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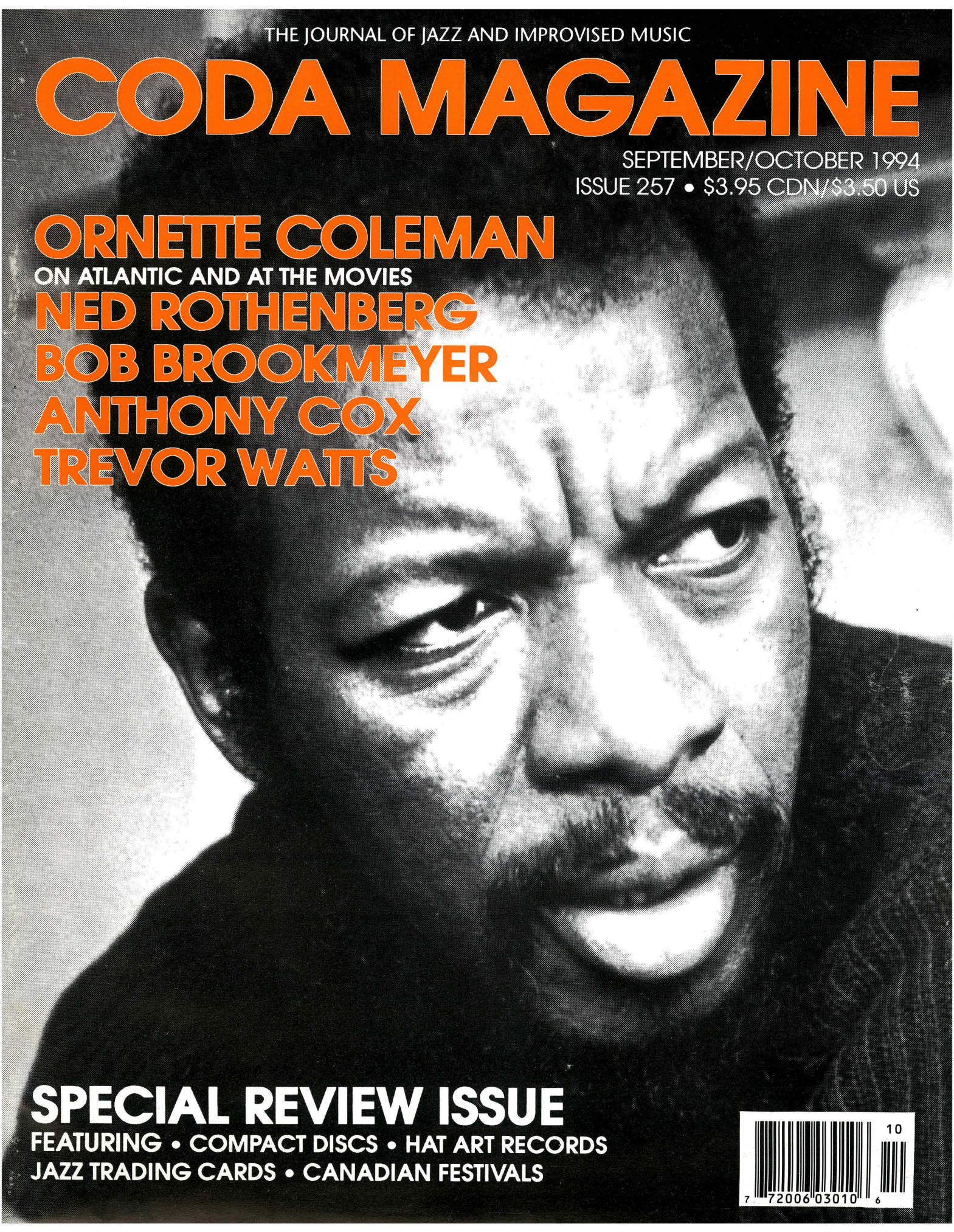
ORNETTE COLEMAN
ON ATLANTIC AND AT THE MOVIES

NED ROTHENBERG

BOB BROOKMEYER

ANTHONY COX

TREVOR WATTS



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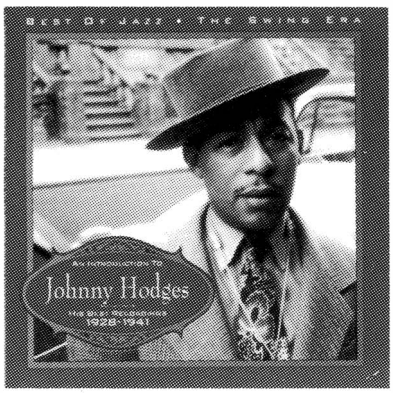

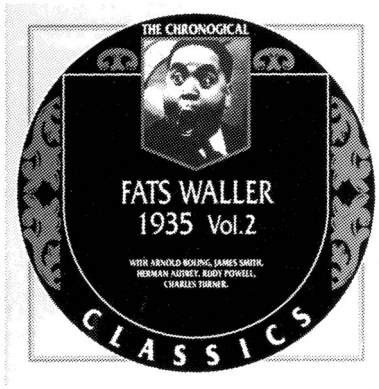

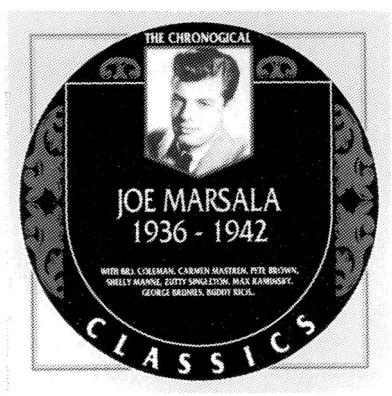

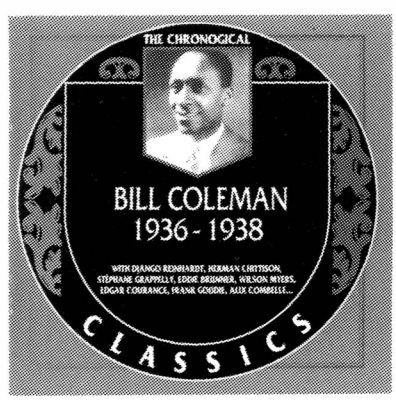

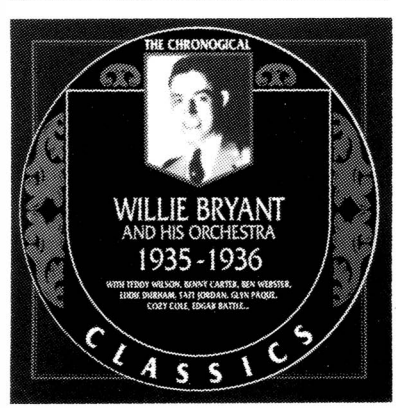

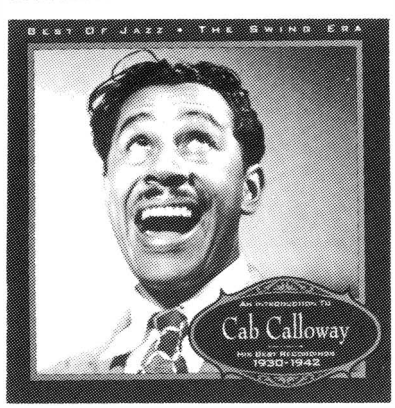

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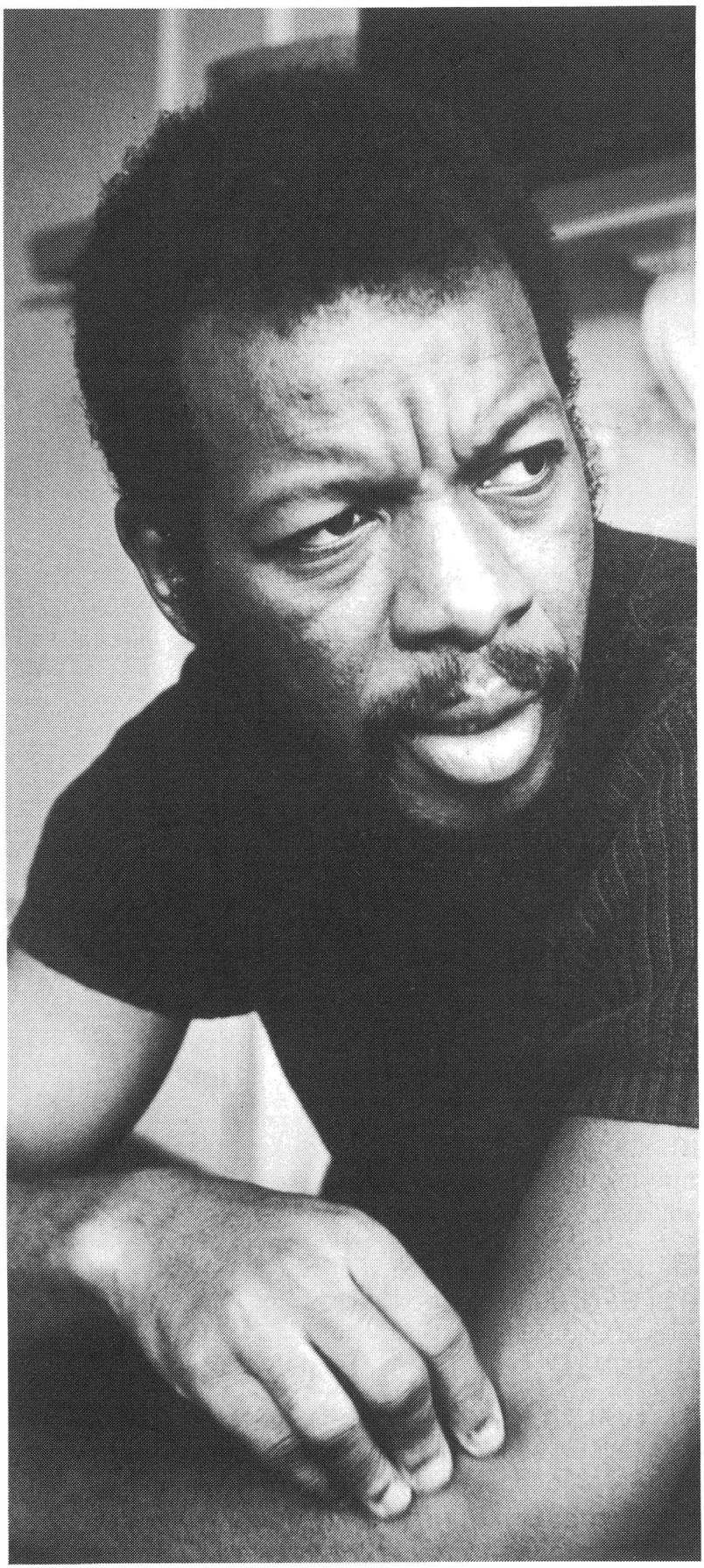


ORNETTE COLEMAN

JAZZ IS A MUSIC IN WHICH A SPECIAL HESITATION NEEDS TO BE OBSERVED WHEN DOLING OUT PRAISE. In particular, whenever it is muttered, the word "masterpiece" should give its speaker pause. That term carries a strong connotation of completion, of success, of aesthetic absolutes, and therefore of stasis. But jazz is fundamentally opposed to such a lack of motion; instead it embraces change – even when it dispenses with the changes. The centre of gravity of jazz is live; it all comes together or falls apart in performance. On the other hand, the moniker "masterpiece" is a value ascription more applicable to product-oriented cosmologies, ones that celebrate the endurance and immortality of a given piece of music rather than processual music in which what is at stake is *what you make out of your life*.

Nevertheless, I will hazard that it doesn't necessarily diminish this observation to insist that Ornette Coleman's recordings for Atlantic Records are masterpieces. They sit alongside the greatest musical artifacts of the 20th century – hyperbolic, but true – and at the same time, when considered in their historical context they give evidence of a musician at work on the margin of the jazz vocabulary, challenging the music's accepted frameworks and foundations, while taking aim at an ideal of beauty outside of that heuristic world. Thus, Coleman created living music at that same time as he created masterworks. Recording didn't compromise him, and the freshness and vitality of his early music 35-years after it was made proves the point.

The complete material that Coleman recorded for Atlantic between 1959 and 1961 – excepting a reportedly large number of tapes that were tragically lost in a warehouse fire in 1976 – has been collected by Rhino on **Beauty Is a Rare Thing**, a lavish 6-CD set issued together with a 70-page booklet in a lovingly packaged box. The liner book is chock full of vintage photos, many from unfamiliar studio shoots. A sharply-dressed Ornette peers coyly off the back of the box, white plastic alto in mouth, while a snapshot on the front of the booklet catches him in a more pasto-

ORNETTE COLEMAN • PHOTOGRAPH BY VAL WILMER

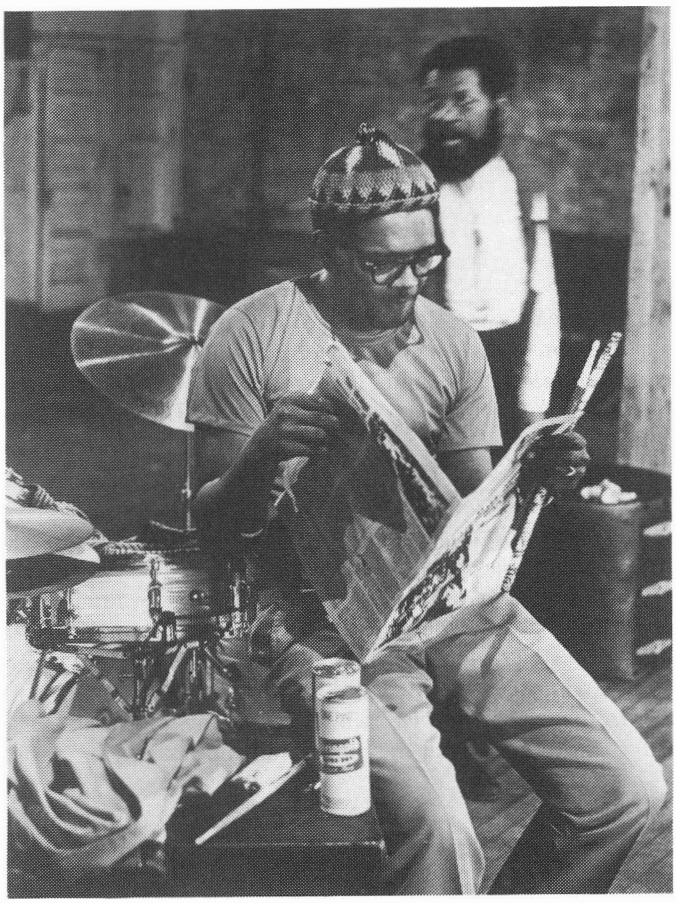
BEAUTY IS A RARE THING
THE COMPLETE ATLANTIC RECORDINGS
A review by JOHN CORBETT

ral moment outdoors beneath a fir tree. Other visuals include session reports detailing a couple of the nine major quartet recording sessions, Coleman's original hand-written titles for ***Ornette!***, reproductions of the original record covers, and an alternate version – almost as zombified – of the terrifying cover photo to ***This Is Our Music***. Along with an essay from Robert Palmer and fascinating explanations of some of Coleman's titles (the Freudian acronyms of each tune on ***Ornette!***, for instance), there are short epigraphs by musicians from Maynard Ferguson to Thelonious Monk (above a beaming, clean-cut photo of Jackie McLean he's labelled as "Jackie Mcclean"). Conspicuously missing, however, are any remarks from Ornette's later inheritors, like Anthony Braxton or Henry Threadgill; frankly, their comments would have been far more germane than those of Herbie Hancock.

As for the music, I would be saying nothing new to sing its praises. Coleman was playing in top form for the full period documented here, his alto solos flexible, his tone distinctive and at times incendiary. Constant companion Don Cherry is a joy to hear; few trumpeters have matched him for sheer inventiveness and simple, elegant creativity. Of course, it is now something of a cliché to note the significance of Ornette's decision to go without a piano, though this was hardly unheard of by 1959. But Coleman's rationale was more fundamental and structural than, say, Gerry Mulligan's. The piano was more than an unwanted timbre, it was a cage; the act of running the changes, which became the fulcrum of hard bop, was a harmonic restriction out of which the different Coleman quartets squirmed. What this revelation unleashed was not a reign of chaotic terror as prophesied by mainstream critics and fans, but various forms of polytonality in which provisional tonal centres are established and shifted by a soloist. In fact this move does not do away with harmony, since any truly melodic statement always infers a harmonic support. Instead, it allowed the musicians to adjust these tonal centres more quickly and to superimpose them without having to answer to a higher harmonic authority.

Listening to the very earliest session – most of which was released as ***The Shape of Jazz to Come*** – invites comparison with Coleman's sides for Contemporary, ***Something Else!*** and ***Tomorrow Is The Question***. Much as I like those two records, they seem merely to presage the strides taken with tunes like "Focus On Sanity" and "Eventually." Both in terms of the daring-do of the solos and in the construction of the tunes, by the time of Ornette's Atlantic sessions he and his cohorts had moved to a very new place. It's commonplace now to wonder why Ornette's music was so vigorously denounced, given its brightness, bounce, swing, and basic geniality. In the liner notes, Yves Beauvais, who produced the compilation, writes: "The arrival of Ornette and his men on the jazz scene in the late '50s created considerable controversy. Yet, when listening to these compositions with 1990s ears, with post-punk, post-metal, post-minimalism, post-distortion, post-*Metal Machine Music* ears, it is hard to understand what the fuss was all about... it is in no way difficult."

DON CHERRY & CHARLIE HADEN • PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER DANSON



I have to disagree with this position, though. While I admit that the intervening decades of music have perhaps stretched the public eardrum, if you listen carefully to what Ornette is doing, especially vis-a-vis the accepted contours of a jazz solo circa 1960, then his incipient harmolodics seem appropriately radical. And more so now, given the current attempt to mummify jazz. In 1994, in the context of rebop and bebop, Ornette's extended overhaul of bebop is practically as revolutionary a statement as it was then. Maybe more so.

What is nice about the programming of ***Beauty Is a Rare Thing*** is the way it pulls all the sessions back into shape, drawing material from later records like ***Twins*** and the ultra-scarce Japanese-only ***For Whom Who Keeps a Record***, as well as six never released tracks, and collating the tracks back into their initial point of origin. For listeners like me, who didn't have the Japanese record, that means there are more than a dozen unfamiliar compositions here, which would in itself be cause for joy. What is lost in the process of reconstructing the sessions is the sense of cohesion that albums like ***Change of the Century*** and ***The Shape of Jazz to Come*** had when they hit the market; of course, you can program them on your CD player so that the tracks follow their original progression, if you want to. The bulk of the compilation is quartets (53 out of 57 tracks), alternating between different drummers and bassists. It's a great pleasure to listen to Billy Higgins, then switch to Ed Blackwell (my preference, no disrespect to Higgins), or check out the sides without Charlie Haden, on which Jimmy Garrison and alchemic Scott LaFaro join the party. Coleman's tenor work (also documented on the later ***Soapsuds, Soapsuds***, which needs to be reissued with the first and best Prime Time album, ***Body Meta*** - both languish in the Artist House museum - is found on six tracks from '61. Ornette's growly low-register tone is so nicely suited to the deeper instrument, it's a wonder why he didn't explore it more actively in the period when he turned his attention to violin and trumpet.

Of particular interest are the longer quartet recordings with LaFaro, which are so different, so much more open and ranging than everything up till then. They come just a month after "Free Jazz," which is presented here alongside the shorter "First Take." In some ways it is unfortunate that "Free Jazz," which is not, by my estimation, one of Coleman's most successful recordings, is the reference point for that stylistic advance to which it lent a name. It was an interesting attempt to do something outside of the propulsion-oriented rhythmic concept that his quartets generally employed, but that forward-driving energy was more central to the development of free jazz itself and the unfulfilled ideas of "Free Jazz" came to more complete fruition six or seven years later with European free improvisation. Indeed, I would argue that ***Ornette!*** supplied more lasting power and less tentative music than the double quartet; perhaps that's actually the most important contribution of "Free Jazz" which may have loosened up Ornette to deal with the longer form solos. Also included in the box are two third-stream compositions by Gunther Schuller that include Coleman's alto, both extracted from the Atlantic record ***John Lewis Presents Contemporary Music: Jazz Abstractions - Compositions by Gunther Schuller and Jim Hall***. Like "Free Jazz," they provide intriguing contrast to the quartet-centrism of this period. Interesting, as well, to compare them with the chamber works that Coleman himself wrote and recorded on RCA and his use of string quartet on the ***Town Hall*** record on ESP. However, in the final report "Abstraction" (short, diffuse) and "Variants on a Theme of Thelonious Monk" (longer, jazzier, more developmental, more Ornette, with Dolphy in the house) are less enduring than the music of the various foursomes.

A couple of other releases have recently crept out, adding to the Ornette family archives. ***Who's Crazy***, the brilliant recording by the same trio that recorded for Blue Note (with bassist David Izenzon and drummer Charles Moffett), is finally reissued on CD, albeit only in Japan. Mosaic has released a box set of Don Cherry's mid-'60s Blue Note sessions, which include three albums (***Complete Communion***, ***Symphony For Improvisors***, and ***Where Is Brooklyn?***) featuring Gato Barbieri, Henry Grimes, Pharoah Sanders, Karl Berger, J.F. Jenny-Clark, and Ed Blackwell. These may not be masterpieces in the same league as Ornette's Atlantic stuff, but there's some truly lovely music here, as well. In fact, with this much Ornette-related music coming out of the vinyl graveyard, it's safe to say that beauty is no longer such a rare thing. □

ED BLACKWELL & ORNETTE • PHOTOGRAPH BY VAL WILMER

ORNETTE AT THE MOVIES

ADVENTUROUS MUSICAL EXPLORATIONS AND AN AFFABLE PERSONALITY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO MAKE ORNETTE COLEMAN THE SUBJECT OF MANY DOCUMENTARIES BY NOW. AND SINCE HIS IMPORTANCE TO JAZZ HISTORY IS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, HIS WORK WOULD BE PERFECT FODDER FOR FILM SOUNDTRACKS. SO THE PAUCITY OF COLEMAN-RELATED CINEMATIC MATERIAL IS INEXCUSABLE, ALTHOUGH NOT UNSURPRISING.

OVERVIEW BY **AARON COHEN** • PHOTOGRAPH BY **PETER DANSON**

THE ONLY SOMEWHAT-FEATURE length documentary currently available on Coleman is **Ornette: Made In America**, directed by Shirley Clarke (1987, Caravan of Dreams Productions). Aficionados will be interested in, but frustrated by, this treatment. Some of the rare footage that's included is amazing. Coleman is shown with Prime Time leading the Fort Worth Symphony in a performance of *Skies of America* during the early '80s. This is compared to scenes of him conducting the San Francisco Symphony as they perform his *Sun Suite* in 1969. The camera also follows Coleman to Africa when he played with Musicians of Nigeria in 1972, as well as his Master Musicians of Jajouka collaboration in Morocco. As the focus shifts to Coleman's deliverance of his insights, he says a great deal about a range of topics from ideas of musical spontaneity to his admiration for King Curtis.

What's so annoying about this film is Clarke's use of distracting visual effects that ultimately show disrespect for Coleman. One glaring example is an incessant jump-cut from his face to neon lights while he discusses Buckminster Fuller. Another is when the camera flashes on some very bad dancers while Prime Time is playing. Clarke seems to want to duplicate Coleman's musical experiments with her own chaotic editing. A straight-ahead presentation of the music would have been radical enough.

A MUCH SHORTER, but more rewarding, documentary is the half hour **David, Moffett & Ornette**, directed by Dick Fontaine (1966, available on video through Rhapsody Films, P.O. Box 179, New York, NY 10014). This film was made when the trio of Coleman, bassist David Izenzon, and drummer Charles Moffett recorded the **Who's Crazy** soundtrack (more about that later). While some of the narrator's comments about free jazz, circa mid-'60s, may seem entertainingly quaint today, what Coleman and his trio say about the creative process—and the economic response—is remarkably relevant. The music is beautiful. Many of the pieces that would later appear on the ***Golden Circle*** (Blue Note) records are seen and heard as works-in-progress here. Izenzon, who never received his proper acclaim, plays a haunting bowed bass solo, and is involved in a provocative string duel with Coleman on violin. Through an easy sense of humour, Coleman shows that he is always in complete control of music that is still breaking boundaries.

PROBABLY THE BEST KNOWN of Coleman soundtracks is the recent **Naked Lunch** (1992, Milan). The subject of the film is the *mischegos* inside the mind of William S. Burroughs. Most of the music is composed by Howard Shore, although five of Coleman's compositions are included. As an orchestral conductor, Shore can be overbearing at times. *Midnight Sunrise*, performed by Coleman and the Joujouka musicians, is a marvellous recording standing on it's own. It's unfathomable why Shore drowns it out with unnecessary cinematic symphonic effects. When Coleman can be heard, his alto sounds commanding; this is his best playing in quite a while.

TWO 1960s FILMS that featured the Ornette Coleman Trio are nearly impossible to find. The records that contain the music from them are almost as difficult to locate. **Who's Crazy** (1965, Pt. 1 and Pt. 2, Atmosphere, France) is spread out over two lps, and the music is as stunning as the Rhapsody video promises. On *Wedding Day and Fuzz*, Coleman hauntingly extends notes, as the keys are superimposed over Izenzon's bass and Moffett's chimes. The **Chappaqua Suite** (1966, CBS, France) is in four parts spread over a two lp set. The trio is augmented by eleven musicians, including Pharoah Sanders on tenor, with Joseph Tekula conducting and arranging. Coleman energetically plays throughout almost the entire recording, and the collaboration is completely successful.

ACCORDING TO David Meeker's comprehensive book, ***Jazz in the Movies*** (1981, Da Capo), Coleman also scored two short subjects during the '60s. One, **Population Explosion** (directed by Pierre Hibert) is a fourteen minute outcry against world overcrowding. The other, **O.K. End Here**, (directed by Robert Frank, 1963) is a half hour look at a relationship. The lead actress is Susan Graham Mingus.

John Litweiler reports on the film **Box Office**, in the biography, ***Ornette Coleman: A Harmolodic Life*** (1992, Morrow). The score was composed by Coleman in 1981 for "a forty-piece orchestra, Prime Time, an opera singer, and a pop singer." Litweiler says, "Box Office appears to have had only a limited release, or perhaps none at all."

Such is the film legacy of a musical genius. Perhaps CBS may someday reissue and release **Chappaqua** domestically, but don't hold your breath in anticipation. Although **David, Moffett, and Ornette** is just a short sample of this great trio's output, savour it while hoping for a revolution in cultural marketing. □

IN THE TRADITION

CLAUDE WILLIAMS (CIRCA 1975) BY DENNIS HESS

The year 1956 was seminal for **DUKE ELLINGTON**. His recording status was rocky, jobs on the road were tougher and audiences smaller. The big band as an institution was in a slump. Public taste was fickle. Rock was on the rise. The bebop revolution had peaked and many musicians were exploring new, less structured, sounds. But the Ellington band was reborn on July 6, 1956 in a sensational performance at the Newport Jazz Festival, never to falter again.

Boosted by resulting publicity and a new record contract, Ellington continued on the festival circuit that summer, next appearing at another New England shindig - the first Connecticut Jazz Festival, at Fairfield on July 28. Fortunately Ellington fan and engineer Jerry Valburn was on hand to record the proceedings and the results are now available on IAJRC CD 1005 in stereo(IAJRC, PO Box 75155, Tampa, FL, USA 33605). The CD, produced for the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors, but also available in some stores, includes four previously unissued Ellington performances not on lp versions, which include IAJRC 45 and Queen Disc 044; among these is the only known recording of *Hey Cherie*, a cheeky novelty tune written by Luther Henderson and sung, unfortunately off-mike, by Ray Nance after some French tongue banter with the Duke. Vocalist Jimmy Grissom is also a victim of the wayward mike on *Good Gal Blues* but redemption comes in the form of a sizzling Jimmy Hamilton tenor sax solo. Much better recorded is the three-part *Newport Jazz Festival Suite*, slightly refined from its premiere 22 days earlier, with striking trumpet contrasts between bubbly Clark Terry and earthy Ray Nance, superb clarinet from Hamilton and heard here "live" compared with the studio version issued by Columbia.

Many other appropriate adjectives are used to describe the sound of brass - fiery, burnished, bold, blue, swinging just to choose a few. All of them apply to members of Ellington's orchestra but there's one more that is special to a trumpeter who appeared at the same festival - it's tasteful, and he is Buck Clayton. This handsome man and musician is on five tracks on the same CD, two of them with Ellington sidemen. A long, moody, *Ad Lib Blues* has good Buck and Hamilton on clarinet but *Tea for Two* is a scrappy affair. Clayton's other three tracks are with Willie the Lion Smith on piano, and rhythm. Smith, an Ellington inspiration, does his famous *Fingerbuster*, and Clayton assists ably on a delightful version of *Perdido*. Good value on this 69-minute CD.

BUCK CLAYTON is the solo star on Sackville SKCD 2-2028, which finds him in better form, even though he was just entering a long period of ill health, at a 1966 concert in Baden, Switzerland. He plays with a small group led by the Swiss pianist Henry Chaix, and anchored by the formidable drumming of Wallace Bishop, who went to Europe with Buck in 1949 and never returned to the U.S. Originating from a Swiss radio recording, this is a happy disc, with Buck in easy-going mood on familiar tunes like *I Want a Little Girl* and *You Can Depend on Me*, but more interesting in the long *Good Old Funky Blues*, an improvisation he and Chaix dreamed up, enlivened by good old New Orleans press roll drumming by Bishop. The real killer here, though, is a long, bustling *Stompin' at the Savoy*, with Buck in top form and high spirits running through a series of admirable inventions and inspiring tenor saxophonist Michel Pilet to attempt to emulate Paul Gonsalves in his solo. Bishop, again, is excellent.

Tasteful is a good adjective, too, for the trumpeting of **JOE WILDER**, often a sideman, rarely a leader (like once in 30 years!), who gets a fine chance to shine with a quartet on ***Alone with Just My Dreams***, Evening Star ES-101. There are a lot of delights here, thanks to producer Benny Carter, who contributes one tune, *Wonderland*, as well as his drummer, the excellent young Sherman Ferguson, and his prestige to this venture, recorded in 1991 when Wilder was a mere 69. It's a brilliant disc featuring beautiful playing on both trumpet and flugelhorn with superb backing by Ferguson, bassist Jay Leonart and pianist Jimmy Williams. Among the best tracks are *Everything Happens to Me*, and a wonderfully controlled, yet emotional duet by Wilder, this time on flugelhorn, and Remo Palmieri's guitar on *What a Wonderful World*. But the charmer on this entirely enjoyable disc is the title number, an undeservedly obscure tune by the late bassist George Duvivier, delicately played by Wilder with Leonart ably filling the composer's role. Wonderful value here with over 70 minutes on the disc.

Representing a younger generation, trombonist **DAN BARRETT** can also claim tastefulness among his musical attributes. On Arbors Jazz ARCD 19107 he attempts something almost impossible with ***Jubilesta***, namely a replication of the only other recorded version of that tune

REVIEWS OF • DUKE ELLINGTON • BUCK CLAYTON • JOE WILDER DAN BARRETT • PETE MINGER • BENNY GOODMAN • CLAUDE WILLIAMS • BY FRANK RUTTER

BUDD JOHNSON & BUCK CLAYTON (c. 1970) BY GERARD FUTRICK

(title of the CD) that I know of, by co-composers Duke Ellington and valve trombonist Juan Tizol. They made two stabs at it in 1937, with big band and small, both minor masterpieces of rhythmic development. Yes, unfortunately, comparisons are invidious. Barrett's slide trombone version doesn't have the snap of the originals, and of course there are no Cootie Williams, Barney Bigard or Tizol on this disc; Barrett sticks close to the melody, playing more for tone than anything else. Having said that there's a tremendous range of music on this CD, from Jelly Roll Morton's *Sweet Substitute* to Eddie Condon's *Wherever There's Love*, a delightful ballad, most sweetly played; from Sidney Bechet's *When the Sun Sets Down South* to Roy Eldridge's *Little Jazz*, plus a neat Barrett original, *Blue Chu* (they could have used this for the album title). Barrett has ace accompanists in drummer Jake Hanna and pianist Ray Sherman along with David Stone on bass. Barrett is mellifluous and musicianly, but middle-register solo trombone becomes a little boring for a whole hour without interruptions. Fortunately there are interruptions - by Sherman, a veteran TV and movie studio pianist, who is nothing short of super, boogieing on *Then I'll Be Happy*, bluesing on *Blue Chu*, ballading, stomping or comping, as required. Barrett is tasteful but Sherman steals the show.

After an hour of trombone comes almost 60 minutes of flugelhorn, from **PETE MINGER**, sometime trumpeter with Count Basie, who flutters and burbles his way through 10 numbers, including the unlikely title tune, his own composition, *Look to the Sky (Jesus is Coming Again)* with a quartet on Concord CCD 4555. This is a more modern sound than the other discs considered here, especially when pianist John Campbell holds forth. The liveliest anyone gets is on Charlie Parker's *Moose the Mooche*, when Minger switches to trumpet; but the rest gets a little bit monotonous, despite Minger's undoubted technical ability, because of the somewhat limited tonal range of der flugel.

There's strange music aplenty on the latest in the Yale Library series of recordings by **BENNY GOODMAN**, Volume 8, on Music Master 0612-65093-2. This one could have been called Benny Does the Hula, as it features half a dozen Hawaiian numbers, unimaginatively played by a listless big band despite the presence of Zoot Sims; I guess we'll have to blame arranger Bill Stegmeyer. Things aren't much better on another big band number, version 1001 of *Bei Mir Bist du Schon*. Andre Previn is the pianist in three quartet numbers that are slick but fail to make the toe tap. Pretty much a dead loss, this collection. Until the last two tracks, 13 minutes of Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart in medleys by a trio with Mel Powell on piano. The quality of the recording is weak, thin and echoey, as if you are listening outside the studio, but the quality of the music is outstanding. Powell and Goodman strike sparks off each other, especially on *Liza*, where the pianist's runs are positively Olympic and Benny matches him, stride for stride.

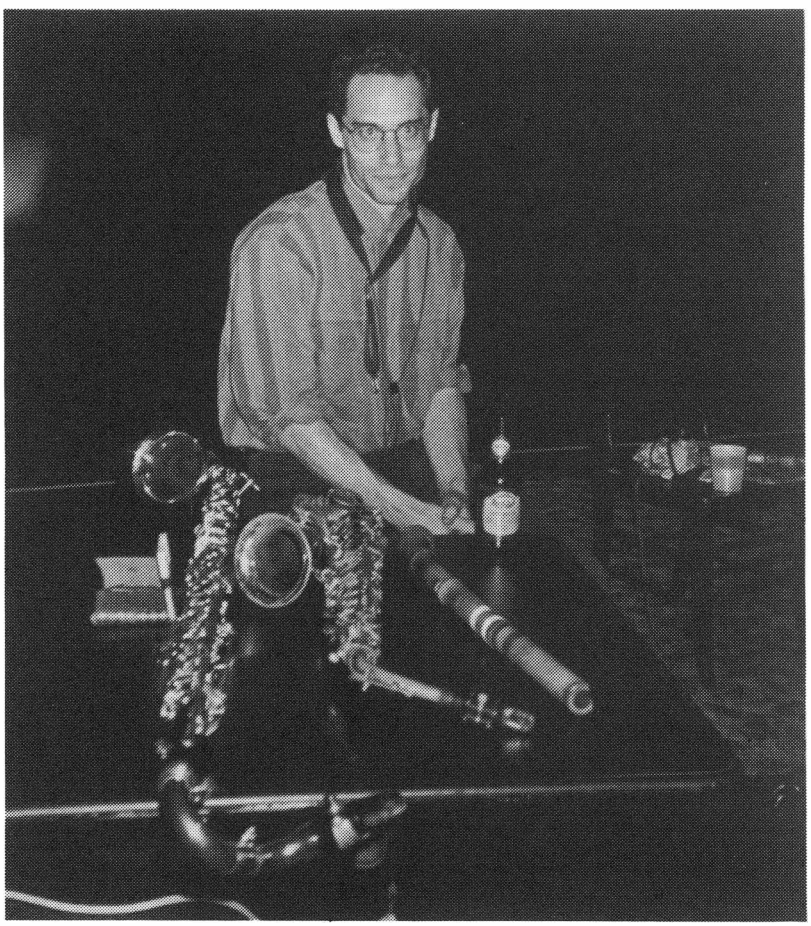
Finally, a grand old man of jazz who was one of the music's best kept secrets for more than half a century. Violinist **CLAUDE WILLIAMS** finally gets his due on two CDs, Arhoolie 405 and 406, recorded from performances at J's Club in New York in 1989 and titled (you guessed) **Live at J's**. Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, in 1908, Williams played with just about everyone, mostly on guitar in his early years, but somehow missed the limelight, giving up his chair in Count Basie's band to Freddie Greene, who became a legend. Williams chose to bury himself in Kansas City and Los Angeles, playing with local blues bands for decades. He was "discovered" in the late 1970s but hasn't had much of a shake on disc until now. Arhoolie gives him two hours of technically well-recorded music, spontaneous and natural in the club ambience. Helping Fiddler, as he's known, are a very fine, swinging, guitarist, James Chirillo, Ron Mathews on piano, Akira Tana, drums, and another mighty man from the Midwest, Al McKibbon on bass. Violinist-and-vocalist Williams has that ultimate sense of relaxation that comes with age, experience and substantial talent, and he sings and saws his way through a wide repertoire including Gershwin, Basie, Ellington, Kern, and Charlie Parker. A lively, swinging *Going to Kansas City* and the lovely *100 Years from Today* are two special treats. The man's an ear-opener. He was 85 when these recordings were made. Music does keep you young. □

ABOUT THE WRITER

FRANK RUTTER *has been a journalist for forty years, in Canada, the United States & Europe. He resides in Vancouver, and in the eighties wrote a regular jazz column for the Vancouver Sun.*

NED ROTHENBERG INSIDE & OUT

THE WHERE WERE YOU BORN, THE WHAT DID YOU START DOING WHEN, AND WHO DID YOU FIRST PLAY WITH, GETS TO BE THIS FIFTEEN YEAR NARRATION THAT WIPES OUT A WHOLE INTERVIEW. MAYBE I'VE GOTTEN TO... WELL, THERE'S AN ORGANIZATION IN THE STATES, CALLED THE JEROME FOUNDATION. IT'S A VERY NICE ORGANIZATION. THEY GIVE GRANTS TO EMERGING COMPOSERS AND THE LAST TIME I SENT AN APPLICATION THEY INFORMED US WE WERE NO LONGER EMERGING. SO I GUESS I'VE ENTERED MUSICAL MIDDLE AGE WHICH I THINK IS A GOOD POINT TO STOP NARRATING MY MUSICAL YOUTH.



FROM A CONVERSATION WITH BILL SMITH

THE MOST IMPORTANT PERIOD OF GENESIS actually occurred around 1980 with Fall Mountain, a group with Bob Ostertag playing synthesizers and a violinist named Jim Katzin. It was really an improvising electro-acoustic group which I still think is quite special, in that we really managed to blend in a way that became completely impossible to tell who was doing what. We had some quite fortunate success. We put out a record on Parachute, Eugene Chadbourne's label, and got a chance to go to Europe a couple of times. I still think the music is nice, but it is definitely early music. After that we broke up; Bob went into politics, Jim went off not into music, and I was kind of left to my own devices. I was playing with some other people, but that was when I really went into the woodshed and created my solo music out of whole cloth. 1980 through '82, and there was a lot of thought that went into that. It's not the kind of thought where you sit and think well what am I going to be influenced by now, but it was a period of listening very hard to as much music as I could and practising my ass off and really searching. There were things that I knew I was after technically, which Evan Parker had certainly shown me were possible, in terms of all this polyphonic type of approach to the saxophone. I never took a lesson with him, to this day, other than his example of showing me that somehow this stuff was possible. It was pretty much pulled out of both a need to express myself and an awareness that I had not really found my voice on the instrument and that it was, you know, if I worked hard something would happen, and it did. The whole thing of practising, whether you're a classical musician, improvising musician, any kind of musician, goes in plateaus. You don't slowly increase at a steady rate from when you first go to music school, and then every time you practice you're a little better than last time. You in fact get into plateaus where you go for a long time searching around and can't find the next step, and then all of a sudden some kind of minor or major explosion, and you're at another level. That's the way I experience progress and I think it's fairly common. You have to work very hard on a continuous basis to make those jumps happen and in fact they happen incrementally.

To me, that period in the early '80s was where the first big jump came and I had a sense of what I had to say. A mode of playing that is personal and deep and has real profile. The players of any instrument, the artists of any art form that interest me are the ones that have real profile. And that doesn't mean necessarily that they are the most original. You could certainly say that such a player is coming out of such a player, but I don't believe

THIS LAST TOUR WE DID IN EUROPE, PEOPLE CAME UP AND SAID "WOW, YOU REALLY WROTE SOME GREAT MELODIES." A LOT OF IMPROVISORS AND POST-CAGEIAN COMPOSERS HAVE BECOME DEATHLY AFRAID OF MELODY.

that players who really have something to say have only looked to their mentors to get what they're after, they've also had to look in themselves. I think Anthony Braxton and Sam Rivers, I listened to a lot of them, were influencing me more as people, as kind of creative mentors just in the way that they went about doing what they were doing, than actually whether their music stylistically influenced me. But that's an equally important thing. People who show you you have to find your own way in things, that you have to create your own exercise, create your own path, and people who have obviously done this despite others telling them that they are full of shit all the way along. People always want you to do that in interviews, break down influences, make a big pie chart and say well I'm influenced this much by... and I really resist because it's something I don't do myself. I try to look inside and see what it is I want to do and in a way if I quantify influences too much then I get into a self-consciousness that doesn't strengthen the music. The periods that have been the most creative for me are the ones where I'm looking inside.

Obviously there are myriad influences because I'm someone who has a very omnivorous interest in lots of different kinds of music, but the attempt to intellectualize those influences and say I'm going to try and transcribe this idea, rarely comes up with anything. The big exception to that of course is shakuhachi music, the traditional Japanese music which I've studied. I have in fact transcribed it for saxophone and I did that largely as an exercise. It was only later I even performed those transcriptions. So that's kind of a special exception. Other than that it's been a conscious hunger to hear music. You eat all the music and hopefully it's digested. I don't want to go on with the metaphor in terms of how it comes out, but I think the metaphor is very good to that digestive point. If you say what you eat comes out as what you are, not as the waste products.

I'm interested in the kind of concentration that you have to have, and the internal communication you have to have with your instrument, to play solo music at all, because I don't think a lot of people understand what solo music is. Cecil Taylor says that it's trance, that when he's playing, he's attaining a trance state.

THAT REALLY DOES VARY from player to player. I think Evan Parker pursues it much the way Cecil Taylor pursues it. He goes at it raw every concert. He hits it and he sees what happens. I'm actually not a solo improvisor, to let the secret out of the bag. I do include sometimes, completely uncharted solo improvising in concerts. But when I make recordings and when I do full length solo concerts I find it necessary to program it, because there's a certain level of variety and shape of a whole concert that's very important to me. I'm not an improvisor with a capital I. I improvise, and improvisation is very important to me, but composition is equally important and so that makes the process somewhat different. The question of improvisation and composition is tremendously important creatively, but not particularly important to me intellectually, in terms of which avenue I'm using to get to the final result. I'm after the result, I'm after the complete musical expression and I use both as tools.

The other thing that's very important, the difference between Cecil and Evan and the way I work, is that a lot of my music is dance based. I'm fairly conservative, I like to use pulse a lot. Pulse is a very unifying factor if you're doing something with a beat. When I say dance based I mean in the basic sense that all music from Africa, African American music and most music from Asia, is in fact music that comes from a dance. In social context it comes from dance. I do a lot of stuff that comes from that same place. Before I started taking all the Sonny Rollins solos off the records, that's when I was a teenager, I was listening to R & B. And in a way that's come back to me quite a bit. I have so much need to do something with a groove in it. People talk to me about, am I very interested in minimalism, Steve Reich and Philip Glass and all this. And really I'm not. It's nothing conscious. But if you ask where does all this pulse come from, it doesn't come from those. It comes from Motown and Stax that's where it comes from. Because that's a kind of minimalist music if you want to go so far.

When this interview took place, over a lunch last summer, Ned Rothenberg's then current band, which he formed in 1989, was Double Band. Indeed two of everything. The performance that I attended at the Pitt Gallery in Vancouver, was a powerful mixture of melody and rhythm; an out-there dance band. So what was his intention?

IN WORKING WITH TWO SAXOPHONES, two drums and two electric basses, it's working with a vernacular of those instruments, a kind of funk, a jazz funk to some extent, although not in the fusion sort of way, almost an R & B sense. There is a conceptual end of what I've been doing in the last few years and it's because I've gotten very obsessed with rhythm. I've started studying a lot about different kinds of drumming, both African and Asian approaches to rhythm, metric types of modulation and phase structures where you have meters going against each other. So what I'm doing is imposing on to this funk basis. For instance, at times half of the band is playing in thirteen and half of them playing in fourteen, and their complimentary rhythmic materials create this long phase pattern. Each player is playing a fairly simple part, but together with his mate who is playing the same instrument it creates a much larger megapart. In fact this actually relates to the solo music. I approach the saxophone not like an up and down play, from top to bottom, but almost like a guitar in the finger picking sense, or the two handed sense, where one hand will be playing something in five and the other hand will be playing something in four or three. This gets fairly technical but in

INSIDE & OUT

OFTEN THE MOST INTERESTING REACTIONS ARE FROM THE NON-MUSICIANS WHO TELL ME IT MADE THEM THINK ABOUT SOMETHING VERY PERSONAL IN THEIR LIVES...

African music you have a strong poly-rhythmic thing, where you have three against two and four against three, so you're dividing twelve one way or the other. In this case you have polymeters going against each other, you have a five eight going against a six eight or a seven going against an eight. This is the structural starting point for a lot of the Double Band music. From those starting points I decide to take the pieces in lots of different ways, I try not force the issue didactically.

THIS LAST TOUR WE DID IN EUROPE, people came up and said "wow, you really wrote some great melodies." A lot of improvisors and post-Cageian composers have become deathly afraid of melody. It's just a combination of these strange obsessions and a certain kind of musical conservatism in that so much of music these days throws something away. Either there's no silence or there's no melody or there's no pulse, there's no this or there's no that. All these things are elements of music and I'm trying, if not in every single piece, but in the totality of my work, to deal with all these. Music is so rich, it has so many important basic elements to respond to.

The other thing that's surprising about rhythm is that people have a real reluctance to take much of a look at it. People will analyze harmony, they'll analyze value, this is very western. But rhythm — you're just supposed to feel it. Well, that's fine to a certain extent but if you want to really deal with playing in odd meters, really feeling something like thirteen without having to sit down and go one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, you really want to feel that in your body, then you have to at least work with it long enough so that you can dance with it. A lot of the music that's really blowing my mind and a lot of people's minds during the past three or four years, that's really come to prominence, is the eastern European music where all these rhythms are completely natural. There's nothing strange about dancing to seven eight. It's the most natural thing in the world and that's something that I've worked very hard to incorporate in my music.

Is there an intention for popular acceptance of the Double Band music?

WELL, IF YOU LISTEN TO IT, there's no question that on an ultimate level it's still too weird to get big time acceptance. I don't think there's a preconceived thing with that, but yes, I would say there's been less concern these days with any kind of musical stylistic purity. One thing, it's more honest because it's less popular. If you listen back to my solo music over the years I've always done these funny kinds of funky bass clarinet pieces. Funk has always been important and I guess part of it was saying, yes, why not write this stuff. Why not put this into a larger context. As far as whether it leads to a wider acceptance I would have to say that my career has shown itself to be a very slow and steady process. There isn't any kind of explosion onto the scene. I feel a nice sense of respect from my peers, and a little more recognition from the audience coming slowly and steadily.

Do you want people to get up and dance?

THAT WOULD BE NICE IF THEY FEEL LIKE IT. As much as I have all these ideas about what music is about I don't try and program it for the audience. The audience should feel what they want to feel. Often the most interesting reactions are from the non-musicians who tell me it made them think about something very personal in their lives, and if it made them get up and dance, that's fine too. I like it when people dance to it who haven't had too much to drink already. The dancers with no sobriety, I get the feeling they'll dance to anything. I like to dance, I've always loved to dance, so I don't think it's anything dishonest within my own inclination.

NED ROTHENBERG'S DISCOGRAPHY

INCLUDES: 3 solo lp's *(Lumina Records)*; a solo CD, ***The Crux*** *(Leo)*, **Double Band's** ***Over Lays*** *(Moers Musik)*, a collaborative studio project co-composed with **Paul Dresher** entitled ***Opposites Attract*** *(New World)*, two records by **Semantics** *(Rift & SST)*, and the **New Winds'** releases ***The Cliff*** and ***Traction*** *(Sound Aspects)*.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

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SOLO STRINGS REVIEWS BY DAVID LEE

"GADDAM RACKET!" THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE STAGGERED INTO THE NIGHT AIR AND LOOKED AROUND. NO ONE OUT THERE BUT ME, LEANING AGAINST A POST. THIS WAS ABOUT 1971, AND THE BAND AT THE RECEPTION WAS RUNNING THROUGH *PROUD MARY* AND *BAD MOON RISING* AT A VOLUME THAT ERUPTED FROM THE DOUBLE DOORS, SHOOK THE LEAVES OFF THE MAPLES IN THE FRONT YARD, AND CAME BACK TO US ABOUT FOUR SECONDS LATER, ECHOING OFF THE MOUNTAINS ACROSS HATZIC VALLEY. AS FAR AS I WAS CONCERNED IT WAS TOO LOUD FOR HUMAN ENDURANCE; NO ONE ELSE SEEMED TO AGREE UNTIL THE BRIDE'S FATHER SHOWED UP. HE WAS WORKING UP A HEAD OF STEAM ON THIS TOPIC.

"WE USETA HAVE DANCES BETTER'N THIS, WITH JUST TWO FIDDLES AND A GUITAR UP THERE. THAT'S ALL YOU GADDAM NEED!"

SUDDENLY ALL MY SENSES TUNED IN to what he was saying. I was trying to learn everything I could, everything that was interesting, about music, and here was a new piece of data. It sounded important:

Fiddles Are Rhythm Instruments.

Up until that point, if you asked me to assign a musical area to each of the following instruments, I would have done it like this: violin = melody - cello = harmony - bass = rhythm, texture.

If country fiddle music shakes up this hierarchy—because it is a dance music where the primary demand is rhythm—it is a bit of a surprise that improvised music, instead of abandoning the hierarchy altogether, retains it in an inverted form. In these solo string recordings, the most melodic players are the bassists, the violinists more concerned with rhythm and texture. This is partly because of loosening of roles, and partly because resistance to stereotype is part of the ethic of improvisation. Being a three-part hierarchy (I plead guilty to ignoring the viola, only because it clutters up my argument), cellists get to stay in the middle, straddling both camps at will. I still maintain that the cello is the perfect instrument for improvised music, performing the chordal and melodic functions of a guitar, but with more tonal flexibility. Executed on the cello, the massive doublestops or chords of the doublebass are less thunderous in percussive force, but more vivid in colour. Plus—and I say this as someone who has travelled with both instruments—you can take a cello onto a crowded streetcar without knocking anyone over.

The last distinction, the instrument's physique, is less superficial than it may sound. The violin, cello and bass are anything but the same instrument, different sizes. Their differences are as much in their structures and registers as in the postures of attack each of them forces on their players.

DAVID PRENTICE • SOLOS VIOLIN-VIOLA 1993 • *NXNW 002 (cassette)* • (Box 69, Flesherton, Ontario, Canada N0C 1E0)

Fiddles are rhythm instruments. Any doubts you might have about this will be swept away by these two solo violin recordings, although if anything David Prentice is the better example of the rhythm aspect of the violin (he also plays viola here). In the country fiddle tradition—a tradition that Prentice has consciously nurtured in his improvising over the last fifteen years—melodic lines are simple, but everything is doublestopped and triplestopped in favour of rhythmic impact, and so that it will be as loud as possible. This is important to the country fiddle, its pre-electric ensembles adapted to playing outdoors and in rackety dance halls. It is important to improvised music, which also comes out of a social context, the music developing in private homes and the tiny back rooms of art galleries and bars.

The body of tension in Prentice's playing comes not so much from tonality, but from texture and dynamics. The roughness of his tone is exciting not simply because of the strength of his attack, but because of where he holds the notes—shuddering just this side of erupting into snarls (occasionally they do). The highwire suspense of this—a polyphony of strings being pushed to their limits—is exhilarating. Interestingly enough, Prentice, like most of the free improvisors here, is not overtly atonal in his playing—rather, his music's tonal centres are constantly being pushed and shifted, along with his rhythms.

CARLOS ZINGARO • IN SITU (SOLO VIOLIN) • *Adda 590076*

To be playing always at the brink of something else. In solo playing, this is one way of stimulating the listener's imagination, by implying that there is more there than one person can possibly play. Carlos Zingaros, a quite different violinist than Prentice, manages this by establishing rapid-fire repeated motifs, and then improvising around them, generating a red-hot minimalism. The speed of his execution is in itself exciting, and his melodic range is as broad as Prentice's timbral palette, although Zingaro also exploits texture and rhythm to vary repeated figures that would otherwise be unbearably extended. "Minimalist" might be too soporific a term to apply to his rhythm pieces since, like Prentice's timbral approach, they create a feeling of suspense, as if the repeated figures could fall apart or explode into chaos at any moment. His melodic pieces hint strongly at a kind of gypsy romanticism, which Zingaros exploits with the same passion, once removed, with which the surrealists appropriated Catholic iconography. Not close-miked at all, this solo recording was made in Lisbon in "the vaults of the Jeronimos Monastery," and the cathedral acoustics are as much a part of Zingaro's recital as samplers and digital delays are to Tom Cora and Tatsu Aoki.

TOM CORA • GUMPTION IN LIMBO *Sound Aspects SAS CD 042*

I guess you can't get away from the Bach comparisons, but Cora's "classical"-sounding pieces remind me more of the great solo suites Benjamin Britten wrote for Rostropovich—in their dynamics as much as in the extent to which Cora's tone resembles the Russian cellist's. *Straylight* sounds like Rostropovich getting tired of

playing the *Suites for Cello, Op. 72 & 80* and applying to them a hitherto-unknown genius for improvisation. This is fabulous; when I first heard the recordings of the Britten pieces I couldn't believe that they didn't have open sections. So I went out and got the scores and of course they don't—those harmonic excursions and pizzicato grenades are all scored and, as Cora proves, they don't have to be.

From what might be called "improvisations in the classical tradition" to electronics which benefit from a stern distinction between "active" and "passive" use of technology, these pieces are filled with the sardonic humour of the New York school of Chadbourne and John Zorn. In all of them the music is wonderful, and we're treated to Cora's great cello tone. More on tone later.

TONY MOORE • OBSERVATIONS
Matchless MRCD22

I beg your pardon—you can get away from Bach comparisons. These "Observations" numbered 1 to 16 are completely free improvisations. Unlike most of the pieces on these recordings, the *Observations* do not sound as if they are based on motifs of any kind. They have a reactive sense that the music is truly being created in real time; what Moore plays spins out from what he has played rather than from what he intends to play. As a result, one has less the sense of specific pieces starting and ending that one has with for example, Tom Cora, than one does of a suite whose individual sections blend into a continuous narrative. These are cellistics without the demonic apeshit craziness of Tristan Honsinger, the eclecticism of Ernst Rejseger, or the overt blues references that one hears in Tom Cora and even moreso, in Abdul Wadud (and the cello is a great blues instrument—if only Robert Johnson had lived long enough to get his hands on one). Just beautifully free music. One would very much like to hear Moore with one or more other players of his calibre.

TATSU AOKI • AVANT-BASS LIVE • *IEL 0793*

TATSU AOKI • NEEDLESS TO SAY
Sound Aspects SAS CD 047

The "jazziest" player here is perhaps not surprisingly a double bassist, as it's the string instrument with the strongest jazz tradition. We return now to melody—perhaps because of the savage pleasure involved in picking a vein of melody out of a textural mountain like the double bass. Improvised or not, most of these pieces are performed against a straight 4/4 rhythm, either stated or implied. The use of electronics is a classic example of what Tom Cora would call "passive" use of technology, with Aoki improvising against his own sampled riffs, etc. The playing is immaculate, but I came away from these recordings wanting to hear Aoki with a really hot saxophonist and drummer; say, Sakata Akira and Moriyama Takeo; or Peter Brotzmann and Andrew Cyrille. In a setting like that, he could really smoke.

ROB WASSERMAN • SOLO
Rounder CD 0179

I'll put my prejudice out front—anyone who has a great tone can get away with murder as far as I'm concerned. I believe the word that Trevor Tolley once used in these pages to describe Ben Webster's reliance on tone was "ensorcelling." It's true, and nowhere more true than with bass players. Charlie Haden: ever noticed that he plays fewer notes in his solos than he does in his accompaniments? He knows that the power he wields with that gorgeous tone will only be diffused by fast runs. Because the bass has such textural potential—especially, like the tenor saxophone, to play "down and dirty"— very "clean" players (never less than eight notes to the bar, always in tune, each note perfectly articulated, we could call it the Scott LaFaro school) often seem to be selling the instrument short, regardless of the immense discipline required to play that way.

Rob Wasserman has a great tone and because he's not afraid to incorporate space into his playing, this solo set has a maturity that brings to mind jazz instrumentalists such as Roscoe Mitchell, Leo Smith, Haden, Paul Bley and a host of other jazz players who are a long way from Wasserman's musical milieu. At the same time he can play incredibly fast, and brings a polyphonic sensibility that you don't often hear on the bass—partly because bassists don't often think in those terms, and partly because it's so hard to hold down all those strings at once.

DAVID PRENTICE • PHOTOGRAPH BY DUSAN KLIMES

BARRY GUY • FIZZLES • *Maya MCD 9301*

Unfortunately for the above bassists, sharing a review with Barry Guy is a bit like a "talented" jazz pianist sharing a recital with Cecil Taylor. You can give the performance of your career and still come off sounding, at best, polite.

Recently I came away from "reviewing" a Barry Guy concert having made only one note, something like "When you hold any instrument in your arms to play it, it looks enormous, and when it's an enormous instrument, it seems to go on forever." You can imagine my chagrin when the first thing I read in John Corbett's liner notes to Fizzles is a quote from the artist himself:

"What I do when I play is try to make the instrument extremely small."

Perhaps his description and mine are both trying to come to terms with that long ascent to the bridge that the bassist must negotiate to make the instrument speak.

Like other of his British colleagues—Evan Parker, Paul Lytton, Paul Rutherford, Derek Bailey—Barry Guy has taken techniques that

are usually construed as emotional peaks in the improviser's vocabulary—broken tones, harmonics, bent notes and vocal effects—and used them as starting points for a new vocabulary. To do this takes the daring to start playing from a zone of technique that other players would take half an hour building to. Which means that Guy begins pieces at the "where do I go from here" point from which other players begin to decelerate. Faced with such a problem in every performance, it is not surprising that the opening piece here is called *Free Fall*.

Many of the climbs from the lowest bass notes to the highest harmonics, that other bassists would themselves incorporate as narrative, Guy has compressed into microseconds; into the smallest parts of a much greater narrative. Like many European improvisors, his art is enhanced by cross references to other forms. Tony Moore refers to influences by painter Jackson Pollock, and the influence here is the late poet, novelist and dramatist Samuel Beckett, whose minimalism is more one of compression than repetition. When the extended techniques of *Hilibili Meets...The Brush* converge not in sheets of raw sound, but in a genial country-folk riff that is given emotional shading by the wild choreographies that surround it, one ceases to wonder about hierarchies of instruments, about barriers between forms, because suddenly a window has opened where, seeing these things from the sensibility of a great artist, we imagine we have seen new horizons. And perhaps we have. □

2 TWOS REVIEWS BY STUART BROOMER

GEORGE ROBERT/DADO MORONI • YOUNGBLOODS • *Mons CD 1897*
DAVID MOTT/DAVID LAPATO • THE STANDARD LINE • *Unity UTY133*
KESHAVAN MASLAK/PAUL BLEY • ROMANCE IN THE BIG CITY • *Leo CD LR 104*
MAL WALDRON/STEVE LACY • SEMPRE AMORE • *Soul Note 121170-2*
OLIVER LAKE/DONAL LEONELLIS FOX • BOSTON DUETS • *Music and Arts CD-732*
MAX ROACH/CONNIE CROTHERS • SWISH • *New Artists NA-1001 CD*
IRENE SCHWEIZER/PIERRE FAVRE • *Intakt CD 009*
BORAH BERGMAN/ANDREW CYRILLE • THE HUMAN FACTOR • *Soul Note 121212-2*
GUNTER HAMPEL/MATTHIAS SCHUBERT • DIALOG • *Birth 041*
RICHARD TEITELBAUM/CARLOS ZINGARO • THE SEA BETWEEN • *Victo cd03*

THE PRINCIPLE OF DIALOGUE is never stronger than in duets. They suggest ideals of equal parts and conversational intimacy, an emphasis on the particulars of exchange. If jazz has often been discussed in terms of its resemblance to speech, the quality should be most apparent when only two players are involved. But somehow, the analogy seems to work better in theory than in practice. Duets that resemble dialogue can sometimes do so at the expense of their resemblance to music. Often one doesn't know what to say about such duets, perhaps because they're already so filled with the paraphernalia of language. Other duets have a way of sputtering along over failed notions of form. Is there a continuum, or a waiting for shaping, or a noodling politeness? Is there a composition, or a head's up rush for form?

Somehow, in a music that has produced endlessly similar trios, quartets and quintets, every duo is different. Perhaps it's the way the duet emphasizes the balance of personalities and roles. There are duos that divide readily into soloist and accompanist, in which the lesser partner must function as a kind of truncated band. This is particularly true where conventional forms are strongest. Others aim at a process of genuine dialogue, though the more genuine the dialogue the more the music can risk becoming noodling. At times the weakest duets are those with players most expectant of conversational response. Strangely, the most successful of these exchanges are often the least concerned with a principle of dialogue. Often the most significant moments of these recordings arise when you're hardly aware that only two musicians are present, when the two musicians have become a band that just happens to have two musicians in it.

These ten duets are linked by the keyboard. There are five duets of piano and reeds and three duets of piano and percussion. Even the two seeming exceptions include keyboard elements, whether vibraphone or synthesizer.

SAXOPHONE AND PIANO

The success of the duo is closely tied to assumptions about language. Is it a thing in itself, or simply something with missing parts? In a grouping of five duos of saxophone and piano, with both old radicals and young conservatives represented, the music is often formed in its relationship to a traditional collection of formal assumptions.

The most conservative of these CDs, ***Youngbloods*** (Mons CD 1897) is by the youngest group, something that can almost be assumed these days. Swiss altoist **GEORGE ROBERT** and Italian pianist

ANDREW CYRILLE • PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL SMITH

DADO MORONI "display their joint mastery of the language of mature jazz," according to annotator Dan Morgenstern, and it's interesting to hear just how differently these two younger Europeans define their terms from, say, Hargrove, Blanchard, the Harpers, Keezer, and Hollyday. If much American neo-con seems to centre around the early sixties Messengers, Robert and Moroni have gone back further (or simply off the continuum) to a kind of late swing small group style that accommodates bop (and beyond) by blunting any hard edges and brilliant corners. I have no idea what historical, or cultural, or even musical significance this might have. I suspect none, insofar as it's divorced from any sense of necessity. It may mean only that Clark Terry, who provides the duo with an enthusiastic blurb, is still able to find sidemen.

Robert sounds best here, while Moroni manages to make the piano role often awkwardly busy, as if trying to jam in all the rhetorical accompaniments. Extending far enough forward to include tunes by Kenny Barron and Ray Drummond, the two produce warm, orderly, slightly bland music that doesn't particularly explore the duo format. With 14 tracks that include *Body and Soul*, *Lush Life*, *I Remember You*, *Stablemates*, and *Easy to Love*, it's almost the perfect "jazz" record for somebody who doesn't have any others. It has no rough edges, except for an occasional Fender-Rhodes piano, which is too rough for me. This particular branch of neo-conservative formalism seems to work better than neo-hard bop, since it plays off the decorous aspects of late swing.

This notion of jazz as memory is a potent phenomenon. It extends to a spirit of historical reconstruction on several other recent CDs, where the duo's dialogue seems to centre on where the players come from, in extended chats about sources.

There's another version of *Body and Soul* on ***The Standard Line*** (Unity UTY 133) by **DAVID MOTT** and **DAVID LOPATO**, though it's the only official "standard" on the playlist. This is a fluent performance by two musicians with a strong sense of common purpose, though Mott's powerful baritone is definitely the dominant voice. He doesn't employ other reeds, and it gives his work a special focus. In this recording he's less interested in the more exotic sonic explorations that he's developed in the past, but there are certainly some interesting timbres, from an unusual upper register to trombone-like slides and trumpet-like shaken notes. This is witty music that's often held together by what it resembles. A ballad by Mott somehow suggests a lonely woman 'round midnight. Another track, *Little Texas*, which Mott suggests invokes early Ornette, certainly does, leaving one wondering when will the blues connotation leave.

KESHAVAN MASLAK and **PAUL BLEY** are not players I would necessarily think of as compatible, but ***Romance in the Big City*** (Leo CD LR 103) is sometimes a pleasure to hear. At times they recreate an ancient spirit of jazz with limited attention to its traditional formal constraints. What it has plenty of is the rhetoric of romance, a breathy, longing, emotional language. They sound like two musicians playing alone in a lounge after all the patrons, the rhythm section, and all notions of structural rigour have left. Time is a suspension bridge stretched from about 1940 to the present. The high point is *Jealous Passion*, a gurgling, burbling, roaring revision of *Cherokee*. Sometimes they listen closely to each other, sometimes they wander off. Occasionally one will wander off completely for a whole piece, Maslak for one, Bley for several, though the unaccompanied alto solos may derive from another session. Generally the first few tracks, where the spirit of blues, ballad and boogie are most alive, and where Maslak plays tenor in a way that recalls every Texas tenor player from Arnett Cobb to Ornette Coleman, are far better than the later ones.

MAL WALDRON and **STEVE LACY**'s ***Sempre Amore*** (Soul Note 121170-2), like the wonderful ***Hot House***, their investigation of bop, is an outlining of history. Here it's an appreciation of Ellington and Strayhorn and their collaborations. The dry economy of this duo etches the music beautifully, particularly Waldron in the title selection. Ellington is recorded with ever increasing frequency, by everyone from Marcus Roberts to Misha Mengelberg (that is a stretch, isn't it?), but Lacy and Waldron perform this music with exceptional clarity. What they bring to this material is a sense of structural coherence that complements their laconic styles. The dryness highlights everything that has been omitted in the reduction to two voices.

One of the joys of the recording is the exploration of less familiar Ellington tunes, particularly from the later years of his career. Lacy and Waldron often choose material that's new to one or both of them, including such pieces as *Star Crossed Lovers*, *To the Bitter, Azure*, *Sempre Amore*, and *Smada*.

Oddly, the most successful of these saxophone/piano duos are the one by Waldron and Lacy, recording some thirty years after first playing together, and ***Boston Duets*** (Music and Arts CD-732) by **OLIVER LAKE** and **DONAL LEONELLIS FOX**, recording an evening performance on the day they first met. What the two CDs have in common is fresh material and some real equality of parts that results in a sense of common purpose.

Fox and Lake bring to the encounter a tremendous enthusiasm and varied approaches to one another's pieces. Fox is a Boston-based composer and pianist whose work has been largely in the realm of orchestral composition. He seems equally rooted in early 20th century European piano music and in the musics of James P. Johnson and Thelonious Monk, often fitting elements of atonal stride and serial boogie to Lakes' twisting lines. He has a way of being most detached when Lake is most expressive, of being most formal when Lake is freest. The two combine to create remarkable tension curves in some of the pieces. The CD ends with a fine account of Monk's *Rhythm-a-ning* in which Lake seems to shred the piece while Fox reduces it to a set of formal kernels. Somehow they push the envelope without losing track of the source.

PIANO AND PERCUSSION

The duo of piano and percussion is radically different from that of piano and saxophone. If the saxophone immediately suggests the traditionally accompanied voice, piano and percussion may suggest a percussion orchestra. The piano suddenly becomes responsible for the bulk of melodic content.

The duo of **MAX ROACH** and **CONNIE CROTHERS** (NA- 1001) challenges the usual expectation for the piano to be the more articulate of the two instruments. Instead, perhaps the most precise drummer in the history of jazz pairs off with a pianist who often favours murky middle register chords played with the sustain peddle. The ideas of dialogue and exchange are strong here, but,

as often as not, the back and forth movement frustrates any strong sense of development. At times, Crothers ruminates while Roach makes busywork. There is a balance of roles here, and the record has both a comfortable moodiness and a strong sense of coloration. Its best quality is that it sounds genuinely improvised.

Perhaps the weakness of the Roach/Crothers encounter is that they place such emphasis on dialogue. The instruments find themselves together in any number of groups. Either is readily contrapuntal, and neither is readily vocal. The issue is as much one of playing together without a bass player, as it is playing as a duet.

IRENE SCHWEIZER is the most commanding pianist among those represented here (at least insofar as Bley is represented), and this concert recording with drummer **PIERRE FAVRE** (Intakt CD 009) is glittering, articulate and filled with a sense of joy and exchange. Favre is an inventive player and the two are finely attuned to one another's rapid shifts in tempo and density. There's a constant sense of the two players hearing a different way to accommodate one another's patterns, creating confluence and new paths. At other times, they find a comfortable rhythmic pattern and stay inside it.

The amount of time the two have played together is constantly apparent, as is the amount of time Schweizer has spent playing in duet with percussionists. Her previous recordings with Louis Moholo and Andrew Cyrille suggest the range of her rhythmic interests, and here she and Favre explore the gamut. They seem to raise control and variety to new levels and that's a pleasure to hear. If you like improvisation that manages to sound like Prokofiev or Bartok (e.g., the sonata for two pianos and two percussionists) slaved over it for days and then two gifted performers spent a week bringing it up to speed, you'll like this. I know I did.

If Schweizer and Favre play with a fluency that is in itself joyous, very different forces are at work in the duet of **BORAH BERGMAN** and **ANDREW CYRILLE** (Soul Note 121212-2). This is perhaps the most powerful of these records, though the principle of dialogue seems least in evidence. This is a very tough hour of music with a dark and manic energy. Bergman only plays at two tempos, but they're the ones that count for the most: as fast and as slow as can be imagined. The tempos are locked together. The title track, *The Human Factor*, begins slowly with Bergman repeatedly stabbing out an unresolvable pattern at the keyboard. The pattern will be transposed, but it won't resolve, and it creates a tension that gradually expands with accumulating dissonances and a mounting storm of note flurries. Bergman's primary concerns are with expressive density and complexity, with knottings and abrasions. His work sometimes contains an almost painful lyricism.

Cyrille plays wonderful counterpoint to this, sometimes ornamenting, sometimes driving the intensity, sometimes multiplying the rhythmic complexity. The drummer keeps sparking and sparkling, lifting and lightening, through even the most bombastic and comatose moments of Bergman's onslaught.

The overall structure is intriguing, reiterating the tension curves sometimes apparent within individual pieces. The CD's seven tracks form a kind of pyramid or circular journey, with the first and seventh tracks versions of *The Human Factor*, the second and sixth two different takes of Coltrane's *Chasing the Train* (sic), the third and fifth "ballads," with the apex occupied by the very fast and relatively short *Devil's Double*. The pianist's tendency to carry phrases from one piece to another adds to a certain structural obsessiveness. Bergman is a pinnacle of the piano's most expressionistic and sombre side. His ballads are as choppy as Monk's but they're slowed down almost to the level of the legendary Ervin Nyiregyhazi playing Liszt. That is, you don't know if the performer can maintain attention or survive the tension to get to the next note.

OTHERS

The otherwise ubiquitous piano is absent on two further duet recordings.

On the four duets of ***Dialog*** (Birth 041), recorded in the summer of 1992, **MATTHIAS SCHUBERT** plays tenor throughout while **GUNTER HAMPEL** plays vibes and bass clarinet on two tracks each. Hampel's gifted doubling seems to alter the principle of dialogue enshrined in the title here. Hampel is effectively polyglot, Schubert unilingual. Further, Hampel wrote all four pieces. It's a conversation where one person determines the topics and gets to switch positions. Schubert makes up for any deficit, though, with a remarkable control of timbre. He seems to possess several traditional tenor voices with a couple of his own added.

This is fine music, with very deep roots. What stands out is the facility with relatively extended pieces. Hampel's vibes are wonderfully liquid, almost piano-like, and his bass clarinet has some of the speech-like quality of Eric Dolphy. That's central to the idea of "dialogue." On the Mingus-like *18 bar blues*, the two reed players really explore the idea of musical conversation. The linear strength of the improvisations, especially Schubert's, is striking everywhere, and movement inside and outside patterns is accomplished adroitly. Everything here is very direct, continuously musical, with each player shifting easily from lead to supporting roles.

The Sea Between (Victo cd03) reissues a Victoriaville concert from 1987 and supplements it with three pieces recorded in Lisbon in 1992. I'm not sure that the real time performances of electronics specialist **RICHARD TEITELBAUM** and violinist **CARLOS ZINGARO** count as duets in the strictest sense of the term, since Teitelbaum's programmed and interactive electronics at times have the effect of converting the violinist into something resembling a string quartet, with altered registers and controlled intervallic unisons, quite apart from what Teitelbaum can generate on his own in terms of complexity and tonal colour.

But once one gets past the hardware, this emerges as the best kind of duet, one in which ideas are mirrored and exchanged, rethought and magnified. The interactive relationships among the instruments are compositional, even determinative, elements in themselves, and one of the things that happens in this music is an expansion of the environment. It is one of the ironies of the duet form that it is not necessarily larger than the space of the soloist. The soloist can play with only personal limitations. In duets, the players are, to varying degrees, limited to what they can share. There is a spatial breadth here that seems greater than usual, as if the space between the players has become denser and somehow alive. The space is heard not so much as electronic, but rather as orchestral. □

3 THREESOME THING: THIRTEEN VIEWS ON THE TRIO • REVIEWS BY MARC CHENARD

FOR THE LONGEST TIME, THE TERM "JAZZ TRIO" WAS UNDERSTOOD AS A RHYTHM SECTION, THE COMMON PIANO-BASS-DRUMS - OR GUITAR - CONFIGURATION. BEFORE THE 60'S THREESOMES WITHOUT PIANO WERE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, A NOTABLE EXCEPTION BEING JIMMY GIUFFRE'S DRUMMERLESS UNIT WITH BOB BROOKMEYER AND JIM HALL. BUT TIMES THEY HAVE CHANGED INDEED. MORE THAN EVER, EXOTIC (OR JUST PLAIN 'UNUSUAL') INSTRUMENTAL COMBINATIONS ABOUND NOWADAYS, THOUGH THEY DON'T QUITE HAVE THE SAME EFFECT OF SURPRISE AS THEY ONCE HAD. IN FACT, ANTHONY BRAXTON'S ***THREE COMPOSITIONS OF NEW JAZZ*** ON DELMARK IN 1968 WAS AN IMPORTANT TURNING POINT, SINCE IT LINKED THE LEADER'S ALTO WITH THE TRUMPET OF LEO SMITH AND THE VIOLIN OF LEROY JENKINS, IN ESSENCE THEN, A TRIO WITHOUT ANY RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS.

NOWADAYS, WIND ENSEMBLES are a direct extension of that pioneering effort of Braxton, and the number of sax quartets are indicative of that fact. As for trios, one encounters from time to time a mixed group of winds players, the likes of the **NEW WINDS**. Multi-reedmen Ned Rothenberg, J.D. Parran and flute virtuoso extraordinaire Robert Dick have been working together for close to a decade now, and their efforts have yielded two recordings, the first being ***The Cliff***, their latest entitled ***Traction*** (Sound Aspects SASCD044 62:30). The flutist, a contemporary classical musician with improvisational inclinations, is a master of multiphonics as are his congenial partners in this exceptional and challenging trio. Save for a bouncy rendition of Eric Dolphy's *Hat and Beard* closing off the program, there is little here in terms of "jazz" content, at least in the traditional understanding of the term. Still, improvisation is very much present here, but these musicians are most adept at blurring the written and open parts with their multiple sonic layers which challenge the listener to find his way through the shifting textures sound. This is very much more group playing in the sense of classical chamber ensembles, but their improvisatory skills give life and uniqueness to each of their pieces. A challenge it may be for the ears, but nonetheless a reward for the open mind.

Such unorthodox line-ups, then, are no more exceptional, though they are not exactly commonplace either, at least in the jazz idiom. For those looking beyond standard jazz parameters, the recordings that combine instruments both germane and marginal to the jazz and improvisational music fields are more numerous now. In that respect, the two following releases on the French ADDA in Situ label are indicative. The first, intriguingly called **TRIO SOC** (in Situ 590163, 54:05) presents the most unusual line-up of all albums under review here, this one comprising the soprano sax of Michel Doneda, the variegated percussion of Ninh Le Quan and Dominique Regef on hurdy gurdy and an even more obscure medieval sound box, the "israj". (If anyone can tell something about this contraption, please drop me a line, the liner notes are of no help.) With regards to the music, this trio is certainly the least idiomatic in its approach to improvisation, but that does not mean it is bereft of references. These are most evident in the drones produced by Regef's sound boxes. As he grinds away, saxophonist and percussionist clash and cajole, creating shards of sounds that demand undivided attention and willingness to do so on the listener's part. This is not your run of the mill improv disc. More than anything else, this music is soundscaping in its most rugged form.

Somewhat more "inside" is the **TRIO DENIS COLIN**, their opus simply titled ***Trois*** (in Situ 590138 58:47). Colin, first presented in the pages thanks to Paul Baker's review of his solo bass clarinet recording, plays the most familiar jazz instrument of the group. His cohorts here are Didier Petit on cello and Pablo Cueco on zarb and berimbau. If the SOC trio's music can be drawn into the orbit of the dense textural abstractions pursued in contemporary classical music, then Colin and friends seem to fit into an ethnic music mould, a trend particularly in vogue in France in recent times. Clear rhythmic patterns emerge from all three musicians as a consequence of the simple and hummable melodies (the folk influence); while the improvisational aspects are harmonically open, modal and scalar areas are primarily explored. Group interplay is also very focused, to the point that no one goes out on a limb or tries to redirect the proceedings. In essence, this trio has a very chamber-music like approach, while creating an imaginary folklore all of its own.

An unusual line-up in its own right, **LEGFEK** (where do they get these names?) is an all-Swiss contingent featuring the dual saxophonists Peter Landis (tenor, soprano) and Urs Blochlinger (bass sax, alto, flute) and a lone "rhythm" man, electric bassist Jan Schlegel. In their release (***Rona*** - Unit UTR4053CD 68:11), this group anchors itself in thematically composed material, though there are a couple spur of the moment creations along the way. Though not an instrument to this writer's liking, Schlegel's electric bass does not sound too thumpy here, this due to his avoidance of the commonplace finger popping cliches. Rather than supplying harmonic or rhythmic backdrops, he engages in open conversations with his partners, achieving a more balanced relationship, *trois* rather than the usual asymmetry of soloists backed up by accompanists. All in all, this is a recording that has its charms, though it might lack a little added fuel for ignition. Given the extended lengths of CD's, keeping one's interest for over an hour is not that easy, and there is still much to say for the principle that "Less is more".

Given its small size, the trio allows not only a greater degree of flexibility but interactions can be redrawn constantly without unduly compromising the clarity of the proceedings. One of the ways to enhance this flexibility is by constant variation in instrumentation. In that respect, the unit **THIRD PERSON** defines the trio as a constant to variant relationship, i.e. as a duet plus a shifting third partner. As a consequence, this configuration precisely underscores the inherently asymmetric nature of the trio. On the one side, cellist Tom Cora and per-

cussionist-cum-sampler Samm Bennett are the constants, the variables being reedmen George Cartwright and Don Byron, guitarists Marc Ribot and Chris Cochrane, vocalist Catherine Jauniaux, harpist Ann Le Baron, pianist Myra Melford and live electronics manipulator Nicholas Collins. Pair each of these people to the duo and one gets a 19 track compilation (***The Bends*** - Knitting Factory Works KFWCD 102 73:13). These people may have various interests and backgrounds, but all are accustomed to improvisational experimentation, each one a familiar name in the Knitting Factory circles. As a package, this disc is evidently a mixed bag of tricks, but with mixed results as well. Hard to find any highlights, though, save to say that no one really manages to cut through the strong interplay of the basic duo. Collins in his completely different world of sound sampling seems to be the only one who brings Bennett and Cora to him, especially to highlight the trenchant sarcasm implied in his sampled snippets drawn from old sex-education records. The two vocal tracks get somewhat spastic, though they are concise and escape over-indulgence. While Byron tries to weave some statements hoping for his partners to give a rhythm section feel - which they do albeit obliquely - saxophonist Cartwright misses the mark in both of his appearances; in both cases he waits till almost half of the track before making his entrance. All this to say that this is Bennett and Cora's effort and the sound mix certainly puts them much more in front than any of their partners. If you like 'interesting' concepts, this is for you; if you're looking for results, then the score is tied in hits and misses.

OF ALL COMMONPLACE pianoless trio settings, the sax-bass-drum combination is now the most widely heard instrumental combo. Given its customary time-keeping role, the bass remains the backbone of such bands, occupying a middle ground between the horn and the drums. While the bass has acquired much more freedom in improvised music, it is still the most reliable backbone to any jazz ensemble. Nevertheless, some musicians (and bands) have deliberately done away with the bass so as to avoid the traditional hierarchy of roles. Nowadays it is not unusual to find a more "melodically-oriented" instrument as a substitute. And the guitar is a particularly good replacement here, since it is also of the string family and can be effective in both melodic and harmonic terms.

This mediator role of the guitar is amply demonstrated in the following two discs, the first from a band called **BABKAS** (Songlines CD002 65:43), the second a co-operative effort of altoist **ROB BROWN**, drummer **WHIT DICKEY** and guitarist **JOE MORRIS** (***Youniverse***, Riti Records CD03 64:55). Not only is the instrumentation virtually identical on both discs (alto sax, drums, guitar), but the music is worked out on a common ground, i.e. free-form improvisations (solo and collective) tenuously connected to opening thematic statements. But for variety's sake, both groups also throw in a couple of spontaneous numbers which prevent the proceedings from becoming too predictable. The first ensemble, New-York based but recorded here in Seattle for a Vancouver label, consists of Briggan Kraus (alto), Aaron Alexander (percussion) and Brad Schoeppach (guitar). (By the way, if you wondered about the name, just put together the initials of their given and surnames...) With the exception of an oblique version of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance # 20*, the remaining fourteen cuts offer a range of moods, improvisationally spirited and laced throughout by acrid alto tones cutting through various guitar twangs and distortions.

The preceding qualifiers also hold true in the latter disc, though Brown's energetic outbursts provide for extra impetus. Yet, there is also that strident edge that gives some thinness to his tone, a problem which seems quite endemic to a lot of contemporary alto players. In both cases though, we have telling examples of post-free improvisational music: bold in its forays, yet weaving melodic statements and patterns within the textures of each performance.

Moving on to another configuration, the piano-drums-saxophone line-up is another variant of interest. Without a bass, this unit can best develop its potentials to a greater degree of rhythmic (and harmonic) freedom. In other words: when it tries to perform within a more traditional framework (i.e. with a time-keeping function anchoring it), this kind of unit often gives the impression of a table with a leg missing. Because of that, such groups sound better when they detach themselves from this "inside" approach to music and assume an a-metric one instead. In that light, the **SCHLIPPENBACH TRIO** has certainly understood this and they have most ably charted the freest of improvisatory excursions over the years. This group's latest collaboration (***Physics***, FMP CD50 74:01) presents the nominal leader and pianist with his long-standing partners Evan Parker and Paul Lovens. Together, they perambulate over two long tracks (44 minutes and 29 minutes plus respectively). For timbral variety, Parker wields his tenor on the first cut while switching to his soprano on the second, playing one of his trademark multiphonic interludes along the way. As is often the case in a lot of free improv, such heady excursions loose a bit of their immediacy when captured on a aural medium. By and large, any type of experimentation, be it musical or otherwise, is not meant to be end product per se but an extemporization cast in real time, the very cornerstone of the work in progress ethic. However, records are essentially brackets in time and the music inescapably becomes a product, an end in itself. But aren't paradoxes like these the lifeline of free improvised music?

A second example of this type of trio is a California based group calling itself **BIG WORLD**. Their release entitled ***Angels*** (Ninewinds NWCD0145 56:06) is much more standard stuff in that it is a very tuneful set with some very focused interplay along the way. Rick Helzer's piano is harmonically solid, while reedman Bill Plake improvises fluently on his tenor and soprano saxes, adding nice touches on flute and alto flute as well. Drummer Janet Wrate is attentive behind her kit and sings a very sobering lyric to one of her tunes *(I'd Like to Go Alone)*. The album ends, however, with a piece of almost kitsch lyricism, "as a prelude to Albert Ayler's *Angels*", according to composer Helzer. This said, one shouldn't expect to hear the same Ayler cry that catapulted his own sing-songy ditties into the stratosphere.

Last but not least in this trio survey, there is that primary horn-bass-drums combination so prevalent in contemporary improvised music. Without a piano, horn players really relish that feeling of being on open harmonic ground, on having those drums chattering about while the bass pumps away a flowing pulse. This, of course, is the most obvious scenario, and horn players are always enticed to let themselves go here, sometimes at the expense of the music making process itself (the worst case, being grandstanding in front of a subservient rhythm section). Lest we forget that music is not so much what each individual does but

J.D. PARRAN • PHOTOGRAPH BY GERARD FUTRICK

it is more a question of what goes on between them, in some sense the cracks that appear and how each performer reacts to them. In certain cases, though, such magic can occur when one player alone, by his sheer strength and presence, is able to lift those around him to his level. Of the chosen few in that category, **CHARLES GAYLE** is indeed a force to be reckoned with. This is indeed most apparent in this recent release of his recording ***Touchin' on Trane*** (FMP CD48 68:46). With bassist William Parker and drummer Rashied Ali, Gayle has found the most congenial partners of any of his recordings until now. In it, one feels not only a groundswell of energy but a pulse that enhances Gayle's abilities to shape his slashing phrases. And do not get fooled by the title, this is no rehash Coltrane homage; nor is there any attempt to play his licks or harmonic changes. Instead, this is a tribute in spirit to the energy, the vitality that J.C. left behind some quarter of a century ago. No fancy titles either, as this disc is simply divided in five parts (A to E), the shortest section clocking a little under five minutes (unusual for him), the longest one going twenty seven. Overall, only the B part offers a subdued introspective meditation, while the rest are of a more dithyrambic nature (the level of intensity proportional to the duration of the piece). Quite unlike the no-holds barred approach he is best known for (check the live two-CD set at the Knitting Factory for that), Gayle achieves an equilibrium here, balancing his cathartic instincts with a finely honed lyricism. If comparisons serve any useful purpose here, Gayle approaches in some ways Sam Rivers volatile tenor escapades of the seventies. Not to be overlooked either are one Joseph Chonto's blast from the past liner notes which recall the heady time of black radical discourse. Amira Baraka and Frank Kofsky must be cheering from the rafters!

Yet another tenorman with some clout, albeit not so brazen in his musical pursuits, is **ZANE MASSEY** (son of Cal, if you had to ask). On his debut release as a leader (***Brass Knuckles*** Delmark 464 47:24), this former sideman of Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society can play a beefy horn, though the rhythm section of Hideiji Taneninka on bass and Sadiq M. Abdu Shahid on drums does not weigh in on the same scales as Ali and Parker. Yet, Parker himself is featured on one cut *(Trickle Down Economics)* and what that piece alone offers, really pops out at you. Still, Massey's edgy tenor drives when it has to and you can also check him out as a sideman on Roy Campbell's ***New Kingdom*** release, also on Delmark. A name to watch out for, without a doubt.

In the same vein, at least instrumentally, the unit **DAY & TAXI** hails from Switzerland, though the bassist Lindsay L. Cooper (not to be confused with the lady bassoonist) is originally from Scotland. With Christoph Gallo (soprano and alto saxes) and Dieter Ulrich (drums and signalhorn), this group's release (***All*** - Percasso Productions 11 63:55) is yet another indicator of a very vibrant improvised music scene in that landlocked European fiefdom. Of all discs reviewed here, the recording quality of this one is nothing short of magnificent, the bass fully resonant, the reeds vibrant in all registers and the drums alive without being overbearing in the mix. (Audiophiles take note!) Of greater concern here, the music enclosed in this is lively indeed and all musicians are well attuned to each other, whether they be playing with a beat or working out a collective improvisation. Thirteen cuts of short to medium length cover this disc (including a dirge to swing rendering of Noel Coward's *Mad About the Boy*) with nary a lull throughout. Even if this isn't music to rattle windows by (except if you boost your bass level knob), this release is a highly enjoyable one, but that will more likely be overlooked in the avalanche of CD's burying today's music marketplace.

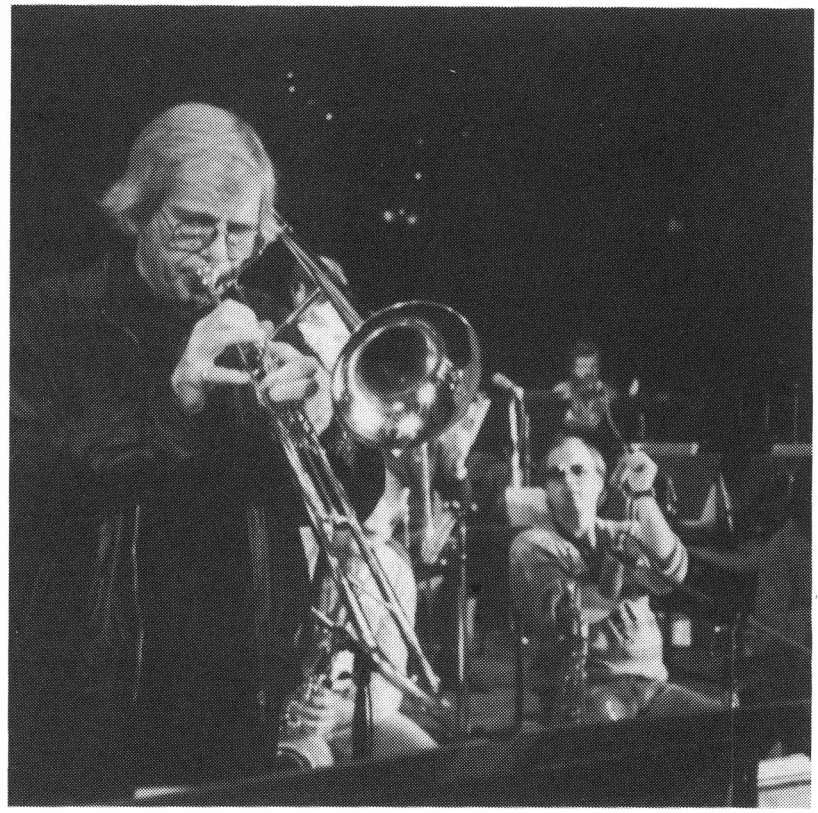
To round off this survey, one concept album of sorts. Of the many world musics infiltrating the pop and jazz scenes nowadays, klezmer music seems to be hitting its stride in recent times. (For how long, who knows?) Don Byron and Klezmer repertory ensembles notwithstanding, this middle-Eastern Hebrew folk music certainly shares much of that rambunctiousness that jazz has always thrived on, not to forget the buoyancy of collective improvisation over embellished themes. Though it may seem more obvious to make the connection between New Orleans Jazz and Klezmer, more contemporary forms of improvisation can also work within the Klezmer mode. To that effect, the **NEW KLEZMER TRIO** turns the trick in ***Mask & Faces*** (Ninewinds NWCD 0144 53:49). Kenny Wolleson (drums) and Dean Seamans (bass) provide a loose and flexible beat that prompt Ben Goldberg to dart around a number of traditional Klezmer vehicles on his clarinet and bass clarinet. Though he knows the jargon, Goldberg doesn't merely stick to it, but rather plays through, around and even away from it. Without being imitative, there is a lot of free play here and the reedman can switch gears at will, wailing folkishly at one moment, then going into high range falsettos and multiphonics reminiscent of John Carter. In the realm of ethno-improv music (for lack of a better term), this disc manages to steer away from the trappings of mere repertory music, using the folk base as a springboard for further extrapolations. By me, bist du schoen! □

BOB BROOKMEYER

AN INTERVIEW BY

TREVOR HODGETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY
BILL SMITH



ONE OF THE BEST LOVED MOMENTS IN JAZZ OCCURS ON THE SOUNDTRACK OF ***JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY***, WHEN THE SOUND OF BOB BROOKMEYER'S MELLOW AND UNMISTAKEABLE VALVE TROMBONE INTERWEAVES WITH JIMMY GUIFFRE'S CLARINET, ON *THE TRAIN AND THE RIVER*.

BROOKMEYER IS PERHAPS THE MOST DISTINCTIVE AND COMPELLING VALVE TROMBONIST IN JAZZ HISTORY, AND, REMARKABLY FOR A MUSICIAN WHO THIRTY AND FORTY YEARS AGO WAS WORKING WITH STAN GETZ, GERRY MULLIGAN AND CLARK TERRY, HE STILL FEELS HE IS DEVELOPING & EXPANDING AS A MUSICIAN.

DIZZY GILLESPIE once said that when soloing he first thought of a rhythm, then found the notes to fit that rhythm. So how does Brookmeyer approach a solo? "Much the same way. If the rhythm doesn't feel right, then the notes don't make much difference. I try to get the rhythm flowing, then I can work on the pitch selection and try to find the notes I want to find."

Brookmeyer first came to prominence in the early fifties, playing in a quintet with Stan Getz. "Getz was my first official jazz job and we played very well together and I enjoyed that. Then I was with Gerry Mulligan for a long time in various formats: of course the Quartet was an education, but I think my favourite format was the Concert Jazz Band. I had a lot to do with organizing that and I always wanted a big band, so that's probably as close as I'll come to having one. Gerry had a wonderful melodic sense. He's one of the best musicians I've ever met. He can hear everything and do everything and he knows all about music. When I first joined the Quartet, someone asked me what it felt like and I said it feels a bit like playing with Bach! Gerry always found the right notes to play for backgrounds or for solo activity, plus being a wonderful songwriter."

From 1957 to 1958 Brookmeyer played with the Jimmy Guiffre Trio, with Jim Hall on guitar. "Guiffre took a long time talking me into joining that band and it worked well. The unity that we had and the time feel between Guiffre, Hall and I was really to me very satisfying. I learned a lot from that band. And we also did a lot of free improvisation, which unfortunately never got recorded."

In 1957 also, Brookmeyer recorded one of his most acclaimed albums, ***Traditionalism Revisited***, on Affinity. "I was getting interested at the time in looking back towards the music of Jelly Roll Morton and some older music, and I found some really lovely music. That album came from that study. I enjoyed making it, but it was a long time ago - almost forty years, so I don't think about it much. That was back then, and I'm concerned with what's now."

IN THE EARLY SIXTIES Brookmeyer was quoted as saying, "The newer things like Ornette (Coleman) make me feel I'm finished". "I don't remember saying that! But I know when I first heard Ornette I was teaching at the Lennox School of Jazz for John Lewis, and Ornette came there. I hated the playing. He went directly to the Five Spot, his first New York job, and I went there every night for one month - I had a bar stool reserved - and at the end of the first week I began to understand it and at the end of the second week I liked it. I think I disliked it so much at first I wanted to go back and find out what affected me so badly. I'm not proud of myself, but I'm really glad I wanted to find out more about it. I didn't just dismiss it and say, 'Hey, this is new and I don't like it.'

"John Coltrane and Ornette were probably the last big explosions we've had and Ornette made concentrated tonal freedom possible, and also flexibility in rhythm. And I think emotionally he just opened up the situation. He took the ritual and changed it and that was one of his most important contributions. I think that retroactively, a lot of things that I heard in the early sixties are now helping me along the path that I'm choosing." From 1961 to 1966 Bob

Brookmeyer co-led the celebrated Clark Terry Quintet. "Clark and I had never been leaders of our own band. He'd worked for Duke Ellington and I'd worked for Mulligan for years. We were working for Gerry's band at the time, and it came about by accident: Tubby Hayes came to the Half Note and they were afraid he wouldn't draw enough people, so they asked Clark and I to come in and help him during that week and we got along so well that the band became a hobby for us. It was a great deal of fun and Clark and I have remained very close. It was wonderful working with him."

BY THE MID SIXTIES however, Brookmeyer had moved into session work, playing on the Merv Griffin TV show, and then moving to California in 1968. "I was finishing a very heavy drinking career at the time, so that was one of my main concerns. It pretty well wrapped up my life for a long time. It closed off a lot of avenues. I was concerned with feeling good, rather than playing good - as many of us were! - but with some of us the feeling good aspect got out of control. It did with me. I managed for a long time to function O.K., but then in California I finally, thankfully, fell apart. I had a good recovery programme, so it was, in retrospect, one of the best things that's happened to me.

"It was ten years that really changed my life, 'cos I got rid of alcohol and drugs and I came back with a lot of opportunity and ambition and a lot of clean paper in front of me that I hadn't had. I think had I not gone through that experience I wouldn't be able to do some of the things that I'm doing now. I'm writing for classical people and I have an opera to do and I'm very busy teaching composition and improvisation and conducting, so my second career in the last fifteen years has been much more enjoyable for me than the first twenty-five years of my career."

In the seventies and eighties Brookmeyer had Festival reunions with Mulligan and with Terry. "Playing live, when it's really together and you feel you have a unity with the audience and the people you're playing with, there's no feeling like that.

"But I also like to do recording, especially my experimental pieces that I'm writing and playing, because it's a different kind of concentration and in a sense the permanence is built into it, so you're maybe sometimes more careful. And as a composer I like control over the situation, and I can have more control over the whole picture when I'm in the studio."

Brookmeyer has now recorded over twenty-five albums as a leader. "Well, I particularly enjoyed the big band album I made when I was recording for Verve for Norman Granz, called ***Gloomy Sunday and Other Bright Moments***, and there was a ***Blues Hot And Cold*** album around the same time that I think was probably pretty descriptive of how I was playing then. But I think probably that my best records are yet to be made, so for me I'm more interested in the future than in what I have done."

On some of his albums Brookmeyer's idiosyncratic piano playing is also featured. "There are a lot of things harmonically, melodically and registerially that I can't do on the trombone. But I was never really a piano player, though it supported me for a while when I was going to school, when I first came to New York. But I like to experiment with sound and with language on the piano. It's a tool for me. I wish that I could play it, but it's a nice hobby! As long as no one else hears it but me!"

BOB BROOKMEYER'S ENERGIES are now concentrated on his Quartet, which recently debuted in Northern Ireland, at the Belfast Festival. "Kris Goessens the pianist and I live in Rotterdam and began playing duo last year and we added Dre Pallemaerts (drums) and Riccardo del Fra (bass). We've just finished a CD, they're all wonderful musicians, they're very sensitive and they want to do new things. They want to learn and they want to be strong in their progress and they're open and they're lovely people and I find them very interesting. We all like each other and like to play together and we want to keep going. This is something that we all feel is full of potential and we're talking about all the things that we can do with this, so it's something that we have long term plans for.

"We're just starting!" □

AND THE HATS KEEP COMING

AN UPDATE OF
hat ART
RECORDINGS BY
RANDAL McILROY

STEVE LACY: REMAINS (CD 6012)
STEVE LACY/STEVE POTTS: FLIM-FLAM (CD 6087)
STEVE LACY FOUR: MORNING JOY (LIVE AT SUNSET PARIS) (CD 6014)
STEVE LACY SIX: WE SEE (THELONIOUS MONK SONGBOOK) (CD 6127)
STEVE LACY/BRION GYSIN: SONGS (CD 6045)
STEVE LACY + 16: ITINERARY (CD 6079)
STEVE LACY/MAARTEN ALTENA: HIGH, LOW AND ORDER (CD 6069)
MAARTEN ALTENA OCTET: RIF (CD 6056)
MAARTEN ALTENA: CITIES AND STREETS (CD 6082)
MAARTEN ALTENA ENSEMBLE: CODE (CD 6094)
JOE MCPHEE PO MUSIC: OLEO AND A FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE (CD 6097)
MYRA MELFORD TRIO: ALIVE IN THE HOUSE OF SAINTS (CD 6136)
PAUL SMOKER TRIO: GENUINE FABLES (CD 6126)

IT'S FITTING THAT STEVE LACY is one of the mainstays of hat ART. For the owlish Lacy, a career in music has meant a life devoted to musical research, often microscopically in the way he frequently re-explores compositions, both from his own singular catalogue of text settings, cross-media pieces (dance, theatre), and un-applied music, and from that of his beloved Thelonious Monk, who likewise sought the many ways into the heart of a single melody. A major label would never underwrite such dedicated exploration for long, but the Swiss label has made a commitment to it since the seventies, when series producer Werner X. Uehlinger issued vinyl records in handsome, outsize, cardboard boxes.

Between digital reissues and fresh production it's a challenge to the ear and bank balance to keep pace with Lacy. Following are only some of the recent dispatches. At the time of writing, the man with the straight horn had just released ***Clangs*** with his double sextet. By the time of reading, hat ART may have released the long-promised three volumes of duets with Mal Waldron.

Remains offers 64 minutes of the Lacy soprano solo. Unaccompanied saxophone is always a knife-edge challenge, forcing the artist to work without the cushioning chords enjoyed by guitarists and pianists, but Lacy's done it enough times to know how to carve shapes into the silence, using silence itself as a compositional gambit the way a painter uses negative space. His playing is rhythmic, bright, and resourceful. The 30-minute *Tao Cycle* reveals both the cruel disciplinarian and the wry prankster (the third section, *Bone*, begins rather like *Pop Goes the Weasel).* There's a light grace of echo on the circling title tract, but Lacy has more than enough in his own resources to hold the show.

Flim-Flam adds alto/soprano saxophonist Steve Potts, Lacy's long-serving partner and, perhaps not coincidentally, the most unjustly self-effacing reed on the scene. Too often Potts' sinewy alto and dark metallic soprano are judged only as part of the Lacy texture; ***Flim-Flam*** redresses that.

These live duets from a 1986 gig in Berne frame the egging and the empathy between the two. On *3 Points*, Potts' soprano is the darker counterpoint but equally limber, the two horns chasing each other like squirrels on a stepladder. Generally, Potts plays the gruff affirmation to Lacy's surgically precise inquisition, but he's just as quick witted, and bright moments like the thrilling alto solo on *The Whammies* leap out of the steely cross-hatching when you least expect them.

More often, Lacy's research is carried out in the mobile laboratory that's been his band since 1972 — Potts, Lacy's wife Irene Aebi on vocals, violin, and occasional cello, pianist Bobby Few and bassist Jean-Jaques Avenel, with drummer John Betsch replacing Oliver Johnson a few years back. They've played together for so long that the group subdivides as handily as it accommodates guest players. Minus Few and Aebi, the Lacy quartet turned in the tough 1986 concert disc, ***Morning Joy***, where the leader's songbook is augmented smartly with Monk's *Espistrophy* and *In Walked Bud*. Six years on, ***We See (Thelonious Monk Songbook)*** was recorded with that same quartet plus trumpet/flugelhorn player Hans Kennel and vibraphonist Sonhando Estwich, with no loss of understanding.

Lacy spent years trying to crack Monk's codes. ***We See*** in turn is one of the more accessible ways to understand Lacy's own. Monk's citric wit and implied swing — he never believed in doing all the work for listeners — find their parallel in Lacy's cunning. The new voices blend well, but once again it's Potts who stands out, and the soprano duel in *Reflections* vindicates his hubris in taking on the master.

Lacy's abiding fascination with text finds its voice in Aebi, whose classical declamation is soulful even as it avoids the tradition of swing for the lexicon of the art song. Still, hip is where you find it, and she finds it on ***Songs***, navigating the late Brion Gysin's wordplay. *Gay Paree Bop* is exhilarating — the tourist hit by the town — while the melancholy *Somebody Special* is the closest this band has ever come to the pop song, complete with echo. Gysin himself joined the sextet on *Permutations* and the ingratiating *Luvzya*, the somewhat awkward results anticipating fellow cut-up William Burrough's recent exploits as unlikely avuncular pop star.

Maybe nobody's ever really sung the telephone listings in the groove, but Aebi's impassioned singing of a dense text by R. Buckminster Fuller is one of the surprising highlights of ***Itinerary***, a 1990 session that situates the sextet within a 17-piece orchestra conducted by Gustav Bauer. The recording is dedicated to the memory of Gil Evans ("My late friend and orchestral guide") and some of the late master's palette is evidenced in the use of tuba, harp, guitar, bass clarinet, and other uncommon flavours.

There's a healthy dose of Mingus too in the mobile layerings of *I Feel a Draft*, and on *Claudy* the soprano trio of Lacy, Potts, and Urs Leimgruber share the melody over the floating colours of tuba, tympani, and percussion. *Rain* clocks as prettily as a wind-up toy.

High, Low and Order finds Lacy in a set of improvised duets with hat Art's most remarkable composer, the Dutch bassist **MAARTEN ALTENA**. In his own bands, Altena's writing tends to take precedence over his playing, but here he's a hearty equal, whether probing a knotty blues figure in *Off-Hand* or summoning many voices in *Post*. Altena's sinewy aggression forces Lacy to dig deeper into the sounds of pads and mouthpieces, but their attitudes are well matched.

Altena's ensembles in ***Rif, Cities And Streets***, and ***Code*** tempt a bedazzled critic to play tour guide, filling paragraphs by simply numbering the episodes. Yet Altena's music invites that by making virtually every piece (even the few he didn't write) a chain of events, with often jarring transitions. This is chamber music with the bow-ties off and chaos just barely under control. Sometimes it shocks. More often it itches, nagging at tight coils of melody only to quickly abandon them, constantly foiling expectations but always obeying an inner logic, however queer.

The octets on these recordings promote a lively floating cast of players, with regular appearances by the tigerish reedmen Peter Van Bergen and Michael Moore, and giant-sized trombonist Walter Wierbos. The key player, though, is percussionist Michael Vatcher. Eschewing for the most part the conventions of straight time at the kit, Vatcher cues and punctuates the music, sounding deep-sea gongs amidst the microtonal pecking of *Slang* on ***Code***, triggering whipcrack snare rolls in *Marre* on ***Rif***, and encouraging the illusion of randomness in a music that is anything but.

Such music could be called prankish — the Art Ensemble of Chicago growing restless in the conservatory, perhaps — but there is that inner logic. The fragmented woodwind phrases in *de Yup* ***(Rif)*** for one read as parts of a puzzle the listener is obliged to complete. No one said music had to be easy; with Altena, at least, there's plenty to pull you back after the exhaustion of the first listening.

There's no hesitation with **JOE MCPHEE**, whose tenor saxophone has the same human cry that Albert Ayler found. ***Oleo and A Future Retrospective*** revives a 1983 hat Art lp and adds a live set recorded the same day but never available until now.

The underheralded American moves easily between the cerebral and the visceral, raising a ragged flag of hope on tenor in the

STEVE LACY & MAARTEN ALTENA (c. 1977) • PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL SMITH

Spanish-flavoured *Pablo*, blowing unblushingly pretty cornet on *Future Retrospective*, handling the balladry of *I Remember Clifford* with love. In lesser hands that would be playing it safe; in his, it's a tribute to a complete player.

The band's a cracker. Reedman Andre Jaume plays Don Cherry to his Ornette, shadowing and embroidering. Raymond Boni's gasping air-bag guitar is a weirdly appropriate third, while Francois Mechali provides stoic but valuable bass on the studio cuts.

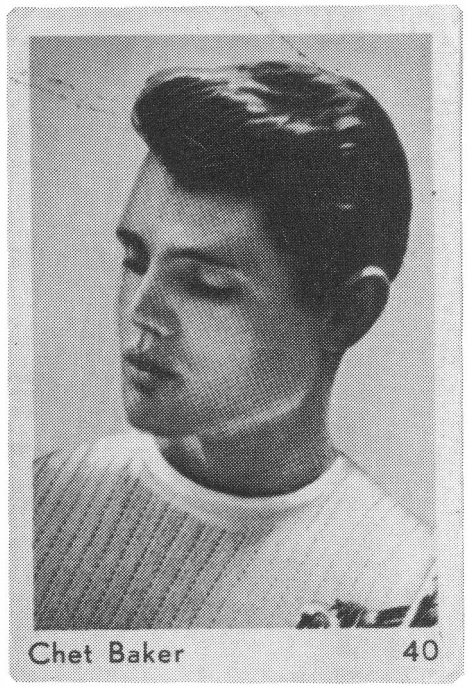
Pianist **MYRA MELFORD** could jam with both Altena and McPhee and come out grinning. She's an astoundingly full musician, at one balanced between wallop and forethought, history and the moment. ***Alive in the House of Saints*** also promotes the band musician, tuned with bassist Lindsey Horner and drummer Reggie Nicholson to the same heartbeat.

The 12-minute and *Silence* typifies the exploration. Opening with a suspended beauty akin to Gershwin's *Blue Preludes*, it builds through more spiky blues forms as it gathers heat. While Horner etches in the few spaces the leader doesn't fill, Nicholson explores an index of percussive sounds, from tiny pings to great splashing cymbals and explosive drums. Each track allows them the room they need, but spirits never flag over the long haul, and *Evening Might Still* finds them tight in the groove.

Trumpeter **PAUL SMOKER**'s arc of invention stretched from New Orleans to now. On ***Genuine Fables***, *St. Louis Blues* is played muted and Milesish. His own *Tetra* filters ECM-styled spaciousness through a Crescent City blues. He underplays the sarcasm just enough in Mingus' anti-racist *Fables of Faubus*, but opens the jets for a furious take of *Hello, Young Lovers*.

Smoker's tone and ideas are exemplary, and bassist Ron Rohovit and drummer Phil Haynes are cats on the case, but it's the sense of history in motion — information made active — that makes ***Genuine Fables*** so important, while doubling neatly as Hat Art's own raison d'etre. □

JAZZ TRADING CARDS



REVIEWED BY STUART BROOMER

THE AMERICAN ARTIST R. CRUMB, best known for his Zap Comix and Head Comix of the sixties, produced a set of collector cards entitled ***Early Jazz Greats*** in 1982. The cards have recently become available again. Crumb has often made reference to early jazz in his comics — he even went so far as to make a 78 r.p.m. record in 1973 — and he briefly worked for the Topps card company in the sixties. With ***Early Jazz Greats*** he commemorates and links two distinct American art forms.

Each of the 36 cards, similar in format to baseball cards, has a painting of an early jazz musician with a brief biographical sketch on the flip side. The paintings are rendered in an uncluttered, almost folk-art style with expressive use of colour, as one might expect given the artist and the size of reproductions, and are sometimes based on the most frequently seen publicity photographs. The result is similar to the painted baseball cards of the century's early decades, except that the jazz cards have no colour line, and the black leagues were clearly superior.

Jelly Roll Morton is presented in blazer and white pants, baton in hand, probably conducting, perhaps even inventing, the photo shoot. Joe Oliver seems more impassive than ever, a more comfortable Buddha. In fact, several early jazz greats — James P. Johnson, Tiny Parham, Sidney Bechet — come to look like the founders of religious sects in this especially reverential form. The high quality of the paper stock and printing combines with Crumb's painting to fill the subjects with light.

The amount of information provided is, naturally, limited, but David Jasen's texts include a brief career summary and dates of birth and death. Surprisingly, given the evident thinness of the medium, the cards manage to achieve the same depth as much critical and historical writing on the subject, and even the same depth as some recordings.

The collector card format has several distinct advantages over other histories. It establishes a kind of absolute equality. The popular get the same treatment as the obscure; the brilliant, as the pedestrian. Louis Armstrong gets precisely as much attention as Freddie Keppard. Further, the cards can be shuffled or arranged in any order , dividing them according to any criteria you wish. If there's someone you think particularly insignificant, you can excise him easily, with no binding to tear. If, for example, you don't think Steve Brown belongs in the ranks of early jazz greats, you can just discard him, though obviously that might detract from the package's value as a collectable.

AS WITH ANY HISTORY, the reader is apt to quibble with the author's choices. Any card series that has room for Benny Goodman should surely have found room for Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, and Red Allen. It's unfortunate that Buddy Bolden, in particular, is missing. Any unrecorded artist who has inspired a novel is certainly deserving of a card, and one would expect a comic book artist to be more sensitive to the interests of the mythic, the legendary, and the ephemeral. But even after the surprise of seeing jazz cards, it's a delight to find among them figures as little known as Ikey Robinson, Alex Hill and Junie C. Cobb. ***Early Jazz Greats*** has its own quirky integrity, rather like the criticism of Hugues Panassie, and one can't argue with the balance of the treatments.

One can only regret that Crumb has not created a comprehensive history of jazz in this form, though this was evidently tried in the past with less successful results. I recently came across two jazz trading cards that appear to have been produced in the mid to late-1950s. Printed in Holland, with text in both French and English, the cards depict Chet Baker (number 40) and Erroll Garner (number 45) in painted photographs that have been cropped and set against a sky blue background. The cards lack both a series title and the name of the publisher, and the brief texts find room for significant error. The Baker card refers to a "Charlie Baker" where "Charlie Parker" might have been intended. A trading card, however, is more easily forgiven than a reference volume. The subjects of these two cards suggest they might be the discards of a finical anti-populist, carried away by the critical tides of the 1960s.

Though oversights and omissions might be inevitable, some ambitious publisher should undertake a new and complete history of the music in just this form. It would be nice to have an Adrian Rollini, a Bubber Miley, a Sal Mosca, a Wilbur Ware, or a Giuseppi Logan trading card. Now there's a dream band.

Originally commissioned by Yazoo records, Crumb's ***Early Jazz Greats*** comes in a cardboard box with a painting of an anonymous trumpeter in a bowler hat. A companion series, ***Heroes Of The Blues***, also painted by Crumb, has been produced as well. □

The sets are available at specialty stores or from the publisher, **ECLIPSE ENTERPRISES, P.O. BOX 1099, FORESTVILLE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A. 95436. TEL. 1-800-468-6828.**

ANTHONY COX

MODERN BASSIST IN HIS OWN TIME

AN INTERVIEW BY SPIKE TAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GERARD FUTRICK

LISTENING IN ON ANTHONY COX's Bass Master Class clinic at the Atlantic Jazz Festival in Halifax this past July, I came to understand the paradox that has marked this very talented player's career since he 'came up' in the early 1980's. It seems that for all his recording credentials, musical foresight and improvising skill, he still doesn't quite have his place in the music. He doesn't fit in. A decade ago when this fact first presented itself it was a cause for alarm, in the mid-eighties it nearly caused him to quit the instrument, but these days, not 'fitting in' is Anthony Cox's shining quality as a modern bassist in transitory times.

He has been recorded on some forty albums under the leadership of John Scofield, Craig Harris, Michelle Rosewoman, Joe Lovano and so many others. He has been paired in rhythm sections with the likes of Ed Blackwell, Pheeroan Aklaff, Jerry Granelli, Ralph Peterson and Billy Higgins. His approach to the music is thoughtful, his attack is relentless. His sound is at once molten iron, a round of blows, a hummingbird (check out his duet with Dewey Redman, 'Dust', from the Dark Metals album or any of his self-guided tours through Gerri Allen's gorgeous and rhythmic compositions on her Maroons). He prides himself on his versatility and has a pointed and singing sound from the high runs to the deepest grooves. The bass is a part of him. He concedes that his conception has long been seen as "too out for the straight-ahead players but too straight for the so-called 'free' ones ... caught in between". He does his own thing from behind an instrument that too often locks a player in as a sideplayer for life. At 39 years of age, he is one of the freshest sounding players in the new music, in his own time.

We spoke in two sessions in Halifax. He is a shy man who is coming surely out of himself as his role in the music becomes defined. The role of confident outsider. This vantage point is a physical as well as a philosophical one for he now makes his home in Minneapolis after years of slugging it out in New York City. Anthony Cox is busier than ever now, putting together new projects and organizing himself for the music of his future. He is, at this writing, pushing boldly forward on many fronts with his instrument and his mindset.

SPIKE TAYLOR: *How is it that, after your many years as a sideplayer, you've arrived at this point in your career where you're doing these other, more involved musical projects?*

ANTHONY COX: Well, I found that there was something missing in my life, that I wasn't happy as everybody's sideman. I felt like I had no input or control ... I was just following orders, being the 'good worker' and I found I was getting burnt out in this situation. I went through these periods where I didn't think it was worth it. I was going to quit the music. I guess around 1986, I had this weird paranoid feeling that it was like damned-if-I-did-damned-if-I-didn't. I mean, it's that whole sideman mentality. I used to joke "career? what career?", you know? I really didn't think too much about what I was doing. I was proud of what I was as a musician but I knew there was something missing. I was frustrated with the observations I'd made about the industry, about the mentality of other musicians on the scene. I thought the jazz community was rather narrow-minded, we were digging our own graves in New York then. It got to a point where I thought I'd be better off doing something else.

I was very shy and withdrawn anyway. Music was my only real means of expression. It took some years and some searching to get at what was holding me back as a person and as a musician. The time did come, though, when I had to take control of my own destiny and not sit around and complain or withdraw or wait for the phone to ring. You have to empower yourself and make your own decisions. We (sideplayers) can't be so browbeaten as to think that if you don't do 'the right thing' you won't get work... because you will get work. You just have to be confident in your own sound which is what we all want anyway. Some of us just have weird ways of going about it.

So this was a timely thing? You came into this awareness in your own time or was there an event that sort of set you on this path?

IT WAS MORE A COMBINATION OF THINGS... I think I was starting to be influenced by other artists and meeting like-minded souls. Meeting more of these people who never went for that buzzword back in the mid- eighties. You know, being "in the tradition". My feelings were that the players who got behind that label weren't really in the tradition at all. It was just a point of reference to show that they'd been with (Art) Blakey or something. They weren't aware of Mingus, weren't aware of a lot of the innovations in rhythm sections. It was just another of those ploys by the record industry dictating tastes to the public. Wynton (Marsalis) just had this very marketable appeal and I saw just about everybody else follow suit at that time. It was very weird to see. Being in New York when everything was changing made me feel like I was outside of it all. I didn't really want to be a part of that but I felt that I had something to say with no available outlet. I wasn't comfortable with that situation. That's what got me on that down phase.

Who were these 'like-minded souls' that helped you find your means of expression?

THERE WERE SOME MORE OBVIOUS than others. (Trombonist) Craig Harris, for one. Marty Ehrlich... James Newton. Again, people who didn't buy into that industry bullshit. I remember playing in David Murray's Big Band with Ed Blackwell and we just didn't seem to get it right somehow.... but playing with him later in a trio with Dewey Redman, I was suddenly sure of what my function was as a bass player. Much earlier than that, around 1981, I took some instruction with Dave Holland in New York and he asked me how my writing was going. I told him that I didn't really write, I was too shy and intimidated by all the music out there already. He told me that I really should start to write my own stuff because I'd be surprised at how nice it could sound when someone else played it. It was nearly ten years later that I really got down to it, though. A series of revelations like that. Gerri Allen is a person who really made an impression on me. She made some very bold decisions about her music. She's told me, " I really believe we've got to write our own music and play our own music. It's fine to play other people's stuff, but this is just something that we have to do." You know? I learned a lot with all of these people. They forced me to come out of my shell because I had my own preconceived ideas in there, too. They challenged me to play outside of the normal role of the bass. It's been a long process and through it I've evolved. I've just come to the point recently where I'm comfortable in what I do. There are always things to discover and explore on an acoustic bass and I no longer have to work through all the fingerings and warm ups. I can just play. I'm doing that now with the electric bass, too... starting with that, having fun.

Now that you've come to this point where you're finally getting to expand upon your own ideas and write, how do you go about the physical act of composing?

WHEN I WRITE it's with individuals in mind or a unit in mind. I write in long forms... telling a story instead of a 32 bar structure. Trying to intertwine movements and sections that would work from my understanding of that individual's or that unit's playing. I've had some success and some failure in doing this but I don't give up on it ... it's the direction I'm going in. When Stephan Meyner approached me a few years ago to do a record I thought that it was my chance to really get down to the writing end of things and I worked steadily for eight months on what would become Dark Metals (Antilles 314- 510 853-2). With my own group now, we laugh and joke but we get down to business. This thing that happens to you when you're working on your own compositions is that the process changes entirely - it's like having your own business, you have a stake in it. Working and reworking and analyzing what you're creating is so much fun. I used to hate going to rehearsals and now it's something I look forward to. No more being told ' do this don't do that', I have a say in it now. This group that I work in with Jerry Granelli and David Friedman is like a cooperative where others come in and work on pieces of music with us (in the case of this festival performance, the three are joined by Julian Priester and Kenny Wheeler). That's the kind of work that I'm into doing... with friends, like family.

This sounds like you're finally in your element. I guess it's taken awhile but at least you've arrived.

YEAH. I USED TO TALK about this stuff with other musicians back in the eighties, (what we really wanted to accomplish in the music) and we'd get all mad and frustrated... and while this was going on we were still waiting on that one big gig that would make us. Those kinds of gigs don't really exist anymore. I just pick up on what I see and what I hear and there's definitely this quiet thing brewing. The record companies have tried to do this big jazz package thing for the last ten years which is essentially to sell a retro version of the music and it's on the way out. I can tell. I don't sit around thinking I've been passed up, I feel very much a part of the music. It's a self-confidence thing, too. It used to be a kind of a drag but it isn't now. When I look back I feel thankful that the things that happened to me did, otherwise I wouldn't be where I am now... at this point of view. The people I have fallen in with are really doing things in the music and in education. I feel very fortunate that my career has gone in this funny path, you know, sometimes underground, but very even and a kind of steady, upward growth. And as that's happened I've changed my perspective on things and I've changed as a person... for the better. So really, right now I'm about 'action'.

What sort of action do you have in mind?

WELL, I'VE GOT SOME PLANS. I'd like to get in on the organizing end of things. This fall I'll be presenting some new musicians in concert in Minneapolis with the jazz society there. I'd like to write for animation films ... produce new albums for my own group and for others. To continue to work with these groups and individuals I've fallen in with and allow those to grow and break new ground. To do more than just show up and play - I've grown beyond that now. I want to continue to give my input into the education of younger players. (He has led clinics in Berlin and in Halifax and is on the advisory panel of Jazz In The Classroom, a program which teaches social, cultural and historical awareness through the music). Jazz education in America has become very packaged, too. They churn out these players like an assembly line. Maybe as the players of my

generation get into teaching at the university level we'll see a change. It needs it badly. The emphasis now seems to be on these methods for getting perfect pitch, for transcribing solos. Young players need to develop their ears and learn to play together and write their own music. You don't need to be a hyper-technician. There's always going to be another virtuoso ready to take your place. You need to have good ideas and learn how to develop them.

***ANTHONY COX** had a relatively laid back few days here in Halifax. He rehearsed and performed Mainstage concerts with Lee Konitz and with Jerry Granelli's 'New Works' band, conducted two workshops for young players and was pressed into these interviews with me. There are many busier days ahead for this player whose own projects are coming together and whose musical community of 'like-minded souls' seems to be growing and barrelling ahead at a like pace. Listen for Anthony Cox's coming appearances in the CD racks, in concert, behind the scenes, in the classroom or wherever he happens to branch out to. He's taken his time about it but it's his time, right? No matter what the record companies dictate or what the mainstream education system says upon the subject, there's no substitute for a musician whose sound, conception and work ethic are realized through their own circle of experience. Who find things out for themselves. Anthony Cox is such a person and his works should be recognized and supported and applauded for these and many other good reasons. Now's the time.*

Actually, the time is some 9 months since these interview sessions with Anthony Cox and I'd now like to jump at this chance to amend the original. I spoke to Anthony over the phone from his home in Minneapolis. We felt that it would provide a satisfying epilogue, seeing that he has done or is doing everything we had talked about last summer.

FOR STARTERS, my quartet is now a quintet. We've added violinist John Blake to the current lineup of Mike Cain (piano), Bobby Franceschini (tenor), and John Newman (drums - replacing Ralph Peterson). We're really working toward a more rhythmic music with a harder edge. For lack of a better word, I guess you could call it ' fusion' - not fusion as we know it in the commercial sense but fusion as a real blend of sounds and styles. That's the direction we're moving into. Our record (Factor of Faces) came out last fall and I feel that it's a logical progression from Dark Metals.

I'm playing with Joe Lovano in a quartet a lot. That's been going on since last fall with Tom Harrell and Billy Hart but for now it's with Mulgrew Miller and Lewis Nash. We made a live recording at the Village Vanguard and it sounds great. I want to start writing for that group, too. Also, I've been doing a power trio thing with Terri-Lyne Carrington and David Gilmore. There's a recording coming up with David Friedman and Dino Saluzzi and some interesting work to do in Minneapolis... doing a lot of different things with a lot of different people - some well-known, some unknown. I think that that's the way it's gonna be for me this next while and there's always a steady stream of recordings coming out with me on them.

Tell me some more about the creative music scene in Minneapolis.

I'M REALLY EXCITED about the possibilities here. It's a more relaxed and more productive environment. I mean, to facilitate on this level is impossible in a New York setting where, given the economic situation, you have a day to rehearse and then one to record and one to mix. Here in Minneapolis it's a lower pressure situation. I've gotten some support through the State Arts Board in Minnesota, some through Jazz In The Classroom and I've facilitated some musical projects out of my own pocket. It's nice to help create a productive environment away from the pressures of the New York mindset. We've got a great facility, a digital recording studio, an engineer who is open to ideas and certainly more time to expand on these ideas.

There are still times when I feel overwhelmed by all the work and then again, it's what energizes me. I recognize that I'm at a real good point right now and I feel I'm on the brink of getting into my own true music personality. I've come to think of musicians as visual artists with our own distinct styles and I think it would be so much better if we could acknowledge each other for that instead of the tendency to put down other people because of their differences. And for the listener it's the same thing - I mean, you can look at an actor and accept that they can take on all kinds of roles as a challenge - people can accept that, but so many people just hate to hear a musician branch out into something different. The music has become something that they (the listener) take so personally. For me, I have to branch out, I have to do a lot of different things.

And you feel that that's the key to a productive future in creative music?

WELL, I HAVE TO SAY 'YES' TO THAT. I think it's important (to branch out) on so many different levels. Also, I want to say how important it is to play among your peers and not to look for the big gig with an old master or in a 'traditional' style. It's about representing 'now'. □

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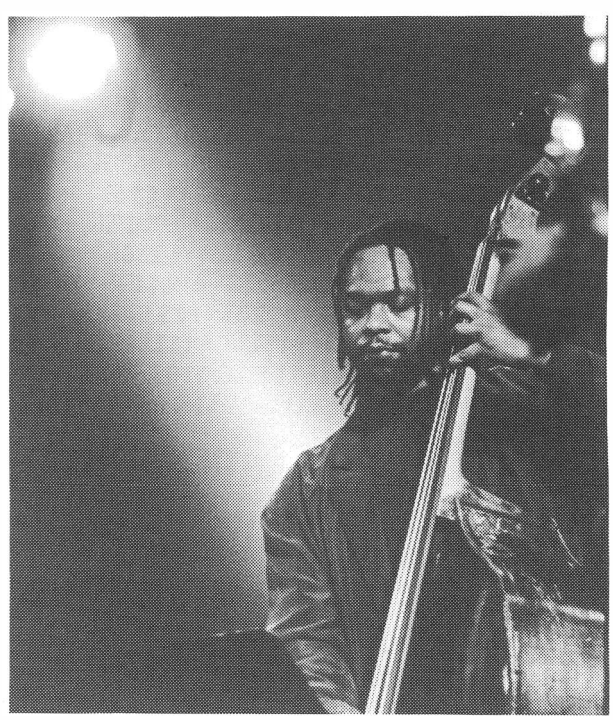

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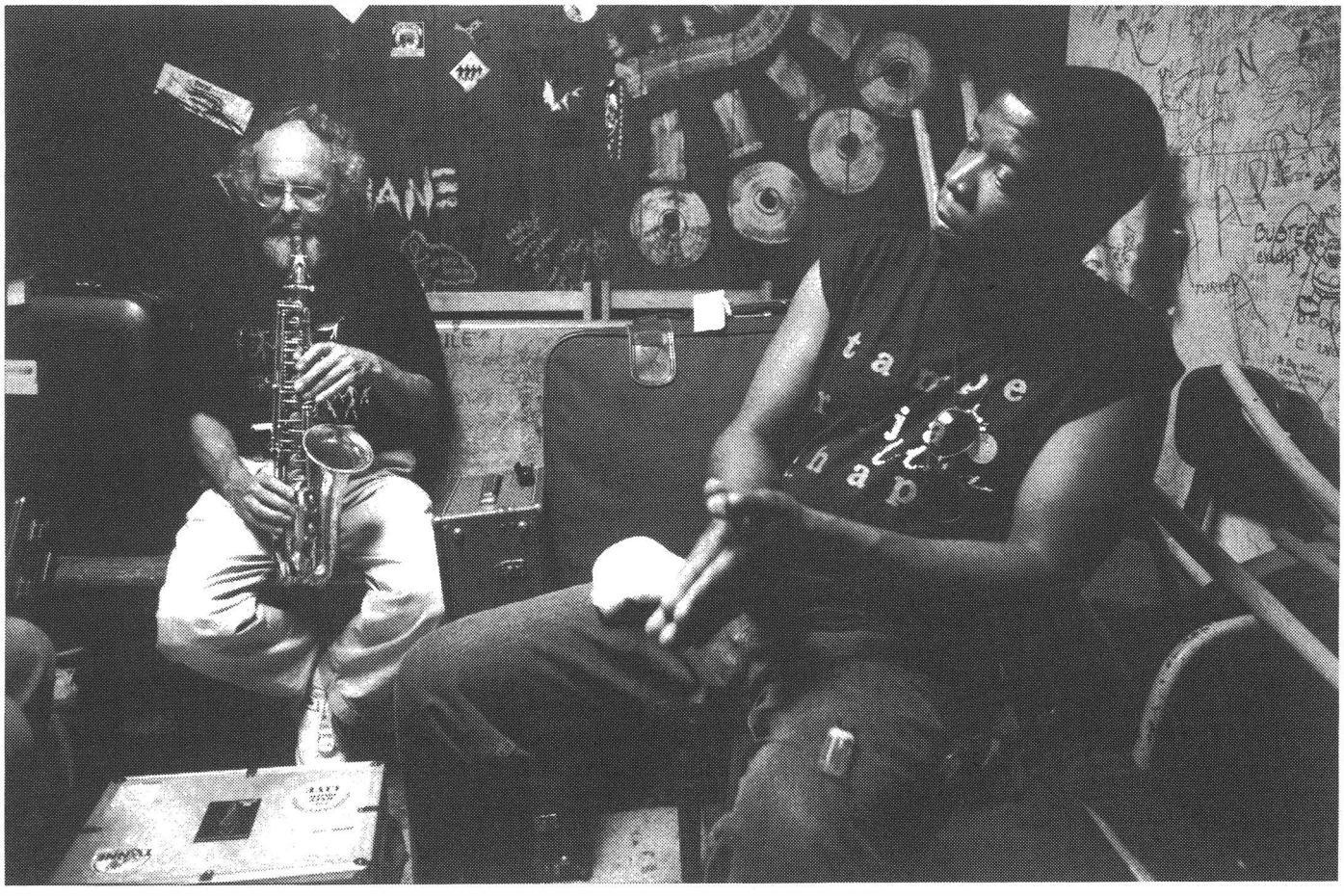

A CONVERSATION WITH **MIKE JOHNSTON** • PHOTOGRAPH BY **BILL SCHWAB**

TREVOR WATTS HAS BEEN PLAYING HIS OWN STYLE OF JAZZ FOR OVER THREE DECADES NOW. HE WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE, BRITAIN'S FIRST FREE JAZZ ENSEMBLE, AS WELL AS FORMING HIS OWN BAND, AMALGAM, TO EXPLORE OTHER RHYTHMIC AREAS OF IMPROVISED MUSIC IN THE 60'S. TREVOR HAS LEFT IN HIS WAKE SEVERAL RECORDINGS. HIS MUSIC REMAINS ONE OF THE SECRETS IN CURRENT CREATIVE MUSIC. HE IS ONE OF THE FEW LIVING ORIGINAL VOICES ON THE ALTO SAXOPHONE TODAY. HIS CURRENT BAND, THE MOIRE MUSIC DRUM ORCHESTRA, IS RHYTHMICALLY PROPULSIVE, AND IS A BEAUTIFUL BLEND OF ALL OF HIS PREVIOUS STYLES BLOWN OVER LAYERS OF RHYTHMS. I HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO HEAR THE BAND LIVE IN DETROIT THIS PAST SUMMER. THE SETTING WAS MOST INTERESTING. THE CLUB OWNER, WHO'D NEVER HEARD OF TREVOR'S BAND, BOOKED THEM IN AS THE OPENING ACT FOR OPEN MIC "JAZZ" NIGHT; ABOUT AS LOW A BLOW AS COULD BE DELIVERED (FINANCIALLY TOO). NOT ONE MEMBER OF THE BAND SEEMED TO TAKE ANY OFFENCE TO THIS, AND THEY "BROUGHT" ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL SETS OF "FREE" MUSIC THAT I'VE HEARD IN AWHILE. AS USUAL, THE MUSIC TRANSFORMED EVEN THE MOST SCEPTICAL LISTENERS.

TREVOR: I see what I'm doing now as a gradual development of things. I work in a fairly slow way, so I see the music that we are doing now as a continuation of what came before it. It's not radically different in my mind. I've always been involved with rhythmic music and I've always played with strong drummers. When I formed Moire Music in 1982, it was basically for compositional ideas. I wanted to use African drumming with a European type of thing with violins. I had the Drum Orchestra for my improvisational side. So this was for free improvising using rhythm and the Moire Music was a project that went on until 1990. Then I decided to bring the two together. That's when I started calling it the Moire Music Drum Orchestra. In 1992, we did a six-week stint in Canada, the States, Venezuela, and Mexico. When I pulled the band together in 1990, we didn't discuss the way the music was going to go. It was just coming together and playing, and we worked out the music form as we went along. It was really purely improvisation. On the tour we were improvising without any discussions musically about

anything. Gradually some of the Africans started bringing in their songs and they decided to do a piece like the four Breketes, which started me playing the soprano in more of a North African way. It didn't really happen consciously. It was the sound of the drums and it started to take on its own identity then I suppose with all of the musicians in the group and how we coped with various situations that came up. I feel over time we've joined together without any compromise and for me that's the main thing and I feel ultimately that it's a true collective.

***MIKE**: Something that interests me is that this line-up or blend of instruments with the African Drumming dominating seems so obvious, but it isn't really done that often.*

IT DOES SEEM OBVIOUS and like a good idea really. The origin of it for me was the Moire Music which had lots of full sound with up to three keyboards at a time. I got to a point where I wanted to strip all of that away and get down to a fundamental underlying African feel. So that encouraged us to use traditional instruments. I play sax, so that's why that's there, but it could be done in all sorts of ways. I've always been inspired by traditional music. I've always wanted to be involved with that long before I was able to meet the people I'm doing it with. So we've used that as the root of the music. I really play not dissimilar to the way I've always played. But my background in free improvisation has allowed me to interact with other instruments around me, in other ways rather than strict traditional ways. I find the African musicians to be quite open people, they don't want things the same every night. But they do play from a solid knowledge of what they are doing, using the rhythms of their country. They're all Ghanians and they're from the Fanti tribe.

Another thing that I wanted was a group that could reach out to more people, but not in a commercial way. It's great when people dance. I feel the music works on a lot of levels; people can listen to the music or dance to it. It works for me on a lot of levels. I don't see it as a sax player in an African group. I'm just playing. Because I'm not in a role with 12 bars here or there, I basically can play when I want to. We all have choices and that's the way I want the group to continue. So we all have choices. We can play if we feel it or lay out if that feels right. As long as everybody is satisfied in the group, then that's fine. I tend to think that we all tend to try and find a balance in the material anyway.

You played me a recording with some Venezuelan musicians. How did that pairing come about?

THE BRITISH COUNCIL sent me to Venezuela to have a tour with Guari Congo, a music group, and Chantanegro, which was a theatre group. This was in December of '92. I had this opportunity to go and study their music, so I insisted to the Council that an African member must come along too. That was arranged, so Nana Tsiboe came. It made more sense to bring him along because their music is essentially coming out of African tradition. We went to the town of Tacariqua. They formed foundations for their music because they didn't get any government support. Now they do. They retain very strong traditions. There's a lot of Spanish influence, along with West African. So that seemed like a logical joining together there. I was interested in singers and dancers. Basically that side of it. So we hooked up with this group that had all of that with lots of drummers.

In 1990 we played in Caracas and jammed with a group and it worked incredibly on a spontaneous level. So I thought wouldn't that be good to get them over to Europe? That involved getting 28 people over. We did it and there's a desire to continue doing it from both sides in any way that we can. So we used some of their music and some of ours and joined the best way we could with the limited amount of time that we had. That was exciting but difficult in some ways, too. We wanted everything to be good including a good social rapport, which goes into the music and then comes out to the people you're playing to. People can see it, feel it and hear it. I'm not interested in having a group of fantastic musicians that don't get along. The music ultimately is a sum total of the whole. You can say that some individual is fantastic, but often you can hear a fantastic individual and the music is shit. To me I like to have all of the parts making the whole music.

How does improving relate specifically to your drum orchestra group?

WELL, IN A TOTALLY IMPROVISED SETTING, someone can drop a stick and that can be the beginning of a piece, and you make music out of whatever the sounds and noises are. That's a philosophy for free improvisation in some ways. This music is a little bit different. We tend to develop pieces. We play them differently every time so the spontaneity is there in that sense. But it's not set up in that totally risky chance setting where parts work and parts don't work. We try to make all of it work by relying on these forms that we can place our hats on. It's important to all of us to be spontaneous with the way we play our pieces. But that idea is as old as anything really. I played for many years the other way and I didn't feel like I was getting anywhere after awhile. It gets to a point where you have to show that you can play on some level to get gigs.

You don't come off like you're compromising, though.

NO, I DON'T FEEL THAT it is a compromise. To me I played one way for so long and it was time to change. I'm just trying another way. I'm not saying that one way is better.

It seems to me that your role in this group is the most free, because they lay down rhythms and at times create a backdrop for your soloing.

IT DOESN'T MEAN I'M FREE THOUGH. I mean it's the freest role, but when I see Patatoe playing his rhythms he's free man, because it's bliss. I'd be happy doing that, too. I'm just where I

am. You know what it's like yourself, but you can be restricted by your own being. Your head in a certain frame of mind at a certain time can restrict you. To feel free is not to be in the role where you have the freedom to do what you like. To feel free can be meditation. It's all the same to me. Hopefully, we all have that feeling of freedom. It makes the music breathe.

What about your new ECM recording, "A Wider Embrace"?

WE RECORDED THAT IN APRIL OF '93. We had four days in Angel Studio in London: a fantastic studio with a fantastic engineer. So, for the first time I feel as though our music had a fair chance. We were given this chance to do the ECM recording, and I think they are a good company. They gave us the space, our say in the music, and they are good for the money. Hopefully it will get around a bit more. As far as the music goes, I think we've captured the essence of the music, but not only that, it has great sound. The voices are full and you can hear what the drums are really doing. All of the subtle interplay is there and we've never had that before. So that's important that people can hear that. I think primarily that we are a live band. I don't know how well recordings capture that, but maybe they never do anyway. But live, there's a lot of excitement live. Part of our band walks around in the audience, and that gets it close with people. That's happened wherever we've played.

I understand the collective aspect of your group, but I also see your band as an interface of jazz and African music.

THAT'S UP TO OTHER PEOPLE. I don't like tags myself. I don't like to look at it like that in any way. I know we are surrounded by that in life. It all has to be put in bags and sold. There is that side to it as well, but I don't want to put it into a bag to sell it. The reason I call it Moire Music is so that it has a name of its own; so others can put it in a bag. We've gone over equally well at jazz festivals, world music festivals, and folk festivals. Ultimately, it's all people. People can enjoy it on different levels.

I like the fact that you can get into the groove of the music, but it has that involvement level so you can go as far as you want with it. There's a lot happening.

I THINK THAT COMES FROM RETAINING the improvised side of it. A few people have made that comment. It's that joining together that seems to give it that appeal. It's not a purely traditional thing. It uses elements of where the members come from. You've spent time with us and can see how the barriers are broken down socially. Patatoe calls it a family and we feel that way. It's a real understanding there. All we have to do is be given the opportunity to play. It's no doubt that people pick up on that. I like this situation. We played in Africa which was important for me. It was a great response there as well. People there found it fascinating. It's more like songs and dance, so that was beautiful. Same with Latin America, often for the same reasons I think that you like it, because it's got that edge to it. It's not smoothed out in a pop way. It's infectious.

One thing that I sense in your playing from the last time I saw you a couple of years ago, is that your playing sounds at times almost like a Ghaita. I can hear the African influences in your playing.

I THINK THAT DEVELOPS SUBLIMINALLY. I left it open. Early on and over time what you're hearing is the way that I've personally solved the problem that was set up when we were just jamming. I was put in a position of, do I play "jazz" or play how I feel. So, I thought the obvious was to play how I feel and it led me back to the soprano and leaning towards that sound. But no way did I sit down and say, this is what I've got to do. It comes from discovering it through improvising. It's a natural way of playing. So it probably comes about as the natural way to solve the problems of blending reed and drum rhythms. I think playing another way could actually sound corny. When you play with an Mbira, there's not a lot of examples. So you have to find a sensitive way to play with that without taking it over. So "I did it my way". (Laughs) Seriously, I try to be honest with the situation. If I'm not honest, then I feel bad and I don't want to feel bad, and my playing this way developed spontaneously. But I've heard loads of music in my life. Everything is influenced by everything else. We're not part of a vacuum. Everything supports the star system. Everybody. So in my opinion, everybody's got a value.

I've been classified as an Avant-Garde player, which goes back to my origins in the 60's. It's a silly name for anybody really, but I feel like that label has held me back quite a lot or held the music back. Not the development so much, we are successful because we manage to survive by it. But, I'd like to get rid of the tag. I'd like people to give the music an honest chance, because I feel it can appeal to anybody. So it would be nice to work more and not have to convince people that it's a good idea to hire the band. It's got the entertaining element yet we totally go for it when we play at the same time. I'd like to get rid of the tag because it's a bit of a pain and I'd like to get rid of the constant comparisons of me to Ornette. Like that's what I've taken so that's what I am. It's years since I've tried to do anything like anybody else. There's no more Ornette than Ernie Henry or whoever.

It's convenient for people who write things. If it's Bebop Alto it's Bird; if it's freer, it's Ornette.

WHEN WE PLAY, PEOPLE JUST LISTEN TO THE MUSIC. They don't know where you're coming from, and they get their rocks off. That's what I see and hear. People want to intellectualize about how it's connected to this and that. I mean can you explain what Harmolodics are?

Not sensibly. I love Ornette and he's interesting in what he's got to say. But no, not really. □

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APPLE SOURCE

NEW YORK NOTES
BY KEVIN WHITEHEAD

Music lessons: Jazz is a work in progress, as fans know well. In New York, the classic defence of a shaky pickup band is, they should sound good by the end of the week. One remembers a ramshackle opening night for Frank Morgan at Fat Tuesday's a couple of years ago, where the assembled band was so untogether, he'd introduce each tune, "and now we'd like to rehearse..." The set was redeemed when Morgan called a piano solo as the closer, and George Cables sardonically picked *Don't Blame Me.*

The clown prince of Chicago tenors, **Von Freeman**, played the Vanguard one week in January, and sported with his pickup band (Michael Weiss, Rodney Whitaker, Gregory Hutchinson) like he was running a jolly boot camp. Wednesday January 19, a fierce cold night outside and in the Vanguard. Von muttered, "My horn is ice cold but that's cool," appeared not to notice how few folks braved the weather, and proceeded to razz the band. Not enough he calls tunes like *Liza* you don't hear on Hargrove gigs; he counted off *Billie's Bounce* at a tempo fast enough to make Johnny Griffin wince. (The band didn't wilt; as Von let fly with his barwalker-bebopper slurs, he sneakily emphasized the harmonically pivotal note in each passing phrase. Elsewhere he leans so far behind the beat you fear he'll fall over, and sports a flatulent flat tone more beautifully expressive than vintage Sonny Rollins'. Freeman tripped up Whitaker by unexpectedly announcing *Satin Doll* as a bass feature; when Weiss whispered he didn't know one tune Von called, the leader said, "Well look at it this way - feel free to express yourself."

Charles Gayle, having done many gigs in New York and Europe with drummer Michael Wimberly and bassist Hill Green, has encountered a paradox previously noted by Steve Lacy and Jackie McLean, for two: the longer you play free with a stable group, the more predictable a set's trajectory becomes. Gayle is shaking things up for himself two ways. One is looking for a new bassist; the last two of his three May Mondays at the Knitting Factory, it was Ernie Barnes, whose sane volume level and good pitch give him an edge over many of his predecessors. A gloss on Gayle's one-man Victoriaville set: the first week of the stand, faced with a well-meaning young bassist with obviously little free-play experience, Gayle took the bass from him and credibly demonstrated the creative possibilities, arco and pizz, for ten minutes, after which Charles displaced Wimberly and played half as long at the traps. The rhythm section cracked up.

The desire to escape old ruts leads Gayle increasingly to the pitiless grace and thematic organization of peak-period Rollins, but Charles seems to fear he'll look like a sell-out if he applies too much blatant technique. (His friends assure him he needn't fret about that.) On the stand this conflict results in graphic marriages of psychodrama and musical artifact, his thinking processes exposed. His reed was stiff as he began one set-opening a cappella tenor piece, which was Sonnyish in developmental method and flat-pitch manipulation, 'cept Charles was squeaking. As he and his horn warmed up, Gayle studded his lines with precise, coherent overtones, effectively amalgamating his own textural approach and Rollins' burly ballad style. You can see why he draws loyal fans (who ain't no "cult"): this pilgrim's progress is exciting and unpredictable, week to week.

Sixty years after its vogue, the bass saxophone makes a comeback. At least three were sighted recently (no, not three appearances of the same rental model - three bass saxes). The parents of the late Gerald Oshita bequeathed his to **J.D. Parran**, who featured it at Experimental Intermedia March 12, co-billed with lecturing seamstress Carmen Kolodzey on sewing machine. (Physically, XI lies between artsy Soho and Chinatown sweatshops.) Bari anchor **Scott Robinson** grappled with a bass sax once or twice on the first anniversary of the Maria Schneider Big Band's Monday nights at Visiones. (The composer/conductor studied with Gil Evans and Bob Brookmeyer and sounds it; her band fit and tight band deserves a loyal audience.) And Rotterdam's **Klaas Hekman**, bass blower with Six Winds, was in town recently, sitting in here and there, often in the company of trumpeter Roy Campbell, with whom he works in Holland.

One sighting was at **Context Studios** on Avenue A, now site of Sunday and Wednesday concerts of "avant garde jazz music, dance and poetry". Key players in the repertory company include Campbell, bassists William Parker and Hal Onserud, drummer Jackson Krall, and fifteen saxophonists from B to Z: Rob Brown, Will Connell, Mark Whitecage, Blaise Siwula, Zusaan Kali Fasteau... To these ears and eyes, the poetry and dance are a nuisance. The large-ensemble improvising is in the vital style of mid-60s New York co-ops, rolling and roiling, and sounding very much the same no matter who's the nominal leader. But it's great to have access to Ascension-style blowouts on a regular basis.

Cecil Taylor booked himself into Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center for a birthday concert, March 26. Because the venue is deep in enemy territory, it inevitably took on the air of a referendum on adventurous music, and Cecil encouraged the audience to worship him, as if plunking down $25 each wasn't enough. Since turnout was good and the response was overwhelmingly positive, may we point out it's unseemly to coax adulation from the throng by beginning an endless series of encores half an hour into the second set? This business had more to do with Pavlov's dogs than spirit music: You applaud hard enough, I'll give you a few more tidbits. Avant-garde? The procedures and motifs on display have been common to CT's music for two decades.

Neo-con guru Albert Murray recently asked who sounds like Cecil Taylor, apparently believing the answer is nobody. But even someone who'd forgotten the '70s, or had never heard of Schlippenbach, Crispell, Plimley or Shipp, could have wandered into Sweet Basil the last week in May to hear **Yosuke Yamashita**'s trio, with Cecil McBee, and the scarily good, tough drummer Pheeroan akLaff. Taylor's clusters, hammered intervals, churned pedal-down chords, obsessive figures and body english were all much in evidence, along with a grounding in pentatonics which Yamashita somehow keeps from sounding simple-minded or reductive in a jazz context. As on the trio's recent records **Joe Lovano** sat in half the time, favouring his Traney multiphonics rather than the Ornetty side he displayed on a March Vanguard gig with Tom Harrell, Anthony Cox and Billy Hart. (That band recorded for Blue Note.)

New Yorkers being proudly ignorant of jazz from overseas, now more than ever in recent memory, it's a pleasure to report that **WKCR** is currently in the midst of a week-long **Evan Parker** marathon, coinciding with three nights of Parker gigs with various combinations the first weekend in June, just after this column goes in the mail.

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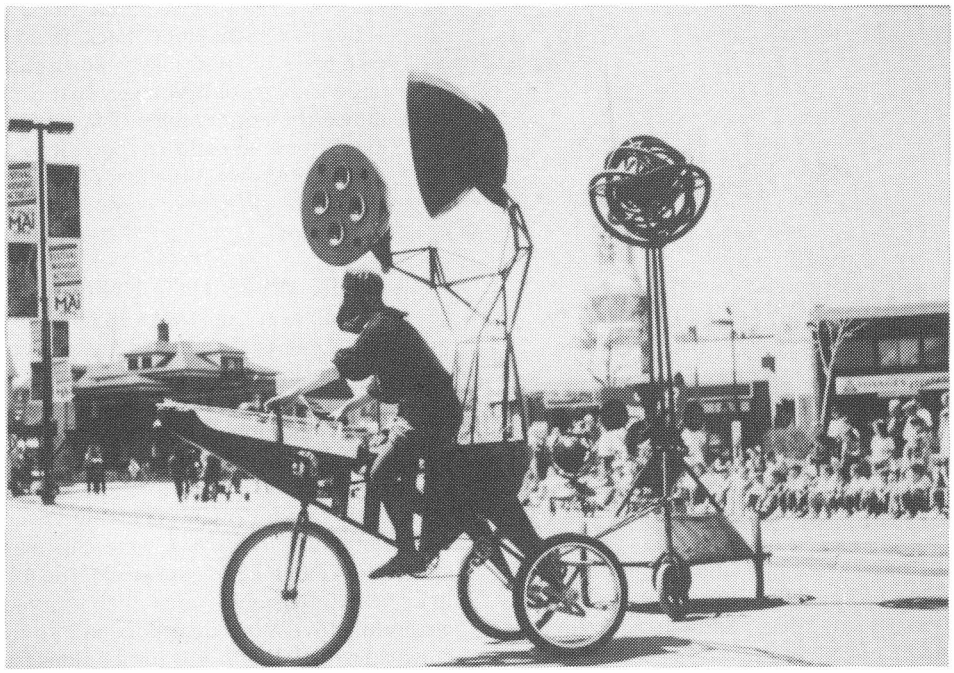
FESTIVALS BACK EAST

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL MUSIQUE ACTUELLE VICTORIAVILLE • MAY 19TH - 23RD / 1994

REVIEW BY SPIKE TAYLOR



FOR ALL THE UNINITIATED, say, the Festival International Musique Actuelle in Victoriaville (**FIMAV**) is perhaps the integral annual gathering of musical minds in North America in the performance setting. This year's event has proven yet again that this small community in the eastern townships of Quebec is a significant opening along the pipeline of creative and adventurous music.

I tapped in for the five days and nights and I'll share with you here what I found (what you missed), and it's a tremendous lot. Taken simply as a celebratory showcase of bold new musical works and workings, the **FIMAV** has made its name through tasteful presentations and unique pairings of musicians and musical styles. From here, though, the simple rules of staged festivity are defenestrated and the spirit of the unknown and the elements of risk take over. There is really no way of knowing what you'll hear at a FIMAV concert and so expectations give way to a new outlook for the spectator. If this still sounds an easy task you must then realize that the true task is to keep up with this musical intensity twenty-six times over a five day period - a tremendous lot.

THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF BAD BLOOD and water under the bridge to stage this eleventh edition of the **FIMAV** after the tenth anniversary blowout in the autumn of 1992. Under civic pressure to popularize the event the organizers bowed to allow for some restructuring and be reborn in the spring of 1994. Artistic Director Michel Levasseur would only bow so low, though. In a resounding press release issued at the time of the tenth anniversary, Levasseur stood fast by the festival's mandate and stated, "...the only negotiable letter in the FIMAV is the 'V'". Relations between the festival and the city are much more relaxed these days - there is a new and supportive municipal administration, a three year contract for the future springtime celebrations of this most uncompromising music and the sun shone on Victoriaville for five days straight.

As the political background seems sound and stable we ought to look now at the music. Though 1994's lineup was not the galaxy of stars that 1992's was, this fact added to the element of risk so vital to this here and now. For the most part, the risks were rewarded at the music's outer reaches as explored by **Espaces Sonores Illimites**, **Mari Kimura/Jim O'Rourke**, **Shaking Ray Levis**, **Keith Tippett**, **Borbetomagus** and the surprise duo of **Caspar** and **Peter Brotzmann**.

The story that circulated the Montreal record shops prior to the festival was that the drummer from Caspar Brotzmann's Massaker had gone A.W.O.L. and the band's FIMAV appearance had to be scrapped. Happily and timely though, a gap was uncovered in the tenor-legend-father's schedule that enabled him to join his equally enigmatic guitarist-son for an improvised sonic trapline. From the opening nod it was quite clear that these two were bound to the search for a common musical ground in contorted ranges of high-volume and layered dissonance. Once they'd found a workable space the two pushed each other ahead into the unexplored zones where the strangest father-son weekend trip was ever taken - or witnessed.

For the jazz fan in Victoriaville there is much that can be learned toward an insight into the free and adventurous music of the future.Where the mainstream jazz festivals have a tendency to invite artists from the more commercially viable and safely de-mystified realms of blues and world beat along with the jazz, the **FIMAV** counters the black/white thinking of the day with a presentation of the most exciting and gorgeous spectra of greys ever heard.The representatives from the more recognizable jazz spheres were highly successful in tearing down the musical barriers that impede too many in the established jazz trade.

A jazz unit could hardly be more established than **Trio Three** - Oliver Lake, Reggie Workman and Andrew Cyrille - and it's hard to imagine a stronger and more imaginative concert statement than their's. The same is true-plus-two for the **Myra Melford** Quintet where energy and joy supplanted the reserve of the Lake-led group. Melford's inspired trio of drummer Reggie Nicholson and bassist Lindsey

ORCHESTRE VELOCIPEDE • PHOTOGRAPH BY SPIKE TAYLOR

Horner were met and challenged by the ideally matched horns of multi-reedist Marty Ehrlich and trumpeter Herb Robertson. While Horner and Nicholson ploughed through the groundwork of mainly Melford's compositions, the front-line piano and horns worked a brilliance of mood swings and odd blasts of blurts. Melford's awesome technique staggered even those standing near the back of the room. She is at once a dancer, a romantic and a savage suckerpuncher at the bench, at times beating all hell out of the piano and making it beautiful.

Charles Gayle's much anticipated solo set delivered beyond any expectation as he claimed the stage with a knowing confidence and wailed it through his tenor saxophone, kicked it into his drum kit or testified to it at the piano with a voice that proclaimed it. Saxophonists Spearman and Larry Ochs lead a furious locking-and-unlocking of grooves fleshed out in the **Glenn Spearman** Double Trio and stood them among the FIMAV's highlight events. The merging of these two outright trio units from the San Francisco area is a dynamic step towards a full and forthright group improvisation. They filled the room with a swirling mass of freely Ornetticized compositions balanced on the edge of reason and abandon. It was an inviting place for the listener to hang.

Elsewhere on the rack of the eleventh **FIMAV**'s strong suits was the continued commitment to showcasing Canadian composer/improvisers. These ranged from the self-assured and endlessly inventive solo pianists **Lee Pui Ming** and **Pierre St. Jak** to the very talented multi-reed player **Francois Houle**. **Michel F. Cote**'s 'Bruire' group gave a truly off-the-wall performance combining the leader's own percussive off-roading with Claude Fradette's minimalist guitar work, Serge Boisvert's trumpet and voice, Martin Tetreault's in-the-know tracking on turntables and the inimitable Jean Derome's own table full of strangely blown surprises. The performance swung on an odd but undeniably cool new meter that evoked the sense of it being the soundtrack to a movie the entire audience would line up to see and bring friends to. Yannick Rieu's tenor-led trio chopped into a solid set of straight-ahead jazz but, as the midnight show on the first of five nights of music, much of the small audience of all-day travellers were contorted in their chairs in restless sleeps. Great band in a tough slot.

THERE WERE TWO UNIQUE and entirely remarkable spectacles by Quebec ensembles at the **FIMAV** in terms of use of physical space, motion and, of course, music. Espace Sonores Illimites opened this year's festival with *Musique En Espace Sacre* inside the beautiful Eglise Ste-Victoire. Some one-hundred-plus music stands and twenty-six musicians in motion were the means toward a sonic exploration of the traditional concert space with unorthodox contemporary music. The result was a strange character study of the church as the established and foreknown centre of the community. It was a challenging and somehow entirely appropriate entry into the often intense musical experience of the **FIMAV**. No less challenging but more interactive were the two performances by the descriptively elusive **Orchestre Velocipede de Montreal**. The six 'velocipedes' took to the streets of Victoriaville in a spirited afternoon event which featured the fun and functional aspects of the sound-generating inventions incorporated into the structures of the cycles. The city block was crowded with children and adult onlookers who may have been wondering 'what's been going on in there' for the past ten autumns. For their second performance, a multi-disciplinary piece entitled *Karel*, Orchestre Velocipede found their element on the floor of the modified Colisee des Bois Francs. The dark, open spaces there supplied a dreamlike atmosphere when combined with the audio and visual experience of these very physical and oddly musical self-propelled velocipedes.The paths of the cycles were generally in and out among the fascinated and welcoming clusters of the 'concert' audience, pausing every so often to dismount and play their 'instruments' in a more confrontational manner than they could when in the drivers' seats.

There were some performances which transcended the concert setting even further with multimedia, theatrics and on beyond. **Diamanda Galas** mounted her solo *Plague Mass* before the largest audience of the festival's run. It was an ear-splitting, eye-opening and mind-shattering testimony against the many different reactionary and counter-reactionary efforts and actions taking focus away from persons infected with AIDS and the disease itself. The three workdays needed to ready multimedia composer **Richard Teitelbaum**'s performance *Golem* at the Cinema Laurier paid off as a major technical coup for the **FIMAV** and as an unforgettable sound and visual scape brought to life by the larger than life presence of vocalist/percussionist David Moss. *Violin Music in the Age of Shopping* was presented by the Australian composer/violinist **Jon Rose** and his ensemble, cast with a sense of humour that rubbed both ways. Depending on how closely one may have warmed up to the decadent spirit of his spectacle, the feeling of the music being usurped by the tone of Rose's commentary prevailed. The uneasiness is with me to this day as I have the feeling that the audience was right where he wanted us and he worked us masterfully. I still can picture him behind his desk, impeccable, with his smirk and violin.

French composer **Albert Marcouer**'s *Sports et Percussion* and Toronto's **Graeme Kirkland** and The Wolves represented physical exercises in manic power-pop and engaged their audiences by different tactics - Marcouer through the thrill of the sport and in the playing and Kirkland through sex, violence and a convoluted delivery of the goods. Kirkland's *Compositional Collage* material is more direct and effective on disc than on the **FIMAV** stage and it's been around awhile, too. Time for something new from this group - the potential for some groundbreaking moves was clearly evident but not ultimately realized.

CHARLES GAYLE • PHOTOGRAPH BY GERARD FUTRICK

The festival went silent after a blistering set by **The Nudes** - an international supergroup of diverse innovators led by Amy Dennio on voice, guitar, accordion and alto saxophone, drummer Chris Cutler, bassist Bob Drake and guitarist Wadi Gysi. By the same assumptive logic that made the festival's opening concert fit so well in its surroundings, so too did the looping rockout affair of The Nudes' closing concert seem somehow righteous.

The 1994 edition of the Festival International Musique Actuelle was one of the strongest ever and remarkable for having overcome the obstacles which threatened its integrity and its future in Victoriaville. Again, this festival is integral to the new music for its encouragement, its focus and its tasteful and often risky ventures to stage the untried and even unimaginable. The inherent problems with the jump from the fall to the spring were not really evident but upon closer examination one would notice some very small audiences at some of the most entertaining concerts.

With the springtime now established as the 'when', the 1994 **FIMAV** should have convinced any sceptics that, indeed, this is 'where' it's at for this music.

DU MAURIER DOWNTOWN JAZZ FESTIVAL TORONTO JUNE 24TH - JULY 3RD • REVIEWED BY STEVE VICKERY

OVER THE APPLAUSE, THE DRUMMER SHOUTED, "hey, man, get your horn". As he joined **Jake Hanna**'s trio for an unexpected solo during their encore, **Jim Galloway** looked happy but a bit frayed around the edges. By then, the festival had been going strong for a few days and the serious tasks of coordinating schedules, purchasing plane tickets and advertising, and solving a host of details was long behind him, or at least far enough away that he could enjoy soloing on a blues with Hanna's pick-up trio that showcased Bob Fenton and Rosemary Galloway.

The du Maurier Jazz Festival for 1994 succeeded admirably in their efforts to bring together acts from all corners of the jazz map, from Mississippi (Mulgrew Miller) to Mali (Selif Keita). Answering their critics who earlier charged that the festival was stalling in its mandate to present the best of the music, the du Maurier festival looked far afield to present more acts than ever before in an increased number of shows within the allotted time span. As always, there were big crowds and that raises a serious issue in the presentation of the music. Is the answer to huge, overflow crowds at venues during the festival, more concerts throughout the year? Certainly this would help alleviate the crush of listeners in venues like the Rivoli club, which reached the point of danger on the evening concert that featured **Lee Pui Ming**, **Marilyn Crispell**, and **Bob Wiseman**.

With the accepted premise of a jazz festival being, in most peoples' minds, see as many acts as possible, the du Maurier festival was an exhausting affair. It would have taken a super-human endurance to attend more than half of the events that were staged throughout the run of the festival. There is also the question of absorbing the music that is being presented. In one day, it would be possible *if* you attended all available events to listen to about eight different sets, a big if that depended mostly on your ability to listen and walk around through crowds. The was a noticeable sag that developed within the audience as the festival week went on. Veterans of the large festivals passed on the hard-won lessons of attending multiple concerts over the years; it's not necessary to see everything that you want to in one day, nor is it recommended to try to sit through something when your attention has lapsed. du Maurier should be credited for their resourcefulness in planning a couple of shows for people who needed alternative days. The **I.C.P. Orchestra**, an inventive Dutch ten-piece unit led by Misha Mengelberg, performed two concerts over the final weekend, allowing core members of the unit; Han Bennink, Wolter Wierbos, Michael Moore, and Ernst Reijseger to appear in other concert settings with the **Clusone Trio**, a well-received hit of the 1993 festival, and the **Gerry Hemingway** Quintet, making their first appearance in Toronto.

What will follow here is some of the highlights of this year's festival, a few points of interest, and a few that got away. Congratulations to the du Maurier staff for another world-class festival presentation.

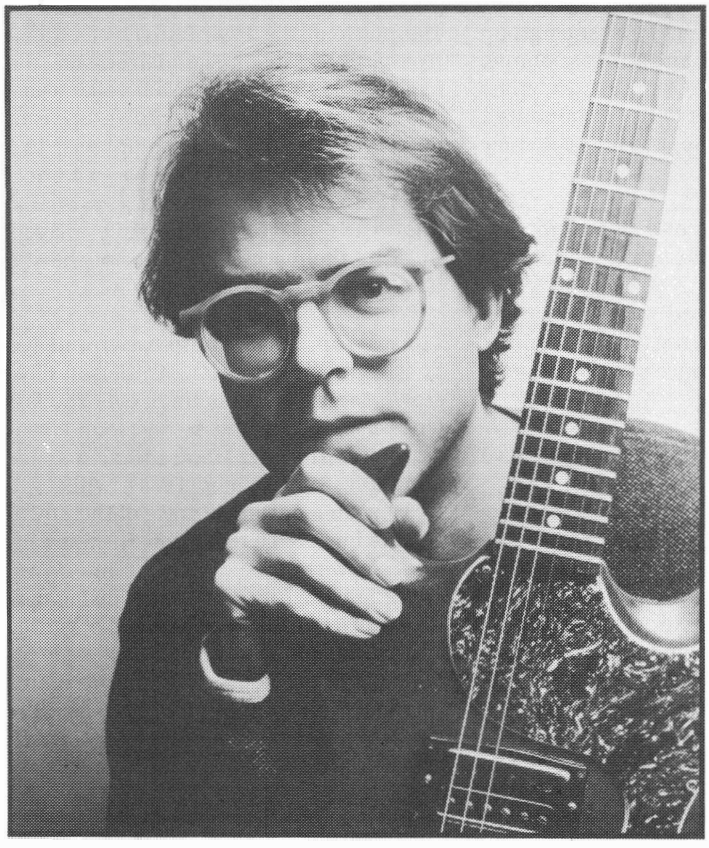
The music of the 1994 festival was inclusive of all the styles, the mainstream, the blues, roots music of the jazz originators, and the musics that have grown up from the influence of great composers like Ellington and Monk. There was a noticeable influence of the modernists as well at this year's festival, with many players showing the marked influence of the sixties innovators.

Time Warp, the Toronto-based unit led by Barry Elmes and Alan Henderson have grown by leaps and bounds over the last ten years developing a big sound that draws on the jazz roots of artists like Ellington, Mingus, and Davis, while still creating an identifiable voice of their own. Featured in a large tent stage, the festival's most successful new venue, Time Warp cooked through two sets, showcasing new material featuring reedman Mike Murley and trumpeter Kevin Turcotte to advantage in the quartet setting. The tent area was jammed to see this unit, one that lives up to its billing as one of the best acoustic acts in Canada.

On a different note, the Molson stage at Harbourfront presented the Paris-based unit of **Selif Keita**, a hypnotic singer whose records don't fully capture the depth of his concert appearances. Singing in several languages, Keita led a ten-piece French/African band that was long on grooves that reinforced his lilting vocal style. The music was reminiscent in moments of the late 60s Miles Davis units, mostly due to the gorgeous tone on South African trumpeter Peter Segonia on muted horn. Updated to 1994 rhythms, Keita's band was indeed a welcome addition drawing many from the area who would not normally attend what was billed as a jazz event.

Rodney Kendrick appeared in concert with altoist **Arthur Blythe** for an impressive set that was in the centre of the tradition. Kendrick's piano style echoed the influence of Monk and Ellington but the twist on that was his tenure in the band led by funk-king James Brown. Kendrick had an undeniably funky sound to his band that was reinforced by the soulful sound of Arthur Blythe on alto. Blythe continues to impress audiences with his deep tone and taste, creating a vivid impression with his reading of the Ellington classic, *In A Sentimental Mood*.

The downside of a large festival surfaces when worthy acts are inadvertently slot-



ted in opposite better-known attractions, winding up in venues that elude all but a few listeners. This fate unkindly served the **Louis Sclavis** Quartet whose energetic set at the Waters Edge cafe was seen by an audience numbering less than fifty at the same time as the Kendrick/Blythe program next door. Sclavis sounded good, blowing solidly on bass clarinet and other reeds with a trio of string players in an intimate setting. Trouble was, his quartet wound up their program just as everyone arrived from next door. This same fluke of scheduling tripped up the Clusone Trio last year, but Sclavis responded with an encore for those who missed the main set.

The Rivoli club that evening featured a trio performance by **Bill Grove**, **Bob Fenton**, and **Mark Congram** that was right on the money. This unit, one of the best that reedman/composer Grove has formed, has an inspired interplay that captures the adventure often lacking in modern jazz performances. Pianist Bob Fenton deserved most valuable player award for his ability throughout the festival to lock into a multitude of formats, from his work with Grove and Congram to his impromptu set with Jake Hanna. This trio's set had all the elements, from free improvisation to standards to original compositions.

Mention should be made as well of the continuing jazz program offered late night in the pool hall upstairs at the Rivoli. Guitarist **Wayne Cass** featured different formations nightly through the festival week, including the exceptional alto saxophonist **Bob Mover**. The club generated that particular intimacy that the large venues are sacrificing in order to accommodate a crowd of listeners. It brings up the question of whether or not the music is well-served by expansion into circus-like proportions, the case at the Air Canada sponsored tent stage. It's also unfortunate that so many people in a club setting fall prey to "jazz disease", the affliction that is characterized by excessive cigarette smoking and talking through the entire program, as many of the Rivoli shows did.

Trevor Watts Moire Music at the big tent was an interesting way to start the festival off, with Watts' band comprising the leader's alto saxophone, an electric bassist, and five drummers. A blend of African rhythms, the unit swung mightily through their set, bringing members of the crowd outside in the street into the action of a overflow audience. Watts performed on both alto and soprano, weaving through the churning rhythms of his band.

Outdoor concerts have traditionally been tough on performers, especially those whose music requires any degree of concentration. **Geoff Keezer** Quartet with tenor saxophonist Craig Handy struggled with the elements at their early afternoon show on Nathan Phillips Square. Dark skies and windy gusts took away much of the spirit that this quartet had to offer. Keezer and his band played well but the distance of the band from the audience, the uncertain weather, and an uneven P.A. mix made for a difficult listen.

Paul Pecanowski is a tenor saxophonist with a mainstream approach that sat well with the Saturday afternoon audience at Harbourfront. Nice full tone and rough enough around the edges to be interesting, Pecanowski blended nicely with pianist Bob Fenton in a program of original compositions by the saxophonist, whose approach never fell into an easy-listening format.

FUNNY HOW THE OLDEST FORMS OF JAZZ MUSIC remain modern in the right hands, lending themselves to expansive playing by the musicians and immediate access by an audience. Is the question of old versus new immaterial when it is applied to the art of improvisation? Up close to the stage rockin' in rhythm to the sounds, young and old folks listened intently to the music of the Harbourfront All-Stars and their special guest, **Doc Cheatham**. Cheatham, an 89 year old veteran of Cab Calloway, blew the bell off the horn, playing the tunes with an enthusiasm that was obvious. The forms of the songs seem old but durable. The All-Stars, a unit organised by soprano saxophonist Jim Galloway, also featured Jake Hanna and **Jay McShann** as their guests. I regret that I missed the name of the trombonist amidst the traffic jam toward the front of the stage by professional and amateur photographers. Norman Amadio on piano and Bob Price on bass both swung through the set.

So what is this thing called a jazz festival? A carnival atmosphere at the weekend shows greeted a variety of old and current jazz forms, the greasy smell of fried food and boiling coffee permeating the halls of Harbourfront centre. Young folks held hands, blissful for a moment, as babies scuttled across the tiled floors, screaming delightedly at the sounds. Old folks sat there rocking and patting their feet, remembering the first shows, maybe wanting to say outloud "I was there" when the names of Ellington or Dorsey or Parker are mentioned from the stage. If jazz is anything we can name, maybe it is that life experience, pure and distilled to an essence, that artists like Doc Cheatham conjure in just a few phrases. Joyful, knowing that time keeps advancing, Cheatham reminisced about Calloway, honouring his years in that band, and then sang the blues standard, *I Want A Little Girl*, still feeling fine.

BILL FRISELL • PHOTOGRAPH BY ALDO MAURO

The solo piano concert, a formidable proving ground for keyboard artists since the days of James P. Johnson and Art Tatum right up through the years of Thelonious Monk and Cecil Taylor, remains the test of a music concept. Lee Pui Ming, a young woman whose inventive concept belies her age, has created her own niche in the new music world, blending together the strands of her music with many sounds; the influences of free music a la Taylor, the classical European piano literature, and the traditional string music and song forms of Chinese music all figure in her work. Ming throws her body into the piano performance with dance-like physicality, her concentration pulling the listener along.

Marilyn Crispell's solo set was an intense unfolding program with a few surprising choices. Last seen in Toronto in duet performance with Anthony Braxton, Crispell's already finely-tuned presence is made more intense in the solo recital. Her set covered a wide range of material: cascading improvisations led into composed pieces, a Monk tune played straight then treated to a convoluted improvisation on the theme, an unidentified standard. An involving improvisor, Crispell played with a wonderful quality of suspense and complete assurance. The overflow crowds in the club received an encore but refused to leave until the houselights were turned up. It is doubtful that the club would still have a license had a fire inspector come into the room during the performance, a completely sold-out room with a third of the audience standing.

DESPITE UNBELIEVABLE HYPE from the press, **Joshua Redman** gave a good introduction to his work at an early evening concert at the Air-Canada stage. Joshua, son of Dewey Redman, came to town with a kicking live band, intent on dispelling the backlash he must have known was coming if he didn't make good on the media deluge.

In fact, he did, making a name for himself as a capable young tenor saxophonist, his sound influenced by the sixties giants and his sensibility free of the tradition homage that belabours others of his generation. His band fired by the intense swinging of drummer Brian Blade, a young man who recalled Art Blakey and Elvin Jones in his non-stop approach to the music. There seemed to be two sides to this concert: one a full-out statement of jazz history circa Rollins and Trane, the other a toned-down radio version for listeners who need just a taste of the substance to satisfy. This type of soft jazz sound reached its highpoint of significance with the bossa-nova original, *Alone In The Morning*, somewhat like the background music for a coffeemate commercial. What's the deal here? Is this jazz, or movie of the week? There's no denying that Joshua Redman could develop into a powerful player from the exchanges of heavy playing on the up-tempo tunes. Blade and Redman are a powerful team working with pianist Brad Mehldau and bassist Christian McBride. Let's hope they know the stakes.

Later that evening, the **Bill Frisell** band with special guest **Don Byron** enjoyed an overwhelming reception from a full-house throng who couldn't get enough of their sound. After jetting in from points all over the U.S.A. and Europe (Joey Baron arriving from Poland less than an hour before hitting the stage) the band played a two hour concert with two encores. A lot of the momentum for the show could be traced to the nervous energy of the band opening its summer tour. Bob Berger on accordion was playing his first concert with the unit that evening, emerging into the spot vacated by Guy Klusevek. He looked scared but fit right in, soloing deftly with drummer Joey Baron for twenty choruses, a touch more blues to his sound than his predecessor. Baron discounted the idea of fatigue from the start of the set, playing with a gleeful smile and burning energy right to the end. Kermit Driscoll directed traffic with very direct punctuation of the time and good tone on the electric bass. Don Byron on clarinet and bass clarinet seemed ill at ease for a while with the band's sound (or maybe it was the mix on stage). He laid back for a time, choosing not to solo much until it all jelled about twenty minutes into the show, when he lit up with wonderful tone on the clarinet. His interaction with the band was smooth, so effortless that you wanted to hear more of him. Frisell played very well, considering the challenge he has presented himself with. He is perhaps one of the only guitarists of his generation to create a new style, a notable achievement considering the number of players today. With material drawn from his new release and from his old book as well, Frisell and the band segued through long stretches of tune, making a crazy quilt of his own compositions. The crowd ate it up, shouting requests like it was a rock show, which it was in part. No titles were announced from the stage but the tunes and the sound of Frisell's guitar, Jim Hall meets Jimi Hendrix, made up for any missing explanations.

Scheduling demons again reared their heads that evening, placing the Frisell concert on-stage at exactly the same time as **Joe Lovano**, an incredible tenor saxophonist who, by all accounts, has arrived at a perfect synthesis of the instrument's tradition. In a concert with his current quartet, Anthony Cox on bass, drummer Tony Reedus, and newcomer Tim Hagans on trumpet, Lovano featured music from the standard repertoire as well as his 1992 release ***Sounds Of Joy***, a trio date with Ed Blackwell. It is Lovano, at 41, a veteran of the music who deserves hype in the mainstream, though most dailys mentioned it only in passing.

A new spin on the idea of the saxophone quartet, **Forty Fingers** formed in September 1993 to play some very unusual music that its members were writing. A coalition of Hemispheres members Nic Gotham on alto and Chiyoko Szlavnics on soprano with baritone David Mott and tenor Peter Lutek opened the door for a cinematic music that explored the outside edge of jazz. All four members were featured in brief solo spots in their set, the bright tones of the horns bouncing around the du Maurier theatre, clusters of sound hanging in the air. At this show, their fourth concert as a unit, they pushed the level of experimentation very high.

JANE BUNNETT • PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK McGINNIS

Jane Bunnett's Quintet with special guest **Jeanne Lee** was a welcome return attraction for the festival this year. Joined by Larry Cramer on trumpet, the band included Jim Vivian on bass and Nasheet Waits on drums.

Bunnett's rise through the jazz world should come as no surprise, given her determined stance to controlling her direction in the music. Although a formidable soloist, she likes to share the spotlight with her band in concert. The presence of Jeanne Lee at this concert made the music very special, with the vocalist soloing like a horn in ensemble passages, as well as marking out her territory on two features in the program, one a whimsical *I Like Your Style* that brought big smiles, the other her reading of the traditional ballad, *The Water Is Wide*. A powerful band, they closed the evening by roaring through a roller-coaster up-tempo arrangement of Ellington's *Rockin' In Rhythm*. The concert was recorded by C.B.C. so try to catch it in the next month. Bunnett and her band are ready for an ever-widening audience.

How much music can you hear in one evening? After the Jane Bunnett show at Harbourfront, there was just enough time to jump in the car and dash up to the Tent stage to catch the last ten minutes of the always uplifting Pharoah Sanders. Performing dressed in eastern robes, the white-haired Sanders looked like something out of a distant past, but his tenor (and band-leading skills) are sharp as ever. The ex-Coltrane sideman is deep into his own thing these days, his tenor testifying through the music as fervently as any country preacher.

There is never enough energy or time to see everything. A few performers that escaped this review but are recommended follow: King Sunny Ade with twenty piece Nigerian band, Steve Donald Quartet at Capriccio, Jean Derome's Les Zommes Dangereaux, Les Granules, Jerry Gonzalez Latin-Jazz, Clusone Trio at the Music Gallery, and Gerry Hemingway's Quintet at the Rivoli. Maybe next year.

Thanks and congratulations to Jim, Barbara, Serge, and all the staff of the 1994 du Maurier Festival for their forward-thinking music policy. □

***STEVE VICKERY** is a writer and bassist residing in Toronto.*

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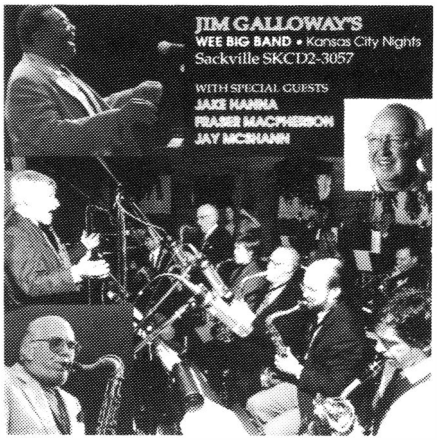

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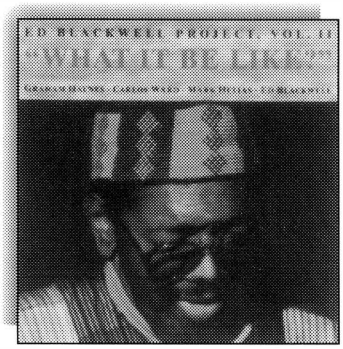

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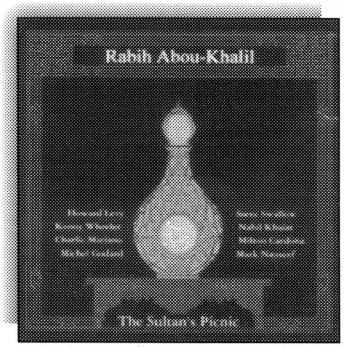

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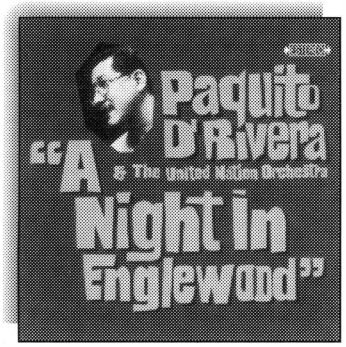

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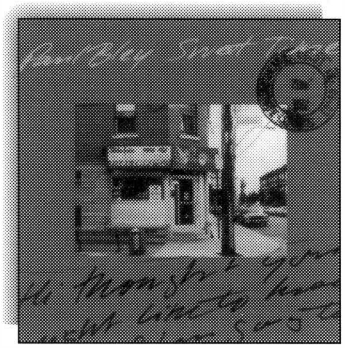

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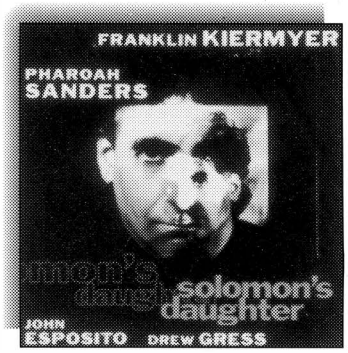

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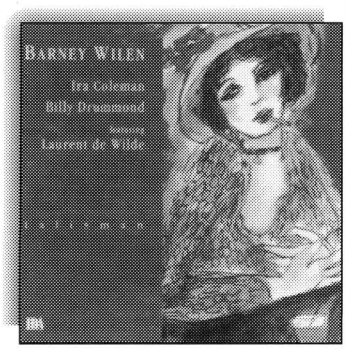

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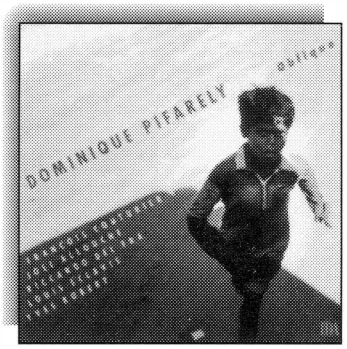

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