In A Morning Sunrise*. There is a crisp chorus of fours between Terry and Alan followed by another trade off between Terry and Sam before the tune ends in a fade out. With its customary samba beat eventually surrendering to a steady 4/4, *Manha de Carnaval* burns relentless with Gibbs drawing inspiration from Dawson's driving cymbal. In a minor groove, *Do You Mind* turns out to be an ideal vehicle for Jones. *Kathleen*, another Gibbs original, is a wistful ballad that will

certainly tug at the heart strings. The set glides to a satisfying conclusion with a buoyant rendition of that old Tommy Dorsey theme song, *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You.*

According to the liner notes, vibist/drummer **Ray Alexander** has played and appeared with George Shearing, Charlie Barnett, Claude Thornhill and a multitude of other well-known artists, however this has been my first opportunity to sample his work. As a vibist he is blessed with amazing speed and a great deal of technical facility. ***Cloud Patterns***, to my knowledge the first release under his own name, was recorded live in 1983 at the now defunct Eddie Condon's in New York. A mixture of standards and originals, it is basically a straight ahead, middle of the road session. Alexander's colleagues include the late **Albert Dailey** on piano, bassist **Harvie Swartz**, drummer **Ray Mosca** and **Pepper Adams**, who turns up as a guest on several selections. From the outset a mellow, laid back mood is established as the title cut, a lovely waltz, seems to float by on a cloud followed by *I Can't Get Started*, which is cast in the usual ballad mould. It is only after Pepper Adams lights a fire under *Softly As In A Morning Sunrise* that the sparks really begin to fly. On *My Foolish Heart*, the temperature cools back down as Alexander and Albert Dailey share the spotlight. Adams returns for a smoking *Green Dolphin Street*, the leader has the impressionistic *Reflections* all to himself and *Ray's Blues* closes things out with an introduction of the musicians. In all a warm, enjoyable listening experience.

Probably best known for his recent involvement with Spyro Gyra, **Dave Samuels** also played a key role in Double Image, a group he co-led with fellow vibist David Friedman. ***Ten Degrees North***, his latest solo expedition, is an easily accessible production geared to attract that so-called much wider audience. A pleasant blend of catchy melodies, earthy tonal colours and breezy island rhythms, it is coated with a deep gloss finish that starts to wear thin after a few cuts. Most of the tunes have a rosy disposition and all seem to lay comfortably under Samuel's speedy mallets. (His glowing marimba sound is especially appealing.) Lending support as well as contributing an occasional solo are such high profile slicksters as guitarist **Steve Kahn**, clarinetist **Eddie Daniels** and bassist **John Patitucci**. Although this record is a prime source of excellent low key background music, it still remains a rather shallow listening experience.

While still in the early stages of developing his own voice, Virginia-based vibraphonist **Jon Metzger** is well on his way to becoming a top contender on his chosen instrument. One listen to ***Into The Light***, his second outing for **V.S.O.P. Records** should help to dispel any doubts concerning his vast potential. A fluent improviser and a promising composer (all of the compositions with the exception of Jimmy Van Heusen's *Nancy* are his), Metzger's solos unfold in a mature, logical manner. His unique way of turning a phrase is shared by pianist **Fred Hersch** who, along with bassist **Harvie Swartz** and drummer **Tony Martucci**, form a strong, dependable rhythm section, On the whole Metzger's fresh, attractive, uncluttered tunes seem to get everyone's creative juices flowing. Most of the solo space is taken up by Jon and Fred Hersch, however Swartz gets his chance to shine on the enchanting *Windy Hill Song* and *Walls*, a beautiful ballad that brings this set to a close. A chum from Metzger's D.C. days, Tony Martucci is a world class drummer who takes charge from the very beginning and stays in control throughout. His vigorous yet refined solo on *Via Via* hints at his considerable percussive skills. By all means check this one out and be on the lookout for more good things to come from Jon Metzger.

Discography

Milt Jackson, ***London Bridge*** Pablo 2310-932

Milt Jackson, ***Be Bop*** East-West 790991-1

Bobby Hutcherson, ***Ambos Mundos*** Landmark LLP-1522

Barney Kessel, ***Red Hot And Blues*** Contemporary C-14044

Andrew Hill, ***Eternal Spirit*** Blue Note B1-92051

The Teddy Charles Tentet, ***Atlantic Jazzlore 48*** Atlantic 790983-1

Terry Gibbs, ***Bopstacle Course*** Xanadu 210

Ray Alexander Quintet, ***Cloud Patterns***

Dave Samuels, ***Ten Degrees North*** MCA 6328

Jon Metzger Quartet, ***Into The Light*** V.S.O.P. #67CD

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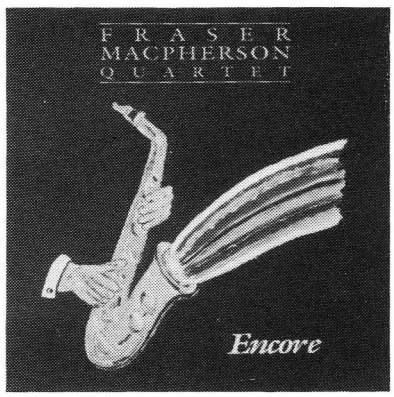

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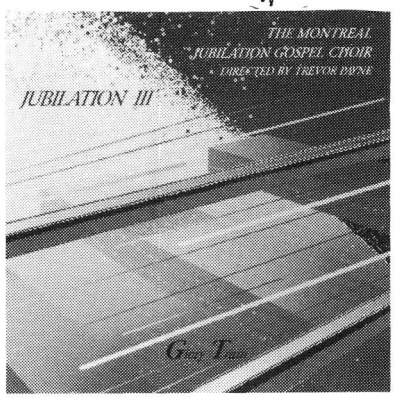

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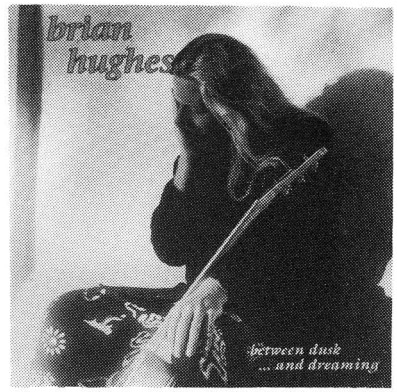

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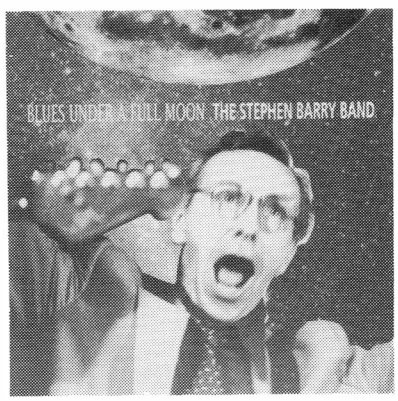

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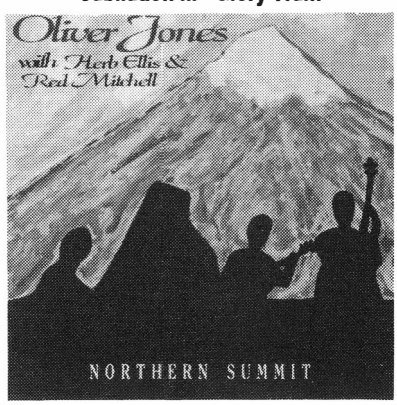

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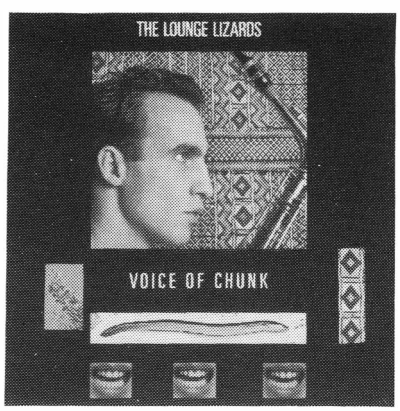

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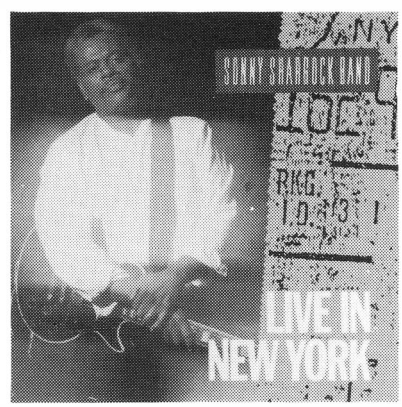

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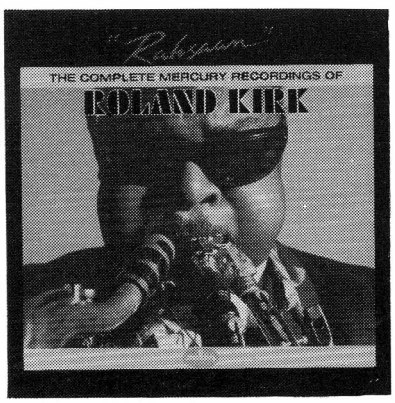

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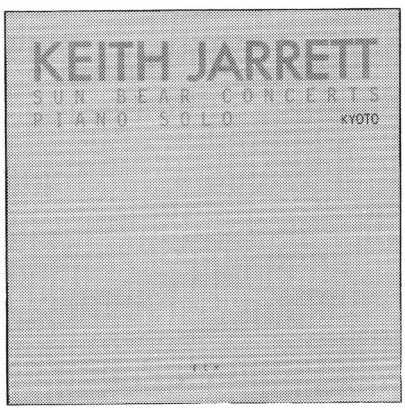

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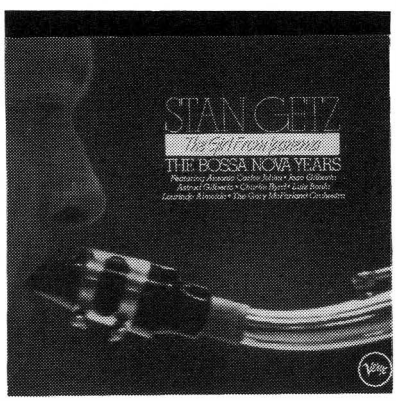

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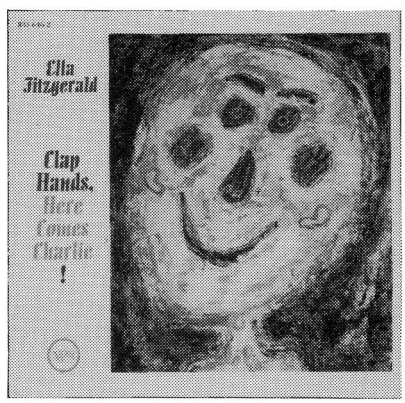

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