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THE PIANO ISSUE

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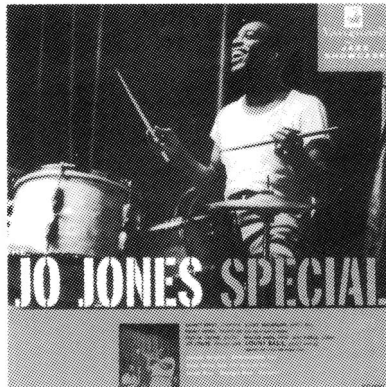
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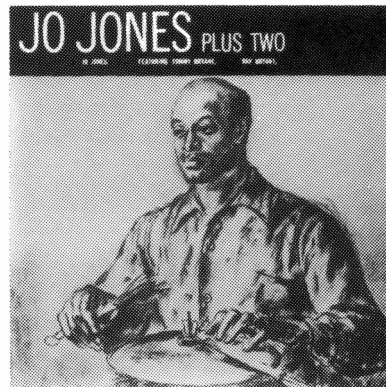
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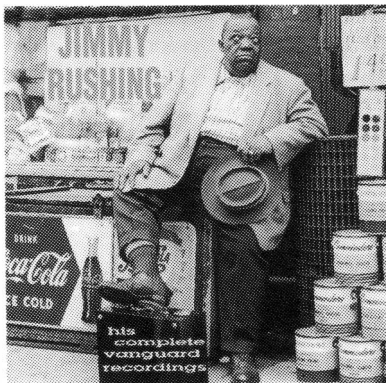
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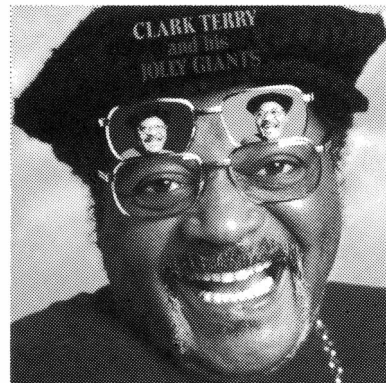
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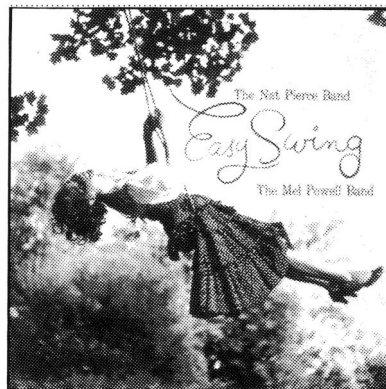
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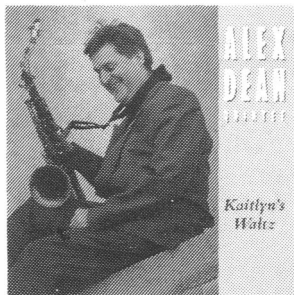
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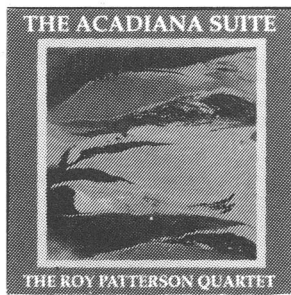
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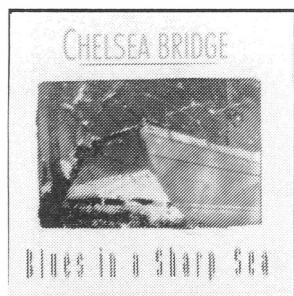
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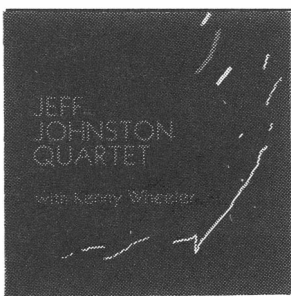
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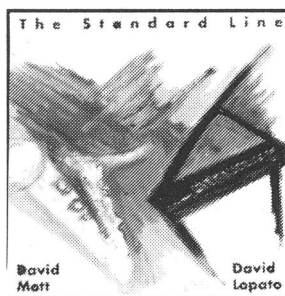
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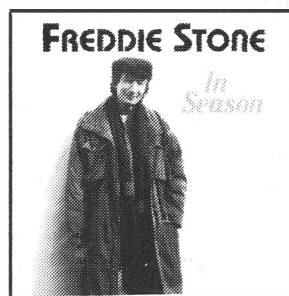
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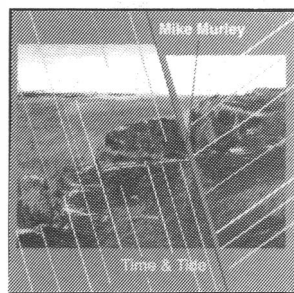
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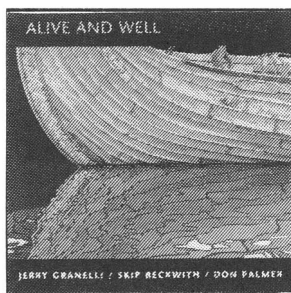
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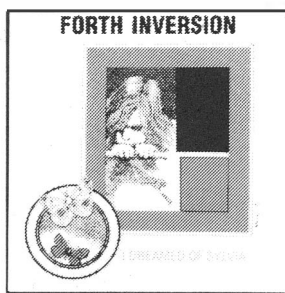
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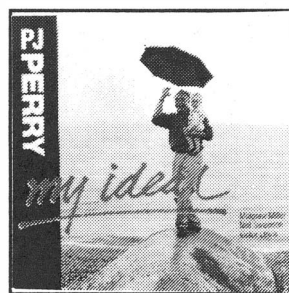
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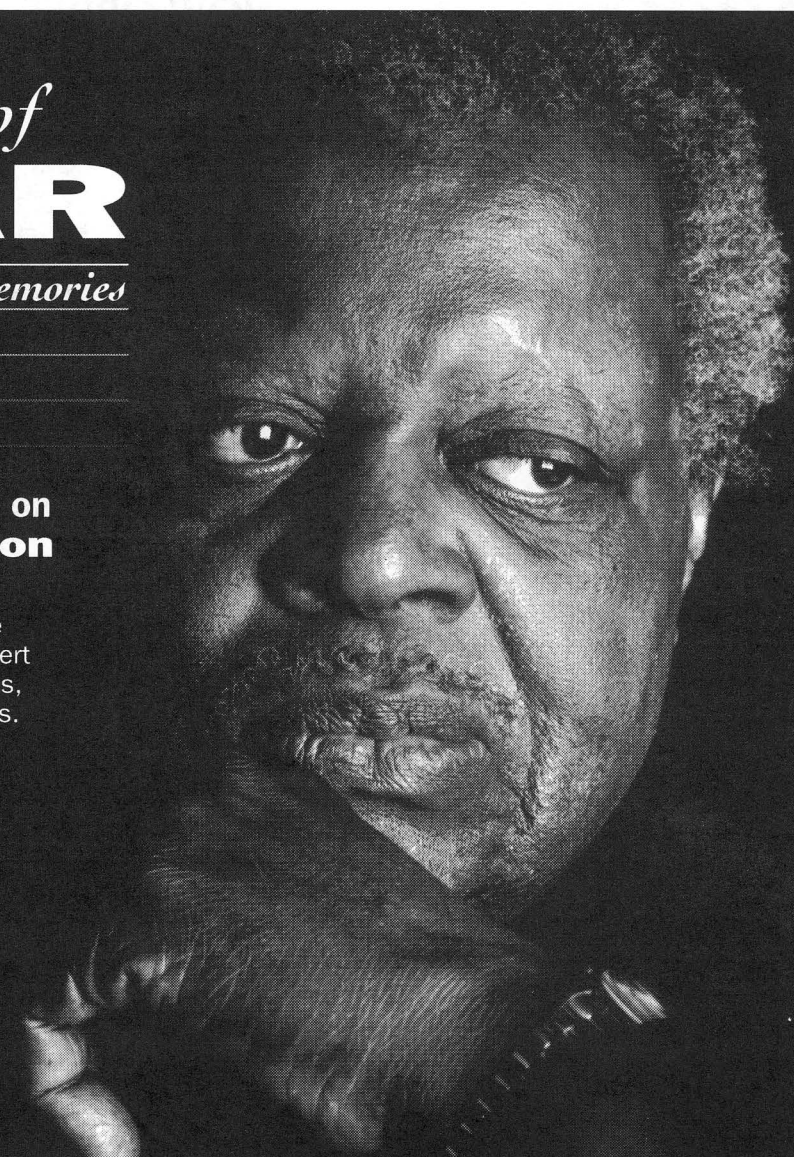
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF MARILYN CRISPELL BY BILL SMITH

MARILYN CRISPELL'S RECENT
MUSICS BY STUART BROOMER

SOSTENUTO

MARILYN CRISPELL IS A CREATOR OF DENSE AND SHIFTING AND SOMETIMES DREAM-LIKE TOPOLOGIES, whose pieces—*Circles*, *Labyrinths*, *Rotations*, *Gravity*, *Jump*, *Grey Chair and Parrots*, *Fringe*, *Fervent Void*, *Solstice*—recirculate and dislocate the familiar and themselves into novel forms and visions. There is a compressed poetics of site, gesture, and time in Crispell's titles that names her playing and is continuous with it.

Anthony Braxton has remarked that she “has the kind of facility that’s awesome. Cecil Taylor apart, she’s the strongest pianist I know of.” It is with that facility and its relationship to Taylor’s approach to the piano that one inevitably begins to address Crispell’s music. While some specific Taylor influences are increasingly sublimated, her playing can sometimes resemble his in purely quantitative ways: mass, density, velocity. She sometimes plays at a velocity that creates a kind of cognitive lag, the listener seeming to hear what actually transpired a second or two earlier. A surplus value improviser, she finds ways to add new details and dimensions when one might have thought all her resources were already engaged. Further, her techniques include the extremely percussive attack that results in a very short envelope, a necessary instrument of articulation amidst that complexity. The similarities are hardly superficial, but are less a matter of imitation than an assimilation of transposable tools and virtues. There is, perhaps above all, an acceptance of Cecil Taylor, an idea that would seem perfectly natural were it not for the extent to which so much jazz piano effort has been devoted to resisting his work.

Crispell’s relationship to Taylor is most strongly marked in her solo playing. The recently reissued *Labyrinths* (Victo CD06), a performance from the 1987 Victoriaville Festival, is index of Crispell’s qualities, some dominant influences and tendencies. It is, in many ways, a conservatively organized recital, originals balanced by two standards and two compositions by John Coltrane. Here Taylor appears as a wondrous given rather than an aberration, the model dervish of the instrument, less a stylist than a force of (choose one or more of the following according to your ideology): a. nature; b. the cosmos; c. history; d. all of the above; e. other. Crispell responds to that gift and her work continues to grow and expand through that embrace of the all possible.

Some of the resemblance comes from the “natural” language of the piano, that dance with the instrument that Taylor realizes so fully, in part evidenced here in the spiky staccato clusters of *Threads in the Ozone* and the blues drenched tremolo chords of *Labyrinths*. *Au chanteur qui danse*, dedicated to Taylor, (an earlier poem dedicated



to Taylor, “and your ivory voice sings,” puts the same emphasis on voice) is startlingly Taylor-esque in its density and its chopping, complex rhythms.

What Crispell derives most directly from Taylor is a flexible and expandable vocabulary of physical gestures that begins with the piano as music displayed in space, a complex sounding board both infinitely open and multiply coded. In this theatre of the piano, (space and mind, body and time) the player becomes an elaborate system of hammers, wires and dampers, inhabiting a space in which one leaps and crashes, arms flail, pitch and wave, (left and right sometimes enacting elaborate plays and noisy pantomimes, linking racquetball and chess, throwing ideas back and forth, inside and outside the court). Hands are knotted, splayed, shaken and even wrung, and fingers point, probe and caress. Crispell tests this space, throwing out gestures as if to see how much space they might fill, how far their traces might extend, what measurable distance might emerge between launch and landing.

Her characteristic units of expression are relatively brief and contained when contrasted to Taylor’s. She certainly doesn’t play as long or as much, and is far more apt to shape a piece around a singular shift, moving from one textural or dynamic field to another, finding new relations between density and space in the process.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MARILYN CRISPELL BY BILL SMITH

In a sense, the bond between jazz piano and European piano music arrives at another fulfillment in Crispell's work, with the full absorption of the post-Webern, post-war, serialism of Messiaen, Boulez and Stockhausen. There are moments in Crispell's work—certain oblique relationships, a pointillism, a spacious disconnecting—that may suggest Messiaen's piano works or Boulez' *Structures for Piano*, while the compositions of Thelonious Monk are a frequent source of rhythmic impetus. Her music is both an attenuated world music and a private world music, a spontaneous etching of consciousness.

While Crispell's improvisatory compositions build out of brief motifs, dissected, extended, magnified, and multiplied across the keyboard, melody is heard specifically as memory, even memento. Coltrane's *After the Rain*, which Crispell earlier recorded on *And Your Ivory Voice Sings* (Leo LR 126), is striking for what she is able to do with its melody, finding its authentic voice, and the kind of rhythmic tension which she counterposes to it, suggestive of the annihilated landscape of Max Ernst's "Europe after the Rain." (Part of Coltrane's ambivalent legacy: some of his melodies are too absolute for melodic improvisation; consider their ties to liturgy, prayer, mantra, the precise formulation). The performance has a warmth and delicacy of line that makes the performance as memorable as the melody, perhaps the most powerfully elegiac use to which one of Coltrane's compositions has been put since his death. The same expressive depth is heard on *You Don't Know What Love Is*, reminiscent of Eric Dolphy, while the performance of Coltrane's *Lazy Bird* reaches back through Coltrane and Taylor to Parker, Powell and Tatum. (It is the ironic duty of the perennial avant-garde to be repository of both the deeply traditioned and the new; that is, to articulate the plurality of the moment). *Over the Rainbow* is distant and utopian.

Crispell's distinct capacities for aleatoric density and emotive directness are reflected in her long associations with Anthony Braxton and Reggie Workman, respectively, remarkable not only for the very different territories in which each works but the ranges that each covers. A highlight of Crispell's playing is how selective she can be in deploying her resources. Having held her own in a Workman quartet completed by Oliver Lake and Andrew Cyrille (*Synthesis* Leo LR CD 131), her work in a recent appearance with the bassist's ensemble, *Altered Spaces* (Leo LR CD 183) seems almost a flirtation with invisibility, heard here as an entirely positive quality. Recorded in concert in December 1991, this version of the Workman Ensemble focuses on extended lyricism and an unusual soprano/alto choir consisting of Jason Hwang's violin, Don Byron's clarinet, and, occasionally, Jeanne Lee's voice. The music is sustained by a profound and abiding sense of lamentation, strongly developed by the violin and clarinet, often hinting at the Eastern, be it European, near, middle, or far. Another strong focus is the development of string textures among the violin and arco bass. Among the lineages of bassists there seems to be a specifically political inheritance from Charles Mingus that Workman shares with Charlie Haden. The extended *Suite pour le courage*, for example, is an episodic recounting of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage* with texts by Jeanne Lee and Lao

Tzu, the former listing sites of massacres from Carthage to Tianamen Square. Crispell repeats a lovely Balinese figure at one point, gently and gradually clouding its pentatonic clarity. Elsewhere, too, in this performance, her role is subtle in the extreme, often adding harmonic weight, shading and extension to a scale or some sudden, penetrating, filigree.

Crispell's greatest strength may lie in her work with more improvisatory small groups and in duet. In such situations she demonstrates a self-effacing virtuosity, a technique that is so strongly tied to response, exchange, development, and exploration that it can go unnoticed, disappearing into the music. This creative virtuosity achieves a kind of tranquillity in which the most stunning moments are achieved with neither struggle nor bravado. This tranquillity, which may be heard as distance, another dimension of space, and is more than mere control, is a distinguishing mark of her work.

There is a kind of consciousness articulate in Crispell's playing that one does not hear as particularly personal, as a set of positions that one might call a style, but rather as a sustained enfolding and meshing with the specific and accumulated consciousness of the piano itself and the collective mind of the group. In three recent trio and duo recordings she finds distinct keyboard vocabularies for each situation.

Her trio with Workman and Gerry Hemingway, heard most recently on *Highlights from the Summer of 1992 American Tour* (Music and Arts CD-758), is simply one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the piano trio format, achieving an almost constant level of balance and invention. Each of the three players has a special capacity for knitting, for finding ways to link up with the other two voices at the same time—to feed, press, or disrupt them—while pursuing a distinct direction, moving in and out of synch. There is a minimum of set architecture apparent here, and very little of the bass and drum accompanying (or soloing) that appears among even the freest of such groupings. The interest in making trio music is a constant, and it consists in a kind of complex rhythmic and timbral layering, focus shifting among the layers. The opening *Suite for Trio* is a sonata-like sequence of medium-slow-fast tempos, but within each movement there are other tempos, whether implicit or articulated. There are intriguingly disconnected forays into 4/4 time and the brilliant, pounding, unison rhythm that climaxes *Commodore* is unique to this group. If Crispell's voice is often central one does not hear it as especially dominant. Workman manages frequently to find novel voices in his bass and provides linear emphasis. The level of collective music that the trio creates is so high that one doesn't distinguish contributions as individual.

While the music of the trio is almost continuous, Marilyn Crispell and Gerry Hemingway craft a very different—more fragmentary, sometimes playful, less determined—music in a recent duo performance from the *Knitting Factory* (Knitting Factory Works KFWCD117). Their association over the past decade, perhaps the most extensive for either player, includes the Braxton Quartet, the

MARILYN CRISPELL'S RECENT MUSICS BY STUART BROOMER

Workman Ensemble, and the Crispell trios with Workman or Barre Phillips. The frequency of that collaboration shows. Crispell has said that Hemingway “challenges me and surprises me, puts me in a space where I don’t know what I’m going to do” (recalling Jackson Pollock’s remark, “When I’m in my painting, I don’t know what I’m doing”). These duets reveal the extent to which Crispell doesn’t have a characteristic approach to the improvising situation, but rather a characteristic openness. There is a very real sense of dialogue, of confluence and dispute, of sentences overhanging one another, of sudden closures and shifts in subject, and of one participant completing another’s thought. Hemingway’s loose tom tom sound complements Crispell’s precision.

Timbre and texture are often the strongest marks of this music, and there is a sense of gesture, of individual blows struck, and of things tossed, rolled, dropped and hung, of fragmentary motifs and rhythms thrown back and forth, of bits tensely juggled then joyously dropped crashing to the floor. Playing with Hemingway, Crispell approaches the piano in a particularly percussive manner, with emphasis on struck clusters and shifts in timbre. Percussion timbres here extend to the piano harp, some prepared piano, toy piano-like effects in the upper register, and Hemingway’s wind chimes and vibraphone. Together they achieve a music that is both fluent and lumpy, often playful, but just as frequently evanescent, and sometimes ominous.

Crispell probes furthest into the nature of the piano on *Piano Duets (tuned and detuned pianos)*, with George Graewe (Leo CD LR 206/207). The first CD of the set is a performance recording from the Ruhr Jazz Festival Bochum recorded in October 1991. The two pianists create an environment for one another and the listener that is both soothing and kinetic, high speed runs often performed with the sustain peddle, sometimes echoing the lovely tonal vagueness of Impressionism. It is a world of mirrors, reflections, and refractions, in which everything seems to double and blend, even the eccentric boogie of *Twin Dragons*. The evenness of the piano is particularly at issue here, and it is in the evenness of articulation, of myriad individual tones, that the two pianos fuse. When one is punctuating the other’s statements the punctuation is subtle, almost muted.



The second CD of the set was recorded two months later at the Ibach piano factory on detuned pianos. The description of the tuning employed — “Both pianos are tuned a quarter-tone apart in their middle registers, while the lower and upper registers are stretched flat, respectively sharp, gradually within the range of a minor second”—leaves something to be desired, perhaps lost in translation from the German (perhaps “flat and sharp respectively”?) but the effect on the music is remarkable. Called Diagonal Tuning, this method developed by technician Thomas Henke may be a far more mechanistic undermining of tempered pitch conventions than recourse to traditional just tunings, or the complex system of Indian intonation, or the elaborations and mysteries of Scriabin, Messiaen and Partch, among others. But the effects achieved here in the chromatic and cluster based practices of these two improvisers are mysterious as well, as rewarding as they are unsettling.

If Crispell and Graewe achieve a striking evenness of expression within the terms of their conventionally pitched instruments, here the mirroring implicit in such a dialogue is skewed and fractured. More than any other instrument, the piano is a diagram of western tonality, its past and its possibilities (epic backdrop beyond the curtains of sound on the first CD). When it is detuned, its history is undone. Here the listener is acutely reminded that pitch is measured in cycles per second, that is, *time* (Ezra Pound was a devotee of the “Great Bass,” the idea that pitch and rhythm had to be synchronized for music to realize its maximum effect). Assumptions about the stability of pitch begin to wobble and bend in time as well as in the relational space between the two instruments. The result is a kind of Coney Island of the piano (and one that is somehow in keeping with jazz tonality: imagine Jackie McLean and Archie Shepp in duet). The ferris wheel and roller coaster are experienced in funhouse mirrors; weird twists, contortions, expansions and displacements take place, as microscopic shifts undo the tonal underpinnings, the limiting frame and ultimate order of the dialogue of the first CD. The tapestries of notes seem to bulge and bubble as if distorted by chemical processes. A piece like *Stairway to Nowhere* goes beyond the cascading notes of *Fervent Void*, the climax of disc one. These are now cascades of other notes, heard in relation to still other notes, invoking lost notes in the intervals, new relations and voices emerging in the difference. □

STUART BROOMER has been intermittently active as a musician and composer since 1965. He has recorded on the Onari and Ugly Dog labels and his compositions have appeared in *EXILE* and *MUSICWORKS*.

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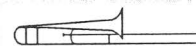
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of the 1960s



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George Lewis, Big Jim Robinson, Kid Thomas
Billie & DeDe Pierce, Punch Miller, Kid Sheik
Sammy Rimington, Polo Barnes, Alvin Alcorn
Capt. John Handy, Sammy Penn, Manny Paul
Creole George Guesnon and many others.*



by **Big Bill Bissonnette**

JAZZ LITERATURE

JAZZ: A PEOPLES MUSIC

By Sidney Finkelstein

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS. 180 PAGES

OVERTIME

The Jazz Photographs of
Milt Hinton

POMEGRANATE ART BOOKS. 164 PAGES

THE COVER ART OF BLUE NOTE RECORDS

Edited by Graham Marsh,
Glyn Callingham, Felix Cromey

COLLINS & BROWN. 127 PAGES

JAZZ GRAPHICS OF DAVID STONE MARTIN

By Manek Daver

GRAPHIC SHA (JAPAN). 157 PAGES

PRESERVATION HALL

By William Carter

W.W. NORTON. 315 PAGES

TWENTY YEARS ON WHEELS

By Andy Kirk as told to Amy Lee

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS. 147 PAGES

COUSIN JOE

BLUES FROM NEW ORLEANS

By Pleasant Joseph
& Harriet J. Ottenheimer

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS. 227 PAGES

JAZZ FROM THE BEGINNING

Garvin Bushell as told
to Mark Tucker

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS. 198 PAGES

CRAZEOLOGY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CHICAGO JAZZMAN

Bud Freeman as told
to Robert Wolf

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS. 103 PAGES

Photograph of the
Ornette Coleman Trio by
FRANCIS WOLFF



THE MOST ARCANE CORNERS OF JAZZ HAVE FALLEN UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: there can be few areas of human endeavour which have generated such close scrutiny! If anything, as much of the music becomes history, the pace of research has quickened. Publishers and record companies are eager to disgorge into the world ever more detailed examinations of every nook and cranny of this music and its practitioners.

Recordings were the catalyst for the ever widening circles of research. This century has been unique in its ability to document the indigenous music of its times. This is commented upon in Sidney Finkelstein's ground breaking 1948 book **JAZZ: THE PEOPLES MUSIC**, where he observes that music such as jazz has a direct relationship with the community because it reflects the emotions and passions of the people. He feels that the qualities which made jazz a great music are the same qualities which were central to the "populist" works of early composers whose written works were a reflection of the tastes of the people rather than an artificial "intellectual" exercise.

You can sense that feeling for the community in Milt Hinton's photographs. He's not a stylized craftsman like Bill Gottlieb or Herman Leonard - artistic photographers who set up the subject matter with lighting and dramatic angles. Hinton simply captured the musicians as they really were and almost all his photographs are candid images of the people. Rarely does he photograph them in action (partly, perhaps, because he also would have been a performer) but you get a real sense of their character. In **OVERTIME: THE JAZZ PHOTOGRAPHS OF MILT HINTON** there are 150 pages of photographs highlighting fifty seven musicians who represent more than five decades of the

REVIEWED BY JOHN NORRIS

music. The trumpeters, for instance are Louis Armstrong, Doc Cheatham, Sweets Edison, Roy Eldridge, Jon Faddis, Art Farmer, Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis, Red Rodney, Clark Terry and Warren Vache.

Each musician is shown in several different photographs. Together they make up a small, but personal, statement.

The dramatic clarity of Francis Wolff's photographs are a contrast to the often soft and fuzzy work of Milt Hinton. Wolff's have yet to be assembled in book form but the Mosaic box sets of Blue Note material include many previously unpublished examples of his pictures. His photographs are often part of the cover design of the Blue Note lps he produced with Alfred Lion where they are showcased in the unique settings created by Reid Miles. This combination of photographer and designer gave Blue Note covers a special cachet. More than two hundred of these are reproduced (many full size) in **THE COVER ART OF BLUE NOTE RECORDS**.

Reid Miles' covers often combined Wolff's photography with original drawings and paintings to create highly imaginative montages. Art alone was the focus of David Stone Martin, whose earliest work predates the lp era. He created covers for early 78rpm albums on the Asch label but was to become famous as illustrator for Norman Granz' various labels in the 1950s. Manek Daver's **JAZZ GRAPHICS** reproduces an exhaustive collection of these covers. Purchasers of the book will be thrilled to discover the 28 original portraits of musicians which were never shown prior to this book's publication.

Many different histories of the music have been written where the focus is on the changing styles of an ever expanding parade of musicians. Reference to venues important to the music are often made in passing but there has been little detailed commentary on those which fueled the jazz flame.

Two locations stand apart from the rest. New York's Village Vanguard has come to symbolise jazz through the many performance recordings from the club. Preservation Hall, however, did more than that. It re-

launched a musical style which had long been moribund and helped rejuvenate New Orleans' tourist industry while putting back into the work force a generation of musicians who had rarely earned more than a few pennies from music.

The stage is set in the opening chapters of **PRESERVATION HALL** with an examination of the musical climate of New Orleans in the decade prior to the hall's establishment in 1961. William Carter then details its haphazard beginnings and final form under the guidance of Allan Jaffe. It was Jaffe who had the initiative, patience and skills to package and promote the music beyond the wooden benches of 726 Saint Peter Street. National and international tours by various editions of The Preservation Hall Jazz Band took the music around the world and musicians like Kid Thomas Valentine, Percy and Willie Humphrey, George Lewis, Jim Robinson and Emma Barrett were heard by thousands of people for the first time.

Interspersed with the narrative are contemporary accounts of action at the Hall, reminiscences from the musicians and interviews conducted by the author. Over the thirty years of the Hall's existence the contours of the music have changed dramatically while the overall framework remained firm. It mirrors an observation by painter Noel Rockmore, whose Preservation Hall Portraits were the first to be done of the musicians, in a discussion of the pressures forced upon him in creating the portraits. "I feel strongly that all intrinsic or genuine developments in an artist are essentially against the grain - if the creator only repeats what he had done he naturally will only go so far."

Complementing the text are many excellent photographs which enhance the warmth of the text.

It's inevitable that jazz, like other art forms, will eventually leave behind for posterity only a handful of major performers whose genius transcends the time within which they lived. While the music remains within living memory, however, even the most obscure of musicians will have an opportunity to tell their tale.

Only rarely though, does a musician have the intellectual curiosity to make observations which sharpen the focus of his times for the reader. Childhood memories are often more clearly drawn than his life as a professional musician and give a better idea of the environment within which he grew up. Those times were often wild and unfettered and perhaps best left alone by those unwilling to face the consequences of public betrayal. It is also reality that most people have a much sharper memory of the forces which shaped their lives rather than the daily grind of adult existence.



TWENTY YEARS ON WHEELS is Andy Kirk's story as told to Amy Lee. The bandleader enjoyed success in the 1930s when he fronted one of the best bands to come out of the Southwest. He seems, at best, to have been a journeyman musician but he was a good organiser and kept his band together for a long time.

The most insightful part of his story is his days as a youth in Denver. Kirk has a good memory of this part of his life and it sets the stage for the stability he found later. There are interesting glimpses into the machinations necessary in the Thirties to keep a band working and the many sacrifices made by the musicians in their dealing with less than honest managers, agents and ballroom proprietors.

JAZZ LITERATURE

There's quite a contrast between the careers and attitudes of Cousin Joe and Garvin Bushell. Neither musician could be regarded as a household name and yet they both made quite a contribution to the music. **COUSIN JOE: BLUES FROM NEW ORLEANS** is a first person narrative assembled from interviews done by Harriet J. Ottenheimer. It's the story of an itinerant musician/singer who knew how to hustle and survive in a tough world. Music eventually took him to New York (where he recorded) and, late in life, to tours of Europe. He turned his natural talent into a way of making a living. He mentions his contacts with many different musicians but there are few thoughts about *their* talents. They are passing ships in his story.

JAZZ FROM THE BEGINNING is a more thoughtful book by a highly skilled musician whose career encompassed King Oliver and John Coltrane. Bushell, like Warren Bernhardt and Red Callender, has produced a book which has invaluable insights into the times within which he lived as well as keen observations about those he was associated with. It is also obvious that this was a man who continually strove for excellence in everything he touched. That excellence included living a high life in Europe with Sam Wooding as well as a renewed dedication to instrumental excellence and professional responsibility which extended his musical career into his eighties. Bushell's comments are sharp and to the point - whatever the subject. These are just a few brief examples. On Eric Dolphy: "There was so much I could gain from him - his ideas of finesse, for example - and he used to show me things on his horns. I don't know of a musician I respected or admired more." On John Coltrane: "They were trying to establish a new approach to American music. I found it difficult to absorb what they were doing melodically, although I could follow it harmonically. I will say that Coltrane had a phenomenal sense of harmony. I just wasn't impressed when he got into a lot of monotonous scales going up and down." On prejudice: "With all prejudice and segregation, I've found this out: as narrowminded as people are who perpetuate this bigotry, they always tolerate *one*."

Mark Tucker's skills as an interviewer and historian/researcher undoubtedly helped shape the focus of Garvin Bushell's reminiscences but one senses that Bud Freeman's thoughts flowed more subliminally in **CRAZEOLGY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CHICAGO JAZZMAN** which was produced with the collaboration of Robert Wolf. Unlike earlier Freeman books this one is a straight narrative account of the outlines of his career with liberal amounts of the anecdotes which made his previous books so delightful. Freeman is generous with his praise for those who inspired him in one way or another. "Louis (Armstrong) influenced the whole world, not only horn players but arrangers and composers, who stole from his old records and performances. Of course, hundreds of musicians who were influenced by Louis' playing did not have his wonderful sense of rhythm, his wonderful beat, his powerful sense of meter and melodic line control. It was just incredible the way the man could play, and every trumpet player who could hit high C commercialised on it and said nothing."

He also spells out the challenges of making music "it takes a lifetime to learn how to play a melody, it takes musical validity."

Freeman's book is very short - less than 100 pages and that includes a "selected" discography of his recordings. The brevity of so many new books and their high cost is but one of the things which are bothersome about this latest generation of jazz books.

The discographies attached to the books are often inadequate or inaccurate. More disturbing is the number of misspellings of names. It is the responsibility, in the first place, for the co-author to verify the spelling of names. Once this is done it is the publisher's responsibility to verify their accuracy and make sure they are correct in the finished book.

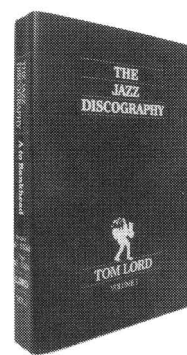
Freeman's book has such misspellings as Ruby Braff (Brath) and Lou McGarity (McGarrity). His reference to Bix dying in Davenport was not corrected and the Belgium town is Breede not Breide. Warren Bernhardt's name is misspelled in the Preservation Hall book. □

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PAUL BLEY THE IAI STORY

A REVIEW
INTERVIEW BY
SCOTT YANOW

WHEN INTERVIEWING A VETERAN MULTIFACETED MUSICIAN LIKE PAUL BLEY (who has a sharp memory of events from forty years ago), there are many topics one could discuss: The musical environment of his native Canada in the early 1950's, his early musical adventures with Charlie Parker and Charles Mingus, the pianist's days in Los Angeles as the leader of a group featuring Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, his role as a transition figure between Bill Evans and the avant garde, the virtues of electricity versus acoustic instruments, how Bley was able to carve out an alternative style in free jazz to Cecil Taylor at a time when the piano was often being discarded, not to mention his participation in a seemingly infinite number of recording sessions during the past decade. In fact an autobiography of his colourful and productive life would be a logical idea although the sixty year old pianist says: "The problem with writing an autobiography is that it signals the end of something and, as far as I'm concerned, I'm only at the halfway point!"



The recent reissue of half of the Improvising Artists (IAI) catalogue under the auspices of Black Saint/Soul Note (with the remainder expected to be released in the near future) serves as a good excuse to focus this interview on Paul Bley's experience as the head of a record label during the mid-1970's. Most of the CD's are well worth acquiring although

none are augmented by the unreleased material that he mentions, and all clock in at the typical length of an lp. Bley was able to remember clearly the circumstances behind each of the twenty albums (I took the liberty of inserting a short review after each listing) and revealed some surprising insights behind the record business.

JIMMY GIUFFRE • JOHN GILMORE • GARY PEACOCK

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO FORM IAI IN 1974 WHEN YOU WERE ACTIVELY RECORDING FOR OTHER LABELS?



My wife Carol and I had gotten together in 1972 and in ways the label was our first child. She's a graphic artist and running a record label was something we could do together. Little did we know that it was a job that should take a minimum of a dozen people! The name Improvising Artists contained the philosophy of the label. The idea was that we would be anti-paper and would hire just those musicians who could make up their entire performance using real time improvisation. There's a lot to be said for not bringing in notes; I built a whole career out of it. You play the weather, you play the mood of the hall. It seems to me that the composers often get too much credit for too little music, sometimes contributing just the first minute of a sixty minute performance.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE LESSONS THAT YOU LEARNED FROM BEING THE HEAD OF A RECORD LABEL AS OPPOSED TO BEING JUST AN ARTIST?

Once we were a label, other record companies started talking to us about record company business. There was a billboard buyer's guide that had 1,200 listings of different people who would buy records, and we wondered who to call. One person told me that out of the 1,200, only ten distributors pay him and they wouldn't necessarily be

the ones that paid us! That was very sobering to find out. I met another person who said he could tell me exactly how many records any jazz artist would sell. I'd name a musician and he called out numbers. It seems that jazz record sales are based on a self-fulfilling prophecy set by the distributors who stand between the labels and the customers. If a distributor thinks a label can only sell 50,000 records of a particular artist, they will only order 50,000. Records, like eggs, are considered disposable after six weeks and are rarely reordered. Since the distributors already have a predetermined number in mind, they never order more than that number, saving themselves shipping and returns.

We found that being a young company without any power or financial reserves, we could not introduce totally new artists. We had to only record artists who had already been on records and were known to distributors because, if they've never heard of anyone on a record, they won't order a single one. Learning these rules about the record industry was very helpful. The paranoia that musicians have is totally correct, but it is the distributors rather than the individual labels who are at fault. A rule in the business is that the distributors never pay for the record you sold them until your next record comes out and they find that they need it. An old joke

tells of a famous artist on a large label whose sales were gold but his returns were platinum!

QUIET SONG (Paul Bley - piano & electric keyboard; Bill Connors - acoustic guitar; Jimmy Giuffre - clarinet, tenor & flute)

*IAI debuted in 1975 with this trio date, reuniting Paul Bley with his old boss Jimmy Giuffre and former Return To Forever member Bill Connors, who by then was mostly playing acoustic guitar. The music is largely free (even the abstract version of **Goodbye**) and introverted with some surprising explosions of passion.*

Our first release is a perfect case of a totally improvised record. Although there were three composers on the date, we didn't use any compositions. At the time I had been playing electric and Jimmy Giuffre was very anti-electric. There's a point on the record where, without telling Giuffre, I sneaked over with my left hand and started playing something on the Fender piano without him noticing. He really liked it and yells out on the record "Yah guitar!" Sure enough, Bill Connors had not been playing for the two or three minutes before that. Shortly after that, Giuffre formed a group with synthesizer!

In 1961 when I toured Europe with Jimmy Giuffre and we played, the audience kept asking "Where is Jim Hall? What are you doing? *The Train and The River* please!" The tour had major publicity and it was so "successful" that the agent never booked another jazz group again! Four years later in '65 when I went back with my trio, Europe was ready. I went over there for one gig and wound up staying six months. Giuffre only remembered our grand failure of course so it took a long time to persuade him to go back. Improvising Artists was the vehicle to get him to see that Europe had changed.

The very date of this recording, Michael Cuscuna in the morning recorded Bill Connors and me on electric instruments along with bass and drums, but that has never come out.

TURNING POINT (Paul Bley - piano; John Gilmore - tenor; Gary Peacock - bass; Paul Motian or Billy Elgart - drums)

RAN BLAKE • SAM RIVERS • DAVE HOLLAND

The earliest and one of the most valuable recordings in the IAI catalogue. All but two songs (which are trio performances from 1968) date from four years earlier and feature the great John Gilmore in one of his very infrequent sessions away from Sun Ra. Lots of fire with Gilmore sounding inspired by the Bley-Peacock-Motian rhythm section.

In 1964 there was a double quartet gig that found Gary Peacock and me playing continuously during each night with two groups. One band had John Gilmore and Paul Motian; the other had Albert Ayler and Sunny Murray. It was Peacock's idea and we had to re-do the book when we discovered that Sunny Murray couldn't play time! After the first night, I told Carla that our tunes weren't working and that we'd need something totally free. She then wrote twelve of her most famous tunes by the next afternoon! That was the week that jazz changed for me.

John Gilmore, like all the members of Sun Ra's family, could have had a very important solo career. And his beautiful tone, unlike so many of the young stars today, does not bring to mind the worst of John Coltrane.

BREAKTHRU (Ran Blake - piano)

*One of the great individuals of creative music, Ran Blake had not recorded in six and a half years (and only once in a decade) when his friend Paul Bley captured him in this intense outing. Although Blake mostly performs standards (ranging from **If Dreams Come True** to **Spinning Wheel**), none have ever sounded like this before or since!*

Ran and I go back quite a way, in fact he booked me for a concert at Bard College when he was a student. It was a natural idea to record him because, although we don't sound at all alike, philosophically we have similar tastes. One of my favourite records is the one he made in duo with Houston Person.

SAM RIVER & DAVE HOLLAND • VOLUMES 1 & 2 (Sam Rivers - tenor, soprano, flute and piano; Dave Holland - bass)

Four lengthy free improvisations with Sam Rivers playing a different instrument for each per-

formance; tenor was obviously his strongest horn although he is surprisingly powerful on piano. This was originally two lp's and now appears as two separate CD's.

Barry Altschul, who had been in my trio since 1965, was at that time also working in a group with Sam and Dave. After hearing them I thought it would be interesting to record this particular duo. Sam Rivers showed me how to make records. He came to the session with a plan, proving that even if you don't use arrangements on a record, you come prepared. He did each of the lp sides with a different instrument, making a double session. I've been doing double sessions ever since.

VIRTUOSI (Paul Bley - piano; Gary Peacock - bass; Barry Altschul - drums)

Released under Barry Altschul's name but actually the Paul Bley trio of the era, this set consists of two very long (around 16-17 minutes apiece) free ballads and tends to drag in spots despite close interplay.

This was my regular trio and has different material from the same session that appeared on ECM. I was working on a double ballad album. It took us quite a long time to get this many tunes together with different ballad feelings and tempos such as a walking ballad, a dramatic ballad, a tragic ballad, etc.

PYRAMID (Paul Bley - keyboards; Lee Konitz - alto & soprano; Bill Connors - electric and acoustic guitars)

*One of the prizes of the IAI catalogue, this collaboration is a lot more playful and upbeat than **QUIET SONG** and Lee Konitz is easily up to the challenge of playing both melodically and free.*

Lee Konitz has been a giant forever. I've known him since the early 1950's and we still

play together now and then. He's an incredibly versatile musician who can actually follow pianists rather than always having to accompany him. Lee is one of the few people who can't make too many records. It's always a pleasure to play with him.

JACO (Paul Bley - keyboards; Pat Metheny - electric guitar; Jaco Pastorius - electric bass; Bruce Ditmas - drums)

*This was the recording debut for both Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny and not too surprisingly, the biggest seller in IAI's history. An electric session with creative but dated sounding keyboards, Metheny searching for his sound and an already very distinctive bassist; the music rewards repeated listening. To correct Bley's statement below, this was not his final recording on electric keyboards (**JAPAN SUITE** was) but after **JACO** was released in 1976, Bley gave up electronics.*

Jaco had never been to New York. I had been going to Florida where my in-laws are from, and I invited Jaco to come back to New York



LEE KONITZ • PAT METHENY • JACO PASTORIUS

with me. After our first rehearsal, he asked me how to get to CBS. He was looking for the big time right away!

We called the album JACO because I realized in retrospect that Jaco was the leader; we couldn't make that record with any other bassist. The great players like Jaco always sound recognisable even in their earliest sessions. He was a little like Vivian Leigh, who also never slept. Jaco had an incredible amount of energy and never seemed to stop playing. He became famous for knocking at my door at four in the morning and asking me to go to a session that was just beginning. Pat forced his way into this group because I actually had another guitarist who had the gig. Pat sat in on the first set and that was it.

This band was hungry to play. We had a gig for a month at a club in the Village and during the first intermission I sat with some friends. Soon they told me that the band was still on the stage. For the whole month, the band sat on the stage during every break, sort of daring me to come back because they couldn't wait for the next set to begin. The music on the record was really an electric transcription from the free music that we were playing acoustically in the club. It sold through the roof, which is why I never did another electric record! I believe that the only corruption that exists in the arts is the corruption of the public. I wouldn't want to be tempted to repeat myself.

I have many tapes of that band and in fact I have a whole building of tapes that are unreleased from many sessions. Unfortunately I already know how the tapes sound so they are of less interest to me than the record I'm recording next week!

SIDELINES (Steve Lacy - soprano; Michael Smith - piano)

*A very adventurous, strangely picturesque and unfortunately obscure pianist, Michael Smith easily keeps up with and sometimes even overshadows Steve Lacy during this stimulating outing which includes titles like **Austin Stream**, **Existence** and **Worms!***

I stayed with Michael Smith and Steve Lacy for a short while during this period in Paris. They used to wake me up every morning with their playing so it was a kind of subliminal advertising message! Michael is a very avant garde pianist and a remarkable individual. Steve Lacy was my watershed in a way with him recording so much for every label. I followed his example and I've even done two records during the same day in two different countries. Of course Chet Baker had us all beat years ago. If he'd stay at your house for a weekend, he'd record an album there!



JAPAN SUITE (Paul Bley - piano; Gary Peacock - bass; Barry Altschul - drums)

A rather abstract and sometimes quite hyper live session by Bley's trio. The music has its exciting moments but there is an inconclusive feel about it.

This was my first experience at playing for 30,000 people. This festival was held in a small town owned by Yamaha. They had Yamaha yachts, Yamaha golf courses, the Yamaha festival and, when the guy rang your phone to wake you up, he said "Yamaha calling." He didn't even have a name! Just before we were set to play, Carol noticed that there were some wires leading from the stage

to an audio building, and since there was no audio in our contracts, we kept the audience waiting while the contract was changed. If you've ever heard curses in Japanese, then you'll understand that it's a little scarier than in any other language. After the papers were signed and we got to the stage, we realized that the only thing we could do to save ourselves from the lions was to play the fastest, loudest, longest piece that we could. We hit the stage full blast and that was JAPAN SUITE.

SUN RA SOLO PIANO VOLUME 1
(Sun Ra - piano)

A very rare solo outing by Sun Ra (there seems to have only been one previous Ra piano session), this music (originally on two lp's recorded the same day) is often both dramatic and thoughtful, looking towards the past with hints of Ellington and Hines and yet utterly unpredictable. Sun Ra should have been persuaded to do more like this. Unfortunately ST. LOUIS BLUES, the second of the two volumes, remains out of print.

I heard Sun Ra's big band in Montreal as a kid and because I sat right near his electric keyboard, I quickly realized how great he was. Through the years he's always submerged

STEVE LACY • SUN RA • OLIVER LAKE

his personality under his band, singers, dancers, flame throwers, whatever. To this day the band and Sunny are pleased that I thought enough of his playing to record him solo. We recorded both albums on the same day because we couldn't stop Sunny. He played wonderfully.

Sun Ra did one tour with Improvising Artists playing solo and the audience loved it because he could not only play stride but could play cakewalk. At the finale he asked me to play a duet with him, so I played the bottom half. He was a funny guy and a wonderful character.

AXIS (Paul Bley - piano)

From 1977, Axis is one of Paul Bley's best all-round sessions from this era. The 16 minute title cut evolves from sound explorations to a blues, a wandering ballad and back again. Porgy is given respectful yet creative treatment and this rendition of Music Matador shows where Keith Jarrett probably got some of his inspiration from. Paul Bley was typically reluctant to talk about his own playing.

Axis was an art gallery/jazz club, a wonderful place, and this was recorded live.

DUET (Lester Bowie - trumpet; Phillip Wilson - drums) Not yet reissued.

A most unusual collaboration for trumpet-drums duets are far from commonplace. However Bowie's wide range of expressiveness (there are times when he sounds like he is imitating the drums) makes this a success, along with Phillip Wilson's large ears.

Phillip came to us with a tape of a duet session he had done with Lester Bowie. At this point I had decided that it was better to make a new record specifically for the label so they recorded some other duets. I was amazed how up-to-date the second wave of free jazz players were and how much variety they could create. Free music invites a complete openness when it comes to instrumentation; it's not what instruments are used, it's who the players are. There has to be a reason for every player on a date. This is one of my favourite records. It was a great shock to all of us when Phillip was killed.

KARMONIC SUITE (Michael Gregory Jackson - electric guitar; Oliver Lake - alto) Not yet reissued.

Michael Gregory Jackson (has since dropped his last name) both looks backwards towards country blues and forwards in an interesting session; Oliver Lake makes four of the performances into stirring duets.

When we recorded the first take, I thought that this would be a great date because I'd never heard anyone play guitar like Michael before, but he never played like that again! Michael was amazing because on every tune on this record, he plays in a different guitar style, all of which he invented. I hope guitar players will take a close listen to this record because most of them have missed it. You can hear a bit where Bill Frisell came from.

IAI FESTIVAL (Jimmy Giuffre - tenor, clarinet, soprano and flute; Lee Konitz - alto; Paul Bley - piano; Bill Connors - guitar) Not yet reissued.

Jimmy Giuffre duets with each of these classic jazz artists including two tenor-alto collaborations with Lee Konitz.

This, IAI's last recording, was performed at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. Jimmy Giuffre and Lee Konitz played an incredible duet at this concert.

It was a watershed recording for me because it was so much work. I was tour manager, stage manager, road manager, musician manager and, almost as an afterthought, pianist. I decided afterwards that I couldn't afford myself! At the time there was a currency shift and it had become cheaper to record in Europe than to have records pressed where I did in Arizona. And I realized that without having to run the label, I could go back to playing with people from all over the world. I didn't miss the additional responsibilities and rather enjoy the idea of alternating between being a leader and a sideman. So we stopped after twenty records.

In addition to the unreleased tapes, we have one hundred hours of video that has just been waiting for a format that does not involve terrible sound such as what is heard on most people's non-stereo VCR. There are

new formats that interest us using an optical disc. While some of our later recording sessions were filmed, a lot of the video has material not out on our records.

And finally I could not help asking Paul Bley about the famous Sonny Rollins-Coleman Hawkins recording session of 1963 in which Rollins tried his best to confuse his idol.

Sonny Rollins is a fighter and true competitor. He knows all about saving himself for the last round and going for the knockout. On the record date Sonny went immediately to the roof and Coleman Hawkins asked "What are we playing? What's going on?" These were songs he had played for decades, he owned these tunes and could not even recognize them! Finally he told me to nod my head when the chorus ended because there was no way anyone could follow it. Rollins was playing for keeps but Hawkins did well although if you notice, he started each of his solos on the first beat!

It's funny how I joined Rollins in the first place. Herbie Hancock and myself were called to come to Birdland on a Monday night because Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins were playing opposite each other and they both needed pianists. In the dressing room, Herbie greeted me and asked me which gig I wanted. I thought that was extremely generous. Sonny was on the bandstand so I sat in with his group, we had a lot of fun, and at the end of the set Sonny asked me to join the band. When I came off the bandstand I said to Herbie that I guess I'll go with Sonny, so Herbie took the leftovers. □

ALONE AGAIN (Paul Bley - piano), **ST. LOUIS BLUES** (Sun Ra - piano), **ALMANAC** (Mike Nock - piano; Bennie Maupin - tenor and flute; Cecil McBee - bass; Eddie Marshal - drums), **REEDS N' VIBES** (Marion Brown - alto and flute; Gunter Hampel - vibes and flute) and **KUNDALINI** (Perry Robinson - clarinet; Badal Roy and Nana Vasconcelos - percussion), have not yet been reissued and have not been included in the preceding review/interview.

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APPLE SOURCE

NEWYORKNOTES

BY KEVIN WHITEHEAD

DRUMMERS: Jerome Cooper's solo recital at the Knitting Factory on May 17 was a conceptual tour de force — the first time he played something that registered as “jazz drum solo” was an hour in. Three points of reference were the AACM, Sun Ra and electric Miles. Seated at the traps, he began by playing talking drum, which occupied both arms, gradually kneading in hi-hat and bass-drum punctuations and a little pre-programmed synthesized percussion. Within minutes he had them all perfectly integrated, ancient to the future. Every time he found himself in a comfortable groove, he'd move along. Sometimes he'd play along with a prerecorded backing track, Music Minus One-style. He might play off a descending bassline, or a deliberately monotonous drum-machine beat: he made himself sound better by auditioning side-by-side with the boxes some tin-ears replace drummers with.

The sharp differentiation between its click-track time and Cooper's own fluidity drew clear distinctions between him and it, even with usual roles reversed. (As his feet marched a steady beat, a syn-drum poked through with stock, cheesy fills.) Somehow the effect was exhilarating. He picked up his musette-like double reed, the chiramia, and honked the blues as taped organ chords came up to accompany him; suddenly we were in grits and greens territory. He kept pulling musical tricks out of his bag like that — kept letting things go on just a little too long before veering off to something fresh. He touched on *The Saints*, *Pork Pie Hat*, Miles' *Jean Pierre*, hip-hop, Blackwell. The first 20 minutes was stunning. There were about 15 people in the house.

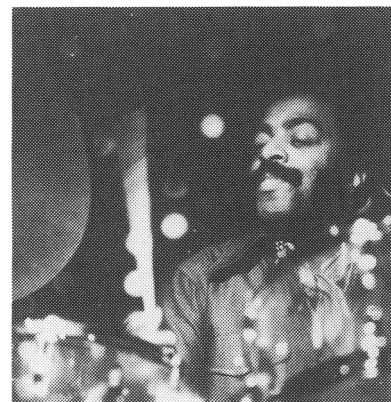
Roy Haynes sounded great, crisp, precise, syncopation's Einstein, kicking off his quartet's week at the Vanguard on June 1. He prodded, coaxed, subverted his mates. *Green Chimneys'* staccato accents kept him inspired even when the band forgot it was a Monk tune and just ran the changes. Overall, bassist Ed Howard also sounded good, avoiding the obvious all night. And yet... it's a paradox that strong stylists like Haynes don't always foster individualism in their helpers. One set began with *Dear Old Stockholm*, in honour of the recent Coltrane reissue on which he plays, and included (by request) *Trinkle, Tinkle*, in honour of the new live Monk and Coltrane Five Spot CD on which the not very crisp nor precise drummer is listed as Roy, although neither he nor anyone else seems to recall his ever playing on that gig. Tenorist Craig Handy got into the memory-lane spirit by playing very like Trane on both. Roy played a jazz calypso; Handy responded not just with Sonny's phrasing and tone, but his rush of quotes too: a largely pointless role-playing exercise. (We already know what they sound like; what do you sound like.) It and the set, ended with the quartet singing, doo-wopping the tune, sloppy fun. Pianist Dave Kikoski is quite competent.

April 23 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the **Brooklyn Philharmonic** premiered **Henry Threadgill's** *Mix for Orchestra* with improvising soloist **Max Roach**. It was pretty nice. In such cases it's the custom for jazz composers to demonstrate they have pencil chops to cut it on the gig; Threadgill showed 'em, but subtly infused it with his own esthetic. Cup-muted brass answered Nielsen strings in the second movement; in the third, a la Very Very Circus, string riffs coalesced out of silence, then overlapped in loosely shifting formation, bar to bar. Consistently canny was his use of percussion: clanging metal; balafon or wood blocks; the clave rhythm every New Yorker hears embroi-

dered and varied daily, on any street automobiles use. Dennis Russell Davies conducted. Max, in truth, tended to rely on the stock effects which have become very familiar from his solo sets—for example the short one which preceded Threadgill on the program (which also took in Berg and Bernstein). Even so, it was good he was there. Likely this was the only time many classically-oriented patrons will see this master play. How can you consider yourself cultured if you've never heard Max Roach?

SHORTS: Pianist **Marilyn Crispell** put together a new quartet for a record date (for Leo) and a Roulette concert May 5: drummer Gerry Hemingway, cellist Hank Roberts and violinist Mark Feldman. They should stay together; having Feldman at her disposal brings out a lyrical side of her writing the trio doesn't get to. Cuba's **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** — who couldn't be paid lest the US trade with the enemy — finished off Lincoln Center's jazz season in suitably snoozy style May 14. The first set — solo (Lennon's *Imagine*, schmaltzy), duo (with caterwauling Dianne Reeves, by astonishing coincidence a Blue Note labelmate), trio (Charlie Haden and Jack DeJohnette, as often these days the most overbearing drummer this side of Tony Williams) — was weak. The second, Latin fusion with his Cuban band — major compositional influence, Joe Zawinul — at least showed why anyone'd get excited about him: he's a really good Latin pianist, but not much of a jazz cat. Of the two nights of three I caught of this year's Corner Store Syndicate Festival at the Knit in late April, the best sets were by french hornists: **Mark Taylor** (with pianist Frank Ansallam, Calvin Jones, Eli Fountain) mostly for his rapturous golden tone; **Tom Varner** (Lee Konitz, Mark Feldman, bassist Lindsey Homer) mostly for his uncommonly rich writing, though having Konitz aboard can't hurt.

Lona Foote, jazz photographer, series programmer, and tireless advocate of non-sexist language, died of cancer at 42 on April 15. She's missed. I don't know anyone on the New York jazz scene less motivated by self-interest than Lona. (She'd rather get a shitty picture than use a flash in a club, a practice she found contemptible.) She just wanted to get the music out there, especially when women improvisers were involved. A couple of years ago she was booking gigs at the Alternative Museum, which continues its laudable tribute concerts featuring jazz masters you won't find working uptown. May 19, guest of honour was **Horace Tapscott**, who played solo. There are few louder pianists in jazz: big hands, big sound, big ringing. He rides the sustain pedal hard, and mostly works the bottom half of the keyboard, where the notes really reverberate. He ain't subtle, but he's got presence. **Sheila Jordan** was honoured—more like worshipped—April 7, in duet with her longtime pal, bassist Harvie Swartz. The mutual admiration can get a little thick, as they shower each other with superlatives. But in a music where an awful lot of younger players equate solemnity with seriousness, she brings more joy to what she does than practically anyone. Sheila makes singing convoluted bop heads sound irresistible. Swartz is her perfect orchestra. The audience lapped it up. It was a love-in. A shame Lona couldn't have been there. It was just the kind of scene she loved to make happen. □



DANCE OF THE INFIDELS

A REVIEW OF JAZZ PIANO SHAUKAT HUSAIN

JOHN HICKS

PHOTOGRAPH GERARD FUTRICK

RECORDINGS OF JAZZ PIANISTS CONTINUE

to flourish and appropriately so. The piano is expressive and effective as a solo instrument and the foundation of most small groups in modern jazz. This review of nine offerings: three trios, a duo and five solos, were all released on CD and consist of reissues and new recordings.

TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI: REMEMBERING BUD

Toshiko Akiyoshi (piano), George Mraz (bass on cuts 2-8), Ray Drummond (bass on cuts 1,9 &10) - *Cleopatra's Dream, Remembering Bud, Un Poco Loco, Oblivion, Celia, I'll Keep Loving You, Parisian Thoroughfare, Budo, Tempus Fugit, Dance Of The Infidels.*

Evidence is a recently formed label which is devoted to reissuing jazz and blues recordings which have been out of print or as in the case of this recording have been issued in Japan only. Toshiko Akiyoshi has been leading her own big band since the seventies and her recordings in a trio setting have been occasionally recorded or issued in North America. This tribute to Bud Powell is an acknowledgement of him as her major influence and consists of all Powell compositions but one, the title tune *Remembering Bud* which is her homage to the great pianist. It is a lament: a loss deeply felt. Other songs, all Powell compositions are played with great authority: *Un Poco Loco* has all the drive and the menace that one hears in the original recording by Bud Powell, the ballad *I'll Keep Loving You* is performed with authority and confidence. The bass accompaniment by George Mraz and Ray Drummond is impeccable, as is the drumming of Lewis Nash and Al Harewood whose name is seen only occasionally on recordings these days. Finally, having listened with great satisfaction to this disc the temptation to listen to the real thing was too hard to resist. Listening to Bud Powell and then coming back to Ms. Akiyoshi only confirms her stature as a fine pianist. She is a true torch bearer of the great tradition and this recording is strongly recommended.

FRANCK AMSALLEM: OUT A DAY - Franck Amsallem (piano), Gary Peacock (bass), Bill Stewart (drums) *Out A Day, For The Record, How Deep Is The Ocean, ...And Keep This Place In Mind For A Better One Is Hard To Find, Running After Eternity, Dee, On Your Own, Affreusement Votre (horribly yours), Time For Love.*

THE TRIOS

TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI • REMEMBERING BUD • Evidence CD 22034-2.

FRANCK AMSALLEM • OUT A DAY • OMD CD 1532

GONZALO RUBALCABA • THE BLESSING • Blue Note CD 97197-2

DUET

JOHN HICKS & RAY DRUMMOND • TWO OF A KIND • Evidence CD 22017-2

SOLO PIANO

RICHIE BEIRACH • MAYBECK RECITAL HALL VOL. 19 • Concord CCD 4518

DAVE BURRELL • JELLY ROLL JOYS • Gazell GJCD 4003.

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM • FATS DUKE & THE MONK • Sackville SKCD 2-3048

RONNIE MATHEWS • AT CAFE COPAINS • Sackville SKCD 2-2026

MIKE WOFFORD • MAYBECK RECITAL HALL VOL 18 • Concord CCD 4514.



This is a first release as a leader for this young French pianist. His credentials appear to be impressive, classically trained, not yet 30, resident in New York and playing with the big names: Gerry Mulligan, Dave Holland and Bob Brookmeyer. The same can be said of a lot of young jazz talent with recording contracts, but play this CD and the music draws you in immediately. *Out A Day*, the title tune and the opening song, is based on the chord changes of Cole Porter's *Night and Day* and is mesmerising in its twists and turns. The two standards are played with originality and the rest of the material composed by Amsallem is well paced with a mix of introspection on the ballads and some fine up tempo playing as on *Running After Eternity*.

However *On Your Own*, the longest piece on the CD, does suffer from over indulgence and is reminiscent of the ramblings of some ECM recordings of the early eighties. There is fine support from Gary Peacock and Bill Stewart. Franck Amsallem is a young talent who deserves a listen and overall this is a fine first effort. Despite the above caveat, check it out.

play them differently to the almost expected standard improvisation and interpretation that show up in recordings. Of course one cannot underestimate the playing and the presence of his mentor Charlie Haden, who has championed Rubalcaba's recordings, nor the very inventive drumming of Jack DeJohnette.

JOHN HICKS (piano) & **RAY DRUMMOND** (bass): *TWO OF A KIND - I'll Be Around, Take The Coltrane, Very Early, Getting Sentimental Over You, For Heaven's Sake, Come Rain Or Come Shine, A Rose Without A Thorn, Without A Song, A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square, Parisian Thoroughfare, Springtime Fantasy.*



GONZALO RUBALCABA: THE BLESSING Gonzalo Rubalcaba (piano) Charlie Haden (bass) Jack DeJohnette (drums) - *Circuito, Sandino, Besame Mucho, Giant Steps, Sin Remedio, El Mar, Silver Hollow, The Blessing, Blue In Green, Sinto y Contracopa, Mima.*

Gonzalo Rubalcaba is capable of playing a flurry of notes and he does so on the opening tune. Rubalcaba takes liberties with time, a metronome he isn't. The surprise of where he will go next is what holds the interest of the listener and not his virtuosity. It is hard to say if one hears a new voice in Rubalcaba's playing. It is too early to tell. He can suggest his influences from Cecil Taylor on *Circuito*, the opening track, to Bill Evans on *Blue In Green*. What Rubalcaba reveals in the choice of the material on this CD is that he is completely at home with all varieties of jazz, be it Bill Evans or Cecil Taylor. What impresses me most is that he can take the hoary Latin chestnut *Besame Mucho* and a standard like Miles Davis' *Blue In Green* and dares to

This CD features mostly standards played with verve by this very compatible duo. John Hicks has been around for quite a while without getting the kudos that has been given to his contemporaries. His accompanist, the very able and versatile bassist Ray Drummond has been much in demand for the luscious fat sound he coaxes from his instrument without giving up the speed and attack. This is amply demonstrated on this disc. He keeps time meticulously on Bill Evans' *Very Early* giving John Hicks complete freedom to play his fast runs on the upper keys of the piano. Harold Arlen's *Come Rain Or Come Shine* opens with Hicks doing the comping while Drummond solos and then they trade back and forth, as they do throughout this disc making it a partnership rather than a piano album with bass accompaniment. Hicks does have a tendency to play a lot of notes on the higher keys of the piano like on Bud Powell's *Parisian Thoroughfare* which creates a great sense of speed but tends to grate on the ear eventually. This is a minor complaint, far outweighed by his lyrical treatment of the ballads like *A Rose Without A Thorn*. A very worthwhile recording that would add much to the listening pleasure of any jazz fan.

RICHIE BEIRACH: AT MAYBECK VOL. 19 - *All The Things You Are, On Green Dolphin Street, Some Other Time, You Don't Know What Love Is, Spring Is Here, All Blues, Medley: Over The Rainbow / Small World / In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning, 'Round Midnight, Remember, Elm.*

It is appropriate that Richie Beirach has been invited to participate in this excellent piano series recorded by the Concord label at the Maybeck Hall. He has travelled far from the days of his Lookout Farm collaboration with Dave Leibman and the fire of his free/fusion jazz has been tempered by his continual exploration of the standards. A look at his discography shows that he has been recorded regularly by the Japanese Trio and German ECM labels throughout the eighties, but has had very little exposure on the US recording labels. Beirach takes chances with his material on this CD and is never predictable. *All Blues* is played with strong left hand inflections of boogie woogie, which give the piece a jaunty air. The medley in comparison is introspective and seamless, Monks' *'Round Midnight* has a despairing edge created by dissonance that Beirach introduces in the middle of the song which is then beautifully masked by composure and return to the melody. Irving Berlin's *Remember* is given a rendition that evokes the melancholy. A wonderful performance by a talented artist deserving greater recognition.

DAVE BURRELL: THE JELLY ROLL JOYS - *The Pearls, New Orleans Blues, Billy's Bounce, Spanish Swat, Giant Steps, Freakish, A.M. Rag, Popolo Paniolo, The Crave, Moments Notice.*

Dave Burrell cites Jelly Roll Morton as an influence in Leonard Feather's "Jazz Encyclopaedia of Jazz in the Seventies". It also goes on to list his musical collaboration with Archie Shepp and Beaver Harris, both noted for their association with the free jazz movement. During the eighties he has also recorded frequently with David Murray. So given this background, what does this CD of syncopated jazz say to us? Is this Burrell's answer to the question flung at all those associated with free jazz: where's the melody, the beat and the harmony? If this is an answer then it is taken to the very extremes. Nothing very creative emerges from such a

rigid style other than the conclusion that Dave Burrell has the technical facility to play the music of Jelly Roll Morton. However, free jazz musicians have ventured boldly into the various genres of jazz. Sometimes to parody, other times to claim a genre of jazz that is considered outside their domain. Perhaps Burrell is doing a bit of both. But what does it say of the intrinsic worth of the music on the CD? It is well enough played except for *New Orleans Blues* where Burrell loses the beat halfway through the tune. He should have recorded another take. The syncopated versions of Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, *Moments Notice* and Parker's *Billie's Bounce* sound trivial. Why bother? Whatever the intention, Burrell's effort sounds stilted, like most repertory jazz: a display of skill without imagination. This CD may serve some use to the students of jazz piano but does not give this listener a great deal of joy.

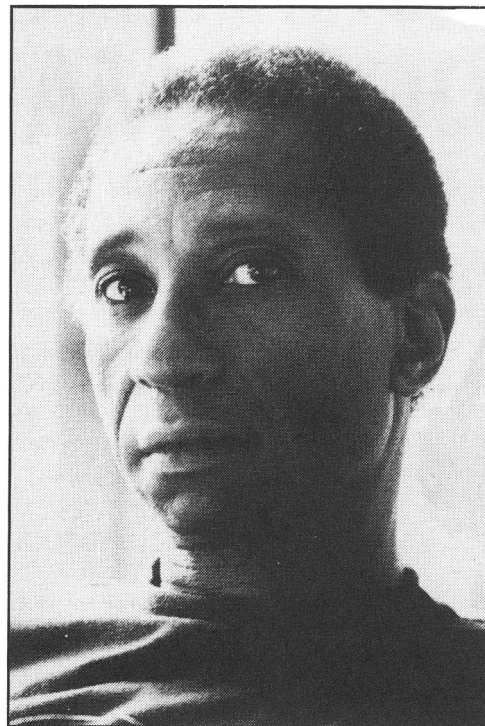
ABDULLAH IBRAHIM: FATS DUKE & THE MONK - *Salaam Peace: (Salaam, Peace, Hamba Kahle, The Stride, Mama, Ilanga, Gwidza, Blues For A Hip King, Gwidza, Chisa, Batavia, Hoe Gaan Die Padjie Na Die Kramat Toe, Dkir), Fats Duke & the Monk: (Single Petal Of A Rose, Ode To Duke, Honeysuckle Rose, Think Of One, Monk From Harlem, Mumsey Wey), African Portraits: (Blues For Hughie, Kippie, Gafsa, Gwangwa, Little Boy, Easter Joy/ Jabulani, Xaba).*

This recording, made in 1973 is a welcome reissue. It was made at a crucial time for Abdullah Ibrahim (a.k.a. Dollar Brand). In 1968 he had returned to Africa after participating in the free jazz scene in Europe. There he converted to Islam and adopted his Muslim name. That conversion also created a renewed sense of seeking the African heritage in his music: the form of rhythm, harmony and melody of South African church and folk music. Therefore this CD is an important landmark in recording this change. You can hear the whole African landscape here: rural chants, the church and carnival music. Dissonance is sparingly used to mark fervour in the music as in *Hamba Kahle* but structure and composition are always present, as is emotion. There are also plenty of surprises too: the almost too late recognition of Fats Waller's *Honeysuckle Rose* as it segues into Monk's *Think Of One*. The African portraits are filled with sonorities of church music and *Xaba* the last part of the portraits is moving in its simplicity. This CD communicates raw emotion that is not present in some of the later solo recordings of Abdullah Ibrahim. Strongly recommended.

RONNIE MATHEWS: AT CAFE DES COPAINS - *Berkshire Blues, A Child Is Born, Ruby My Dear, Over The Rainbow, Like Someone In Love, Willow Weep For Me, Hi Fly, Tenor Madness.*

This CD was recorded at the Cafe Des Copains. It had been a feature of the cafe to present solo piano performances and some of these have been recorded. Ronnie Mathews has been playing piano professionally since the early sixties and has performed with such musicians as Max Roach, Kenny Dorham, Clifford Jordan, Dexter Gordon and Johnny Griffin. He has not been recorded often as a leader so this is a welcome addition. There is nothing to hide behind when playing solo. It is a statement about the artistry of jazz improvisation taken to its extreme. Ronnie Mathews pulls it off very well. The choice of songs is well planned. His performance opens with a driving, pulsing version of Randy Weston's *Berkshire Blues* and that sets the pace for the next few songs. A fast version of Thad Jones' *A Child Is Born* follows and *Someday My Prince Will Come* is played as a waltz. By this time he has your attention and then come the ballads: Monk's *Ruby My Dear* followed by Arlen's *Over The Rainbow* and Van Heusen's *Like Someone In Love*. Throughout the set one is aware of the confidence with which Mathews performs the music. The improvisations are to the point and very self assured and never does one feel that Mathews is throwing all he knows at a song, if anything he is understated, very different from Mathews the accompanist. He possesses a rhythmic left hand and one never senses a loss of tempo or misses the lack of bass and drums. Overall a very good set with an excellent choice of songs.

MIKE WOFFORD: AT MAYBECK VOLUME 18 - *Tonk, Two Marvellous For Words, Stablemates, For Woff/One To One, Rose Of The Rio Grande, Little Girl Blue, Duke's Place/Mainstem, Topsy, Impresiones Intimas No. 1, Lullaby In Rhythm.*



The contrast between Mike Wofford and Richie Beirach, John Hicks or Ronnie Mathews couldn't be greater. Whereas the latter use single note runs with a more propulsive left hand for rhythm, Wofford plays chords that give his piano style a lush sound and less of a rhythmic drive. The material he presents at the Maybeck Hall recital consists largely of songs from the thirties with the exceptions of Golson's *Stablemates*, Bill Mays' composition *For Woff* and Ray Bryant's *Tonk*. The opening piece, *Tonk*, is performed with a good feel for the blues but then the rest of the performance doesn't live up to the initial promise. Perhaps the choice of the songs ultimately fails to hold the interest: there isn't much variation of tempo as one finds in the playing of Ronnie Mathews or Richie Beirach. A disappointing recording of a pianist from whom much is expected. □

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THE MYSTERY OF DODO MARMAROSA

AN ARTICLE BY BOB ELEFF



IN FEBRUARY 1947 ESQUIRE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED ITS FOURTH ANNUAL JAZZ POLL, IN WHICH A GROUP OF EXPERTS SELECTED THE TOP MUSICIANS TO FILL THE SLOTS OF THE "ALL-AMERICAN JAZZ BAND." THE PANEL CHOSE PARTICULARLY WELL THAT YEAR IN THE "NEW STARS" SECTION OF THE POLL, SELECTING SEVERAL MUSICIANS WHO WERE TO DOMINATE THE JAZZ SCENE FOR THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS: MILES DAVIS, SONNY STITT, RAY BROWN, MILT JACKSON, SARAH VAUGHAN. THE "NEW STAR" ON PIANO WAS A YOUNG MAN FROM PITTSBURGH WHO HAD JUST TURNED 21.

WHILE FEW OF THESE MUSICIANS WERE HOUSEHOLD NAMES AT THE TIME, IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT MICHAEL "DODO" MARMAROSA WAS MORE OBSCURE THAN MOST, EVEN TO JAZZ FANS.

Marmarosa had first come to prominence as a teenager in the early 1940s, playing with some of the most popular big bands of the day: Gene Krupa, Charlie Barnet, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw. He was equally at home in the new world of modern jazz, recording with top musicians like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie.

THE ESQUIRE AWARD SEEMED PROPHETIC; 1947 was a banner year for Marmarosa. He made several recordings with various small groups, including his own trio, and another session with Parker. He became a fixture among West Coast beboppers, jamming in L.A. clubs and playing concerts with musicians like Woody Herman, Benny Carter and Wardell Gray.

And then the music stopped. In 1950 Marmarosa returned to his native Pittsburgh, resurfacing briefly in Chicago in the early 1960s to record a few albums. Nothing has been heard of him since.

Although Marmarosa's career peaked forty-five years ago, musicians who played alongside him retain great respect for his abilities.

"He was the most brilliant musician I met during that entire period," remembered guitarist Barney Kessel, who played alongside Marmarosa in the 1945 Artie Shaw Orchestra.

"Dodo had a fantastic knowledge of the piano," recalled tenor saxophonist Teddy Edwards, who recorded with Marmarosa in 1946. "He was very fast. He definitely had his own style. He had it all."

Ray Linn was a trumpeter who worked with Marmarosa in the Shaw and Boyd Raeburn bands. "He was absolutely brilliant as a musician," Linn said. "Way ahead of his time. He didn't play like anybody else. He had a light, feathery, classical touch and he swung. So clear, an immaculate technique."

The late bassist Red Callender played on several record dates with Marmarosa, including those with Parker. "In my estimation," Callender stated, "he was quite a genius."

But where had the genius come from, and where had it gone?

MICHAEL MARMAROSA was born on December 12, 1925, the middle child and only son of Italian working-class parents. He grew up on Paulson Avenue in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighbourhood, and began taking piano lessons at the age of nine. He was tagged with the unflattering nickname Dodo at a tender age, inspired by his small frame, large head and prominent falcon-like nose. Alienated from his peers, Marmarosa sought ego-building satisfaction at the piano bench, rattling off the Bach Two-Part Inventions at double the indicated metronome speed.

By his early teenage years, the dedicated youngster had forged a piano style combining speed and agility in both hands with solid classical discipline. Such talents were readily recognized. He began playing professionally at 14, and when the Johnny "Scat" Davis Orchestra came to town in 1941 with an opening for a pianist, local musicians suggested the diminutive teenager. At the age of 15, Marmarosa went on the road.

Six months later, when Gene Krupa incorporated the nucleus of the Davis outfit into his own orchestra, Marmarosa found himself playing with a name band. He bandhopped regularly over the next few years, from Krupa to a short stay with Ted Fio Rito, then to Charlie Barnet in 1943, Tommy Dorsey in 1944, and Artie Shaw in 1945.

Clarinetist Buddy De Franco met Marmarosa in the Scat Davis Orchestra. The two remained together in different bands over the next several years. Marmarosa, De Franco recalls, was "always learning. [H]e had probably the most astute musical mind that I had ever run across," De Franco told jazz writer Ira Gitler. "Dodo had a great ability to hear new things... He was always searching, always into new things... He knew. And I knew he knew."

I HAVE KNOWN NO MAN OF GENIUS WHO HAD NOT TO PAY, IN SOME AFFLICTION OR DEFECT EITHER PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL, FOR WHAT THE GODS HAD GIVEN HIM. SIR MAX BEERBOHM

AMONG THE NEW IDEAS that Marmarosa was exploring were the advanced harmonies of the embryonic bebop music. He was exposed to the new style at an early stage of its development. During the Barnet band's stay at New York's Strand Theater sometime in 1942 or 1943, one of its trumpeters became ill, and was temporarily replaced by bop co-founder Dizzy Gillespie. One afternoon between shows, Gillespie invited the young pianist to his home to meet saxophonist Charlie Parker. The trio held an impromptu jam session, and another friendship was struck.

Marmarosa was enamoured of the new music. "Dodo and I ran down to 52nd Street whenever we were in New York," De Franco recalled recently. "We gobbled it up. Dodo was fascinated with Bird. In fact, it was Dodo who said to me, 'Why don't you play the clarinet like Bird?'" (De Franco proceeded to do so, earning his place in jazz history as the master of modern jazz clarinet.)

Although Marmarosa continued to climb the ladder and play with more popular bands, they offered little scope for his talents. He found more room to express himself in a small group formed from Artie Shaw's big band, known as the Gramercy Five. Boasting such excellent artists as Shaw, trumpeter Roy Eldridge and guitarist Barney Kessel, the group's recordings exuded a fresh modern chamber music quality.

The pianist's growing reputation led Lester Young, a star with the Count Basie Band in the 1930s and 1940s, to choose him for the first recordings the tenor saxophonist made after his release from the Army at the end of 1945.

"Pres dug Dodo very much," recalled Red Callender, who played bass at the session, in which the classic *D.B. Blues* was recorded. Marmarosa's melodyless impressionistic introduction to *These Foolish Things* is hauntingly beautiful, the perfect prelude to Young's lyric romanticism. Marmarosa's unquestioned musical maturity, however, did not extend to the personal sphere. He was a shy and insecure teenager thrust into the glamorous world of entertainment, subjected to a host of situations and pressures with which he was unequipped to deal. In a business which had its share of odd characters, Marmarosa stands out.

In his 1984 autobiography, Charlie Barnet wrote that his young pianist "was very talented, but definitely a mixed-up young man. Dodo was unpredictable. He once pushed a small piano off a third-story balcony. 'I wanted to see what chord it would sound when it hit the ground,' he said when asked why he did it."

Guitarist Barney Kessel, who met Marmarosa in the Shaw band, quickly discovered that there were two sides to Marmarosa. "He was very young to be coming up with his own musical identity," Kessel

recalled. "But he was also very naive, not well versed in social relations. I don't think he even knew that you shouldn't drink on an empty stomach. He could do outrageous things — rude social behaviour, mostly when he was drunk. He'd get this maniacal little look, a fey, elfin glint in his eye, when he was about to pull something. He was never on drugs. But even when he was not drinking, he seemed kind of stoned." Nonetheless, Kessel concluded, "He was a delightful character. I really loved him."

Not all of Marmarosa's weird behaviour could be attributed to his youth. Buddy De Franco recalled an incident that occurred in 1942, when the pianist was sixteen.

"We were in Gene Krupa's band in Philadelphia, my home town. We were in the subway going back to our hotel from the ballroom. In those days there was an awful lot of tension between servicemen and civilians, and we had on Gene Krupa uniforms. Five sailors walked right across the tracks and demanded that we take our clothes off. They started pounding us. We got beat up pretty bad. Dodo got the worst of it. A big fella hit Dodo and he banged his head hard on the cement platform. He was in a coma for a couple of days. I don't want to cop out for Dodo, but he has never been the same since. In other words, he began to lose his grasp."

In 1945 Marmarosa left Shaw and moved to Los Angeles. When Parker and Gillespie made their West Coast debut at Billy Berg's club in Hollywood in December, he was among the legion of young musicians who flocked to hear the revolutionaries from the east.

Parker stayed in L.A. after the engagement ended in February. Along with tenor man Lucky Thompson, pianist Joe Albany, and a little-known trumpeter named Miles Davis, he took up residence at the Club Finale, located in the Little Tokyo section of L.A. When Albany walked off the bandstand after an argument with Bird the night before a recording date, Dial Records producer Ross Russell tapped Marmarosa.

The recordings made that day in March 1946 — *A Night in Tunisia*, *Moose the Mooche*, *Ornithology*, and *Yardbird Suite* — are classics of early modern jazz.

Marmarosa worked with Bird through the early summer, in a band that included trumpeter Howard McGhee, Red Callender and drummer Roy Porter. After drug problems forced Parker into Camarillo State Hospital in July, Marmarosa continued playing with McGhee, in a group that included tenor saxophonist Teddy Edwards. The band played at jazz clubs along Hollywood Boulevard and Central Avenue, including The Empire Room, The Streets of Paris, The Suzie-Q, The Jade Palace and others.

THE MYSTERY OF DODO MARMAROSA



MORE THAN 40 YEARS later, Edwards remembered Marmarosa as “a very astute young man. He looked like a Harvard law professor, an alert look on his face, very relaxed at the piano. He was a musical thinker, he didn’t have to rely on anybody else’s thoughts.”

At this time, Marmarosa was also part of one of the era’s most progressive big bands, the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra. Arm-

ed with modern arrangements seeking to bridge the gap between bop and advanced European music, the band included such talents as Dizzy Gillespie, Frank Socolow, Johnny Bothwell, Al Cohn, Sonny Berman, Oscar Pettiford and Shelly Manne during its short life from 1944 to 1946.

Raeburn vocalist David Allyn told Ira Gitler a story he had heard about Marmarosa. While with Shaw, he had missed a job at a Los Angeles theatre and couldn’t be tracked down. After a few days, a band member taking his tuxedo to a nearby Chinese laundry found Marmarosa contentedly ironing shirts in the back room. “He says, ‘Dodo, man, what are you doing? We’re looking all over for you.’ So the Chinese cat says, ‘No, no, you leave him alone, he very fine. Very good handkerchief. He very good laundryman.’ Dodo says, ‘Get the hell out of here and leave me alone.’” Allyn said it was no small job cajoling him to rejoin the band.

Marmarosa made his first trio recordings in 1946. Many years later, jazz writer Brian Priestley summarized his style: “What was so distinctive about Dodo’s work was partly his harmonic sense and knowledge of the additional notes that Parker and Gillespie used. Many pianists were trying to find ways to voice these satisfactorily in full chording, but none did so as pleasingly or as fluently as Marmarosa. Partly it was also the way he alternated between employing his hands together and in opposition to each other, and allied to this was his unusual time feeling.”

Drummer Jackie Mills was on most of the pianist’s recordings made in Los Angeles during this period. They lived together during 1946 and 1947. Mills also remembers Marmarosa as an outstanding musician and a troubled person.

“We often went to parties at Don George’s house. He used to write lyrics for Duke Ellington. Everyone would take a turn at the piano. I remember once, Dodo approached the bench and, literally, sat down on his right hand. He played for half an hour with his left hand. No one would touch the piano after that.”

“Dodo was the most dedicated of players. He practiced an incredible amount of hours, often all day long. He wouldn’t stop to eat. He would eat at the piano with one hand and keep playing with the other. He had no other interests that I was aware of. He could play forever.”

Living with Marmarosa was not easy at times, Mills remembered. “He had a short fuse. He didn’t drink. He smoked some marijuana, but no hard drugs. But he started getting more eccentric than people wanted to deal with. “Once we were sitting outside on the front lawn. ‘You’re my best friend,’ he said to me. ‘Help me. I want to kill myself. Get me a gun.’ I said no, but he kept bugging me. Finally, to get him to quit, I said, ‘OK, I’ll get it.’ He said, ‘Wait, I thought you were my friend.’ He started to cry and ran away.”

“Dodo was just a big kid,” Mills said. “He had to be watched and taken care of all the time. He never really grew up because he never allowed anything but the piano to be important to him. The piano was his life. He heard things in his head that he wasn’t able to play and it frustrated him. Once, he got mad at the old upright piano we had and chopped it up with an axe.”

In 1949, Artie Shaw put together another big band, featuring such bop-oriented musicians as Zoot Sims and Al Cohn. He asked Marmarosa to join him.

“Dodo was a great talent and a hell of a nice little guy,” Shaw recalled recently. “I had a lot of affection for him. But he had no concept of what it took to stay alive in the modern world. He could not tolerate the stuff that goes with being a public entertainer. I talked to him patiently, never got angry with him. But he just wasn’t interested. He had an utter purity about him, like Van Gogh. And we all know what happened to Van Gogh.”

Shaw even offered to pay for psychiatric treatment for his young pianist, but Marmarosa refused, yelling that Shaw was the one who needed a psychiatrist. (Not an inaccurate statement, as it turned out. As Shaw wrote in his autobiography, the psychoanalysis he underwent in the 1950s changed his life.)

Buddy De Franco remembers a similar reaction from Marmarosa’s parents when he broached the subject of psychiatry. “They were not reconciled to his needing professional help. They were from the old school, they saw it as a stigma. I got into a big argument about it with his father. He really blew up.”

When the new Shaw contingent broke up in 1950, Marmarosa returned to Pittsburgh. He was 25 years old. He married a local girl, moved back to California, and soon had two daughters. The marriage did not last, and Marmarosa returned to Pittsburgh to live with his parents, regularly sending financial support back to his family. His wife soon remarried, asking him to sign a form allowing her to legally change the children’s names and end his financial responsibilities. Advised by his parents, he acquiesced, and never saw his children again.

AN ARTICLE BY BOB ELEFF



"That was the great blight of his life. It tore him apart," said Chick Barris, a Pittsburgh drummer who knew Marmarosa since his teenage days. "He was crazy about those kids. One of the girls was named Susie. Every time we'd go into a joint he would play that Everly Brothers song ("Wake Up, Little Susie") on the jukebox."

"After the marriage broke up, he seemed to lose the spark, the drive he once had," recalled Reid Jaynes, a fellow Pittsburgh pianist.

His despondency increased when he was drafted into the Army in the mid-1950s, where his un-martial attitude landed him in a Veterans Administration hospital for several months of observation before he was discharged. Back in the Pittsburgh jazz scene, Marmarosa would suddenly disappear for up to a month at a time, according to trumpeter Danny Conn, who played jobs with him during this period.

"His father would find him in some cheap hotel and bring him back," said Conn, a veteran of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra who grew up on the same street as the pianist. "He also tried to get rid of all the money he had, putting it in church collection boxes or leaving all his change on the bar. It was like he was on the road to self-destruction."

Marmarosa made no attempt to re-enter the national jazz scene. "Artie Shaw came to town and asked Dodo to go to Europe with him to play in a trio. Dodo told him he wasn't interested," said Conn.

In 1960, Marmarosa, then 34 years old, left on a road trip to California. Car problems forced him to stop in Chicago, where concert promoter Joe Segal arranged a recording date for him with

Argo Records, but the pianist suddenly left town and did not return until the spring of 1961.

The resulting album, titled *Dodo's Back!* reflects the changes in his style. He continued to use block chords and dissonant notes, but these parts are weaved into a more satisfying whole. His sound is fuller and more relaxed.

Jazz writer Leonard Feather gave the album three-and-a-half stars in a *Downbeat* review, calling it "required listening for anyone with a serious interest in the history of modern jazz piano... This is a return that has been overdue for many years."

Marmarosa cut his last two albums in Chicago the following year. One, featuring his best trio work and a quartet with tenor saxophonist Gene Ammons, was not issued until 1974. ("In a word, brilliant," read a review in *Popular Music: An Annotated Guide to Recording*.) Another quartet date with trumpeter Bill Hardman remained unissued until 1988. Segal remembered Marmarosa as "someone I liked very much. He didn't talk much, was very mild-mannered. He just drank an awful lot, shot and a beer all day long. It would've put nine out of ten people under the table, but he was still walking around."

Marmarosa played in Chicago for a while.

"The last time I saw Dodo," Segal remembered, "was during the Charlie Parker festival I had at the Southland Hotel at 47th and Drexel. He gave me his union card, which I still have somewhere, and said, 'Keep this for me. I don't want to lose it.' That's the last I saw of him."

THE MYSTERY OF DODO MARMAROSA

MARMAROSA RETURNED AGAIN TO PITTSBURGH around 1963, performing sporadically. Buddy De Franco recalls visiting Marmarosa at the Pittsburgh Musicians Union hall at this time. "He would play brilliantly for half a tune, then just stop and walk away. He didn't even know who I was."

Marmarosa's last public performances were in the late 1960s. "I remember a job he had in about 1968 at a place called The Cowshed," said Reid Jaynes. "Between sets he would just sit in a chair in the corner and stare at the wall." He was 42 years old.

He became completely isolated. Barris attributes his seclusion to family pressure.

"His family's contention was that music and musicians had been his undoing. They watched him like a hawk. If they had let him go and allowed him to deal with his problems in a natural way, he would have been okay. But they kept telling him, 'You're not strong enough.' They were ashamed of the fact that he had some mental instability. They kept him in the house like a convict."

"I kept calling him at Christmas and on his birthday," remembers Danny Conn. "But his sister and parents wouldn't let me talk to him. I finally just gave up."

TWENTY YEARS PASSED.

On a sunny afternoon in the fall of 1988, I drove with Danny Conn to the suburban house where Marmarosa lives with his family. He had emerged from his hibernation that spring, meeting with Conn and Barris. The heavily wooded area was brilliant with colour, and as we pulled into the driveway, Dodo Marmarosa stood in front of the garage, his hands in the pockets of a light blue jacket.

The thick curly black hair has turned grey, the once spare frame has filled out considerably, as has his face, diminishing the effect of the prominent nose. We shook hands and exchanged greetings. His hands are surprisingly small. He is physically frail, moving slowly and gingerly. Conn said he takes medication for diabetes.

We drove to a nearby restaurant and talked over lunch. The rules had been arranged in advance: no direct quotes. Though reluctant to talk about himself, Marmarosa was extremely friendly and considerate. He did not dwell on the past, but did fill in a number of gaps in my research. He recalled Art Tatum and Charlie Parker as friends for whom he felt a particular warmth.

Marmarosa keeps up on the Pittsburgh jazz scene. Among the pianists he enjoys listening to he named Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, George Cables and Cedar Walton.

In December 1988, Marmarosa was among the first group of musicians inducted into Pittsburgh's Jazz Hall of Fame, sharing that honour with jazz greats such as Earl "Fatha" Hines, Billy Eckstine and Ahmad Jamal. He did not attend the ceremony.



THROUGHOUT HIS LONG RETIREMENT, Marmarosa has continued to play piano in the basement of his parents' home. No one else has heard him play in more than twenty years. That changed in January 1990, when Marmarosa allowed Conn to bring his trumpet to the basement for a private jam session. How does Dodo Marmarosa sound in the 1990s?

"Beautiful," said Conn. "He's still Dodo — just himself. He fills it up with melody and changes that are all his own."

While Marmarosa's music of the 1990s may not become available to a wider audience, we do have his recordings to treasure. Though relatively few, they contain a wealth of expressiveness and beauty.

As Marmarosa's friend and fellow pianist Reid Jaynes put it, "Every note he played meant something." □

Bob Eleff currently works for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and contributes to several community newspapers in Minneapolis and was the editor of The Surveyor from 1989-91.

Photographs of DODO MARMAROSA courtesy of **Down Beat Magazine** (December 29th/1966. Photographers unknown).

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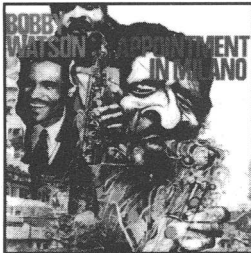
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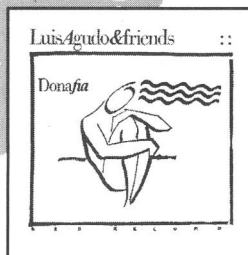
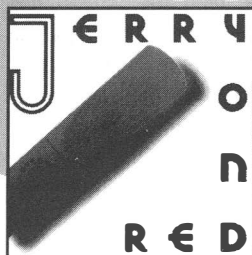
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LEGENDS

COMPACT DISC REVIEWS BY TREVOR TOLLEY

BACK IN THE MID-FORTIES IN ENGLAND YOU COULD WALK DOWN ALMOST ANY STREET AT SUNDAY LUNCHTIME AND HEAR THE FIRST CHORUS OF ARTIE SHAW'S *DANCING IN THE DARK*, EVEN IF YOU WALKED A QUARTER OF A MILE WHILE DOING SO. IT WAS THE THEME SONG OF THE BBC RECORD-REQUEST RADIO PROGRAM, **FORCES FAVOURITES**, TO WHICH ALMOST EVERYBODY LISTENED. THIS WAS A MEASURE OF THE FAME THAT SHAW HAD ATTAINED; YET BY THEN HE SEEMED ALREADY TO HAVE MOVED OUT OF THE PICTURE. HIS FAME BEGAN IN 1938 WITH HIS FIRST RECORD FOR BLUEBIRD, *BEGIN THE BEGUINE*, AND CONTINUED UNTIL 1942, WHEN HE JOINED THE U.S. NAVY. BY THEN HE HAD ALREADY MADE A COUPLE OF GESTURES AT GIVING EVERYTHING UP; AND IN 1952 HE PUBLISHED *THE TROUBLE WITH CINDERELLA*, RECOUNTING HIS LIFE AND EXPLAINING WHY HE WAS EXITING FROM FAME.

The trouble with Cinderella was that she represented getting everything you wanted - "the fame and the girl and the money/All at one sitting", as Philip Larkin put it. It was when, for Shaw, the trouble began, because you didn't live happily ever after. You were surrounded by jitterbugs, or people who kept asking to hear *Begin The Beguine* or *Frenesi*; and you were brought face to face with the question of what you really wanted to do with your life. So Shaw left it all and became a figure of legend - a legend that he seemed to go out of his way to cultivate: that of a man who walked away because, when he had attained fame, he did not want to spend his life doing things that fame brought him.

The legend is a typically American one, enshrined long ago in Thoreau's *Walden*, with its rejection of materialistic goals in favour of a life that gave the opportunity of exploring deeper satisfactions. Shaw wanted to be a writer and sought to make enough money to enable himself to follow that course of development. He also wanted to be famous - which he achieved to excess by becoming an idol in the world of popular music. The trouble with Shaw is that he set up these two choices as the ones that life presented to him. He seemed unable to accept that, whatever the limitations imposed by running a dance band, he changed jazz clarinet playing so that it would never be the same again, and that was a major achievement. *The*

Trouble With Cinderella is a minor literary performance, long winded, but of interest because it is written by Artie Shaw. *Concerto For Clarinet* is a trite performance in its overall conception, but a *tour de force* of jazz clarinet playing. The hidden question is how one could play as well as Shaw did if doing so did not correspond to a very deep personal drive.

In fact the legend is not quite true to what happened. After leading the Navy band, Shaw came back to lead a new band that recorded for Victor. He then reformed and recorded for Musicraft in 1946, and went on to lead a band to be heard on Decca recordings of the late forties and early fifties - always, he contended, because he needed money. Finally, he formed a new version of his famous Gramercy Five, using modern musicians; and in 1956 made for Clef the recordings to be heard on *The Last Recordings Of Artie Shaw* (Musicmasters 01612-65071-2: two CDs): at first with Hank Jones (piano), Tal Farlow (guitar), Tommy Potter (bass), Irv Kluger (drums) and Joe Roland (vibes); later Roland left and Joe Puma replaced Farlow.

Shaw admirers who come fresh to these recordings will perhaps find them hard to appreciate: the old bounce and aplomb, a product of the characteristic Shaw rhythm, encountered on recordings like *Moonglow* or *Begin The Beguine*, had diminished (one supposes deliberately) in Shaw's playing from 1942 onward. Listen to the version of *Yes-*

terdays on this set and the version for Bluebird in 1938. In the notes Shaw explains: "I was playing so softly that I was almost in a subtone mode. Basically, what that softness does is give your playing a lot more intimacy and warmth...it's very difficult to do...if you don't quite fill a horn, just fill it enough to set the reed vibrating." Yet, as one becomes attuned to the idiom of these recordings, one realises that this too is vintage Shaw. The performance of *Sposin'* has the long, flowing phrases running over the bar lines that one encounters in Shaw's best solos of the forties. Though the music reminds one of Tristano at times, there are several startling virtuoso passages in the old Shaw manner. If the music has a fault at all, it is that, in places, it seems a trifle *Lugubrious* - to use one of Shaw's titles.

These recordings are presented here as Shaw's "rare and unissued" last recordings. They are rare: the original lps are hard to come by. Three of the titles are from unissued alternate takes, lovingly conserved by Shaw himself, who contributes expert and enlightening notes. However, according to Korst and Garrod's discography, they are not quite Shaw's *last* recordings: the group made one last session for Decca sixteen months later. Then Shaw retired to live his legend.

Shaw's unostentatious ease with show tunes masks his virtuosity. A player whose virtuosity one is in no danger of



overlooking is Art Tatum. For many Tatum is the greatest pianist in all of jazz; and his command of the instrument is legendary. For those who cannot, like myself, go along with the legend, there is the rejoinder that you had to hear Tatum after hours; though the recordings allegedly made in such circumstances and released on 20th Century Fox (*Art Tatum Discoveries* FOX 3029 & 3033) do not seem notably different from Tatum's commercial recordings. Earl Hines was one of those who said that "To hear Art at his peak you had to be present at the after-hours sessions... He did things that were impossible on the piano"; and Mary Lou Williams and Oscar Peterson were dumbfounded admirers. Yet one has the sense that what they may have admired most in Tatum was that he could do things on the piano that they couldn't do - not an achievement to be belittled; but not an achievement that measures the quality of the music produced. I would rather listen to Jimmy Yancey or Thelonious Monk than to Tatum, though neither could touch him technically. Andre Hodeir wrote a celebrated essay on Tatum in *Toward Jazz*. He said: "Any jazz pianist,

even the most obscure cocktail pianist, ornaments a tunes as he plays it; in other words, he contrives to vary the theme, either by adding personal harmonies or by interspersing the main motives with arabesques, arpeggios, or other virtuoso figures designed to contrast with the simpler melodic lines around them...It is this purely decorative approach that Tatum has adopted." Against this we can place Alun Morgan's summation in *Jazz On Record* (1968): "We shall be misled if we expect him to build new melodies on the chords of the pieces he plays...for Tatum represents...the final sophistication of stride school practices...he uses melody...as *cantus firmus* around which evolves a structure of ever-changing textures, full of counter-melodies, inner voices."

Morgan's characterisation of Tatum's style is accurate: it does not contradict Hodeir's description; though the valuation is different. Stride piano in turn descended from ragtime piano, where the performance of the piece was a kind of arrangement in which the material was put through a variety of pianistic treatments. Tatum's approach is a blend of

this with the treatment of show tunes accorded by the cocktail pianist: one of Tatum's acknowledged influences was Lee Sims, who was not a jazz pianist at all. Yet, while his dazzling interplay of left and right hand owes much to Earl Hines, Tatum's playing is essentially decorative; and his famed ability to turn a tune inside out harmonically seems a trait more evident in the work of his admirer, Bud Powell. Even Tatum's virtuoso effects are rather repetitive: one becomes tired of the constant interpolation of downward runs. That he was Norman Granz's favourite pianist is further cause for dismay. Nonetheless, one has to admit that jazz piano playing would not be the same if Tatum had not existed. His great facility and rapidity, running over the bar pattern

of tunes, opened up new possibilities exploited by later pianists like Bud Powell.

Art Tatum: 1935-1943 Transcriptions (Music & Arts CD-673: two CDs) are recordings that Tatum did in 1935, 1938, 1939 and 1943. They are contemporary with his solo recordings for Decca; though the performances are shorter in length - to their disadvantage, I feel; and perhaps a touch less crisply brilliant. They include most of the tunes that Tatum recorded commercially; and sometimes the treatment is different, as in the case of *Indiana*, taken here up-tempo, but on the Decca recording of 1940, turned into a middle-tempo elegy. Tatum's repertoire seems to have been rather limited: he recorded certain tunes three times for Decca inside a decade; and, in the case of five of his solo recordings, the later recordings were substituted for the earlier ones on the same 78 rpm issues. The Decca recordings from 1934 and 1935 are not the ones normally reissued on lp; so that it is good to have the transcription from that period. It is good, too, to hear Tatum in pieces that he did not record commercially in those days - *Stay As*

ARTIE SHAW • ART TATUM • FATS WALLER

Sweet As You Are, Get Happy, I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plans and many others.

Sixteen of these performances appeared on Jazz Panorama LP15, from which fourteen were later issued on Saga 1915 (**Art Tatum: His Rarest Solos**) six other pieces from these transcriptions appeared on Polydor 623274 (**The Swing Piano**). These CDs give us sixty-one performances in all; so that, if you are a Tatum addict, you will certainly want them. The transcriptions have been re-recorded without any attempt to interfere with the original sound so as to remove the noise of scratches - something to be commended; but one has the sense that these transcriptions are not so rare that clean copies could not have been found.

Technique is not what we think of first when we think of Fats Waller. He created himself in the white man's image of the Negro entertainer - always, with his "Yeahs" and "Oh! Mercys", feeling "effervescent". The white middle class liked him for the appearance of an uninhibitedness that they could neither risk nor attain; and his clowning became for them an image of what they thought jazz was. He attained, indeed, a wider popularity: his *Two Sleepy People* was

a popular request on the British BBC's *Housewives Choice* in the forties. The artistic became hidden by his public legend.

Waller began as an organist and pianist; and his early piano solos are amongst his finest performances. Even though later his group recordings give the appearance of someone playfully "tickling the ivories", to the end of his recording career he made solo recordings the equal of his earliest ones. His total recordings of piano solos for Victor made up only one lp; so that it was a happy event that he recorded enough such material for Associated Transcriptions in 1935 to make up almost two CDs - the one under review, **The Definitive Fats Waller Vol. 2 - Hallelujah!** (Stash ST-CD-539) and its predecessor, **The Definitive Fats Waller Vol. 1 - His Rhythm And His Piano** (Stash ST-CD-528). The sound on transcriptions was generally better than on commercial recordings; and this carries over to the CD, to give the best of opportunities to hear Waller's piano playing (along with a certain amount of vocalising). The one shortcoming is that only three of the twenty-six tracks from these transcriptions last more than three minutes; while seven of them last less than two minutes. This means that there is not the opportunity for devel-

opment offered by some of the Victor recordings. Nonetheless, we hear versions in fine sound of *Honeysuckle Rose, Clothesline Ballet, African Ripples, Alligator Crawl, Ain't Misbehavin'* and many other Waller piano classics.

What is impressive technically about these performances is the impeccable control of tone, dynamics, intonation and variation of pace. Everything seems so effortless, just because Waller is so completely in command of what he is doing. He utilises, without vulgarity, nearly the full tonal range of the piano - something that few jazz pianists do; and he developed the percussive possibilities of the instrument, in contrast to the *legato* effects favoured by Tatum and Hines. His conception of a jazz piano solo, however, puts him in the same school as Tatum. He works by reducing a tune - even his own - to a series of riffs; and an extended solo is an arrangement in which a different set of riffs is used in each chorus. This approach had a great future in section writing in swing era arrangements; but it is not my idea of what makes a good piano solo. All the same; if you like Fats Waller as a pianist, you could not do better than buy this CD and its predecessor. In addition to the transcription tracks, which appeared on two lps on French RCA, there are two privately recorded solos made in London, England in 1939, and two tracks from a George Jessel broadcast from the same year.

Stan Hasselgard was one of the outstanding Swedish jazzmen to appear after World War II - a group that included baritone player Lars Gullin, altoist Arne Domnerus, pianist Bengt Hallberg and arranger Gosta Theselius. Hasselgard came to the United States in 1947, and quickly gained attention as a virtuoso of the clarinet. He recorded four pieces for Capitol (to be heard on **Capitol Jazz Classics Vol. 4**, M-11029) only two of which had been issued before he was killed in a car crash on November 23rd 1948.

Hasselgard had been a long-time admirer of Benny Goodman; and he was no doubt overwhelmed by the interest that Goodman showed in his playing while in



STAN HASSELGARD • SIR CHARLES THOMPSON

California. In the spring of 1948, Goodman got together a small group for a concert at Carnegie Hall, which he cancelled three days before it was to take place, because he felt the band was not yet ready. That band, which included Hasselgard, played at the Click in Philadelphia in May, and the record under review consists of airshots from broadcasts on May 24th and 29th and June 1st and 5th. With Goodman and Hasselgard were Wardell Gray (tenor), Teddy Wilson (piano), Billy Bauer (guitar), Arnold Fishkind (bass) and Mel Zelnick (drums).

By this time Hasselgard had absorbed the new ideas of the bop movement and the cool jazz that followed it. Bauer and Fishkind, from the Tristano school, were well in tune with the style in which Hasselgard had come to play; and Wardell Gray was one of the leading bop tenor players. Goodman, who had picked these men, is heard trying out the new idiom. He sounds, to me, a bit uncomfortable - as does everybody except Gray; but this may be because the sound is somewhat muffled and one cannot hear the rhythm section properly. Certainly, Teddy Wilson does not contribute to the liveliness of the idiom. Goodman is heard on older favourites, such as *Bye Bye Pretty Baby*, *Bye Bye Blues*, *After You've Gone*, (where Wilson seems himself) and *Limehouse Blues*, and he appears to be relaxed and at home on them. *Indiana* and *Donna Lee* are features for Wardell Gray, who, of all the players, seems most at ease - though he is not here at his dry, relaxed, laconic best.

While this is a memorial to Hasselgard, Goodman gets most of the solos, so that Hasselgard is to be heard in extended solo on only five of the twenty tracks. His arrangement of *All the Things You Are*, where both he and Goodman solo for a chorus and then duet for the conclusion, is certainly a highlight. Hasselgard shows, with his light, clear tone and his fluent phrasing - reminiscent of Shaw as much as of Goodman - what a fine player he already was and what potential he had. This recording, *Stan Hasselgard and Benny Goodman* (Dragon DRCD 183), is a Swedish production, lovingly brought together in recognition of that lost, legendary potential. There are twenty tracks, but only twelve tunes; and the sound ranges

from acceptable to moderately good. The 77 minutes playing time is generous; but I did not find myself wishing it were longer. The best place to hear Hasselgard is in two broadcast tracks from 1947 with a similar group without Goodman, on *Wardell Gray/Stan Hasselgard* (Spotlight SPJ 134), where the pianist is the too-little heard Dodo Marmarosa, who gives the modern-style support the soloists need.

Sir Charles Thompson's *Takin' Off* (Delmark DD 450) consists of recordings made for Appolo, put out from the Rainbow Record Store in the 1940s. Four of the tracks are among the legendary recordings of the bebop era - *Takin' Off*, *The Street Beat*, *20th Century Blues* and *If I Had You*, made on September 4th 1945. As with some of the other early bop recordings, some of the musicians were founders or aficionados of the new music, while others played in an idiom formed in the Swing Era: Charlie Parker, Dexter Gordon playing alongside Buck Clayton and Sir Charles, with Danny Barker, Jimmy Butts and J.C. Heard behind them. Everybody is in great form; and, except for the lugubrious ensembles on *20th Century Blues*, it is all "A plus". Thompson's tunes *Takin' Off* and *The Street Beat* were to become bebop standards. These are among the least reissued of the early Parker classics; and, if you don't have these four tracks, you should get them. The sound is good, without the bad surfaces of the original Appolos.

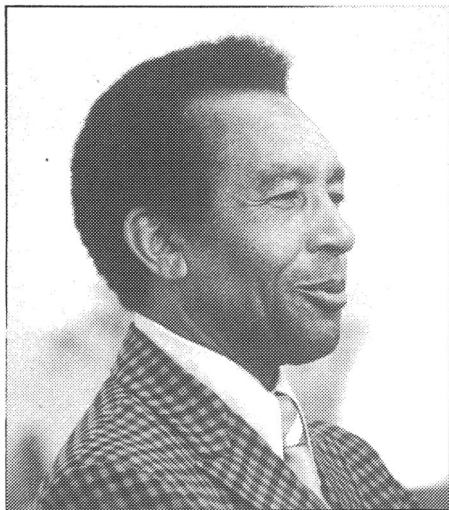
The remainder of the CD is of the same vintage, though not of the same quality, and one recognises by contrast the technical mastery of players like Gordon and Clayton that sets them apart, just as does their superior musical conceptions. Two baritone saxophonists, Leo Parker and Tate Houston, are featured respectively on *Mad Lad* and *Mr Big Horn*. Houston, particularly, has not had the recognition he deserved. The unissued *Harlem Jump*, with Pete Johnson on alto, is a notable find. Joe Newman and Taft Jordan are to be heard on trumpet; and the little known tenorist Bob Dorsey is featured on more than one number. I was intrigued by the contribution on trombone of H.B. Mitchell - a brief, assured few bars by someone who has disappeared beyond the reach of legend.

Sir Charles himself is featured on *Rhythm Itch* and shows what an accomplished player he was in the Basie manner; though favouring the lower reaches of the piano more than did Basie. He has been too little recorded over the years. He is to be heard solo on *Portrait of a Piano* (Sackville 3037); and he contributed superbly to sessions almost as legendary as the one with Parker and Gordon: his 10 inch lp for Vanguard with Coleman Hawkins stands out among the mainstream revival recordings of the fifties; and he played a part in the solid rhythmic base that sustains the long but marvellous *Robin's Nest* from the Buck Clayton Jam Sessions.

Sir Charles was also the pianist on the wonderful recordings that Vic Dickenson did for Vanguard. The clarinetist was Edmond Hall; and there has seldom been a better setting for his playing. Hall, who grew up in New Orleans, was a long time coming forward, playing in the bands of Claude Hopkins and Lucky Millinder in the 1930s. He finally emerged as a major soloist on the Condon style recordings of Wild Bill Davidson for Commodore in the 1940s; and, after refusing an offer to join Duke Ellington (post-1942, a fate worse than artistic death for a clarinetist, as Jimmy Hamilton showed), he attained fame with the Armstrong All-Stars. These recordings with Papa Bue's Viking Jazzband, *Edmond Hall In Copenhagen* (Storyville STCD 6022), are from 1966, a year before his death. He plays with the incisiveness and drive that was to be heard on the records made under his own name for Commodore two decades earlier; but this "trad" setting (complete with banjo) is not the one for Hall, whose playing essentially belongs to the swing-era mainstream. Fortunately, two thirds of the tracks are with a quartet from the group (minus banjo), where some of the numbers are of the type at which Hall excelled - *Rose Room*, *Memories of You*, *As Long as I Live*. Of Hall it may be said that he became a major exponent of the clarinet in an era in which the instrument had little prominence; but these are not his greatest recordings.

Mary Osborne: A Memorial (Stash ST-CD-550) came as a delightful surprise. I had known Mary Osborne's playing only from the four numbers that Coleman Hawkins

EDMOND HALL • MARY OSBORNE • SUN RA



made for Victor in 1946; though there had been other not-very-well-known recordings in the forties and fifties. This CD consists of six tracks recorded in 1981 in the company of Steve Laspina on bass and Charlie Persip on drums; and eleven tracks recorded in 1959 with Danny Barker on rhythm guitar, Tommy Flanagan on piano, Tommy Potter on bass, and Jo Jones on drums. That rhythm section lives up to expectation, and we get superb swinging performances of *I've Found a New Baby*, *I Surrender Dear*, *These Foolish Things*, *I Love Paris* (an unusual but fine choice) among a series of unrelentingly hot tracks. They appeared on the small Warwick label when first made; and this may account for their not being better known. Where were we when they came out? Listening to Wes Montgomery, who got all the limelight in those days? Mary Osborne is not afraid to have the guitar sound like the plucked metal-stringed instrument it is. She doesn't go for the plushy tone that Montgomery brought in; nor does she attempt his facile rapidity, which impressed critics so much. Her first influence was Charlie Christian, before he became well-known; and she plays with the drive and relaxed swing that was a mark of Christian's recordings. Mary Osborne, who died in 1991, had spent her later years in teaching (like another wonderful virtuoso, alto saxophonists Gigi Gryce, who seems to have given up playing regularly about the time she did). On the strength of this CD, she should become one of those too-little-heard legends of whom we wished we had more.

It is nice to conclude with a record that one can endorse for no other reason than that one finds oneself listening to it over and over again with pleasure. Sun Ra is one of the legends of our time, not only for the far-out costumes in which he presented himself and his Arkestra, but also for the strange ethereal, avant-garde sounds that he produced on recordings such as *The Heliocentric World of Sun Ra* (Volumes 1 & 2) (ESP DISK 1014 and ESP DISK 1017). He was also a legend before he became well-known, because his recordings were for his own obscure Saturn label, so that very few people had the chance to hear them.

If, like me, you got to know Sun Ra's music through the ESP recordings in the 1960s, you won't believe that *Holiday for Sun Dance* (Evidence ECD 22011) is by Sun Ra. Relaxed, driving, often luxurious four-beat treatments of *But Not for Me*, *Day by Day*, *I Love You Porgy*, *Body and Soul*, and four other numbers. If the record had been issued on Riverside or Blue Note when it was made, it would have been one of the records of the month. When it was made is in some doubt. The discographical material in the notes to the CD suggest 1968/69; but the writer of the text goes for 1960. The mere shortness of playing time – 32 minutes – would point to an early lp as the origin; and the music suggests the late 1950s – possible 1959 to judge from the kind of Coltrane sound that is echoed by the tenor player, John Gilmore. The group seems to consist of Sun Ra and Gilmore, with Phil Corhan (cornet); Marshall Allen (flute, alto); Ronny Boykins (bass); and Bob Bury (drums); and not the larger line-up given in the notes. They all show themselves to be fine exponents of this kind of music, as they were of Ra's more familiar later idiom. Ra sounds Monkish on *But Not For Me* and *Body and Soul*, though more like Eroll Garner on his surprisingly attractive transformation of *Holiday for Strings*. The final track, an unusual revival of the 1920s tune *Keep Your Sunny Side Up*, is not quite equal to the others; and Ricky Murry's vocal, in the Herb Jeffries/Arthur Prysock full-voiced baritone style, on *Early Autumn* does not thrill me; though Marshall Allen makes up for it on the rest of the track. What a disappointment it must have been to make such lovely music and get no attention. A record from the legendary past, to buy now.

These legends of jazz history – those who made a mark because their playing seemed in its day so outstanding, and those whose gifts remained for long recognised only by discerning few – all belonged to a common tradition; and it is in terms of their place in that tradition that we retrospectively celebrate their work. Some, like Shaw or Tatum or Waller, transformed the way their instrument was played, so that nobody who came after them could entirely ignore what they had done. They realised possibilities for their instruments that constitute a residue that later musicians can return to. If we cannot say that of players like Sir Charles Thompson or of virtuosos who practiced in obscurity, like Mary Osborne, they contributed nonetheless to the continuity and life of the tradition in which they played. Though Edmond Hall is not remembered as a startling innovator, one cannot imagine jazz clarinet playing without him, he occupies so central a place. It is sometimes surprising how aware players of commanding presence in the jazz world are of the work of their fellows, minor as well as major. The community of performance is a reality in which they all participate, whatever their fame with the public; and their achievements, thanks to recordings, can be returned to as examples as the idiom renews itself. □

TREVOR TOLLEY has been active in the jazz world since the early forties. He is a much published writer, with articles appearing in *Jazz Journal*, *Jazz Monthly*, *Storyville*, *The New Review*, *ARC* and *Aquarius*. He has taught English at universities in Finland and Australia, and from 1965 on has been associated with Carleton University in Ottawa, where for five years he was the Dean of the Faculty Of Arts. He has published numerous books including two volumes: *The Poetry of the Thirties* (1975) and *The Poetry of the Forties* (1985).

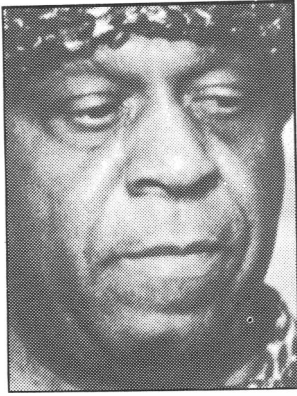
The drawing of **ART TATUM** is by Ramsess and is from a series of letter cards

SUN RA

Photograph by Gerard Futrick

SIR CHARLES THOMPSON

Photograph by Bill Smith



THE SOUL OF THE LIGHTNING, A WHISPER FROM THE REACHÉS

A TRIBUTE TO SUN RA BY MICHAEL F. HOPKINS

TO SAY THAT THE JAZZ MYSTIC SUN RA was one of the most enigmatic, charismatic, and prodigious figures to grace the annals of the great Music is not enough. One of the last original Masters of the Big Band, a pervasive influence who has firmly

touched the legacies of so many over the past 40 years plus, the incomparable Mr. Mystery left more than a monumental body of Jazz classics when he left us this past June. He left us a large-hearted warmth, honest wisdom, infectious wit, and challenging integrity which may prove to be unsurpassable.

Through Jazz, the hard-searching elder statesman forged a relentless standard of experimentation, innovation, and lyrical wonder. Known for his pioneer work on electronic keyboards, Ra persisted in commanding one of the sweetest touches ever to grace an acoustic piano. With the Arkestra (formed in the early 1950s by those who left other bands to heed a different call, all their own), Ra took the best of Henderson, Ellington, Dameron and Gillespie, forged from them and more, a rhythmic song all his own, and brought the tempos of the Third World into even greater focus.

HIS IS AN AMAZING REPERTOIRE, which includes *Ancient Aethiopia*, *Saturn*, *Lights On A Satellite*, *Images*, *Dancing Shadows*, *Omniverse*, the stargazing *Magic City*, and the cosmic tango *Space Is The Place*. Among the most diverse songbooks ever conceived, Ra's legacy straddles the deadly snap of Bop and the explorative flicker of the Avant Garde. Straight from the swing of essential American standards, and the freedom of solid conceptuality, Ra emerged deep in the discipline of his own guideline's, and a perceptive balladry which will not be denied.

With all this, Ra's value is further enhanced by the very nature of his presentation. For all of the Science Fiction flavour running through his theatricality, the essence of the Myth Realist's song and dance is borne from foot-patting, dirt-talking, root-stalking Blues. Here lived the uplifting Blues of real life strangers in a strange land, refusing to settle for ignorance and despair. Fueling a travelling minstrel show which ripped apart the insidious mammyface of Al Jolson, Sun Ra opted for concoctions of symbolic fun and joyous ritual, geared to spark playfulness and provoke entertaining thought within the most cowering imagination.

YET IT WAS HIS GRIOT-INSPIRED CONJURE of storytelling song and dance, taking shape through a cagey showman's moonspinning razzle-dazzle, which was most misunderstood by many critics and peers throughout the decades. Those who came for a tourist attraction were often blown away by the serious depth of even the most casual Sun Ra concert. Those coming for rank intellectual status-seeking were often affronted by the sight of the Arkestra marching up the aisles and into the streets, gleefully du wah diddy-bopping to the stellar-charged salvation theme of *We Travel The Spaceways*. Even in the past decade-and-a-half, where the Pop industry has made fashionable the mindless sounds and fascistic frenzy of amateur hour

street theatre, many *still* dismiss the aesthetic variety of Ra and Arkestra as "anti-white", "anti-Jazz", or out-n-out "noise". To those wanting pat rationales, easy descriptions, and pocketable answers, Sun Ra was—and will forever be—unexplainable.

FOR SUN RA IS THE SOUL OF THE LIGHTNING, A WHISPER FROM THE REACHÉS, astral Black and culturally beckoning. His *El Saturn* record label struck the precedent for artist-controlled production and distribution decades ago. His poetic allusion and thespian sense of multi-media touched a wide field of artists, from collagists to poets, from abstractionists to romanticists. With Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk, Ra was one of the seminal guides who motivated John Coltrane's most prodigiously giant steps. From the Art Ensemble of Chicago to Gunter Hampel, from the street call of the Willem Breuker Kollektif to the impassioned equations of Anthony Braxton and onward, the touch of Myth Realist is everywhere.

Look to the classic legions that have closed ranks to form the Arkestra over the decades (from sadly ignored songkeepers like Hatty Randolph and June Tyson, brass kings like Art Hoyle, Hobart Dotson and Julian Priester, towering bassists like Ronnie Boykins and John Ore, to saxophonic titans like John Gilmore, Marshall Allen and Pat Patrick), and one discerns the most consistent, long-standing allegiance of masters since the time of Duke Ellington himself. From among such ranks, and elsewhere, it is certain that the vitality of such ways will carry on.

LONG BEFORE BLACKNESS CAME INTO THE PUBLIC RELATIONS VOGUE, Sun Ra was talking cultural aesthetics and community building. When corporate whims worked to twist ethnic creed into race-baiting, narcissistic greed during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ra called it out for the hypocritical, self mocking disgrace that it was. To the end, he opposed mendacity, surmounted mediocrity, and even prevailed over the illness of his final years to keep fine Music and good sense flowing strong and wild, gentle and true.

Because of his unyielding genius and firm generosity, the light of his offerings will glow brightly in all who saw him, all who spoke with him, and all who continue to experience his sound of joy, and silent prayer for the betterment of all people.

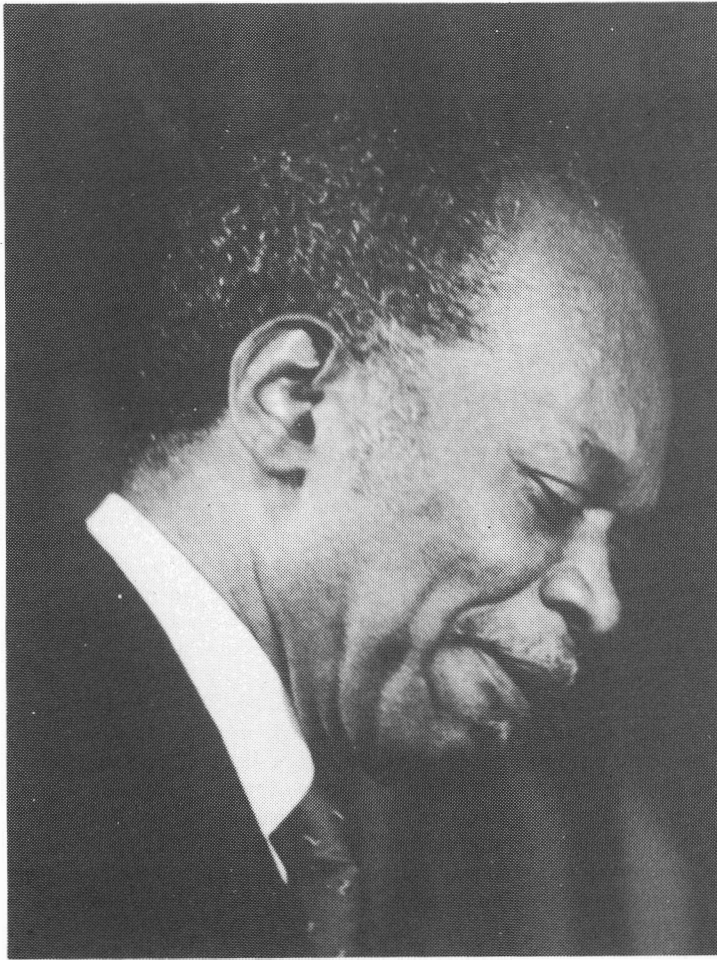
IN THE END, THERE WILL BE MANY THINGS SAID—and unsaid—about the prophet, the pariah, the portly court jester, or whatever else people took him for. When all the epithets are spent, all the honours paid, and all the mysteries truly begun, the essential truth will linger, and build like a river across hungry plains.

Sun Ra was a man. A human being who many of us were fortunate to have had enter our lives. It is certain that such a person will not come this way again for quite some time, if ever.

His presence of character, the living spirit of Jazz, will always be with us. Such a presence will not permit the death of its very meaning.

Or ours. □

HANK JONES



DOUG WATSON: *Maturity in playing. To achieve one's own individual style is something we all strive for as musicians. It's sometimes difficult escaping your influences to choose to not listen to your favourite players for awhile and see what happens.*

HANK JONES: It is a good idea not to listen too much. Don't become obsessed with a particular player or style. Rather, it's best to concentrate on learning a thorough grounding in the principles of harmony and developing your technique so that when your style evolves you'll have the facility to express your ideas and develop your own lines. I think it's most important for young players to do it this way. And to get a sense of the historical perspective of jazz music. Players like Wynton Marsalis and Marcus Roberts, they think in terms of the historical content of jazz. They know about what happened in 1920, 1930 and 1940. I think people like them are the ones who make the greatest progress. They understand jazz better

because they know where it started. Nobody knows where it's going but it helps to know where it started.

Who would you cite as being some of your influences?

I listened to 'Fats' Waller, Art Tatum ... after Art Tatum who else is there? Duke Ellington... I suppose my harmonic concept is an amalgamation of those two styles plus others. And Teddy Wilson. A lot of people don't give Duke Ellington credit for being a fine pianist but he was. A lot of the arrangements he made for the band came about because of his use of his left hand. He played the kind of piano that was exactly right for his orchestra. Let's see, who else...I used to listen to Earl Hines. Now, Earl Hines didn't have a great left hand but his style was the forerunner of the so-called "bop" style. He used a lot of single line figures which became hallmarks of that style. Influences...I think any person is the sum total of all their experiences to date. If your experience happens to be musical then it's the sum total of all the musical ideas that have impinged on your conscious or unconscious mind, that you unconsciously evolve a style. I don't think it's a preordained or preconceived thing. You evolve. In your listening and playing experience you adopt the things that your mind thinks you can incorporate into your playing style.

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Who would you cite as being some of your influences?

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*One of your many experiences was recording with altoist Charlie Parker. One session released on Verve comes to mind from late 1952 or early 1953 when you recorded **The Song Is You, Laird Baird, Kim and Cosmic Rays** with Bird's quartet.*

That's a long time ago. The recording studio I think was Riverside. Yes it does bring back memories. Charlie Parker...it makes me realize today how great this man was. It was a great learning experience. Anytime you work with people of that calibre you come away enriched musically. I suspect that 500 or a 1000 years from today people will look back and say Bird was one of this century's true masters.

What do you think the young players of today should be getting out of Bird's music?

I think the young players should concentrate on his musical thinking rather than what the thinking produced. Think about the harmonic ideas that Bird had, then develop your own lines. I don't think anybody should try to imitate him consciously. Try to emulate the idiom without playing the notes. The thought is really what you should concentrate on...the musical thinking that produced the playing.

Speaking of younger players, has anyone impressed you recently?

Marcus Roberts. He's a very, very fine young pianist. He uses both hands very well. He doesn't play as if he had one hand tied behind his back like too many of the young players do, you know, to much right hand. His whole attitude about music is very constructive. He's a thinker and he knows exactly what he's doing. He has great maturity of mind and is going to be one of the great, great stars of the future.

A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH DOUG WATSON

You've established yourself as one of the greatest accompanists of all time. Singers and instrumentalists love the way you 'comp for them.

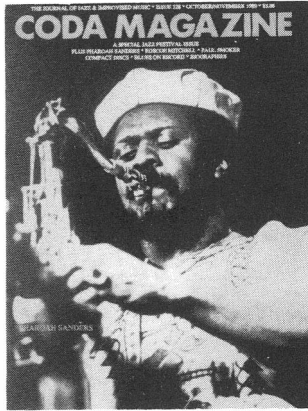
Well I try not to get in the way. Accompanying is quite an art. A lot of pianists confuse accompanying with soloing. You must stay in the background and complement the singer or soloist. The main idea is to help not hinder...not too many altered harmonies and not too many rhythmic departures from the norm. Try not to distract. Try to direct if you can but never lead too far ahead.

During your long career as a jazz pianist is there anyone you regret not having been able to work with?

I can't think of a name offhand. I'm sure there are players out there but I've worked with a great many of the great players...Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Ben Webster, Don Byas, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Shavers, Stan Getz, Charlie Ventura...all these people. Many of them were members of the Jazz At The Philharmonic tours that I did 1947 through 1951. To my knowledge players of this calibre don't exist today. Perhaps in later years players of today will reach the stage of proficiency that we're talking about but you see Doug it takes time to develop. It takes years of experience. Mature style develops from personal experience, a thorough knowledge of harmony and mastery of one's own instrument. Styles just don't happen overnight. They take years to evolve. □

*This interview was conducted on **Portraits In Jazz** a weekly show on CIUT-FM Radio (89.5 in Toronto). Doug Watson is a Toronto saxophonist, broadcaster and journalist.*

HANK JONES PHOTOGRAPH
BY GERARD FUTRICK



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179	(June 1981)	Dannie Richmond, Jimmy Knepper, Blues News
174	(Aug. 1980)	Leroy Jenkins, Jemeel Moondoc, Eddie Jefferson
169	(Oct. 1979)	Amina Claudine Myers, Kenny Burrell, Pisa/Bracknell Fests
168	(Aug. 1979)	Albert Mangelsdorff, Barry Altschul, Moers Festival
167	(June 1979)	Evan Parker, Incus Records, Red Callender, Rova Sax Quartet
163	(Oct. 1979)	Henry Red Allen, Frank Lowe, Albert Nicholas
159	(Feb. 1978)	Randy Weston, Milt Hinton, Blues News
158	(Dec. 1977)	Joseph Jarman, Eddie Durham, Bobby Hackett
157	(Oct. 1977)	Bobby Bradford, John Carter, Chet Baker, Butch Morris
155	(June 1977)	George Lewis, Lloyd Glenn
154	(April 1977)	Milt Buckner, Christmann, Schonenberg
151	(Oct. 1976)	Don Pullen, Benny Waters
150	(Sept. 1976)	Milford Graves, Will Bradley
134	(Dec. 1974)	Julian Priestler, Muggsy Spanier Big Band, Steve McCall
133	(Nov. 1974)	Charles Delaunay, pt. 1, Rex Stewart, Howard King
132	(Oct. 1974)	Karl Berger, Jazz Crossword, Johnny Shines

CANADIAN NOTES

CANADA CELEBRATED THE WORLD OF JAZZ this summer with concerts and festivals across the land. Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City were among the communities. Many international artists were featured, while Canadian performers took to the road for their yearly opportunity to play for audiences far from their own locales. Even with this pooling of talent each event has developed its own personality - a credit to the organisers and the diversity of appreciation from audiences.

DuMAURIER LTD. DOWNTOWN JAZZ: TORONTO

This was year seven and the event has finally gained the credibility and support it deserves from government and business. Attendance was much higher and considerable enthusiasm was shown for a wide ranging array of musical talent.

The festival was built around the daily concerts at Nathan Phillips Square, Metro Centre and City TV/Much Music's parking lot. There is no charge for these events (two a day at each venue) and a broad diversity of international and local artists were showcased.

Highlights included a one time presentation of **Kenny Wheeler's** big band scores where the trumpeter was featured with a specially assembled big band who tackled brilliantly (with minimum of rehearsal) the complex charts. Norma Winstone's voice was a key factor in the concert's success.

Rob McConnell's Boss Brass opened the festival's activities and then gave five more concerts at Nathan Phillips Square to the delight of their large audience. Equally impressive was the appearance of the Jazz Ambassadors

of the United States Army Field Band who gave two concerts.

These venues also showcased Mulgrew Miller's new quartet (which introduced Toronto audiences to vibraphonist Steve Nelson), the Charles Lloyd Quintet, Roy Hargrove and Bobby Watson. Out of town Canadian performers at these venues included Chelsea Bridge, Michel Clusson, **Jean Derome**, Walle Larsson, **P.J. Perry**, Paulo Ramos, **Charles Papasoff**, Larry Roy/Marilyn Lerner and Karen Young.

International artists ranged from the traditional jazz of Austria's Red Hot Pods to the very contemporary sounds of Germany's Grubenklangorchester. But it was the intoxicating rhythms and melodically dramatic playing of **The African Jazz Pioneers** who made the biggest impression. This thirteen piece band gave Toronto listeners a chance to hear the vital music from South Africa's Townships in its purest form.

This festival, with over one thousand performers, is far too large for one person to hear everything.



In reality there are at least five separate festivals running simultaneously.

Toronto's Downtown Jazz Society (the organising body which runs the festival) presented showcase ticketed events with Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson and Keith Jarrett. The Rivoli hosted a series of concerts entitled "The Next Wave". England's Mike Westbrook, Canada's **Michael Snow/Paul Dutton** and **N.O.M.A.**, Russia's Bolt & Cheka, and Hungary's Szakcsi were among those performing.

Harbourfront is the second major component of the festival. The nightly concerts at the duMaurier Theatre presented Abdullah Ibrahim, Randy Weston, Michel Petrucciani, Gonzalo Rubalcaba and the bands of Steve Lacy and John Scofield. Harbourfront was also the venue for the Rollins and Henderson concerts and a weekend of no charge concerts with

the **Dave McMurdo Jazz Orchestra**, **JMOG**, **Hagood Hardy's** Sextet, **Ranee Lee** and **Charles Mountford**. Simultaneously there were traditional jazz sounds at a different venue with the Climax Jazz Band, Harvey Silver's Band and the All Stars which featured Yank Lawson, George Masso, pianists Ralph Sutton and Johnny Varro, Dave Young, Jake Hanna and festival artistic director **Jim Galloway**.

The final component of the festival is the clubs. An astonishing array of venues presented jazz through the festival but most of them will not see another jazz musician until next year's festival! **Capriccio** and **Mezzetta Cafe** are among the exceptions who have been supporting the local jazz community on a regular basis. The best music could be found at the three clubs which feature jazz on a regular basis: **Georges Spaghetti House**, **The Montreal Bistro** and **Top O' The Senator**. Nat Adderley

BY JOHN NORRIS & A.C.STONE

(with Vincent Herring), Kenny Garrett, Velvet Glove, Irene Stitt, Vanessa Rubin and Roy Hargrove were among the headliners at those venues.

Additional activity included jazz cruises around the harbour, Reel Jazz — film presentations by Marc Glassman with Rhapsody Films Bruce Ricker in attendance for several days, jazz workshops and jam sessions at the Holiday Inn (host Hotel) Judy Bar which were well lubricated into the small hours of the night following regular sessions with **Ian Bargh's** Trio and soloists **Art Ellefson**, **Rob McConnell** and Marty Grosz.

Jake Hanna has been the spark-plug of many bands since he gained widespread attention with the 1963 Herman Herd. His forte, though is small group swing and he gave the Harbourfront All Stars a special lift. It was a joy to hear this music and, in particular, the way in which trumpeter Yank Lawson, at 82, lays down the lead with authority. His distinctive tone and phrasing is unique.

P.J. Perry, buoyed by his recent Juno Award, brought his own quintet to Toronto. P.J. has always been a burning bebopper since the night he dropped into Toronto for the first time in 1959 and blew everyone away at the Minc Club. **Claude Ranger** was the fire behind Perry for this intense set of originals and bebop standards.

Danny D'Imperio's Sextet was the surprise hit of the festival. This is a classic bebop band with a remarkable repertoire of charts for just about every tune from the bebop era. The music is built upon a classic rhythm section. Hod

O'Brien, Dave Shapiro and Danny D'Imperio lay down a driving time feel (not a hint at Bill Evans or McCoy Tyner harmonics) for the horn players. Trumpeter Greg Gisbert is feisty, exuberant and dynamic but the sensitivity and flow of Ralph Lalama's tenor playing is ultimately more rewarding. Andy Fusco's alto playing was down the middle with its supple lines and clear articulation. Like Art Blakey and Horace Silver in the 1960s this band generates excitement.

Equally intense was the music offered by an all star quintet under Kenny Wheeler's nominal leadership. Joe LaBarbera's multi-layered rhythms were perfectly tuned to the playing of Wheeler, guitarist **Sonny Greenwich** and pianist **Don Thompson**. These three contributed most of the tunes to the band's repertoire. Bassist **Jim Vivien** brought out the nuances of Dave Holland's composition dedicated to Charles Mingus to perfection. This was high energy music which reflected everyone's mutual concerns within Coltrane flavoured parameters. But it was LaBarbera's high pressure drumming which raised the level of the playing into uniquely expressive areas.

Bobby Watson's music will leave you with a warm and happy glow. He finds joy in the playing of his colleagues, and his own solos retain elements of his Kansas City roots. His alto "sings", and this links him to such past masters as Johnny Hodges and Sonny Criss. Victor Lewis' drumming gave the music a fluidly loose feel. He achieved every effect without any sense of strain. Trumpeter Terrell Stafford was a stylistically adroit foil for Bobby Watson.

News Notes: **Joe Sealy** has taken up a long residency at the King Edward Hotel's Consort Bar in Toronto. Bassist Paul Novotny and reedman Bob D'Angelis complete the trio. On Sundays the band becomes a quartet with the addition of drummer Archie Alleyne... **Oliver Jones** and **Phil Nimmons** have been resident this July at the Courtenay Youth Music Camp (CYMC) in British Columbia, and have also been featured in concert: Jones solo and Nimmons with the father and son team of **Art and Lee Ellefson**. Tenorist **Eddie Holiday** still plays regularly at the Thatch Pub, with the **Charles Gauvin** trio. Bassist **Bill Britto** passed away January 22 in Massachusetts. He

was an important part of the Toronto jazz scene in the 1950s... Canadian musicians are getting better representation on recordings these days. Just out is the latest Boss Brass on **Concord**. *Our 25th Year* is a self explanatory title... New on **Unity** are CDs from guitarist Roy Patterson and saxophonist Alex Dean... New from **Justin Time** is Oliver Jones' *Just 88*, a solo piano set.

NOTE: Information from musicians and promoters should be sent to JOHN NORRIS, CODA MAGAZINE, PO BOX 87, STN. A, TORONTO, ONTARIO M4J 4X8, for possible inclusion in this column.

WINDSOR JAZZ FESTIVAL 2 BY A.C. STONE

From April 29th to May 2nd this year, Windsor, Ontario was host to some of the best jazz musicians in North America as Hugh Leal presented his second Windsor Jazz Festival. **Bobby Fenton**, **Guido Basso**, Marcus Belgrave and dozens of other Canadian and U.S. musicians performed indoors and out at the Hilton Hotel, Art Gallery of Windsor, Capitol Theatre and Cleary International Centre.

The Festival got a swinging start with Leal's own **Motown Classic Blues'n Jazz Band**, featuring **Juanita McCray** reprising the songs of Sippie Wallace & Bessie Smith. While the group has only been together for a short time, their musical styles gelled perfectly

and were the ideal backing for McCray's lusty blues. They left the crowd of traditional jazz fans begging for more.

The next night, the Festival moved to the cabaret setting of the Hilton Hotel's ballroom where 300 fans welcomed the return of Windsor's Bobby Fenton. The popular Toronto pianist was joined by old friends Stu Saunders (tbn), Gerry Brannigan (tenor sax) and a host



AROUND THE WORLD

COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS

of younger musicians to produce some of the finest jazz of the weekend.

Saturday afternoon, Leal moved to the local Art Gallery to provide something for everyone. Fans crowded into the Gallery's restaurant to listen to the big band arrangements of the **Peabody Bridge Demolition Crew**. A new group, led by Tom Powers and featuring some of the best young musicians in the city. They sounded like they had been playing together for years. A musical treat for those who managed to get in.

For those who couldn't, there was a free outdoor concert, in the Art Gallery Plaza, featuring three area bands comprised of future jazz stars.

The lead group was the Washtenaw Community College Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Morris Lawrence. This 27 piece band from Ann Arbor, Michigan has performed at Carnegie Hall and are regulars at the Detroit/Montreux Festival.

They were followed by Windsor's **Brennan High School Jazz Stage Band**. This is an ambitious group, tackling everything from swing standards to the music of Charlie Parker, and whose arrangements and swinging soloists delighted the enthusiastic crowd.

The session closed with an excellent set by **Matrix**, a community jazz ensemble composed of local musicians who get together to hone their craft and explore all the nuances of big band sound.

All of this, of course, merely set the stage for the main event, held at the Cleary International Centre on Saturday evening. This session featured ten of the biggest names in Detroit jazz, the Stars of the

Montreux/Detroit Festival. Larry Nozaro (alto), Jimmy Wilkins (tbn), Marion Hayden (bs), Gary Shunk (pno), Johnny Trudell (tpt), Ursula Walker (vcls) Pistol Allen (drs), Charlie Gabriel (tenor), and George Benson (sax) were joined by special guest drummer Roy Brooks.

From the duet by Benson and Nozaro, early in the show, through the percussion demonstration on everything from a traditional drum set to a hand saw by Brooks, through the final jam session, this will be remembered by those who attended, as the highlight of the weekend.

For the final session on Sunday some of Canada's finest musicians returned to the Capitol Theatre, which I found to be the best setting for a concert. (Cabaret settings may more closely represent normal listening conditions, but I've never understood why people would pay to hear the music and then talk through the solos). Guido Basso (tpt/flugel horn), **Dave Young** (bs), **Barry Elmes** (drs), **Brian Dickinson** (pno) and **Phil Dwyer** (tenor), demonstrated to an appreciative crowd why Canadian musicians are internationally acclaimed.

A surprise visit by Detroit trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, who had not been scheduled to appear at this year's festival was an added treat to the 600 or so fans in attendance.

Despite the work involved and a grand piano that must have once been used by Doug Henning (Why else would it disappear every time it was moved from one location to another?), Leal was encouraged by the response and has already started to work on Windsor Jazz Festival 3. Watch for the announcements. It will be well worth a trip to Windsor. □



T.S. MONK • PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIANNE DE TREY

Trumpeter **Clora Bryant** was music director for a special tribute to Dizzy Gillespie and his music April 27 at Inglewood, California's Southland Cultural Center. Among the highlights was a version of 'Tour de Force' featuring the horns of Bryant, Al Aarons, Marcus Belgrave, Oscar Brashear, Jon Faddis, Chuck Findlay and Clark Terry. Bryant, who was burned out of her house during the LA riots, has written a suite 'to Dizzy with Love' and will be in New York this summer for performances of this work.

A summer long exhibit on JAZZ is on display at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza... The International Jazz Society, a St. Louis organization, is planning to open a new international jazz museum in the historic Ludwig-Aeolian Piano Company showroom in downtown St. Louis in late 1993.

The 10 piece Either/Orchestra is planning a Western US tour for early 1994. For tour information contact Jon Poses at (314) 449-3009.

Changing economic times in Europe are threatening the very nature of much of the music's presentations. FMP is hanging in in Berlin. Coming in August are concerts with **Toshinori Kondo** and **Charles Gayle**. These will be followed by the **Total Music Meeting** from October 27-31. Solo saxophonists, solo vocalists and groups will be presented. FMP can be reached at Lubecker Strasse 19, D-10559 Berlin, Germany.

Michael Schilp's paintings (many of which use the saxophone and jazz themes) are exhibited widely in Europe and have been used as cover art for magazines and festival programs. The artist can be reached at Am Perick 37, 58675 Hemer/Westfalen, Germany.

Bob Brookmeyer is organiser of a summer improvisation workshop at Amsterdam University.

COMPETITIONS & AWARDS

The 1993 Thelonious Monk Piano Competition takes place November 21-22 at the Kennedy Center

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY THOMSON

NEWS • COMPETITIONS & AWARDS • FESTIVALS

in Washington D.C... Australia's National Saxophone Awards will be part of the Wangaratta Jazz Festival to be held October 30-31.

Kenny Drew is the 1993 recipient of Denmark's Palae Bar Jazz Prize... **Pierre Dorge's** New Jungle Orchestra has become Denmark's 'State Ensemble' for the next three years... Michel Urbaniak has received an award for best achievements in jazz and for Polish culture... Gospel singer Marion Williams received a MacArthur Fellowship.

FESTIVALS

The eleventh annual **San Francisco Jazz Festival** will be held between October 29 and November 14. Joe Henderson, Joshua Redman, Pat Metheny, Cleo Laine, Carla Bley/Steve Swallow, David Murray, Don Byron, and Steve Turre are among the performing artists.

The T.S. Monk band, Randy Sandke's New York All Stars, the J.J. Johnson Quintet (featuring Renee Rosnes' dynamic piano) and the spectacular piano of Dorothy Donegan highlighted this year's **Bern Jazz Festival**, in Switzerland.

Monk's dynamic brand of musicianship brought out the ensemble qualities of the sextet (trumpeter Don Sickler, altoist Bobby Porcelli, tenor saxophonist Willie Williams) and their expressive solo qualities. Veteran pianist Ronnie Mathews was well featured and his solo presentations were on of several highlights. The Randy Sandke band paid tribute to Bix Beiderbecke in a well chosen collection of tunes which highlighted the ensemble discipline and solo abilities of Ken Peplowski, Dan Barrett and the

marvellous sound of Scott Robinson's bass saxophone. Other standouts at the festival were Brian Sledge's powerful trumpet work with Arvell Shaw's band and the muted trombone effects of Denis Wilson (with Shaw), Barrett and Wycliffe Gordon (with Wynton Marsalis).

The blues night, far and away the most popular event of the festival, is often tedious. Chic Street Man + Street Sounds was a refreshing discovery. Chic Street Man is an acoustic guitarist (out of the Brownie McGhee tradition) who writes and sings his own material. All the performers are from Los Angeles and their music deals with topical situations in that torn apart community. More should be heard from these performers. They are good.

VIDEOS

Rhapsody Films has new videos covering the spectrum of jazz. New Orleans bassist Chester Zardis is 'the Spirit of New Orleans'. 'Texas Tenor' is the documentary of Illinois Jacquet. 'Last Date:Eric Dolphy' includes rare European footage by the great saxophonist. 'Space Is The Place' is a 1970s performance/fantasy creation featuring Sun Ra's Intergalactic Solar Arkestra.

View Video has released concert videos of Dizzy Gillespie in Chicago and Toshiko Akiyoshi's Jazz Orchestra.

'Beyond El Rocco' is an Australian feature movie which incorporates the performances of Aussie musicians Dale Barlow, Don Burrows, Sandy Evans, Roger Frampton, Paul Grabowsky, Bernie McGann, James Morrison and Mike Nock.

LITERATURE

'Reading Jazz' is a collection of essays, articles, poetry and fiction which presents a view of how jazz has been mythologized. David Meltzer created the book, which is published by **Mercury House** in San Francisco.

England's **Ashley Mark Publishing Company** has reprinted Adrian Ingram's 'Wes Montgomery'. It includes updated discographical information and CD issues. They have also reprinted Charles Delaunay's 'Django Reinhardt' but no attempt has been made, in this case, to include new CD issues of the guitarist's recordings.

'Prez: Homage to Lester Young' is a collection of poems by Jamie Reid which is published by **Oolichan Books** P.O. Box 10, Lantzville B.C. V0R 2H0.

'Chet Baker in Europe 1975-1988' a 176 page book, also includes a CD. Edited by Ingo Wulff, the text in German and English, traces his many tours and is illustrated with more than 180 photographs. It is available from **Nieswand-Verlag Gmbh**, Werftbahnstrasse 8, D-2300 Kiel 14, Germany.

Coming soon from Abbeville Press is Larry Cohn's 'Nothing But The Blues'. Already out is a deluxe, beautifully illustrated photographic book called 'Acoustic Guitars And Other Fretted Instruments'. It was written by George Gruhn and Walter Carver and the publisher is **Miller Freeman Books**.

Music students will want to pick up on Jack Reilly's 'The Harmony of Bill Evans'. It is published by **Unichrom Publishing Company**, P.O. Box 150-243, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.

RECORDINGS

BLUES AND GOSPEL

New from **Arhoolie's** archives are two CDs of music from a 1969 Blues Jam in Memphis. There are six selections not available on the original lps which featured such legends as Sleepy John Estes, Bukka White, Fred McDowell, Furry Lewis and Napoleon Strickland. Other Arhoolie CDs repackage material by Juke Boy Bonner and Piano Red as well as extending the content of Harry Oster's important 'Country Negro Jam Session' lp from Folk Lyric.

Shanachie has released compilations featuring The Great Gospel Women and The Great Gospel Men.

TRADITIONAL

'Jubilesta' is a fine showcase for the trombone of Dan Barrett. He's heard in trio and quartet settings with the piano of Ray Sherman featured. It's on **Arbors Records**... Marty Grosz' recording career is moving into high gear with the release on **Jazzology** of 'Songs I Learned At My Mother's Knee and other low joints'. Upcoming in the fall is his latest, to be issued on England's **J&M Records**... More archival George Lewis material has been issued by England's Lake Records. It's a 1966 concert with Ken Colyer's Jazzmen. Lake has also recorded Ged Hone's New Orleans Boys and The Savannah Jazz Band, two regional UK bands in the New Orleans tradition... The Bunk Project is an American attempt at perpetuating the traditions of Bill Russell's American Music recordings with Eddy Davis the music director. This **Musicmasters** release does little to enhance the reputations of some

VIDEOS • LITERATURE • RECORDINGS • PASSING NOTES

of the musicians on the sessions and, to some ears, can only cast further doubts on the qualities of the original Bunk Johnson recordings. These, fortunately, are now widely available on **American Music** CDs in greatly enhanced sound quality... Australia's **Access Jazz** (P.O. Box 111, Kew, Victoria 3101) has issued a CD by The Storyville Jazztet and guest soloists. The New Orleans sound is obviously still part of the Australian scene.

NEW ISSUES

Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Joey Calderazzo and Pieces of a Dream all have new CDs on **Blue Note**... Howard Alden's latest trio date on **Concord** is 'A Good Likeness' and he also shares the spotlight with Ken Peplowski in a Maybeck duo concert... New artists on Concord worth checking out are trombonist Robert Trowers' 'Synopsis' and the Rick Hollander Quartet's 'Accidental Fortune'... You might, also, be surprised at the quality of Steve Allen's 'plays Jazz Tonight'. It helps that he has Glenn Zottola, Ken Peplowski, Howard Alden, Chuck Berghofer and Frankie Capp in tow for this date... The Maybeck Recital Hall solo series continues with a good one from Cedar Walton.

Guitarist Garrison Fewell's debut recording is on **Accurate Records**. 'A Blue Deeper than the Blue' also features Fred Hersch, Cecil McBee and Matt Wilson... Due up from Capitol/EMI via **Blue Note** in August is the T.S. Monk band's second recording 'Changing of the Guard'... **Chiaroscuro** has recent CDs out featuring Jay McShann in different settings and a Flip Phillips ballad date with strings. In the works from Chiaroscuro are new recordings from Summit Reunion, Dorothy Donegan and the debut of pianist Jesse Green.

Rickey Woodard's second **Candid** release is 'The Tokyo Express'... Don Byron's new **Elektra None-such** release is 'plays the music of Mickey Katz'... New on **FMO Productions** (222 N. Percival St., Olympia WA 98502) is 'Further Adventures in Jazz' featuring saxophonist Bert Wilson... David Murray and Dave Burrell join forces in the **Gazell** release 'Brother to Brother'... **GM Recordings** has issued 'The Mingus Epitaph Rhythm Section'... **In & Out Records** is a German company with recent recordings by Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, the cooperative group 'Roots' and a new edition of the Maynard Ferguson Band... Tim Berne's 'Diminutive Mysteries' salutes the music of Julius Hemphill. It's a new **JMT** recording distributed by Polygram.

Leo Records has new releases by Keshavan Maslak/Paul Bley, Jon Lloyd Quartet, Sun Ra (1991 concert in Banlieus) and the group 'Earthbound'... **Muworks Records** (111 4th Avenue #5A, New York, NY 10003) has issued 'Headfirst Into The Flames', a live concert recording by Last Exit and featuring Sonny Sharrock, Peter Brotzmann, Bill Laswell and Shannon Jackson.

Trumpeter Marvin Stamm is the 'Mystery Man' on **Music Masters**... Mulgrew Miller's first **MBG Novus** recording is 'Hand in Hand'...

Polygram has issued Ahmad Jamal: 'Live in Paris '92', 'Let's Hang Out' with the J.J. Johnson Group, Helen Merrill's 'Blossom Of the Stars', pianist Stephen Scott's 'Aminah's Dream' and Randy Weston's 'Volcano Blues'.

Harold McKinney and Wendell Harrison collaborate on 'Something for Pops' on **Wenha Records** (Rebirth, 81 Chandler, Detroit, MI

48202)... **Spotlight Records** has issued Harry Beckett's 'All Four One' and Pat Crumly's 'Beyond the Mask'... Bassist Matt Kendrick and pianist Fred Hersch collaborate in 'Other Aspects', a duo recording from **Suitcase Music**, P.O. Box 10121, Winston Salem, NC 27108.

Telarc's ever expanding jazz catalogue now includes a Joe Williams date with the Count Basie Orchestra, the Slide Hampton Band in action at the Village Vanguard, a debut session for vocalist Jeanie Bryson (with great accompanying group) and Bobby Short with the Alden Barrett Quintet. Telarc also has a George Shearing session with his piano immersed inside Robert Farnon's lush orchestrations.

JazzMania Records has CDs by Hod O'Brien's Quintet and vocalist Stephanie Nakasian's 'Bitter Sweet'... Andy Lavern's 'Double Standard' is on **Triloka Records**.

REISSUES

The 1976 Village Vanguard Jam Sessions were originally on Solid State. All the Dizzy Gillespie material is now on a double **Blue Note** set. The lps had edited versions of the tunes but this set restores them to their original state. Five of the seven titles are also widely available (in unedited shape) on LRC. The companion set from that same session with Chick Corea, Joe Farrell and Marvin Stamm is now on a separate **Blue Note** CD (all three tunes). Another **Capitol/EMI** double CD (on Roulette) reissues the September 1954 Birdland All Stars Concert from Carnegie Hall featuring Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan.

A further 20 selections from the Savoy catalogue have been reissued by **Denon**. Artists on these

short length CDs include Marian McPartland, Yusef Lateef, Bill Barron, Charles Moffett and Ronnell Bright.

Mosaic has issued on lp/CD 'The Complete CBS Buck Clayton Jam Sessions' and 'The Complete Don Cherry Blue Note Recordings' Also issued on lp only is 'The Complete 1959 CBS Charles Mingus Recordings'. Upcoming on Mosaic are the Decca Studio Recordings of the Louis Armstrong All Stars, The Complete Serge Chaloff Sessions, the Roulette studio recordings of Count Basie, the Benny Goodman Capitol small group recordings 1945-1955 and the 1964-1966 Jackie McLean Blue Note sessions. These mail order only recordings can be obtained from Mosaic at 35 Melrose Place, Stamford CT 06902.

Oscar Peterson's legendary Stratford concert has been reissued on **Verve** with two additional selections. Don't miss out on Peterson's four CD set containing the six 'Exclusively for my Friends' lps from MPS. That too is on Verve.

Polygram's highly successful 'Compact Jazz' and 'Gitanes Jazz' continues its programming of inexpensive compilations from their many labels. Art Blakey, Chick Corea, Ella Fitzgerald/Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Shirley Horn, John McLaughlin, Anita O'Day and Bud Powell are among the recent releases.

Dave Brubeck and Teddy Wilson are the first artists from Marian McPartland's 'Piano Jazz' series to be issued on CD by **Jazz Alliance**.

PASSING NOTES

The legendary pianist/composer/bandleader **Sun Ra** died May 31 in Birmingham Alabama... Blues guitarist **Luther Tucker** died June 17 in San Rafael, California. □

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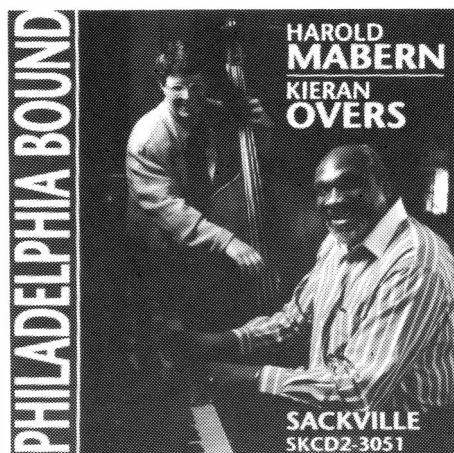
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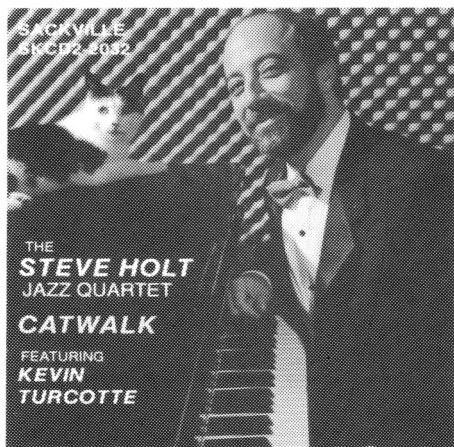
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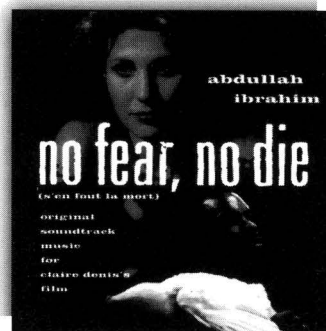
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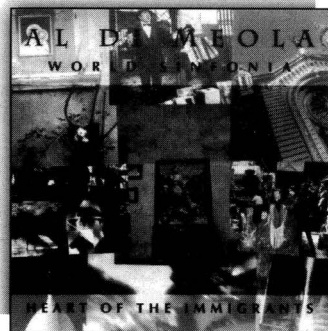
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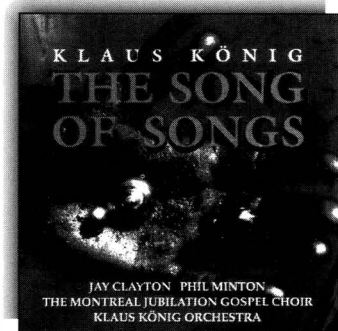
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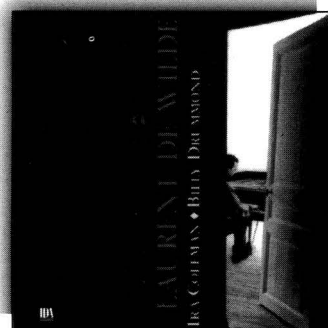
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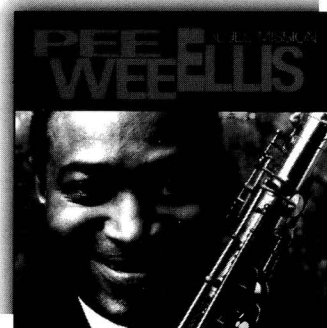
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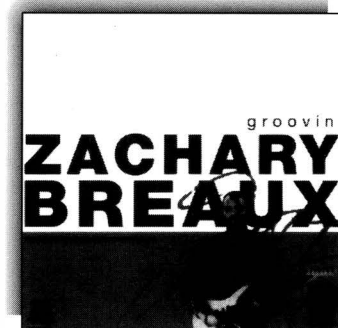
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