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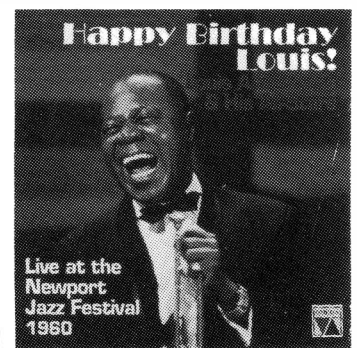
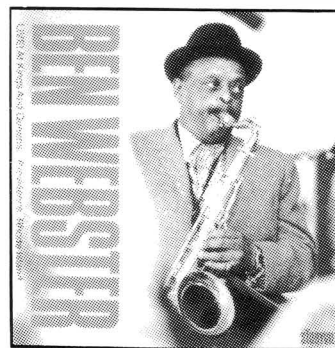
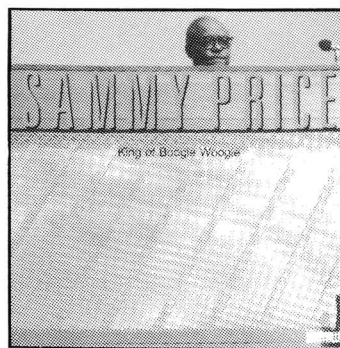
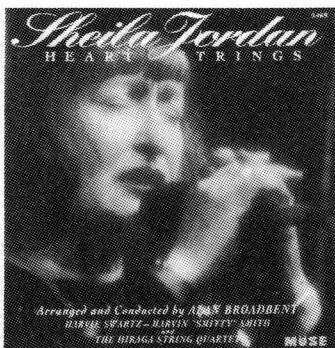
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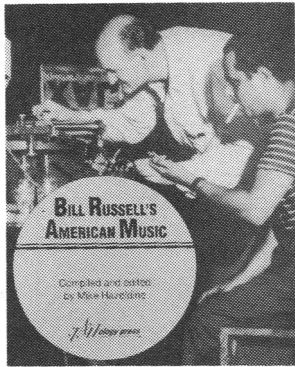


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JULIUS HEMPHILL
BY BARRY THOMSON

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WRITER'S CHOICE FAVOURITE RECORDINGS OF 1994

AROUND THE WORLD

COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS

AWARDS • AUCTIONS • APPOINTMENTS

ALAN DAWSON AND JIMMY GUIFFRE RECEIVED AWARDS FROM THE NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS... TONY COE IS THE 1995 JAZZPAR PRIZE WINNER... ALTO SAXOPHONIST BENJAMIN KOPPEL IS THIS YEAR'S WINNER OF DENMARK'S PALAE BAR JAZZ PRIZE... JODI CHRISTIAN AND NORRIS TURNEY WERE BOTH HONOURED AS MIDWEST JAZZ MASTERS BY ARTS MIDWEST... BOB BROOKMEYER WILL BECOME CHIEF CONDUCTOR OF THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND IN JANUARY 1996. THE CONTRACT RUNS TO THE YEAR 2000... LIONEL HAMPTON HAS SIGNED AN EXCLUSIVE RECORDING CONTRACT WITH MOJAZZ RECORDS... THE CITY OF KANSAS CITY PAID NEARLY \$150,000.00 FOR CHARLIE PARKER'S PLASTIC ALTO AT AN AUCTION OF BIRD'S ARTIFACTS IN LONDON IN SEPTEMBER

MARION BROWN (CIRCA 1977) • PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL SMITH



JAZZ INSTITUTES

The new home of the Institute of Jazz Studies is the fourth floor of the Dana Library addition at Rutgers University in Newark. The state of the art structure will double the space available to the ever growing archive. The building was formally opened October 12.

The Swiss Jazz Museum in Arlesheim sponsored an exhibition devoted to the work of Sun Ra from September 17 to October 23.

England's University of Exeter Library has an extensive collection of American Music which is available to researchers and others interested in gaining additional information.

EVENTS

A major benefit for Marion Brown was held August 7 in New York at The Cooler to raise funds to help defray the alto saxophonist's medical bills from the series of strokes and brain surgery he has gone through. Readers wishing to make a contribution can do so with a cheque to *Dean Witter Reynolds Inc. c/o Marion Brown, 2 Logan Square, Philadelphia, PA-19103.*

Jazz West Coast was a major performance/symposium presented October 27-30 through the auspices of KOLON in Redondo Beach... Another major West Coast event was held in Seattle between October 16 and November 13. The 1994 Earshot World Jazz Festival presented a wide range of artists in club and concert settings.

Steve Lacy, Dewey Redman and the Swedish Jazz Kings were the foreign headliners at Australia's *Wangaratta Festival* October 28-31.

An All Star Jazz Party featuring 28 of Flip Phillips' musical associates will be on hand to help celebrate his 80th birthday March 24 - 26 at the Boca Raton Hilton, Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The International Art of Jazz' winter series continues with Saturday night concerts at Five Towns College with the Nick Brignola Quartet (January 21) and the Tana/Reid Quintet (April 8).

The 20th anniversary edition of Decatur's Central Illinois Jazz Festival will be held January 27-29... England's *Ogun Records* celebrated 20 years with a 100 Club

presentation of Louis Moholo's "Viva La Black." To mark the occasion Ogun has reissued (with extra tracks) on CD their first release - *The Brotherhood Of Breath's* "Live at Willisau".

"Parallel Worlds" was a Vienna Music Gallery presentation in November which included Anthony Davis, Tom Varner, Dave Douglas and Franz Koglmann.

LITERATURE • VIDEOS

"Klook" - Mike Hennessey's valuable biography of master drummer Kenny Clarke (reviewed in Coda #243) - has finally been published in the U.S. through the *University of Pittsburgh Press* in a paperback edition... "Remembering Song" is a particularly evocative look at "encounters with the New Orleans Jazz Tradition" by Frederick Turner. A newly expanded version of this book has been issued by everyone's favourite book rescuer *Da Capo*. They've also made available again Art Pepper's "Straight Life", Bill Cole's "Miles Davis Biography", Ekkehard Jost's "Free Jazz", Marshall Stearns "Jazz Dance" and "Jazz Spoken Here" by Wayne Enstice and Paul Rubin... *Scarecrow Press* (P.O. Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840) has pub-

lished an oral history of George Duvivier "Basically Speaking" and a backward look at the career of Sylvester Ahola. Promised soon are bio-discographies of Frankie Trumbauer and John Coltrane.

"Chasing The Vibration" is a collection of articles by Graham Lock based on interviews with many of today's leading jazz artists. It's available (US \$16.95) from *Stride Publications*, 11 Sylvan Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 6EW, England... *Duke University* has published "Extended Play" - a collection of essays by John Corbett... "Thinking In Jazz" is an exploration of the "infinite art of improvisation" by Paul F. Berliner... "Cats Of Any Color: Jazz, Black and White" is the latest set of writings by Gene Lees to be published by *Oxford University Press*. From the same publisher comes Mel Torme's reflections on singing popular music - "My Singing Teachers"... "Straighten Up And Fly Right" is a Chronology and Discography of Nat King Cole compiled by Klaus Teubig and published by *Greenwood Press*.

Michael Sparks and Pete Venuder have had a new edition of "Kenton on Capitol and Creative World" published by *Balboa Press*

AWARDS • INSTITUTES • LITERATURE • VIDEOS • RECORDINGS

(P.O.Box 493, Lake Geneva, WI 53147)... Just out through **Woodford Press** is a new collection of David Spitzer photographs in a book simply titled "Jazz"... Many guitarists in the jazz world have played a Robert Benedetto acoustic archtop guitar. He's now written an instruction book on "Making an Archtop Guitar" which is available from RR1, Box 1347, E. Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

Stan Getz: A Musical Odyssey is a 60 minute colour video documentary of Stan Getz' 1977 visit to Israel. It's released through The National Center for Jewish Film (Brandeis University, Lown 102, Waltham, MA 02254-9110.)

RECORDINGS

A profile of **Dragon Records** in a recent Swedish Jazz Federation newsletter praised the company for its dedication to the documentation of the music regardless of the fame of the performers. However, it also stated that apart from the best selling Miles Davis/John Coltrane recordings they rarely sell more than a thousand copies of a release. That scenario is probably mirrored elsewhere in a field which is more than saturated.

Trumpeter Tim Hagens (who is finally getting some recognition) is featured in the Steve Grismore/Paul Scea "Just Play" CD on **Accurate Records**... Tom Harrell joins Art Farmer on the veteran's **Arabesque** debut "The Company I Keep"... Pianist Kei Akagi's **Audioquest** release "Mirror Puzzle" also features saxophonist Rick Margitza.

Sonny Fortune's "Four in One" is an isolated new **Blue Note** release which hews to the label's original identity. The label's reissue program has taken a new twist. Many of the titles are now deleted but a new "Connoisseur" series is bringing us such classics as Johnny Griffin's "The Congregation", Tina Brooks' "True Blue", J.R. Monterose's quartet date and

Clifford Jordan's "Blowing In From Chicago".

The **Concord** factory brings out new models every week. These are ones that look interesting. Some archival Johnny Smith guitar solos are coupled with newly recorded solos by George Van Eps; Frank Wess is a featured soloist on Howard Alden's program of Bill Evans tunes... Ken Peplowski's latest is a California concert which features Harry Edison on some tracks. (There's also a video available)... Marian McPartland's latest trio date is a beauty - the music of Mary Lou Williams. There are also a dozen of her Piano Jazz radio broadcasts now issued on CD through **Jazz Alliance**. They preserve, in more permanent form, the charm and insight of such distinguished performers as Teddy Wilson, Bill Evans, Dizzy Gillespie, Eubie Blake, Dick Wellstood, Clark Terry and Red Richards... Vocalist Mary Stallings has joined the Concord team with a debut collaboration with Gene Harris' quartet... Carol Sloane's newest for the label is "When I Look In Your Eyes".

Delmark has four new titles from the Apollo vaults: Earl Hines, Arnett Cobb, Duke Henderson and "East Coast Jive". They've also brought back three classic blues albums of the 60s - Magic Sam's "Black Magic", J. B. Hutto's "Hawk Squat" and "Sweet Home Chicago". Their Big Boy Crudup CD is drawn from two different dates with bassists Willie Dixon and Ransom Knowling.

Herbie Mann's new label **Kokopelli Records** has recorded David "Fathead" Newman as "Mr. Gentle and Mr. Cool" and a solo date by Jimmy Rowles "Lilac Time"... Also heard solo is Dave Brubeck in **Telarc's** "Just You Just Me."

After making a couple of latin dates Kenny Barron is back to his roots in a trio date ("Wanton Spirit") with Charlie Haden and

Roy Haynes for Verve's **Gitanes** series. As **Polygram's** 50 year celebration of the origins of Norman Granz' recording career winds down the company continues to offer listeners some gems from the past. There's a Bud Powell box and a two CD set of three Stuff Smith sessions with Oscar Peterson and Dizzy Gillespie. "Nothing But The Blues" is an exceptional date for Herb Ellis and there's a Roy Eldridge compilation.

Both **Cadence Jazz Records** and **Nine Winds Records** continue to introduce to listeners musicians who are highly talented but only known in their own regions. Nine Winds is the brain child of saxophonist Vinny Golia and his own music is well documented by the label but you can also hear Rich Halley, Dave Ferris, Rob Blakeslee and Steve Adams... Chicago's **Premonition Records** second release showcases the talents of pianist/singer/composer Patricia Barber in "Cafe Blue"... **Sea Breeze Records** has a lock on the many regional big bands who are busy documenting their music. Out recently are recordings by the Black Market Jazz Orchestra, The Trilogy Big Band, Roger Neuman's Rather Large Big Band, Bill O'Connell Big Band and the Miles Osland Little Big Band... Bill Holman's music is heard on a new **Candid** release produced by Vic Lewis and issued under his name as part of the celebration of his 75th birthday.

Bob Wilber can be heard in a variety of new recordings. "Horns A Plenty" is an **Arbors** release with

Johnny Varro. "A Man and his Music" is a UK recording on **J&M Records**. Wilbur plays all his horns on both these sessions. **Chiaroscuro** has issued their original Soprano Summit dates as a two disc set, and there's a 1992 date by "Summit Reunion" which was recorded on board the SS Norway. Other Chiaroscuro issues include a Dave McKenna solo session from 1973 with eight additional tracks. Gerry Mulligan's 1976 "Idle Gossip" is back and there's a new Flip Phillips session from 1993. Bob Wilber's collaboration with Maxine Sullivan for Monmouth Evergreen - "Close As Pages in a Book" - is now reissued on an **Audiophile** CD... A two volume set of recordings by Keith Ingham's New York Nine is now out on **Jump Records**.

Your Neighbourhood Saxophone Quartet's fifth CD for **Coppens Records** is called "Wolfstone"... Jan Lundgren is a talented young Swedish pianist who is heard with Jesper Lundgard and Alex Reil in the **Four Leaf Clover** release "Conclusion".

A new series of **Savoy** reissues from Denon is making available compilations which appeared on lp in the 1970s when Arista controlled the label. There are CDs by Gene Ammons, Al Cohn, Kenny Burrell, Erroll Garner, Charlie Byrd, Booker Ervin, Coleman Hawkins, Kenny Clarke and Lester Young. Some of the music has already been on CDs in both the U.S. and Europe. Al Cohn's "The Progressive" has already appeared in Denon's CD series as "Cohn's Tones". □

PASSING NOTES

Guitarist **Danny Barker** died March 13 in New Orleans... Drummer **Tommy Benford** March 24 in Mt. Vernon, NY... Pianist/Trumpeter **Dick Cary** April 6 in Glendale, CA... Concert promoter **Jimmy Lyons** April 10... **Joe Pass** May 23... **Sonny Sharrock** May 26... **Red Rodney** May 27... **Oliver Jackson** May 29... **Marion Williams** June 2... **Earl Warren** June 4... **Willie Humphrey** June 8... **Eddie Boyd** July 13... **Max Kaminsky** September 6... **John Stevens** September 12... **Haywood Henry** September 15... **Jimmy Hamilton** September 20... **Teddy Buckner & Leonard Feather** September 22.

REEDS AND DEEDS MARTY EHRLICH

AS A COMPOSER, PRODUCER, UBIQUITOUS SIDEMAN, BANDLEADER IN HIS OWN RIGHT

AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, A MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST WHO PLAYS CLARINET, FLUTES AND SAXOPHONES WITH EQUAL FLUENCY, MARTY EHRLICH SEEMS TO SUIT THE CLICHÉ OF THE “MUSICIAN’S MUSICIAN” TO A TEE. WHILE THIS STATEMENT MIGHT SOUND MUNDANE, ONE ONLY NEED LOOK AT JAZZ DICTIONARIES, BIG AND SMALL, TO FIND NO ENTRY UNDER HIS NAME (WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF THE FRENCH “DICTIONNAIRE DU JAZZ” PUBLISHED BY ROBERT LAFONT IN PARIS). SAVE FOR A COUPLE OF SNAP PROFILES IN SOME OF THE GLOSSIER AMERICAN MAGS, THERE HAS BEEN AN INTRIGUING LACK OF ARTICLES DOCUMENTING THIS ARTIST’S 15 YEAR CAREER. AND A RICH ONE IT HAS BEEN INDEED.

HIS MUSICAL BACKGROUND includes stints in Saint Louis, where he was first acquainted with the experiments of the Black Artists Group (BAG), though the collective had pretty well dissolved itself by the mid-seventies; later in the decade, he moved to Boston where he pursued his training at the renowned New England Conservatory, a breeding ground for many a fine talent now active on the contemporary jazz scene. At that time, he was exposed to such luminaries as Gunther Schuller, George Russell, Ran Blake and Jaki Byard, all of these people allowing him to delve extensively into all aspects of the music. While his earliest musical experiences, mainly through his BAG connection, were concentrated on free improvising as well as working with poets, he nevertheless worked his way back into the tradition while in the Boston area. Since then, he has become, in his own words, “a decent changes player”, but, more importantly, his fluency on all of his horns is indicative of his own personal interests as a player.

Unlike many of the “young lions” touted who have gone back to the one-man-one-horn relationship, yet another indicator of their allegiance to bop tradition, Ehrlich’s multi-instrumentalism is very much linked to his formative years, the 1970’s. On that point, he offers the following observations:

“From the middle of that decade up until the early 80’s, there was an emphasis on having a lot of sound at your disposal. I was influenced a lot by players, like Braxton and those associated with the AACM (Mitchell, Jarman). Nowadays, I feel that in this more traditionally-oriented music, there is less of an emphasis on sound as a main element. I have always been very conscious of trying to have a personal voice on all of my instruments, at least I don’t want to come across as though one of these sounds like a second instrument. I have also been encouraged to do this because of the many composers I have worked for, for instance Muhal Richard Abrams or Anthony Davis, and in Anthony’s band (“Episteme”) I play a lot of flute and clarinet, because his music is very chamber-like. Overall, I can say that alto is my main horn, with soprano a close second. But I also play tenor, which has given me some added work. In fact, Bobby Previte and Wayne Horvitz like to feature me on that horn. Still, I’m interested in being known as a creative player, first and foremost, and not so much as an instrumentalist, like a great clarinetist or a great saxophonist.”

Being creative as a musician supposes many things, of course. Which leads us to his work as a composer. Not only did his time

in Boston have an impact on his work as a writer, mainly through his study of classical music and its third-stream extension, but he gained more valuable experience by working in clarinetist John Carter’s octet. Interestingly enough, Ehrlich was called upon after the leading candidate, David Murray, was unavailable for the recording session. In Ehrlich’s own words:

“I was honoured that John kept calling me after I did the first one (i.e. “Castles of Ghana”, the second of Carter’s five suites known as “Roots and Folklore”). His influence on me was threefold: first as an instrumentalist. He was a great player and an exciting clarinetist. Secondly, he was very ambitious as a composer and he used a very layered approach, like the trombone and trumpet in one rhythm, the drums and bass in another and the two clarinets in still another one. On my new record (see review below), there are two pieces dedicated to him. They are different, but somehow they have something of his spirit in them. Thirdly, as a person he was a very dignified, warm and loving man.”

THOUGH HE HAS EARNED extensive credits as a sideman over the years, Marty Ehrlich has led his own group as well, a pianoless quartet with long-time Boston friend, tenor and flutist Stan Strickland. For this group, with bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Bobby Previte, he states: “I work very long on the pieces I write for this band, not that they may be particularly long in written material, but I spend a lot of time really trying to define the moods of the piece, the directions.”

More ambitious, however, are his through-composed works. Just last year, his first string quartet was performed by Boston’s Lydian String Quartet, a classical ensemble with whom Ehrlich spent some time learning about the whole tradition and the language specific to that instrumental grouping.

“I worked very hard to internalize the string language, primarily in regard to articulation and phrasing. I also studied most of the literature, from Haydn to Ligeti. Since I received a grant to compose this piece, it allowed me to spend a whole week with this ensemble. I did even play a bit with them, because I could explain them some things. This piece is mostly notated, because the musicians are not really acquainted with improvising or playing ‘jazz-related’ music, but I did put in some of those elements in parts of my work. I mean, there were parts open to improvisation, but in a very collective sense. I did not ask them to be soloistic improvisers, so I met them half way and they were

AN ARTICLE BY MARC CHENARD

even complimentary to me about that. I'm thinking of writing something for them in which I would actually perform, but for this first piece I thought it best not to. By the way, in the early stages I was wondering how I should go about it until one day, I met Leroy Jenkins. He told me 'Marty, when you get these grants, you got to go in there with what you know best and use it.' So I set aside all these scores I had been looking at and that is when I started to work on the piece just from my imagination. So, Leroy kind of set me straight."

AS ANYONE CLOSE TO THE MUSIC may know, the situation of a creative improvising musician is not an easy one. At one time or another, most musicians have to find different venues, both musical and non-musical, to make ends meet. While some pursue more commercial ventures, others diversify themselves by moving into different areas of the trade. Marty Ehrlich, for one, has been quite involved as a session producer, taking care of the business of recording and creating the best conditions possible for the players involved. For him, this aspect has been a rewarding one.

"In many ways, the producer is the least important person in the studio, and should be - unless needed. I think I am good at it, since I can bring a composer's ear to the proceedings, and act as a kind of counsellor, helping out the people to relax so they can do their best playing. I've done nine dates so far in that capacity, a number for the New Worlds Countercurrents label. I produce my own records, you see, and I don't like people telling me to do this or that, so I avoid doing that for others."

Currently, Marty Ehrlich is maintaining a busy schedule, touring in Europe at regular intervals with his own group as well as with pianist Myra Melford's Extended Ensemble (with Dave Douglas sharing the front line of her quintet - and a Hat Art release now in the works). Last Summer, Ehrlich was in Oakland for a week, fronting the quartet of pianist (!) Anthony Braxton. The five day gig at Yoshi's was recorded and A.B. is considering releasing it. Braxtonophiles take note...

As Ehrlich himself points out, he wishes to be considered as a creative player more than an instrumentalist and in light of his various activities in music, he has worked hard - and deservedly so - for this well-earned description. □

MARTY EHRLICH

CAN YOU HEAR A MOTION • *Enja CD 8052-2 (54:51)*

MARTY EHRLICH: Soprano, alto saxes, clarinet, bass clarinet

STAN STRICKLAND: tenor sax and flute

MICHAEL FORMANEK: bass & **BOBBY PREVITE:** drums



PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENCE M. SVIRCHEV

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST Marty Ehrlich's fourth release as a leader really showcases his abilities as a composer, not to mention his fine melodic abilities as an improviser. Throughout this disc, eight tracks in total, the moods shift from almost baroque-like pieces (i.e. the ballads *Picture in a glass house* or Jaki Byard dedicatory *Ode to Charlie Parker*) to quicker paced tracks (*Reading the River*), driven by Previte's splashing cymbal work. Moreover, the relationship between the leader and his front-line partner, Boston reedman Stan Strickland, is a productive one, always well balanced and focused in their exchanges, the best example being the final cut, a duet for reeds on the lesser known Coleman opus *Comme il faut*. Sensitivity, depth and adventure are words that suit the music of this recording, one particular highlight being the suite-like composition, *The Black Hat*, one of two pieces dedicated to the late John Carter. All in all, a fine album that deserves repeated listening. □

REVIEWED BY ANNIE LANDREVILLE

CONTEMPORARY GUITAR

THE ROSENBERG TRIO

LIVE AT THE NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL 1992 • *Verve 519446-2*

JOE PASS

MY SONG • *Telarc CD-83326*

JOE DIORIO

WE WILL MEET AGAIN • *RAM RMCD 4501*

Casa Musicale Tarasconi S.r.L., Strada Farini, 37-43100 Parma, Italy

TAL FARLOW AND PHILLIPPE PETIT

STANDARDS RECITAL • *FD Music 151932*

ANTHONY MICHAEL PETERSON

THE BOOK OF DAYS • *Gazell GJCD 4007*

SYLVAIN LUC

PIAIA • *Transat TRT 9004-2*

EUGENE CHADBOURNE

STRINGS • *Intakt CD 025*

A. SPENCER BAREFIELD

XENOGENESIS 2000 • *CAC/Xenogenesis CD 002*

19550 Argyle Crescent, Detroit, MI 48203-1402

BERN NIX TRIO

ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS • *New World Counter Currents 80437-2*

REVIEWS BY

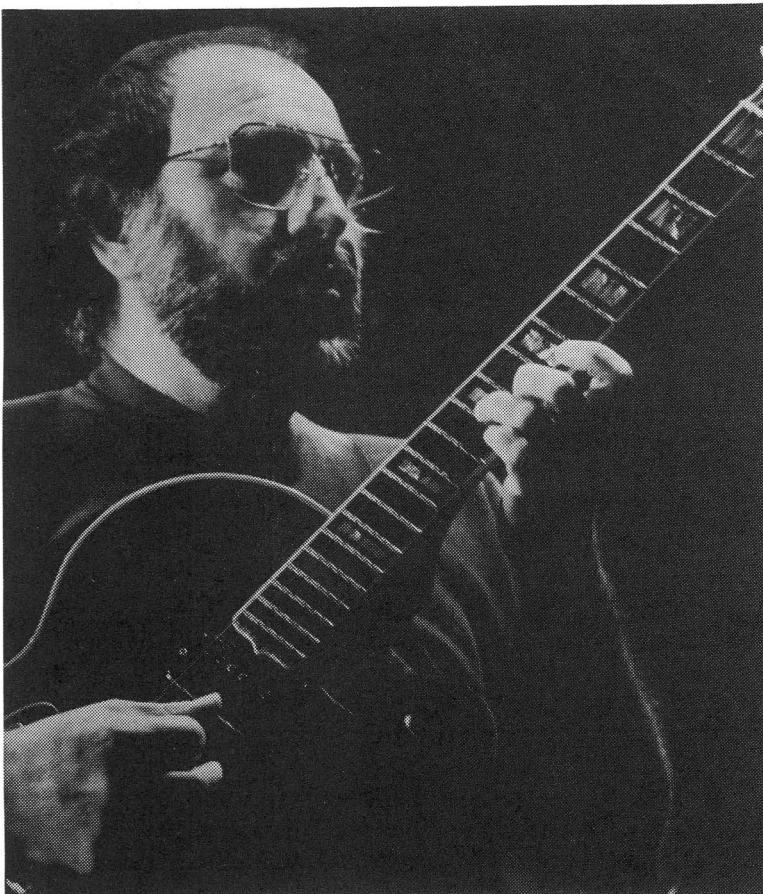
BENJAMIN FRANDZEL
AND **DAVID LEE**

THE JAZZ GUITAR HAS DEVELOPED on a path very much its own. Because the guitar emerged rather late as a solo instrument and has made a late entry into many new movements, its masters have had a far deeper influence on their fellow guitarists than on the whole of improvised music. No guitarist has changed the course of jazz the way the greatest pianists or horn players have, but this history allows guitarists a freedom to choose among many roles. The guitar's independent lineage and its affinity with nearly every genre of music have made for an extraordinary diversity among the instrument's most talented practitioners. The recordings at hand, as varied as any sampling of new jazz might be, feature a number of players who are established as major artists, some who have situated themselves at well-defined points on the jazz guitar continuum, and several who are dedicated to extending it.

IN TERMS OF STYLE, it might be best to start with the **Rosenberg Trio**, as much of the group's inspiration comes from an early source in jazz history, the music of Django Reinhardt. Although Django's gypsy swing permeates their playing, the Rosenbergs wisely use this still-potent legacy as a point of departure more than an altar for worship, and *Live at the North Sea Jazz Festival 1992* is animated by the group's own spirit and sensibility.

The spotlight is on lead guitarist Stochelo Rosenberg, and he supplies plenty of fireworks, lacing his solos with lightning-fast chordal, scalar, and arpeggio passages. Although he clearly enjoys his own virtuosity, it's put to use in the spirit of the music, and his playing always retains a graceful, natural character.

The rhythm section of guitarist Nous'che and bassist Nonnie is rock-solid and sensitive, but this date may have benefitted from a little more variety in their playing. The bossas, for example, could have used some Brazilian rhythms rather than the same upbeat strumming that drives the older standards. But their approach is never ineffective, and the entire CD is buoyed not only by the trio's fantastic energy, but by a wildly enthusiastic audience that clearly knows the Rosenbergs' style and repertoire.



AS THIS ARTICLE WAS NEARING COMPLETION, the sad news of the death of Joe Pass appeared. Though the world of music will miss him dearly, *My Song* offers a fine record of his talents. Pass had been perhaps *the* pre-eminent mainstream jazz guitarist for so long that I feared there would be little new to say about this album, but it reveals an artist whose growth continued several decades into his career. In a program of standards and pieces by members of the band, Pass seems to be playing with a greater elegance and sweetness than ever before. His playing is as incredible as expected, but there's a little more breath in his phrases, more variation of rhythmic groupings and phrase lengths, and a deeper expressiveness.

Perhaps the wonderfully relaxed feeling of this date is due to the presence of a rhythm section — guitarist John Pisano, bassist Jim Hughart, and drummer Colin Bailey — that first recorded with Pass more than 30 years ago. Praise is also due to pianist/reed player Tom Ranier, whose playing is beautifully attuned to Pass's, so much so that their solos often seem like A and B sections of the same musical thought. If there's any objection to be raised here, perhaps it's with the recording itself. The sound is crystal clear, but almost to a fault: Telarc's engineers seem so intent on reproducing each of the instruments clearly that at times there's an almost artificial sense of separation between them. Musicians this in tune with each other shouldn't be made to sound otherwise.

The range of recordings Pass produced is too broad for any one to be called a final testament, but *My Song* reveals an artist still vibrant at the end of his career, and is a valuable addition to his body of work.

VETERAN LOS ANGELES guitarist Joe Diorio has created a memorable solo album in *We Will Meet Again*. Half of the recording is made up of standards, but Diorio arranges them with such care and plays them so lovingly that it almost seems he'd written them himself. A great deal of thought has obviously gone into preparing these pieces, and Diorio's intelligently extended harmonies and occasional added dissonances are masterfully chosen.

Diorio's original pieces tend to be brief and built on cyclical patterns, with poignant melodies over beautifully voiced accompaniments. The guitarist's playing is so lyrical that both originals and standards are genuinely touching, never just a workout over the same old chords.

I've often felt that the CD's extended length, though a blessing, has led to far too many albums with unneeded filler. Diorio has the good sense to leave the album at 47 minutes, allowing for a full listening experience that needs to go no further. It seems appropriate that this recording is titled for the piece by Bill Evans that closes it, as Diorio's sensitivity and touch recall the late pianist's. On the Italian RAM label, this may be a little hard to find, but for Diorio's rare musicality, it's well worth seeking out.

A SENSE OF JOY in communication fills Tal Farlow and Phillippe Petit's *Standards Recital*. Although the selections are unsurprising, the playing here is unfailingly fresh and inventive. Their duets have the feeling of a conversation, of careful listening and a focused exchange of thoughts, even when they're playing strictly as soloist and accompanist. The recording is also full of wonderful details, such as Farlow's surprising percussive effects during *Autumn Leaves*, his famous ability to solo with artificial harmonics, and brilliant bass lines by both players. In his seventies, Farlow plays these tunes with boundless energy and originality, and he's sensitively matched by the younger French guitarist. Within the flood of standards collections released each year, this stands out as a committed and truly exciting example.

The Book of Days is the debut as a leader by New York-based Anthony Michael Peterson. All of the music was written by the guitarist, and his personality runs the gamut from the West Indies-styled *Goin' to the Festival* to the contemplative beauty of his acoustic solo, *A Midwestern Winter*. Peterson gracefully burns through these tunes while displaying a great musical intelligence, as he creates short motives, develops them, and rapidly replaces them with new ideas, exploring the outer reaches of each musical context.

Peterson sometimes favours a biting, almost staccato articulation, a technique well suited to the angularities of *Oliver Lake* (the guitarist's former boss) or the boppish *Playground*. He's also a thoughtful composer, as his tunes balance vamps, exchanges between instruments, lovely melodies, and then develop patiently, each one having a strong sense of closure. Peterson's bandmates, his brother Mark on bass and drummer William McClellan, offer solid support, but giving equal time to soloists of equal power would make for an even more stimulating date. Nevertheless, Peterson's eclectic influences and obvious gifts are clearly leading to the emergence of a valuable musical voice.

Piaia is the endearing solo debut by a young French guitarist named Sylvain Luc. Luc uses the electric guitar for a very funky *Freedom Jazz Dance* and his own lovely *Doudou Song*, along with the occasional 12-string, but his primary instrument is the classical guitar. Luc brings the inherent intimacy and poetic nature of the instrument to a series of clearly conceived, flowing pieces. His harmonic language is certainly that of a guitarist, filled with intricately woven chords reminiscent of Ralph Towner or John Abercrombie. Much of his music is more conservative, though, less mysterious, and more concerned with travelling beautiful terrain than exploring the enigmas of these other guitarists. Luc draws a gorgeous tone from the classical, and the



sweetness of his playing is balanced by a lack of preciousness and an intense awareness of the music's pulse. Over repeated listening, this album assumes the feeling of an offering, a gift being given, and one is easily drawn in by Luc's serious, compelling personality.

Eugene Chadbourne's unique sound-world is well showcased on the aptly-named *Strings*. In a series of guitar, dobro, and banjo solos, Chadbourne draws upon folk, Delta blues, rock and roll, European improvisation, and from the languages of both jazz and country music. He also makes constant use of a uniquely guitar-based vocabulary of bends, slides, strums, harmonics, muted and popped strings, percussive attacks, and sounds of unknown origin. Omnivorous as he is, Chadbourne is free from any orthodoxy, and brings his frequently manic style to both his own originals and a series of reimagined standards.

THERE'S A STRONG SATIRICAL bent to Chadbourne's music, but he honours the masters whose tunes he inhabits, even when he impersonates Senator Jesse Helms paying homage to "one of the true giants of bluegrass music... Mr. John Coltrane," then blazes through a Coltrane medley on the banjo. Chadbourne is a true original and a wildly creative improviser, and throughout this recording he manages to be both amusing and amazing at once.

A. Spencer Barefield is an important figure in creative music. For many years he has been at the head of the Creative Arts Collective, Detroit's AACM/BAG-style collective group. He's also made several fine recordings for Sound Aspects, and has been a regular contributor to Roscoe Mitchell's ensembles.

Xenogenesis 2000 highlights Barefield's many talents. Like Luc, Barefield is rare among improvisors in choosing the classical guitar as his primary instrument, in his case one with an added set of sympathetic strings. In keeping with the broad tonal palette and shimmering resonance of this instrument, Barefield's ensemble emphasizes colour, space, and texture in constantly shifting arrangements, always unified by a purposeful energy. Barefield's core group includes his frequent colleague, drummer Tani Tabbal, the great bassist Richard Davis, and an adventurous young saxophonist named James Carter.

Among the album's original works, particularly compelling pieces are the lovely, lilting *Barbara Thru the Mirror World*, which weds an arco bass and contra-bass clarinet over a delicate guitar and Tabbal's sensitive brushwork, and the rather entrancing *Invisible Mysterious (Black Indians)*, which intertwines Barefield's ten-string African harp and Tabbal's expert tablas over a droning bass. The title work, with added string quartet, is a particularly impressive composition, as a series of brief opening motives is gradually expanded into an ambitious three-movement suite.

Like Spencer Barefield, **Bern Nix's** deepest influences come less from his predecessors on the guitar than from a broad musical philosophy. Nix was a member of Ornette Coleman's Prime Time band from 1975 until 1987, and Ornette's linear approach to playing and his non-adherence to strict harmony and meter have clearly had a deep effect on Nix. But *Alarms and Excursions* reveals Nix as an independent thinker, one concerned with intense explorations of musical relationships.

JOINED BY drummer Newman Baker and the mighty Fred Hopkins on bass, Nix mostly avoids the soloist/rhythm section format. Instead, the players often move together in a constant linear counterpoint, unified in purpose but distinct in personality and direction. Much of the music grows from the players' abilities to respond to each other, developing partly through the musicians deep sensitivity and partly through Nix's compositional designs. Both *Acuity* and the probing *Ballad for L*, for instance, begin with either Baker or Hopkins offering varying responses to the guitar's repeated statements, then dovetailing into their own improvisations. These beginnings serve as models for the rest of each piece, as the instruments diverge independently before reuniting at each tune's end. Baker's drumming is fascinating as a microcosm of the group's approach, with an ongoing counterpoint between the drums and cymbals, each piece in the kit seemingly having its own

ANTHONY MICHAEL PETERSON • SYLVAIN LUC • A. SPENCER BAREFIELD

voice. With each listening, the depth of the playing becomes more evident, and for the listener, just as the musicians, this music offers a field for deep exploration. □

BENJAMIN FRANDZEL is a West Coast writer and musician based in San Francisco.

DEREK BAILEY / ANTHONY BRAXTON

MOMENT PRÉCIEUX • *Victo cd 02*

Derek Bailey, *electric guitar*;

Anthony Braxton, *alto & soprano saxophones*

YOU CAN GET A HANDLE ON almost any record in the first one or two tracks, or even in the first one or two minutes. As an experienced listener—I almost wrote “old hack”—I usually know in twenty seconds if I’m staying or leaving. But to understand *Moment Précieux* you have to listen to the whole thing.

On lp I had always liked these 1986 guitar/saxophone duets, but listening again in 1994 I squirmed through the first track (there are only two tracks, total 48 minutes). The problem was a bad case of nerves, I decided; not mine, the musicians’. Braxton seemed to be pushing the tempo, forcing on the reluctant Bailey a kind of free-jazz energy that the guitarist has always avoided. I started speculating about jet lag, stage fright, some personal hassle, and was relieved that Braxton and Bailey seemed to relax and get it together on track two.

But listening again a few days later track one sounded perfect, its tension imbued with daring and fun. The more relaxed second track was no longer the most interesting, although this time around its drifts in focus seemed to heighten rather than drain its dramatic charge.

In short, just as in concert some nights are better than others, this live CD sounds different every time, as if the performers were on some kind of temperamental razor’s edge, and the engineer somehow managed to capture it. For an, uh, experienced listener, it’s unnerving to be affected this way; this is a good reason to recommend these particular precious moments.

KAISER / KIMURA / O’ROURKE / OSWALD

ACOUSTICS • *Victo cd 025*

(Henry Kaiser & Jim O’Rourke, *acoustic guitars*;
Mari Kimura, *violin*; John Oswald, *alto saxophone*)

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO, or whenever I first heard Kaiser and Oswald playing together, it seemed necessary to interpret what they were doing in terms of the generation of improvisers who came before them; in fact, in terms of Derek Bailey and Anthony Braxton (see above) or to be more precise, Bailey and Evan Parker.

But no matter how tightly focused an artist’s creations, the range of his or her “influences” is inevitably huge and chaotic. Concluding a specific lineage for critical reasons may help the listener understand, but that truth will still only be a little bit of the whole. In the end you can find that all you’ve contributed to the music is a pedigree: the very antithesis of creativity.

But Parker and Bailey had been doing it longer, at the time they were playing duets a lot, and when Oswald and Kaiser came along, there hardly seemed to be anyone else to compare them to; especially from a lineage-obsessed jazz perspective. But in fact, these Toronto and San Francisco-based players never sounded much like the London-based Bailey and Parker and now, joined with two players whose work is new to me, this quartet doesn’t sound like anything you’ve ever heard.

The opening track, *Warm Grey to Pale Yellow* pretty much defines the quartet’s strengths. The acoustics are diamond-sharp and the listener can choose from one playing to the next which half of the quartet is foregrounding and which is backgrounding, Oswald-Kimura or the Kaiser-O’Rourke acoustic guitar duo. The sense of focus is so strong that the music is consistent throughout the CD, regardless of the *amount* of sound. A whisper of bowed string with someone tapping on something in the background is as energized as the full quartet, as it crescendos like a runaway barrel organ down those famous Frisco hills.

Mari Kimura has a kinky melodic sense that fits perfectly with these two percussive/chordal instruments and a very vocal reed. There are some lush and languorous string sections, that back in the seventies we would have shunned like bossa novas, that the players simply indulge and accept as part of the process. And overall there is a shivering, kinetic excitement, as if everyone was tuned in to each other and playing their best. Just some great improvised music. □

DAVID LEE is a musician and writer residing on the British Columbia Sunshine Coast.

PHOTOGRAPHY

JOE DIORIO • PHOTOGRAPH BY GERARD FUTRICK

BERN NIX • PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY THOMSON

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PAT LABARBERA

JAZZMAN ON THE GO

AN ARTICLE BY
JERRY D'SOUZA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
BARRY THOMSON

"I HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A JAZZ MUSICIAN. EVEN WHEN I WAS DRIVING A TRUCK AND LOADING BOX CARS, I KNEW DEEP IN MY HEART THAT I WANTED TO BE A JAZZ MUSICIAN."



JOE & PAT LABARBERA - MONTREAL BISTRO, TORONTO, 1993

LONG BEFORE THAT REALITY was even a speck on the horizon of his mind's eye, Pat LaBarbera held the compass that would chart the course of his dream. He didn't realise this when he first started out. Could a nine year old lad think through the heady whirl that enveloped him as he sat in with his father's band?

The atmosphere in the LaBarbera house crackled with music, and not only because father LaBarbera had two bands and mother LaBarbera played the double bass. Endowed by nature with their share of musical genes and primed by the large assortment of instruments around the house, the sphere into which the brothers LaBarbera gravitated was not surprising. Joe took to the bass while John played trumpet before adding the attributes of writer and arranger.

"We did local gigs and the odd party," says Pat, the clarinet player turned sax man and occasional flutist. "We played ethnic Italian tunes and swing stuff like *In The Mood*. Jazz did not weave its way into his being until he was in high school. The music teacher would bring in jazz records, the students would listen, play along, and then cut classes to practise. "We convinced the teacher to give us a spot at the spring and Christmas concerts," says LaBarbera. "They would pull us out of the big band that was playing and we would do a quartet number. We looked forward to that every year."

His music teacher lit the flame but there was another who stoked the fire in LaBarbera. His name was Bob LaDelfaa. "There were only about 3500 people in Mount Morris where we lived" remembers LaBarbera, "but Bob loved jazz and he brought in a lot of musicians including Gene Krupa and Jack Teagarden. He would also take us to the clubs including a black social club called The Knights of Pithaeus where we could get in for 50 cents. Bob was the big influence on me getting to hear jazz."

When it was time for college, LaBarbera enrolled at Potsdam State Teachers College. Memories of those days do not salve his soul. It was 1962 and the time when jazz was "looked down on in the New York State schools system. I did not get what I wanted there so I left."

BERKLEE CROOKED A FINGER and LaBarbera was off to its hallowed halls. He found the sanctum he sought in the jazz that was coming through the city, in playing everyday in a band, in learning theory, harmony and writing, in the teachers who were all players and in the connections. The last set him on the road with Buddy Rich, a signing that over-rode an offer from Woody Herman.

Connections may have made the dotted line but the factor that tilted the scale in LaBarbera's favour was his aptitude, one that had imbued the best elements of Lester Young, Gerry Mulligan and Stan Getz. They were his big influences before John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins and Charlie Parker moved in to leave their impress.

LaBarbera's eyes light up when he recalls the Coltrane days. "I used to go see him when I was in Berklee. As students we could see a matinee show for \$1 or \$1.50. We would be witnessing a piece of jazz history. We would

“ONCE YOU HAVE TURNED FIFTY YOU CAN BE OPINIONATED, YOU CAN SPEAK YOUR MIND. WHO CARES!”

go to jazz workshops an hour early because we knew Coltrane would be rehearsing in the back room. Although I always respected his free period, it was hard to grasp. There were times when I walked out of Coltrane's band because the arrangements were so strong. I did not understand everything that was happening, but the energy that came off the stage and the dedication was stupendous! When I was in my late teens and early twenties he was the one playing all the time.”

BUDDY RICH HAD THE REPUTATION of being difficult to work with. LaBarbera affirms that in balanced perspective. “He was difficult to the point that he always wanted the music to be played correctly. He felt that the drummer had to work constantly and he did not want someone who was 20 years old and could not keep up with him in the band. He was a taskmaster and a lot of the guys who worked with him complained about the things we had to do, like keeping our suits clean and our shoes polished. These things are important when you present yourself on stage, you find that out when you mature. I learned a lot about professionalism from him. We all miss him. Even those guys who had knock-down, drag out fights with him, miss Buddy. He was a personality that doesn't come around anymore, like a Miles Davis or a Charles Mingus. They were unique personalities that came from a period when it was a struggle to get anywhere in music. They cherished their stature and did not want anyone to blow it for them.”

Despite Rich's despotic strain, he gave his players enough room. “He gave everybody who wanted to solo a chance. He was really good about that. He gave me a lot of space on recordings and he featured me a lot in concerts. Certain things were short because his was a big band and there isn't that much time to stretch out.”

After seven years with Rich, LaBarbera moved to Toronto. It was his gateway to convenience. His wife's mother lived in Lindsey Ontario, while his mother lived in Rochester New York. Toronto offered proximity to both, and more.

“I knew several musicians I had met on the road and played with. I liked the rhythm sections. Many of the musicians I had met in Vancouver had moved to Toronto in the seventies among them Don Thompson and Dave McMurdo. I did not want to go to New York or to Los Angeles because I had lived there and was looking for something out of the way. I felt I could work professionally full time without having to do a day job. I had done that before and did not want to do it again.”

Toronto, however, did not turn out to be the Mecca of his hopes. He was new to the city and it was not easy getting gigs despite the reputation he had gained while with Rich. He did work the occasional show at Bourbon Street, but times were tough. Then came the invitation from Elvin Jones in 1976. On his return LaBarbera found more work. But this wasn't free of its glitches either.

“I worked with Hugh Clairmont up in Orillia during weekends. At that time one couldn't work a steady gig in Toronto, the Musicians Union wouldn't allow that. One had to be in a jurisdiction for six months before one could have a steady gig. The rules have changed now but they did not change fast enough for me,” he laughs.

LaBarbera got out of sitting in with other bands and stood up in his own outfit with his brother Joe, Don Thompson and Neil Swainson. They called the collective JMOG. How did they ever get such a name? Let LaBarbera tell the story.

“Neil and I once shared a house. When I was at home, Neil would be out on the road with George Shearing. He would come in the door with his bass and I'd be packing to go on the road with Elvin Jones. He used to call me the jazz man on the go. And then I began to call him that. Then there was this jazz band we had been trying to put together for years but we were all too busy. When we finally did get around to putting it together, we called it JMOG for jazz man on the go. The critics hate the name but we don't care. It's kind of unique. Rather than look at the name, they should look at the music!”

JMOG IS WORKING BETTER NOW, a condition eased when Joe left Tony Bennett. Yet it is not enough for the elder LaBarbera. “We play a couple of times a year. We generally get together in the fall and in winter but we would like to get more out of it. We all write, we put it all together and the band has a different flavour. We are still searching but I think we are a good band. It's very representative of Canadian jazz.”

In all of his writing there is one area he does not delve into, free jazz. Sure he indulged in the form several years ago when the air was rife with the rhythm. There were times when he and his brothers did not want to play a string of chord changes and just played free. “I don't see a big market for it right now,” he continues pensively. “It seems to have changed and gone in another direction. I like to incorporate it in parts of tunes but I wouldn't play a whole free set. I've done free things in clubs and I've done experimental free things with Phil Nimmons. We have reacted with classical dancers and free jazz. We did that at the Banff School of Fine Arts one year and it was quite nice!”

He pauses, reflects and goes back to JMOG. The quartet has had offers to play in Europe and they may perform there this year. Yet this is not the harbinger of good tidings. LaBarbera is peeved at the fact that little is known of Canadian jazz in Europe.

“One of the problems is that there are no real jazz booking agencies. There are a few but they don't look after the whole jazz spectrum. If we had a Norman Granz or a George Wein who got behind a Canadian package and took it to Europe, it would be great. Maybe we should keep things quiet and growing but it should be nice for Canadian bands to play in Europe.”

"They are aware of Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass but mostly through recordings. They know Oliver Jones, Oscar Peterson and Moe Koffman and I think Ed Bickert has played in festivals there. But they don't know what goes on in Toronto and in Canada. I mean there are major players here!"

So there are. All one has to do to absorb the dynamism of the scene in Toronto, is to get into any of the clubs offering jazz and witness the wealth of talent.

"When players from outside come to Toronto their jaws drop," he adds, "no one knows how great it is until they come here. There are some young guys here who are as good if not better than some of the young stars in New York who have recording contracts. They just keep slugging away. It must be frustrating for some of them."

"There are four or five players everybody is talking about," he goes on, leaning forward, hands clasped as if in prayer, "I'm not going to name them. I don't think they play as good as some here do. People think that because they are in Toronto they are not as good as the players in New York. I know what's good because I've heard it all and these guys are fantastic. Take Terry Lukiwski. Who can play better than he does? Yet nobody outside Canada knows him."

THE TORMENT OF THE SOUL HAS NOT ABATED. LaBarbera moves on to the dearth of recording opportunities for local jazz musicians. He calls it a toss-up where the company wants to record known names while the new players need a recording to become known. "You need someone to take a chance. Some do have recordings but they have gone and done it themselves."

His mind goes back to those dank, dark days of the seventies when he was trying to find his feet in Toronto. He roves in familiar territory as he remembers trying to get a recording deal and "nobody wanted to record a young guy. One had to be an old established jazz star. I just gave it up."

Fate was not entirely unkind to LaBarbera. He got his moment in the sun when Gene Perla recorded him. But that is what it was, a moment, for the clouds rolled in. All too quickly. For him it happened "all of a sudden. The time came when nobody wanted to record any old guys, they only wanted the young players. There is a whole bunch of us who came through this stage and missed both ends of the recording spectrum. I decided that I would not care if I never recorded as long as I worked. The beauty is that one becomes a more polished, refined player as one matures. But then, one can't alter the market."

Time seems to have come full circle for LaBarbera. Notwithstanding that avowed dismissal of a recording career, a silver lining did cut through. He found it in the opportunity to record for Sackville, a label he says accepts jazz as an art form and which lends validity to the scope of improvisational music. The eponymous "JMOG" was followed by "Live At The Glenn Gould Theatre". A third, recorded at Thompson's studio, is ready. In tandem the product should give the band the track record they are looking for.

The positive vibrations have cleared his brow. It is time to take him to the other aspect of his life, teaching.

At first he thought teaching would infringe on his freedom, the weekends and his summers and he did not want to lose that.



PAT LABARBERA - PILOT TAVERN, TORONTO, 1994

"Right now teaching is the primary thing in my life. Humber College keeps me going. The students have the interest and the energy that wears off on me. The fact that I am passing down something that was passed on to me keeps me going. Alex Dean and Mike Murley were among my students. I never thought I would be a teacher. Teaching made me retrace my steps and in doing so I got really good at getting things across. If I don't know something, I'll find out. Don Menza was a big influence. He taught me a lot about sound and about players like Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt and Coleman Hawkins."

The freedom he thought would be elusive is now more pronounced. LaBarbera, always a voracious reader was going through books on Miles and Coltrane. Music was complemented by readings on Tai-Tchi-Tchuan and at different times on those who have left their impress in other areas of music, like Elvis Presley.

"There are many facets to me," he laughs. Then he proceeds to pull a ball out of a desk, revolves it with his fingers and presto, he has two balls then three!

"I love to do tricks. I learnt to do this when I was on the road and needed to do something with my hands. It's just a hobby. Music has been the main thing. The rest is curiosity."

LaBarbera reflects on what has transpired during the interview. He breaks into a grin and philosophises, "Once you have turned fifty you can be opinionated, you can speak your mind. Who cares!" □

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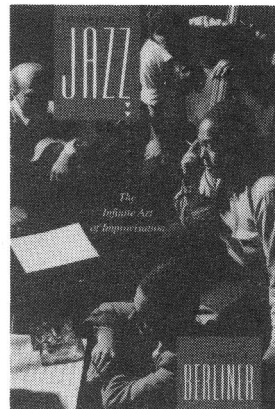
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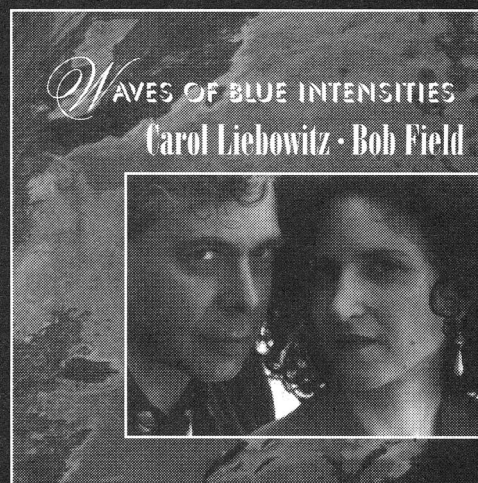
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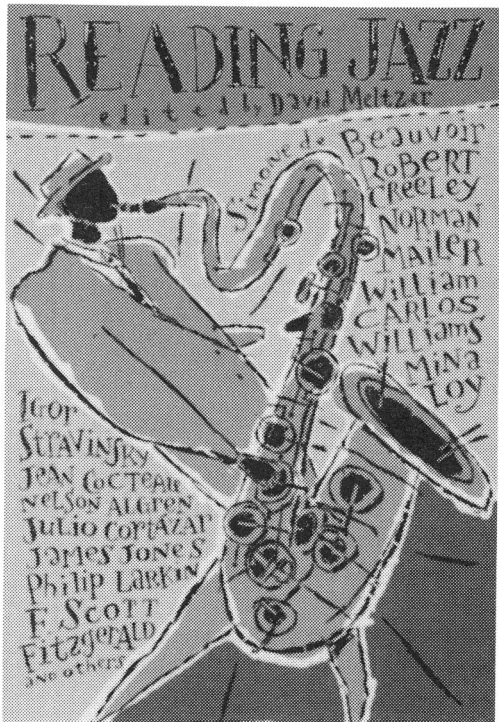
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READING JAZZ

JAZZ IN PRINT REVIEWED BY STEVE VICKERY



THE FEELING OF JAZZ and the beautiful heated spirit inspiring it is illusive for the writer that tries to capture it. The dimension we experience in the heart of the music defies the process of language, and there are only a few that succeed in bringing the music across on the silent printed page.

What's often lost in the shuffle of language is the immediacy, that instant of recognition that is unmistakable for the jazz lover. There are no words necessary to explain the rapture created by Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, or any of the other artists that created this music. *Reading Jazz* (Mercury House, 1933) a new collection of material compiled and edited by poet/essayist David Meltzer is a mixed blessing in its view of the music's social progression through the 20th century. Meltzer catalogues the currents of the music by drawing together essays and pieces from contributors like Julio Cortazar, Art Pepper, Robert Creeley, Simone DeBeauvoir, Kenneth Rexroth, Lew Welch, Jack Kerouac, Weldon Kees, (among many others). While language, sound and meaning are a tricky subject to pin down in print, Meltzer is certainly on the right track with this col-

lection. His essays introducing each section of the book reveal the author's willingness to risk contradiction and go out where the music leads, all its loose ends and unlikely turnarounds left intact. Meltzer's earlier anthology of interviews with west coast writers, the *San Francisco Poets* (Ballantine, 1971) has prepared him well for the massive task that *Reading Jazz* presents.

When I think of the "spirit" of jazz I mean improvisation and the willingness to improvise. I mean keeping the doors open and letting the spirit move through. I mean being "in the moment" in and out of control at once, a conduit of and for invention. Completely present tense. Awake and alert to the cues and clues the music allows. Receiving and transmitting. At once.

The premise of an anthology of writing reflecting the world that surrounds this music is a sweeping one, requiring an almost impossible perspective be maintained. In this sense, Meltzer's reach exceeds his grasp. The author intimates that the jazz world as we know it has grown up out of the confusion and class/race struggle of contemporary society, that we have attempted to decode meaning from an art form that resists our understanding, an art form that remains inseparable from the lives that recognize and inhabit its beauty. The back cover introduction hints at the rigorous theme Meltzer pursues:

As the term JAZZ was appropriated by white writers to describe a black musical form, it came to represent a colonizing culture's image of a colonized culture. This anthology not only charts the evolution of a musical form, it also reflects evolving racial and cultural conflicts and stereotypes.

As Meltzer's introductory essay Pre-Ramble outlines the various etymological sources of the word JAZZ (delving into Jazz as culture, mythos, and unknowable Other), the reader will soon realize that social/racial/political implications guide his thesis here.

APART FROM THE SOCIOLOGY implicit in the development of a music as intensely personal as jazz, the bulk of Meltzer's view of "the life" is works of biography and fiction. The quality of the writing is difficult to comment on, since the editor has chosen pieces from the entire spectrum of critical writing. The inclusion of pieces from poet/curmudgeon Phillip Larkin and sleaze-bio king Albert Goldman are low points in the anthology, both contributing essays full of rancour and half-hidden contempt for the subject material.

Thankfully their presence is the exception to the rule regarding authors' affinity to the music. The real world of jazz is seen through the eyes of artists like pianist Art Hodes, who reminiscences of early days playing for gangsters in casinos and joints are full of the pungent bite and danger that was often associated with the work of a jazz musician in the thirties. To hear him tell it now, it seems amazing that any of the original jazz players lived through those rough days and nights.

One day our place was held up. We were all on the stand playing when it happened. I found out later the hoodlums broke the doorman's head a bit, and ruined the chap's arm just to impress us. And then one of them slid across the dance floor with a gun pointed at us. Get off and lay down, face forward. Needless to say, we did.

The daily living of the musicians, the gypsy-like travel and irregular hours took a toll on many of the artists, pushing them over the edge into self-destructive habits. Alto saxophonist Art Pepper struggled for years with heroin addiction, a torturous downward spiral that dominated both his life and his music. Pepper's descent into hell is briefly recalled here, its chilling clarity more convincing than any fire and brimstone sermon could ever be. The fear, restlessness, and anger that destroyed so many jumps off the page at you.

All of a sudden, all that feeling, wanting

something but having no idea what it was... all that wandering and wandering like some derelict; that agony of drinking and drinking and nothing ever being resolved, no peace at all except when I was playing, and then the minute I stopped playing there was nothing; that continual insane search just to pass out somewhere... all of a sudden, all of a sudden, the demons and the devils and the wandering and all the frustration just vanished and they didn't exist anymore because I'd finally found peace... I realized from that moment on I would be, if you want to use the word, a junkie. That is what I became at that moment.

It is an interesting irony that the writing that works best in terms of creative fiction is offered by those farther removed from the music in the technical/performance sense, drawing its inspiration more directly from the subconscious mind and the poetic sensibility. Latin American writer Julio Cortazar combines the real world of the concert performance with the dream state where past and future meet, a place of supernatural happenings.

barely a minute has passed and already we are in a night outside of time, the primitive and delicate night of Thelonious Monk. Yet this is unexplained: a rose is a rose is a rose. We are becalmed, someone intercedes, perhaps somewhere we will be redeemed. And then, when Charlie Rouse steps toward the microphone and his sax imperiously show us why it is there, Thelonious lets his hands fall, listens a moment, tries a soft chord with the left hand, and the bear rises, swaying like a hammock... in search of a mossy bank suited to his drowsiness.

The depth of the writing included in *Reading Jazz* varies widely across the eras of the music it concerns. The post-war writing of Simone DeBeauvoir looks beyond the surface level of the music and probes the society beneath/behind it, looking for reasons to explain the gulf that lies between the makers of art and the public that thoughtlessly consume it. DeBeauvoir's perspective on the American jazz of the early-1950s conjures the brutality of a society that obsessively moves forward, worshipping progress for its own sake.

When you compare Bechet, the little bands in New Orleans, old Armstrong records, and Bessie Smith with fashionable jazz, you realize that Americans have emptied this burning music

bit by bit of all human feeling and content... Negro music always expressed something and "hot" music was the feverish, passionate form of this expression; the present was exalted in concrete form, weighted with some feeling, some situation linked to a past and a future. The Americans turn away with contempt from the past... What pleases them in jazz is that it expresses the passing moment... Of course, noise and rhythm can be scientifically orchestrated in such a way that the present is endlessly reborn from its own death, but the meaning of the old jazz is entirely lost.

THERE IS A DISTURBING UNDERTONE

in the way that *Reading Jazz* ends prematurely. After a lengthy discussion of the beginnings of the music, Meltzer gives a rambling overview of the 1940s and 1950s jazz eras, a time of incredible growth and vitality for the development of the music, in Crazy and Cool. The problem arises when the time period again advances and the subject of the 1960s is at hand, certainly a challenging era of new beginnings. Meltzer loses his momentum here, covering a period of the music that has been revolutionary in defining the new jazz, a music that produced some remarkable recordings, in 28 pages. Meltzer hedges his bets at the end of the chapter by including a good reading list of further sources of information on what is contemporary in jazz, but it is a great disappointment for the reader who is truly interested in the music to find that little attention (or respect) is paid to the work of creative musicians active over the last thirty years. The inclusion of essays by Albert Goldman (whose vicious attack of Miles Davis borders on a white racist diatribe) and Phillip Larkin are highly questionable. The brief mention that Larkin makes of highly regarded artists confirms any suspicions that he is a critic whose narrow tastes in the music leave little room for discussion. It serves no purpose to dismiss contemporary artists with the admonition that they cannot compare to the early innovators like Ellington and Armstrong. It is an admission of defeat to suggest that the music has not gone on since the work of artists like John Coltrane, who is the only sixties artist granted a positive presentation in this final chapter. If Meltzer's attitude is, as he states earlier, to let the spirit move through, why is no mention made of the work of Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Eric Dolphy, and the many other powerful musicians whose music influenced a generation of

listeners too young to have heard the music of the swing and bebop decades? While the attitude of the writers that do comment on the new music is at best ambivalent (Andre Hodeir's essay is a curious bit of writing that has more to do with wordplay than any serious view of music) there is a worthwhile contribution from John Sinclair that answers this dilemma directly by taking the emphasis away from the comparative value of different music forms and instead talks about the reality of the musicians themselves, working in an era of social upheaval.

There's one more thing I have to get in here, and that is that music, as the musicians' lives, is revolutionary music, music of the highest and positive CHANGE effect. It is the highest energy music, the freest, the most natural, the most inspirational music there is... You can learn from the music because it's there to teach you.

In the end, *Reading Jazz* presents the reader with a problem concerning the issues that the new music brings into focus; Is the music of the past thirty years to be dismissed simply because it doesn't bear any noticeable connection to the music that serves as its foundation? Obviously the music that Meltzer thinks of as JAZZ is present in the work of artists like Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor, so why is there no discussion of their influence on the growth of the music. It is a shame that the editor chose not to anthologize the work of contemporary writers whose insight on the new music would have provided an authoritative conclusion to his book. Writers like A.B. Spellman, John Litweiler, Val Wilmer, Derek Bailey, Gary Giddins, Richard Scott, Graham Lock and Nathaniel Mackey have all created works that show intense commitment to the new music that has grown out of the sixties experimental approach, solidifying through the last two decades into the music of today. *Reading Jazz* takes the right direction in investigating the social and personal world of the jazz artists, looking at how our culture responds to the modern artist and his work. It may be too soon to tell if the new music will have as dramatic an effect on its audience as the historic jazz art, but certainly the music of Muhal Richard Abrams, Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, and many other living artists deserves the degree of attention that their elders received. □

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JULIUS HEMPHILL FIVE CHORD STUD

FOR THE LAST DOZEN YEARS OR MORE, SAXOPHONIST/COMPOSER JULIUS HEMPHILL HAS RIDDEN A ROLLERCOASTER OF ILLNESS THAT HAS CLAIMED PART OF ONE LEG, KEPT HIM BED-RIDDEN FOR MONTHS ON END, REQUIRED BACK SURGERY AND MORE. By his own account in May, his horn hadn't been out of the case in a year and he'd been unable to compose for some time. None the less, the Fort Worth native climbed out of bed and led his incandescent sextet on July 1 at the JVC Jazz Festival in New York, blowing from his wheelchair and standing 10,000 people on their collective ear. And the word is that he's making a great recovery now and that he's writing and, obviously, playing again.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOE GIARDULLO

WHEN I CALLED HIM ABOUT THIS INTERVIEW and asked when he'd like to do it, he responded quickly, "the sooner the better." From his bed, where he'd been for 3 months, but looking and sounding spirited and composed, Hemphill was still concerned about his "fluttering" health, and he indicated there were still unresolved questions about his condition. I've heard since that things are greatly improved for him, and that is good news for us all.

But that day Hemphill spoke clearly and at length on a variety of subjects, including the early days in St. Louis with the Black Artist's Group and his exit from the group with which he is most consistently identified, the World Saxophone Quartet. What he has to say about the end of his tenure with WSQ is not pretty and, while Hemphill speaks quietly and without rancour, there is a clear pain in his words.

"Yeah, the quartet was important for me, as far as longevity and I suppose in a developmental sense also. I had this fixed ensemble that was there for years so it was a pretty good challenge to try to make it work. They're still doing it, but I don't know much about it."

After a dozen years, during which time Hemphill was recognized for truly capturing the real potential of the all star group, Hemphill was out, and as he tells it, it was an ugly exit.

"Well, actually we had been having a fair amount of friction, intergroup tension going on. I had been considering leaving mostly because we seemed to have lost something that I thought we had in the beginning, and as it turned out, I didn't get a chance to leave. They (David Murray, Oliver Lake and Hamiett Bluiett) voted me out."

"They sent me a letter", Hemphill says quietly, pointing to a shelf above his dresser, "it's right up there. They sent me a list of grievances and things. I had to reply to the list in a letter,



too. Some of the things are quite silly. One of them was that I was trying to get a job at Columbia University and that would interfere with the working of the group, which was, well, I've been on the campus of Columbia maybe four times in twenty years and I don't even know anybody in the music department.

Another 'grievance' was, I called some staff person at None-such Records to find out who decided we were flying to Switzerland on economy class to play the Montreaux festival. I thought it was bullshit. Basically, we were going there to represent the company and I noticed that (the) Kronos (Quartet) was in business class. They made a seat for the cello, and they crowded us into economy, and I spoke on that. The rest of the WSQ didn't like it either but they didn't say anything, just like a lot of things. Nobody likes it but nobody says anything.

The final thing was that New Music America program was going to happen at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the group had been saying for months that we're not going to do it. So I said, after Labor Day I'm going to take a break and someone else said the same thing. Shortly after that, we signed contracts as individuals, not as the WSQ, to appear in Bill T. Jones' production of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN IN THE PROMISED LAND. Then, the other members of the quartet said they wanted to do the gig at BAM.

I had another thing in Boston by then because they had been saying we weren't going to do BAM, so instead of getting a sub, they tell me I'm either in or out, and sent me a letter to that effect saying that we had "contrary goals" and that they were going to add Arthur Blythe and they voted me out. Well, yes, it hurt. It opened my eyes to the fact that we were on several different pages, nothing was holding us together. We had no allegiance to each other after a dozen years so I had to look at the whole association. It was a good learning period for myself and I learned more about what I was doing, what I was attempting to do. "

ALTHOUGH HIS EXIT from WSQ left a bitter taste in his mouth, Julius Hemphill's inquisitive nature and commitment to creative endeavours had prepared him well for life after the quartet.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY THOMSON • TORONTO 1989



"Back around '87, 2 years before the letter came, I started working on this longterm saxophone opera and I had first the WSQ plus Andrew White and Carl Grubbs. Then the WSQ proved to be a little bit unmanageable as far as following directions and such. Everybody wanted to put his 2 cents in and it wasn't about that. So that was the first time I tried to work with a sextet, but I let it go because of the scene. The next time I tried it, I just retained Oliver Lake out of the quartet and I got some other people, and then it became a question of the WSQ requiring much more of his time and then the vote went down. I almost had the full sextet then and I knew some good players. I never thought about replacing the WSQ. I just had another project, you know. "

That project bloomed into the smoking and pungent Julius Hemphill Sextet, and while his former associates accused him of trying to replace the quartet, he insisted that wasn't the case at all. "One thing was concluded, and I had something else to do."

With six horns, Hemphill focused on the ensemble sound. The highly regarded Black Saint recording, *Fat Man And The Hard Blues*, is virtually all scored and has very little blowing, although it's hard to tell. It's clear that while Hemphill regards the WSQ as an important part of his career, he relishes the sextet even more, and when he speaks about the group, he talks about it as a group he is "in", not a group that he runs.

"I enjoy being in the sextet better than the WSQ because nobody's on an ego trip. You don't have all this dissension, this regular NY kind of bullshit, people booking two rehearsals for the same time and stuff like that. In the sextet, everyone comes to play ready to deal with whatever the situation is. All we do is crack jokes and play music. "

HAVING FOLLOWED HEMPHILL'S MUSIC since the late 60's, when the Black Artist's Group was active, I'm interested in his recollections of that time.

"Well, we were familiar with the AACM from Chicago, we spent a little time getting acquainted - well, we knew the personnel, we really didn't know the organization at first, but we went to visit and became aware of them. I was interested in joining it, but they had a lot of rules and stuff. I had just (68) gotten out of the Army and I didn't want to join nothin' else with rules like that.

So, I returned to St Louis and got together with a few people, including Oliver Lake, and we decided to form a group of our own. I mean, in the 60's, there was a lot about self-determination and so we used the AACM as a model to a certain extent. Whereas they were primarily about music we as musicians and one actor got together and we tried to start with representation of all the disciplines. At that time, a lot of people thought we were second rate and stuff, and they were probably right at the time. But we were serious and kept working at our various interests and we got there. We were afforded a sanctuary almost, where you could come and explore ideas and work together. Nobody cared much if they didn't work out. There was no criteria to meet except what one enlisted from one's own vision. We really didn't have to satisfy anyone else's desires in terms of economic matters that one generally encounters in clubs.

I got a chance to write for a fixed group and gain practical experience, and to use some of the musical knowledge I had. Up till then, I was into the quartet/quintet format, you know, playing so-called jazz standards, which I wasn't all that taken with playing.

I had figured music out in high school, I mean as far as harmony and all that, but I wasn't so enamoured of playing *Stars Fell on Alabama*, I mean. I like to hear Cannonball play it, but as far as playing that repertoire, I wasn't into it. I just liked to play the saxophone. "

When I asked Hemphill about that keening sound of his on alto, he smiles a bit, but turns the question inside out.

"It's pretty much a work in progress, cause I don't really think about it. There's a certain elasticity of sound that I want. I listened to guys from Jackie McLean to Paul Desmond. I mean, that's a pretty big chasm right in there. But I just wanted to play. Some of my friends took abuse for the music we played but that didn't really happen to me. I had gotten it up to the level of being able to play straight ahead, if I knew the tune.

Problem was, I didn't want to learn the tunes. And I didn't have any particular interest in playing the club scene. I never liked all that bullshit comraderie. "

Put the accent on 'bullshit' in that sentence, for Hemphill is held in warm esteem by players and fans alike. In 1982, when his health had taken a major setback and he lost part of a leg, longtime friend and colleague Marty Ehrlich organized a benefit concert at New York's Public Theater. Drummer Michael Carvin referred to Hemphill as "the only true friend I've found since I left Texas" and the bandstand saw everyone from Max Roach to Stan Strickland, Barry Altschul to Jack DeJohnette, Baikida Carroll to Howard Johnson, and more. Hemphill was more than touched by this true comraderie.

AND TRUMPETER/COMPOSER Baikida Carroll, at home in the Woodstock area, remembers his first encounter with Julius Hemphill. Carroll, just out of the service, was back in St. Louis and living in a small place where he couldn't practice his horn. He'd take it out into the park near a golf course and sit on a hill and play. What was a speck far off on another hill moved slowly in the direction of the music, getting a little bigger as it moved closer. The next thing Carroll remembers is this tall guy standing in front of him, and that was Hemphill. He liked Carroll's playing and invited him into the early BAG scene.

"I've been talking to Julius every other day for the last 15 years", says Carroll. "We trade musical ideas, technical ideas and forms. I spoke with him yesterday and he's doing great right now. The JVC thing was well received, you know. Julius has a strength as a person, a love for life that is shining through all this turmoil he's been through. He's the godfather of my daughter, and he's feeling real good right now. "

Speaking about musical ideas and form, Hemphill had some interesting things to say on the subject during our long

discussion. When I asked him about his thoughts on beauty, he took it in another direction.

"I don't know that I think about beauty. I look at it more like architecture, building stuff. So, you make a framework and there's room in it for people to be themselves and, if it's an interesting enough framework, they'll do their part if I do my part. You seek out players who can just stand up and play - they don't really have to have very much information - they just make it up. That's all we're doing, just making this stuff up.

You just get somebody that's a good 'maker-upper' and you're half way home, really. So, I think the contours of a given piece, the parameters are self-imposed by the players because to play it in the spirit of what has gone before and what is to follow - sometimes you want to tamper with it but sometimes you just want to reinforce it, and that's where the 'maker-uppers' come into play. The better the improviser is, the more seamless it becomes, really. I really like that part. There's actually nothing there but it 'seems' like there's something there in terms of structure.

I'm a musician because of improvising, that it could be the same thing but it's not the same at all. I impose enough will on it and then let somebody else have something to say. The players decide what to say, not me. And, if they're not satisfied with what they do say, well then you're on to something". Hemphill flashes a big smile with that statement.

"Finally, it will work because they'll be after it, and pretty soon, you've got a group, you know."

THE GROUP THAT HEMPHILL leads now is composed of multi-reed players Marty Ehrlich, James Carter, Andrew White, Alex Harding, Sam Furnace and, at JVC, Andy Laster. They exhibit a sensitivity to the ensemble sound that distinguishes them mightily from the WSQ, but they are all capable of stepping up to distinctive solo voices too. Carter, for one, roars with a power and conception way beyond his 23 years. Hemphill says, "you should have heard him when he was 17!" White is as surprising as ever on tenor, and Ehrlich adds a finesse to the group that keeps the fire hot but with a low, burnished flame.

During the last year, Hemphill has had to put a few projects on the back burner while attending to his health. Perhaps now he'll be pushing on with them. There's one in Minneapolis, and there's an ensemble thing with his great friend, pianist Ursula Oppens. And, of course, there's the Julius Hemphill Sextet. There's a new album due out, with Tim Berne sitting in for Hemphill. It's called *Five Chord Stud*.

"I've just been kind of treading water, pretty much out of commission with my health. But the guys in the sextet have said they'll stick until I can get back. It's quite touching, actually. I mean, I like this group all the way around. "

That's the vote that counts. □

ABOUT THE WRITER - JOE GIARDULLO is a musician and writer living in Woodstock, N.Y.

IN THE TRADITION

COMPACT DISC REVIEWS BY DICK NEELD

JAZZ HAS MANY TRADITIONAL FORMS, and is acquiring more all the time. One after another, successive styles go through birth, youth and maturity, eventually becoming another part of the tradition. Frequently these once-new sounds slowly lift their veils and reveal stronger links to the traditional continuum than was suspected when they first made their obstreperous appearance. The challenge, always, is to play the chosen music with creative imagination, whether the form is 50 years old or 50 weeks old. When successful, any jazz performance is new. The older and the more familiar styles earn the name of traditional jazz by virtue of getting there first and living the longest.



A BRIEF SAMPLING OF RECENT CD releases reveals that the vintage approaches are being squeezed and poured into all kinds of bottles. A baker's half-dozen takes us through an assortment of styles, generations and parts of the globe that illustrate the universality of the music.

DUKE ELLINGTON is reissued prolifically, to the point where one's hardly aware that Ellington is no longer here himself. Coming around for the third time, now dressed in CD attire, is the 1963 album, *Afro-Bossa* (Discovery 71002). The title piece, a bolero, leads the way through a dozen tracks of Latin exotica, abetted by a battery of percussionists assisting Sam Woodyard, that includes Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Billy Strayhorn and Roy Burrows. It takes less than 37 minutes to play the 12 titles, a throwback to the 78 rpm era. The music itself, nevertheless, is latter-day Ellington, adding his evolving melodic, harmonic and dynamic concepts to the Latin themes, which have nothing to do with bossa nova, as the album title might suggest. There are good opportunities for Cootie, Cat, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Ray Nance, Jimmy Hamilton and Harry Carney to contribute solos on what is largely new material for the time. While many of the pieces have their share of beauty and stimulation, the best candi-

date for a long life remains the one song brought forward from the earlier orchestra's book, *Pyramid*. Ellington was compelled to try anything and everything, and the result here is a modest success.

Though several years younger, clarinetist **HERB HALL** is essentially contemporary with Ellington. Like his noted brother, Edmond, he's often erroneously thought of as a dixieland musician. However, the Halls' essential point of view is neither dixie nor Duke—nor is it what we consider New Orleans jazz, though their origins were in the Crescent City. Both of them evolved a strong swing-oriented style that Herb displays masterfully on *Old Tyme Modern* (Sackville SKCD 2-3003). Maturing with the big bands of the thirties, both brothers found themselves there-after in the company of musicians who were an amalgam of the Chicago, New York, and Southwest styles that formed the basis of classic jazz. To this the brothers added the stylistic influences and tone of their New Orleans beginnings to produce a distinctive sound of their own. In this 1969 session, Hall is joined by Arvell Shaw on bass, Buzzy Drootin on drums, and, most significantly, Claude Hopkins. Hopkins, successful as pianist, leader and composer, contributes substantially to the date. Both men were in their prime, playing with a

sense of structure and destination, a lesson too many musicians have never learned. The ten songs included are mainly such early standards as *Old Fashioned Love*, *All Of Me*, *Willow Weep For Me* and *Sweet Georgia Brown*, laced with some blues, both familiar and original. Especially notable is inclusion of Hopkins' exquisite piece, *Crying My Heart Out For You*. Like the Ellington disc, this reissue is an exact duplicate of the original lp, weighing in at slightly under 40 minutes. Also, like the Duke, it's all timeless music that needs no greater length to make a full statement.

Another elder statesman, now 80 years old, is **GEORGE VAN EPS**. One of four musical sons of a musical father, noted banjoist Fred Van Eps, he has maintained his guitar-playing career right through to today. *Hand-Crafted Swing* (Concord CCD 4513) teams him with contemporary craftsman Howard Alden in their second album of duets. Alden is accomplished at playing different guitars in different styles — and the banjo, too, for that matter — and has studied Van Eps' playing style and compositions. Thus the two of them were ready to come together. Their plot, as with the first album, is to draw on the popular jazz standards, ballads and show tunes that the older guitarist has always played and that the younger has embraced and

incorporated in his broad repertoire. Then it's the simple wizardry involved in listening to the other, anticipating, and playing as one that makes all successful duo performances so absorbing. Dave Stone on bass and Jake Hanna on drums are also on hand supplying discreet emphasis and forward motion. Along with such constant classics as *Stompin' At The Savoy* and *What's New*, they roll their way through such welcome pieces as *Can't We Be Friends*, *Just In Time* and Stuff Smith's *It's Wonderful*, with Alden specializing on the single-note solos on top of Van Eps neatly placed chording. Completing the spread, Van Eps plays a pair of his original compositions, *Lap Piano* and *Forty-Eight*. The enjoyment the two stringers get from creating special passages, switching roles, harmonizing and developing melodic variations is shared by the listener.

One of jazzdom's greatest figures, in a career that spans most of this century, is **BENNY CARTER**. His undiminished talents have graced as many performing and recording events in recent years as at any time in his life. Now available on CD is a 1988 Paris session titled *Claude Tissendier - Saxomania Featuring Benny Carter* (IDA 017 CD). This date places him as a soloist, playing his alto sax in a familiar and compatible context. Altoist Tissendier's Saxomania is a septet with four saxophones and three rhythm, duplicating the reed instrumentation Carter used for his arrangements for the famous Coleman Hawkins date a half-century earlier. It's a very accomplished group of musicians capable of playing the arrangements with accuracy and sensitivity. Carter brought one chart to the date, his own *Doozy*, after which there are ten efforts by Tissendier and one from Francois Biensan, whose trumpet enhances four of the tracks. Tissendier applies his scoring abilities to a variety of material that encompasses such standards as *Out of Nowhere* and *Lover Man*, an assortment of Ellington pieces (*What Am I Here For*, *Sweet and Pugent*, *Cottontail*, *P.B. Blues*) and hot borrowings from the Basie band (Ernie Wilkins' *Sixteen Men Swingin'*) and Chick Webb's twist on Gershwin's *Liza*. He is an able soloist, with a more modern stylistic orientation than Carter, but what is really outstanding is the impact of his arrangements. He has captured the Carter ability to write those marvellous sax section passages. This alone justified the session, though both altoists,

as well as the others on occasion, include some fine solos, with Carter as distinctive and vibrant as ever. This is stimulating and inspired music.

Matching his affair with Carter, **CLAUDE TISSENDIER** also took up with another alto giant, **PHIL WOODS**, for a November 1991 session. *Claude Tissendier-Saxomania Starring Phil Woods* (IDA 031 CD) shares a number of basic similarities with the earlier session but also has some significant differences. This time the instrumentation, save for one track, drops Saxomania's second alto in favour of a baritone sax, played by Jean Eteve, that gives a thicker texture to the results. As might be expected, the entire character of the two dates is different. Here there are more flourishes, notes and agitation than before, as would be expected in a Woods mode. The music is heated, urgent and energetic. Woods has supplied his own material for half the tracks (*Quill*, *Randi*, *Eddie's Mood*, *Yes There is a Cota*) (sic) and Tissendier matches the Woods style on a pair of Bird pieces (*Yardbird Suite*, *Bloomdido*) plus Django's *Manoir de Mes Reves* and the standard *Star Eyes*. Tissendier, a capable chameleon, sounds as convincing in his scoring and playing in Woods' idiom as in Carter's. His soloing is confined to three numbers, while his guest gets lots of space on all eight tracks, sounding very satisfied with the setting given him. With these two discs Tissendier proves himself to be an exceptional arranger and the leader of a fine adaptable band of musicians.

Just as Claude Tissendier seeks out the jazz tradition within a framework of his own, we find **JOHN HICKS** doing essentially the same thing on *Friends Old and New* (Novus 63141-2). Most of the recordings under his own name have been solo piano dates, with bass and drums rhythm support at most. This time, however, he works with an adventurous band of mainstreamers that includes Clark Terry, with Greg Gisbert for a second trumpet, Al Grey and his athletic trombone, noted newcomer Joshua Redman on the tenor sax, and experts Ron Carter on bass and Grady Tate on drums. They're all accomplished at dishing out mainstream swing and bop, bringing leader Hicks closer to the centre of that stream than he's been before. Some of the eight selections owe their interest more to the

vitality of the group than to their well-worn familiarity – *Rosetta*, *It Don't Mean A Thing* and *Makin' Whoopee*. But they're given the fresh air treatment along with Monk's *Nutty*, Hicks' own *Hicks Tone* and an attractive pair by producer Bob Thiele and music coordinator Glenn Osser, a bop frame and a blues that give the soloists some good opportunities. While Redman still seeks his own voice, he's a match for old hands Terry and Grey on the blues. Grey, in turn, uses a slow *Whoopee* to explain on his horn what sex is all about. In addition, the horns lay out on Billy Eckstine's *I Want To Talk About You*, enabling the pianist to display an expressive ballad style that makes use of flecks of silence and strands of contemplativeness to add a dimension to his playing. It's a stimulating, varied program where everyone gets high grades for keeping the tradition very much alive.

A disciple of early New Orleans jazz is **ORANGE KELLIN**, who has devoted his life to absorbing and reflecting that sound. He left college in Sweden in 1966 to visit New Orleans and ended up making it his home, life and career. He studied and worked with many of the traditional New Orleans musicians and emerged an able clarinetist in the idiom, part of his success including involvement with the stage successes *One Mo' Time* and *Further Mo'*. His new CD, *The Orange Kellin Trio*, (Big Easy BIG CD004) takes him out of the band context in which he's usually heard and places him in the classic clarinet-piano-drums trio format. While his style is thoroughly New Orleans ingrained, his tastes are broader. Over the course of 18 tracks he mixes old New Orleans songs (*Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Zero*), New Orleans traditionalists' addiction to pop favourites (*Over the Rainbow*, *I'll See You in My Dreams*), show music and ballads (*You Are Too Beautiful*, *Guilty*), and swing musicians' favourites (*Liza*, *Fine and Dandy*). In choosing such songs he's following an old tradition of his musical forebears. Staying with the fundamentalist approach, he sticks to the basic patterns of the style in his playing, as do his pianist and drummer. The results provide a striking contrast to the swing-oriented approach of such veteran natives as Herb Hall, whose CD discussed at the outset of this piece reveals a journey through musical time with a very different outlook. The traditions multiply. □

TWO PROFILES BY ROBERT HICKS

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JAMES CARTER

"MOST OF THEM SPEND THEIR TIME BEEFIN' UP ON CHOPS ON COLTRANE SOLOS AND TRYING TO SOUND LIKE HIM OR AN OFF-SHOOT OF HIM. I JUST DIG A LOT DEEPER INTO THE BAG.

I also listen not only to saxophonists - I get it from everywhere actually as far as influences and other alternate routes that an instrument can take. 'Cause that would be like havin' blinders on a horse. I don't have time for that. That just puts you in a bag with everyone else, and if your number happens to get picked in the raffle, then flame on. It should be about that individualism," says 25-year-old tenor saxophonist James Carter whose debut as a leader, *J.C. On The Set* (DIW), with bassist Tanni Tabal, percussionist Jaribu Shahid and pianist Craig Taborn, shows his devotion to a blues form as the foundation for all jazz in his three originals *Baby Gill Blues*, *Blues For A Nomadic Princess*, and the title cut.

Carter rounds out the 8 tunes for his set with renditions of Ellington's *Caravan*, and *Sophisticated Lady* as well as Don Byas' *Worried In Blue*, Sun Ra's ballad *Our Parting*, and Texas tenor saxophonist John Hardee's *Lunatic*.

Though Coltrane's pen is absent on Carter's debut, the young tenor gets to the essence of Trane in his eclectic approach to his horn that's backed up with experience in bands led by Lester Bowie, Wynton Marsalis, Julius Hemphill, Frank Lowe, and in the Mingus Big Band, a group he began performing with in New York at the Time Cafe in April of '93 and with whom he appeared at this year's Atlanta Jazz Festival.

"The only thing I really get from Trane is his diligence and the spirituality that's been the essence of his music. For me that's dealing with Trane - not just dealing with the notes - cats comin' up and sayin', 'I know the *Countdown* solo' (here Carter hums the tune). "Now what?," he exclaims, deriding those young players who would content themselves with just mastering technique without understanding the ideas and invention behind jazz improvisation.

Besides "hits" (as he calls his gigs) with the '60s AACM and Black Artists Group alumni, Carter knows how to swing and has even backed some of Motown's finest soul groups, The Dells, Four Tops and Temptations.

His latest big engagement was at Alice Tully Hall in New York on April 1 and 2 with the premiere of Wynton Marsalis' *Blood On The Fields*, an examination of the history of slavery in America, as performed by a 13-piece ensemble. Earlier in the year, Carter had joined Marsalis' large group for the premiere of *Jazz*, a collaboration with the New York City Ballet at the New York State Theatre in Lincoln Center, including Branford Marsalis as guest artist.

Carter met Marsalis in March 1985 when Wynton arrived in town to perform with the Detroit Symphony. Marsalis approached Carter at a seminar he was giving at Carter's Northwestern High School, and soon thereafter, he played with Marsalis on the symphonic circuit, promoting Wynton's *Hot House Flowers*. Years later in 1991, Marsalis arranged for Carter to join Todd Williams, Walter Blanding, Tim Warfield and Herb Harris as the new tenors on *Tough Young Tenors* (Antilles), with drummer Ben Riley, Marcus Roberts and Reginald Veal.

Carter's primary exposure has come though in his work with saxophonist Julius Hemphill, on whose newest Black Saint recording (done in Nov. '93), he'll appear alongside saxophonists Sam Furnace, Tim Berne, Fred Ho, Marty Ehrlich and Andrew White. Hemphill writes all the compositions, but does not play due to his recent illness.

SAXOPHONISTS JAMES CARTER & ROB BROWN

Carter first recorded with Hemphill on the 1991 date for Black Saint, *Fat Man and the Hard Blues*, which featured some material from Hemphill's *Long Tongues: A Saxophone Opera* as well as pieces from his collaboration with choreographer Bill T. Jones, *The Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land*. Carter performed on these two projects from the start: *Long Tongues*, Hemphill's take on jazz history, theatre, and black life in America, and their relation to dance and hip-hop, premiered at the historic Warner Theater in Washington, D.C. in 1989 and went on to runs at New York's Apollo and in Boston. *Last Supper*, for which World Saxophone Quartet was originally contracted to write the music, until disputes arose, premiered with Hemphill's music as the score in 1990 in Minneapolis before heading to New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Carter met Hemphill while attending a WSQ gig in 1982, but not until 1989 did the two hook up to perform together. At the time, Carter was co-leading a quartet with drummer Phillip Wilson at the VP Fair jazz festival in St. Louis. After their concerts, they'd house jam sessions at the local Prestige club where one night Hemphill came to hear Carter play. Soon thereafter, Carter became a permanent member of Hemphill's Sextet, an answer to WSQ.

Upon arriving in New York in Nov. 1988, Carter first worked with Lester Bowie's quintet, consisting of Bowie, Carter, Phillip Wilson, Cecil McBee and pianist Donald Smith. That group later evolved into Bowie's New York Organ Ensemble which underwent personnel changes. The late Wilson was replaced by Don Moye; Amina Claudine Myers became the organist and various trombonists and guitarists rotated through the group as well. Carter recorded twice with this ensemble, the first being *The Organizer* (DIW) in 1991 and the second *Funky T, Cool T* (DIW).

Carter met Bowie in May 1988 while working in the Detroit-based Creative Arts Collective. During the period of his early Marsalis gigs, Carter woodshedded his "outside" chops in this organization, from which he later drew the members for his first trio with Tabal and Shahid. Prominent members of the Collective included Spencer Barefield and saxophonist Donald Washington, who had served as Carter's initial mentor and influential teacher in Detroit. The Detroit Institute for the Arts housed their regular concerts. By 1990, Carter premiered his James Carter Trio at the Moers Jazz Festival, which led to appearances at other European festivals. As a trio, however, they never recorded.

A less important factor in Carter's playing today is saxophonist Frank Lowe, whom he met while playing with Bowie's quintet in New York in 1988. Carter appears on Lowe's *Inappropriate Choices* (ITM) in the group Saxemble (misspelled Saxemple on the cover), with saxophonists Michael Marcus, Carlos Ward and drummer Phillip Wilson. More recently, Carter worked with Lowe on poet Jayne Cortez's latest Firespitters recording with Denardo Coleman, Albert McDowell and Bern Nix, recorded at Ornette Coleman's new studio on 125th St. and Park Ave. in New York's Harlem.

Born on Jan. 3, 1969 in Detroit, Carter surprisingly enough started his musical training on a Baroque recorder. A boarder in his family's house, Charles Green, who currently plays with the group War, had numerous instruments in his room which Carter looked at first just to note their colour and shape. By age 11, he was playing alto saxophone in school ensembles led by Miss Turner and learning the fundamentals of various instruments ranging from tenor to bass clarinet and baritone sax. He first took up tenor after borrowing one from a neighbour. As essential as these fundamental lessons were to Carter's growth as a player, he was bored and sought direction by listening to jazz records, particularly Duke Ellington, whose 70th birthday concert in Manchester, England his mom held in her collection.

At age 12, Carter adopted saxophonist Donald Washington as his mentor and teacher. By 1979, Carter was performing in Washington's band, Bird Trane Sconow, whose name reflected the legacy of Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Roscoe Mitchell and what's happening now.

"We were all young experimental musicians," recalls Carter.

That first professional experience for Carter included his peer Rodney Whitaker who went on to play with Roy Hargrove and Terence Blanchard and it made for his first recording engagement in Detroit.

Apart from the instruction he received from Washington, their association whetted Carter's interest in repairing instruments. He recalls a time when Washington's baritone keys were broken and Carter welded them back together so that he could play the horn. Carter went on to gig with Marcus Belgrave before hooking up with Marsalis. He often performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival during these early years with his high school groups as well as with Bird Trane Sconow.

Carter became a faculty member at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lakes, Michigan, some forty miles from Detroit. Earlier he'd been a student there and had toured Europe in 1985 with the Blue Lake International Jazz band. In fact, Carter's tune *J.C. On The Set* was composed there in 1987 and had its premiere at a faculty concert that same year. It was customary at such events to refrain from applause until the concert's end, but students and the audience became so enthralled with Carter's performance that they burst out into clapping and cheering his solos. That's when he first realized he could command attention with his skills on sax.

By the end of this April, Carter found himself touring Australia with a house band of European musicians. In May '94, he toured Greece with Ronald Shannon Jackson. He recently toured Europe as George Adams' replacement in the group Blue Brass Connection, with Jack Walrath, pianist Donald Smith, trombonist Paul Zauner, bassist Lonnie Plaxico and drummer Idris Muhammed. He's also been in Germany at the Burghausen Festival of late with Bowie's New York Organ Ensemble.

"I look into the multiphonic side of things and the upper partials of the instrument," Carter says of his approach to the tenor. "It seems most recently," he continues, "that it's a standard gimmick in terms of playing up high and hitting all these upper notes. I don't really use the saxophone in terms of that. I direct my influences more to Cat Anderson, the high note man in Ellington's orchestra. I get my jollies off of hearing that. He was able to hit those notes with nuances and nobility. That's

the deal. I listen to guitar players as well in terms of getting the power out and the polyphonic things they do. Rather than playing this one particular note or one particular passage, this chorus and the next chorus I hear this other note, I put it all in on that one particular chord and call it a day. It cuts down on solos and makes them more concise. It's something that the listener has to skull upon a few more times rather than putting their thumb on it and saying, 'Aha, That's it.'" □



ROB BROWN

REPETITION IN THE HANDS OF SAXOPHONIST ROB BROWN HAS THE POWER OF A REFRAIN IN A GOOD POEM, OF A LEITMOTIF IN A BILDUNGSROMAN. With each recurrent image, his phrases build new layers of meaning, fresh nuances atop what grows familiar. An eerie merger of the known and what lies entangled beneath its surfaces creates a richly evocative array of hues and textures.

"I like to have every piece have its own sound, its own character. I would think of repetition in terms of establishing the sound of a piece. In my improvising, repetition is a form of developing

my ideas with some logic. Instead of having each phrase be different, I would say the phrases relate to one another in a logical way. I might want to dwell on one phrase or one rhythm because I like the way it sounds. Repetition is just a device to help the music make more sense. I like to hear that in other people's playing. I don't want intentionally to make my music hard to understand, but I'm not doing it to please other people per se. I'm doing it because I like that [concept of improvisation and writing] myself," says Brown.

As a young new talent on the New York scene, thirty-two-year-old Brown keeps a low profile, performing irregularly, not openly marketing himself like some of his peers. But his challenging work, especially in a trio format, surfaced on *Breath Rhyme*, (Silkheart), with bassist William Parker and drummer Dennis Charles, in 1991, which heralded his spiritual allegiance to Albert Ayler and John Coltrane.

Then with the 1993 release of *Youniverse* (Riti), adding new personnel and instrumentation, guitarist Joe Morris and drummer Whit Dickey, Brown's thinking about the parameters of a trio sound in jazz took on new depth and a radical asymmetry, which on first hearing was hard to digest, but with each new listen added weight to his strong concepts.

Unfortunately, Brown remains obscure outside certain jazz aficionados and critics and at certain downtown circles in New York City, among them Roulette, the Knitting Factory, CBGB's 313 Gallery and various dance venues, for Brown often collaborates with dancers Elaine Shipman, Kay Nishikawa and most recently with Ujaku and Akim in the recently formed organization, Improvisors Collective, which holds weekly concerts at Context Hall on Ave. A in New York's East Village.

Brown's next trio release, tentatively entitled *Highwire*, is now in the can, but due out in early 1995 on Soul Note, with a trio of himself on sax, William Parker on bass and Jackson Krall on drums. It returns closer to the tonal palette of *Breath Rhyme*, but still exhibits Brown's penchant for "free" interludes. His sense of a ballad is intact with a more mature control in his phrasing. Krall's drumming brings a new textural dimension to Brown's trio.

One piece works off of two groups of notes a tritone apart, improvising upon chordal sequences with minor shifts thematically, according to Brown. The two basic statements, re-

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TWO PROFILES BY ROBERT HICKS

peated a half-step apart, are a development which Brown likens structurally, but not soundwise, to Coltrane's *Impressions*. Brown wants a less formal and freer movement though than is found in Trane.

Another cut, which Brown describes as a "sound piece," he says explores sonority and subtle changes in timbre, incorporating a solid melodic statement.

Some of Brown's work is paced like a bebop head, but without the usual bop harmonic sequences, according to Brown. Lately, he's been listening to a lot of Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington over Phil Schapp's WKCR daily morning show in New York. Brown's fascination with Bird goes back to his early years of study on the sax in Hampton, Virginia.

"I wanted to change the sound of my trio," says Brown of the replacement of drummer Whit Dickey by Jackson Krall. Brown had worked before with Krall in various ensembles led by bassist William Parker and liked the energy of Krall's playing and its foundation in a traditional jazz setting.

"Whit has more of a percussionist sound. Jackson has a real lively sound, a more driving force. Whit's is more spacious. Jackson has more of a jazz drum set feeling," says Brown.

Born Feb. 27, 1962 in Hampton, Virginia, Brown started on piano in second grade, playing sporadically until at age 13, he turned to tenor saxophone. "My brother played sax and we had one in the house," says Brown of the change in instruments.

Jazz wasn't always available to hear in Virginia, but Brown caught Count Basie, Woody Herman and Maynard Ferguson when they came to town. And he listened devotedly to Bird.

After five years on tenor, Brown chose alto as his horn. In the meantime, he took up other saxes, various reeds, including clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon. During high school, he joined a local group known as The Little Big Band, playing blues, R&B, swing, jazz charts, and hits by Louis Jordan.

He attended James Madison University in Harrisburg, Virginia for one year until he yearned for a city where he could be among jazz musicians. He chose Boston, where he studied at Berklee College of Music for two years with Joe Viola and John LaPorta and needing a change of scene, he hit the road with a band to tour the West Coast and ended up living in Berkeley, California for one year and working full-time as a bartender. Bored with this menial labour, Brown returned to Boston where he met pianist Matthew Shipp through his former James Madison classmate Gary Joynes, who was then studying at the New England Conservatory of Music.

Within less than a year, Brown decided to head to New York. There he enrolled in the music department at NYU, where he studied with Joe Lovano, Lee Konitz and others, complement-

ing his later studies in Philadelphia with Coltrane's teacher, Dennis Sandole. Working in a trio with pianist Matt Shipp and drummer Frank Bambara, Brown gigged at downtown venues. His association with Shipp led to their debut duo recording, *Sonic Explorations* (Cadence Jazz Records) in 1988.

Trio work with William Parker and Frank Bambara from 1987 and ongoing gigs with Parker and Dennis Charles increasingly became the focus of Brown's activities, though he would occasionally record and perform with Shipp's group and later would do the same with drummer Marc Edwards. In 1989, Brown sent live tapes of his work with Parker and Charles to Silkheart Records, which recorded *Breath Rhyme* (1991).

Even before 1989, Brown had worked with choreographer Elaine Shipman's SITU dance company, providing improvisational textures and rhythmic direction along with Shipp and later scoring films to be used with Shipman's choreography. Through Shipman, Brown met choreographer Kay Nishikawa, with whom he last worked alongside percussionist Paul Guerguerian in New York at DIA on Mercer St. and at Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

Last year, Brown joined an ongoing series of concerts entitled In Order To Survive, with William Parker's ensemble, which included pianist Cooper-Moore, trombonist Grachan Moncur III, Lewis Barnes and Dennis Charles. The series began at Roulette in New York, moved on to the Knitting Factory and has plans to do concerts in Philadelphia.

Brown's most recent work as a leader combines the concepts of his two trios into a quartet format, with himself on alto sax, bassist William Parker, guitarist Joe Morris and drummer Jackson Krall. Two concerts have been performed recently at New York's Knitting Factory, and recently in a New Jersey studio, they made a tape, which Brown hopes to sell to a record company soon.

Aside from improvisational sets with Improvisors Collective at Context Hall on Wednesday nights, Brown recently participated in a multimedia event at the old Carlton Arms Hotel on New York's east side. The project entailed artists transforming each of the hotel's rooms with paint and other artistic materials into a site for musicians to improvise as the audience was led through the spaces by a tour guide. Actors accompanied the musicians by reading from 19th century French texts about Medieval times.

Brown envisions doing more solo performances on alto sax with a solo recording in mind, but he's mainly happy with expanding his writing from his staple trio format into a new quartet. "I felt ready to add another instrument and to expand my writing concepts for a group," says Brown. □

New York City based writer **ROBERT HICKS**, writes a weekly column for the *VILLAGER*, and contributes to *CODA*, *DOWNBEAT*, *BASS PLAYER*, *GUITAR PLAYER* and *JAZZ CRITIQUE (Japan)*. He also reviews dance for *ATTITUDE & the VILLAGE VOICE*.



CANADIAN NOTES

COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS

OSCAR PETERSON was back on the scene this summer. It had been a long lay off since he suffered a stroke in the spring of 1993. He performed at such major European festivals as the North Sea, Montreux, Marciac and Vienna. There's also a new Telarc recording where he shares the spotlight with violinist Itzhak Perlman.

Peterson's lengthy career was the subject of an exhaustive and fascinating seven part radio documentary on CBC Radio. *About Oscar* drew upon vintage recordings, live remotes and the voices of the pianist and many of his associates. First heard on the AM network it was better served on a CBC Stereo (FM) repeat.

Europe 1 Records in France has issued a deluxe 5 CD box drawn from the Oscar Peterson trios 1960s performances at Paris' Salle Pleyel. There's a wealth of remarkable material in this set. Also out in Europe on Pablo is the legendary *Live at Zardi's* set which was favourably reported in Gene Lees' book *The Will To Swing*. Just as bizarre is the news disclosed in the Verve CD reissue of Peterson's Concertgebouw concert that it was recorded on tour in the US rather than being a privately recorded tape of an Amsterdam performance!

The **Norman Guilbeault Ensemble** won the 1994 du Maurier Ltd. Jazz Award — the finals of which took place during the Montreal Jazz Festival... **Marilyn Lerner** received a \$5000 award from SOCAN for her composition *Healing Hands*. Her debut recording on Justin Time was released earlier in the year.

Brass Goes Silver, a CBC TV documentary saluting the 25 years of **Rob McConnell's Boss Brass**, was aired September 4... **Oliver Jones** will take things a little easier in 1995. The globetrotting pianist has been worn down by the constant grind of travel and will be highly selective in his engagements for the future. Justin Time is reissuing on CD his 1983 Montreal Festival collaboration with bassist Charlie Biddle and he has a newly minted Christmas CD (*Yuletide Swing*) for the 1994 season.

Just about every Wednesday evening this winter you can catch some of the jazz faculty of the University of Toronto in performance at the Edward Johnson Building's Walter Hall or MacMillan Theatre... Toronto's Classic Jazz Society brought **Neville Dickie** and his Rhythm-makers to Canada in September followed by our own **Tex Wyndham** (October 22) who performed with the Hot Five Jazzmakers... December 3 it was the turn of Vancouver's Grand Dominion Jazz Band. At the other end of the spectrum are the presentations at *The Music Gallery*. Trumpeter Michael White and drummer Michel Lambert performed there October 7 with their group Lonely Universe which includes Pery White, Reg Schwager and Rob Piltch.

The Newport Jazz Festival All Stars Road Show played a one nighter at Toronto's legendary Roy Thompson Hall October 11. Featured were Clark Terry, Tom Harrell, Warren Vache, Ken Peplowski, Lew Tabackin, Red Holloway, Urbie Green, Stanley Cowell, Howard Alden, Peter Washington and Alan Dawson.

The *Kawartha Jazz Society* will showcase the Barry Elmes Quintet on January 15. Their Fall series featured concerts by Raneé Lee and Ray Bryant solo.

Vancouver as always, has been very active, even adding a new venue to its already existing performance spaces. The *Vogue Theatre* is a renovated old style concert hall, that may well have been a cinema, that seats 800. Pop singer Deborah Harry appeared there with the Jazz Passengers in September.

The *Glass Slipper* (2714 Prince Edward) is still the most active jazz club in the city, and where, on most nights one can hear local players. Special events have included the Francois Bourassa Trio, Steve Lacy/Irene Aebi Duo, Joe Lovano Quartet with Tim Hagans, Santi Debriano and Tony Reedus (September); the trio of Hans Koch, Martin Schutz and Fredy Studer with the NOW Orchestra (October); Bernie Senensky/Gary Bartz Quartet, Freeplay with guitarist Steve Fisk (November) and in December Kate Hammett-Vaughan sang the music and lyrics of Cole Porter.

The other theatre where numerous events are presented is the *Vancouver East Cultural Centre* (1895 Venables). Appearing in October was singer Cassandra Wilson with a band that included Brandon Ross on guitar and Charles Burnham violin, John Zorn's Masada and Steve Coleman's Five Elements.

The yearly celebration of jazz & improvised music, *TIMEflies*, took place from November 3-6 with performances at *Western Front* - Michael Snow & Jack Vorvis, the trio of Urs Leimgruber, Fritz Hauser and Kate Hammett-Vaughan, Glenn Horiuchi's Shamisen Trio and a Montreal performance group called Screen... *Glass Slipper* - Tony Wilson's Flowers For Albert, Jim Nolet Trio, Paul Plimley & Francois Houle, Talking Pictures and the Stellar Saxophone Quartet... *Vancouver East Cultural Centre* - Lee Pui Ming Ensemble. Workshops by Francois

Houle and Jim Nolet's trio took place at the Vancouver Community College.

For up to date information phone (604) 683-0706.

RECORDINGS originating in Canada grow apace. By now readers will have seen the advertisements for Al Henderson's "Dinosaur Dig" on *Cornerstone* and Jessica Williams' trio date for *Jazz Focus*. That label also has a George Robert Quintet session scheduled from recordings made in Montreal during the jazz festival.

Distribution Fusion 111 has become the international distributor for Tomato Records in many parts of the world. Fusion's record label Justin Time has been busy with new releases by Paul Bley, Jon Ballantyne, Paul Bley/Jane Bunnett and the cooperative group Free Trade which features Peter Leitch and Rene Rosnes. They also have a compilation of performances from various sources featuring drummer Pete Magadini.

"The Water Is Wide" is Jane Bunnett's newest *Denon* release... Joe Sealy and Paul Novotny have released "Dual Vision" on their *Seajam* label... Veteran singer Liberty Silver has a new release on *Radioland Records* with the Bill King Quartet... New on *Unity* is Chris McCann's "On This Night" - a quartet date featuring saxophonists Remi Bolduc and Kelly Jefferson. Also from Unity is "Freeplay" - a collaboration between guitarist Steve Fisk, saxophonist Rob Frayne, bassist Andre Lachance and drummer Aaron Alexander... Vancouver singer June Katz has issued through *Katzeye Productions* her new recording "New Shoes Blues"... Sousaphonist Brad Muirhead's Brass Roots released "Laconda Rift" on their own label and it's available from 3516 Ontario St., Vancouver, BC V5V 3E9. □



JAZZ FROM CANADA

COMPACT DISC REVIEWS BY
SCOTT YANOW

ROB MCCONNELL • DAVE MCMURDO
KERRY KLUNER • DIANA KRALL
JERI BROWN • VELVET GLOVE • UPSTREAM
CHELSEA BRIDGE • GARBO'S HAT

THIS REGULAR SERIES COVERS RECENT RELEASES FROM CANADIAN JAZZ ARTISTS, MANY OF WHOM ARE NOT ALL THAT WELL-KNOWN OUTSIDE OF THEIR LOCAL AREAS. THE BATCH OF CD'S DISCUSSED IN THIS PARTICULAR ARTICLE FOCUSES ON THREE AREAS; BIG BANDS, VOCALISTS AND A QUARTET OF UNUSUAL GROUPS. TAKEN AS A WHOLE THEY PROVE AN OBVIOUS FACT: THERE IS NO SINGLE DOMINANT CANADIAN STYLE, JUST A GREAT DEAL OF OFTEN OVERLOOKED TALENTS.

ROB MCCONNELL & THE BOSS BRASS
OUR 25TH YEAR
Concord CCD-4559 (58:32)

While big bands during the swing era were often headed by either a virtuosic instrumentalist or an attractive frontman, the jazz orchestras of the past 30 years have almost always been under the leadership of an arranger. Because virtually all big bands are part time affairs (other than the very active Count Basie orchestra and just a handful of others) and few go on extensive road trips, they have to develop a strong personality in a hurry for recording dates and concert appearances. The quickest way is to fill a band not only with strong soloists but expert sightreaders, and have the book written by a distinctive arranger-composer.

Rob McConnell's Boss Brass has followed that formula for a quarter-century quite successfully. Their music may be essentially straightahead but that does not mean that it lacks surprises, beautiful tone colours on ballads or humour. On their latest Concord CD, listen to how many key changes there are on *What Am*

I Here For and to the way McConnell makes the rapid blues *Riffs I Have Known* sound fresh and exciting; the two french horns really add a great deal to this band's personality. With such soloists as altoists Moe Koffman and John Johnson, tenors Eugene Amaro and Rick Wilkins, trumpeter Guido Basso, pianist Don Thompson, guitarist Ed Bickert and McConnell himself on valve trombone among others, this twenty-two piece band is top heavy with talent. McConnell's consistently colourful charts give the orchestra a purpose and a unique identity of its own, even on such veteran songs as *Broadway* and *Flying Home*.

DAVE MCMURDO JAZZ ORCHESTRA
LIVE AT MONTREAL BISTRO
Sackville SKCD-2029 (62:21)

Trombonist-arranger Dave McMurdo leads a big band not all that different than McConnell's, very much in the modern mainstream. His orchestra does not have that many names (tenor-saxophonist Pat LaBarbera, pianist Don Thompson and perhaps guitarist Reg Schwager are the best known sidemen),

but on their Sackville CD, taken from a five-night gig in Toronto, the musicianship is very high, the ensembles are tight and the solos are consistently creative within the bebop tradition.

One of the most interesting charts, McMurdo's reworking of *Straight No Chaser*, builds up in a similar fashion to Gil Evans' late-50's recording, has dissonant brass reminiscent of Kenton and solos from the fiery baritone of Perry White and Thompson who is quite humorous during his spot. Other highlights include a driving version of Wayne Shorter's *Black Nile* (arranged by Ted Moses), the lengthy Basieish blues *The Mayor Of The Beach* and a few warm ballads. No new ground is broken on these sessions but this CD should easily please big band collectors; everything swings!

KERRY KLUNER BIG BAND
LIVE AT THE WEST END
CULTURAL CENTRE
Justin Time JTR 8436 (61:39)

Unlike the recent sessions by the Rob



McConnell and Dave McMurdo orchestras, trumpeter Kerry Kluner's Justin Time recording is really a tour-de-force for one musician, the great altoist Paquito D'Rivera. Although he never seems to win the popularity polls (too old to be a Young Lion, too young to be honoured for a half-century of music!), D'Rivera has been one of the finest alto-saxophonists in jazz during the past decade in addition to having his own style on clarinet. And, as he shows during his collaboration with Kluner's orchestra, Paquito is also able to bring warmth to the EWI (electronic wind instrument).

D'Rivera contributed five of the nine arrangements to this date including the eccentric *Estamos Ai* (which includes quotes of *Down By The Riverside* and *Salt Peanuts* in its melody!). Also quite memorable are *Wapango I & II* (which utilizes an unaccompanied saxophone quartet at first) and the funky *Alma Lalnera*. On the minus side the longest selection, Mike Pendowki's *Suite For Jazz Orchestra* (which does not include D'Rivera), sounds too close for comfort to Buddy Rich's *Channel One Suite*; also none of the regular members of Kluner's orchestra has enough space to really stretch out during this set although

JAZZ FROM CANADA

one can tell that there are several strong solo talents in this band (particularly Bill Prouten on tenor and keyboardist Marilyn Lerner). So this is a set to purchase primarily for the brilliance of Paquito D'Rivera, who is heard throughout in peak form.

DIANA KRALL

STEPPING OUT

Justin Time JUST 50-2 (54:15)

If one does not listen to this CD too closely at first, it is possible to guess that this set features Ernestine Anderson being backed by the Gene Harris Trio. The presence of bassist John Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton help to reinforce that impression, but actually both the singer and the pianist are Diana Krall!

Krall, who performs nine standards plus the blues *Big Foot* and her own melancholy ballad *Jimmie*, is an excellent pianist who swings soulfully and fits in well with her sidemen. Her vocal phrasing (and the way she slightly bends notes) does recall Anderson but she already shows maturity on ballads (her rendition of *Body And Soul* is quite expressive). Also her repertoire has a fair amount of variety, from the upbeat *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me* to a surprisingly moody *42nd Street* and a hard-swinging *As Long As I Live*. This is an impressive modern mainstream set, particularly for an initial effort, and is worth checking out.

JERI BROWN

UNFOLDING THE PEACOCKS

Justin Time 45-2 (62:08)

Singer Jeri Brown has an eerie voice, a versatile style and an appealing vulnerability that sometimes borders on the panicky side. On the Nat Cole-associated *Orange Colored Sky* she reinterprets the upbeat lyrics, making it sound as if she really cannot help herself on Dizzy Gillespie's *Woody'n You*, is flexible enough to sound comfortable doing wordless vocalizing on the contemporary *Jean* (which could have been written by Chick Corea) and is haunting on both *The Peacocks* (during which she interacts closely with Michel Dubeau's shakuhachi flute) and on Fred Hersch's ballad *Don't Ask*.

Joined by a particularly strong backup

COMPACT DISCS REVIEWED BY SCOTT YANOW

group (guitarist Peter Leitch, pianist Kirk Lightsey, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Wali Muhammad), Brown proves to be a particularly creative scat singer with a very wide range who is also able to do justice to intelligent lyrics such as those on *Somewhere Near*. If she can continue to come up with projects as successful as *Unfolding The Peacocks*, Jeri Brown may very well be a future pollwinner. (All of the Justin Time releases are available from 5455 Rue Pare, Suite 101, Montreal, Quebec Canada H4P 1P7)

VELVET GLOVE

ROUND ONE

Fishhorn 001 (64:54)

The gender of the all-female quintet Velvet Glove is happily irrelevant because their musicianship is consistently high. Toronto's local legend Jane Fair (who switches between tenor, soprano and flute) is teamed with a particularly strong rhythm section (pianist Jill McCarron, bassist Rosemary Galloway and drummer Sherrie Maricle) and trumpeter Stacy Rowles who was visiting from Los Angeles. The order of the day is bebop with seven jazz standards, Joe Henderson's *Mo' Joe* and McCarron's blues-with-a-bridge *Unpredictable Nature* making up the repertoire.

Both Fair and Rowles have mellow tones so they blend together pretty well no matter which reed Fair is playing (although she mostly sticks to tenor). But actually the solo star on many of these selections is pianist Jill McCarron who works particularly close with the rhythm section and takes many swinging improvisations; she will certainly be heard from in the future!

Few surprises occur during this live performance other than Rowles' warm one chorus vocal on *I Fall In Love Too Easily*; none of these musicians is breaking any new boundaries or saying anything startlingly new. But the program should please bebop fans and this CD is easily recommended to them. (Available from Fishhorn Music, 257 Berkeley St., Toronto, Canada M5A 2X3)

UPSTREAM

OPEN WATERS

Upstream UR 001 (65:58)

This set of highly original music (one

composition apiece from each of the eight musicians) is a bit difficult to evaluate because it is sometimes difficult to ascertain what is being improvised and what was written out beforehand. Upstream has an intriguing instrumentation with three reeds (Paul Cram, Don Palmer and Jeff Reilly who sticks to bass clarinet and clarinet), trumpeter Steve Tittle, guitarist Bob Bauer, keyboardist Steve Naylor, drummer Tom Roach and Sandy Moore on Irish harp and keyboards; no string bass.

Most of the compositions build up logically, using repetition and the differing combination of instruments creatively. Much of the music is quite melodic while being very unpredictable, covering a wide variety of moods without ever being obvious and the Irish Harp is a major asset throughout this set. To name a few of the more inventive pieces: *Nocturne* is a ballad with some surprising twists, *Winds of Lyra* uses an odd drone at first and then becomes a feature for the Eastern sounding flute of Don Palmer, *Fragments* is an interesting flute-bass clarinet duet and the eccentric *Immortal Coil* has strong solos from Cram on tenor and trumpeter Tittle. Overall the music does qualify as jazz due to the advanced improvisations but it also crosses over into many other areas. The open-eared listener should find much to ponder while listening to this stimulating yet thoughtful CD. (Available from Upstream, P.O. Box 36040, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 3S9)

CHELSEA BRIDGE

BLUES IN A SHARP SEA

Unity 135 (58:33)

GARBO'S HAT

FACE THE MUSIC

Word of Mouth 1006 (54:12)

These final two groups are a bit unusual for they both smoothly integrate their singer into the instrumental ensembles rather than having the musicians merely accompany the vocalist.

Chelsea Bridge is a new name to me, as are its members (Rob Frayne on tenor, soprano and flute, vocalist Tena Palmer, bassist John Geggie and drummer Jean Martin) but, on the evidence of their Unity

release, they deserve to be much better-known. Sticking to group originals, the band's music ranges from wild free bob and ballads to a Billy Strayhorn tribute, some folk music and a country waltz. Frayne's solos are both logical and adventurous but it is Palmer who, despite the group's democratic approach, emerges as the main star. Her expressive qualities are quite deep on the ballads yet her scatting can also keep up with the saxophonist during the "instrumentals". Not all of the selections are classics but the moods they set are generally quite memorable. Chelsea Bridge's future progress should be well worth watching closely. (Available from Unity, 377 Ashdale Avenue, Toronto, Canada M4L 2Z3)

Garbo's Hat, a trio comprised of vocalist Kate Hammett-Vaughan, bassist Paul Blaney and the reeds of Graham Ord (tenor, soprano and flute), has been recently receiving well-deserved praise and seems a couple of years ahead of Chelsea Bridge. Very much a cooperative (with solo space divided pretty evenly between the three), this adventurous band is at its best (and most innovative) when it indulges in group improvisations.

While Hammett-Vaughan is perfectly capable of singing standard lyrics (as she shows on a spacey but not too radical rendition of *Let's Face The Music & Dance*, she is also able to cross the line and meet the other two musicians on an equal basis. Blessed with a very attractive voice (which occasionally resembles Sheila Jordan's) and a wide range both in notes and in emotions, she often interacts with (and sometimes battles) Ord's reeds, really indulging in some advanced tonal explorations on Paul Blaney's driving *Pyro Vox Nix* during which she almost sounds like someone with an operatic voice speaking in tongues! Graham Ord and Paul Blaney are both quick thinkers, necessary requirements for playing this spontaneous (but not merely random) music. Whether it be the somewhat whimsical *Burglar Bop*, the dynamic interplay between soprano and voice on *New Directions* or a sombre *Angel Eyes*, virtually every selection on the continually fascinating *Face The Music* deserves a close listen. Highly recommended. (Available from Word of Mouth, P.O. Box 429, Station P, Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2S9)

JOSEPH JARMAN

AN ARTICLE BY AARON COHEN

PHOTOGRAPH BY FLOYD WEBB

AS PART OF THE ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO,

JOSEPH JARMAN RESHAPED MANY PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OF TRADITION. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, WHEN HE CREATED MULTI-LAYERED POLYTONAL PHRASES ON A COLLECTION OF WOODWINDS AND PERCUSSION (NOT TO MENTION HIS DRAMATIC POETRY READINGS AND AFRICAN FACE PAINT), JARMAN SHATTERED LIMITATIONS ON JAZZ PERFORMANCES. WHILE JARMAN'S LIFE IS SEEMINGLY QUIETER NOW, HE'S FAR FROM INACTIVE.

ALTHOUGH JARMAN IS still an active player, he is now the Director and Dojocho of the Brooklyn Buddhist Association where he is also a Sensei (instructor) in the martial art of Aikido. Since his home borough comprises some of New York's most creative residents, he's trained some musicians in this skill. Pianist Myra Melford earned her Black Belt under his tutelage.

"I became interested in Buddhist ways thirty-five years ago," Jarman says. "About four years ago I was ordained as a Jodoshinshu. This gave additional responsibilities in helping people realize the wonderfulness of their own nature. Aikido is martial art that is a way of harmony that I've been practicing for about twenty years. I became involved in aikido because I wanted to understand more about why I was alive."

"Music is wonderful, but it was not the path for me to understand why I was working in it, and why I was doing many, many other things. Although the tradition of music I was engaged in became a spiritual way, it did not offer the kinds of solutions to my life's problems that I needed. I found aikido and the approach to Buddhism more accessible to my own consciousness and reality."

Jarman's experience as a martial artist became clear throughout the course of our interview. Time spent in meditation probably contributed to his clearly thought out words, as well as his quiet, but assertive, conversational style. And his eyes are too disciplined to ever waver from his subject.

He says his life and perceptions have changed a great deal over the years. "I'm probably more ignorant, less thinking that I know everything today. Seven years ago I thought I knew something, when in reality I knew nothing, and I'm learning to learn less and less. Which is why I'm not so angry, so bitter and not so annoyed. I have probably a ninety nine percent good time everyday. I'm less concerned with anyone's opinion. I am aware that I am born, and I am dying absolutely alone. Fifteen years ago, I thought that I was not the centre of the universe, but the centre of beyond the universe. This arrogant attitude was very self-destructive. Now I know less about the world and just a little bit more about myself so I am more ignorant."

When listening to music today, Jarman prefers sounds that originate far from his own. "I listen to a lot of things. I was very inspired by music of the South Indian Gypsy tribes, it's just beautiful. Also, I've become interested in the music of many American Indians over the past three years. The rhythm, the spirit, the intensity is so pure."

In discussing important inspiration in his past, he includes a pivotal encounter during his high school training. The lessons he received from famed music teacher Capt.



Walter Dyett at Chicago's DuSable High School in the 1950s are connected to the Zen instruction he imparts on Brooklynites today.

"Dyett was not just about music, but engaged the living process in a positive way. For young people, this kind of message is very important. With the encouragement from him, it led me to where I'm at now."

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL Jarman started hanging out with other determined music students at Wilson Junior College, including Roscoe Mitchell and other early members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Eventually, he joined Mitchell's group as it transformed itself to the Art Ensemble in the 60s. Their early excursions are enthusiastically compiled on the recent 5-CD box set *The Art Ensemble 1967/68* (1993, Nessa Records, P.O. Box 394, Whitehall, MI 49461). Many of the formidable AACM members also appeared on Jarman's debut as leader, *Song For* (1967, Delmark), which has also been recently reissued. Jarman fondly recalls their discovery of the most exciting music of their era.

OUR SOCIETY CAN USE A LOT OF HELP, AND WE'RE TRYING TO OFFER OUR OWN WAY

"It was such a beautiful time, but it was such a long time ago that I can't remember all the details. We were very engaged young students. We would even refuse dates because we had to play. Every Saturday we would go to Roscoe's house, and we would play Art Blakey's music. Everybody had to play the piano sometimes."

"One day the drummer brought in these three records, and I swear, they were *weird records*," Jarman says with decisive emphasis. "One was called *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, by this funny guy named Ornette Coleman, the other was by this guy named Eric Dolphy, and the other was by John Coltrane, but we knew he was o.k. because he played with Miles Davis. See, we would start playing at nine o'clock, take a break in the afternoon, then we would go back 'til six or seven at night. It was really a great period. During the break they played these three records. It so happens that everybody was so taken by these records that when we went back and played *All The Things You Are* it had changed completely. Each person had been directly influenced by one or all of those recordings. Later I became directly involved with Coltrane and Dolphy because they were on the edge of chromaticism, and after a bit they were beyond chromaticism."

A vibrant cultural blend made the South Side a unique musical environment. Jarman absorbed it all. "In Chicago we still had sessions, Von Freeman still runs his. Sun Ra was still there. John Gilmore was still there, Eddie Harris, and a lot of people you don't hear about today. This was the musical environment I was in. And I used to go to see the Contemporary Chamber Players at the University of Chicago when Ralph Shapey was director. When he was there it was awesome. He was able to bring out of those musicians a power that I had not experienced in that format, whether it was Webern, Schoenberg, or an unknown composer."

A new method of composing that Jarman is now investigating is the use of computer-generated themes. While trombonist George Lewis, an AACM peer, is

also interested in this method, they're still considered outcasts even among their notoriously individualistic set.

"Most recently I had the good fortune to participate with Lewis, and many other early AACM musicians in a reunion band that Muhal Richard Abrams formed in Italy. At that time both George and I had our Powerbooks with us. The other people there were looking at each other, then us with our Powerbooks out and wondered, 'are these guys talking about music, or what?'"

"It's really just another compositional format. All the ways I had always been interested in mixing things up. About 10 years ago I got my first Mac, and began to investigate that as a possibility. Even though I haven't mastered all these great programs, it's another means, and in some cases a more expedient means, to engage the craft. Lewis gave me a program that perpetuates itself like a living improviser. With a computer generated format, I can have more direct non-chance structure if I'm mixing more than one thing. Or, I can have chaos, but regulated. Even with the computer you can make music naturally breathe."

Jarman primarily uses acoustic instruments on his recent releases. *Calypso's Smile*, recorded with Famoudou Don Moye's Magic Triangle (1992 - AECO Records, P.O. Box 53429, Chicago, IL 60653,) contains the most beautiful melodies he's composed. A revisited version of *As If It Were The Seasons* reflects his current worldview. On his 1968 lp of that title, the arrangement sharply divided stretches of silence and passionate sounds. Now the piece is a calmer streamlined showcase for Jarman's evocative playing.

NOT EVERYONE IS ENTHUSIASTIC about his new work, according to Jarman. "There's a Japanese recording called *The Poem Song* that I made and I sent it out to a few people, and a reviewer said it was 'too meditative' and I sent it to a recording executive to try to use it as a sample to make a record. He said it was too 'new agey'. He said I need to play like some famous saxophonists he named. And then said I could make a record. I thought that was funny. It's just funny to think that someone would have the audacity to tell you how to live your life. It didn't offend me, it just gave me an instant of humour. If this is the criteria for genuine for success — that is to become a clone of someone else's image — who will be successful?"

The ability to laugh off this adversity causes Jarman to look realistically, but optimistically about the performance prospects for himself and the Art Ensemble. "I would like to tour on my own, but I have not been successful in engaging an adequate solicitor. Therefore, it is very difficult, probably impossible, unless a person has all the lead-in, lead-out work already done. As a group, we haven't been fortunate enough to have work other than European touring, and that has stabilized into a bi-annual situation."

"The forms and gender of music that the Art Ensemble plays has somehow been moved to another perspective. It is not as accessible I suppose because of the elements of business that have to negotiate it. The people who are responsible for generating the work have other interests, but I can't say why. Lots of my peers have difficulty in finding work. When those karmic elements are engaged, then the circle will continue. These people will have the op-



portunities to share their music in the future."

This belief in times to come also stems from the actuality that despite considerable tribulations, the group still does tour and record. A recent collaboration with the Deutsche Kammer-Philharmonie was taped last year at Musikfest in Bremen, Germany. The Art Ensemble has been together for over a quarter of a century, but Jarman is hard pressed to discern any major changes.

"We've known each other for so long I haven't noticed any changes. It's like if you're a peanut on the inside of a shell. You don't know if the shell is going to stay natural. You may feel a little ice or a little heat, and you might become roasted or baked and you don't know it. Only the outsider can see it."

"The different personalities are evolving, and as a unit, because of the anticipation of communication, the music is psychically transferred. The music doesn't think, it just manifests, it just is. And that's because of the psychic relationship between the players. Whereas they used to do a lot to get people to understand, now everyone knows where the music is going. You don't have to depend on any elements. It's all direct mind transmission. We can play without any interference, because we can feel if someone is extending just by the sound. We used to count the bars, now the bars count themselves."

At the conclusion of our interview, when Jarman escorted me on a tour of Brooklyn, I asked him if the scholarships in Zen training that he donates to needy people in his neighbourhood are reminiscent of the free music classes he helped teach when he was active with the AACM's hands-on community involvement.

"I'm sure the experience of the AACM in my early political formation, and the enhancement of that awareness through the Buddhist practice, causes this kind of attitude. We're just trying to get a few smiles around here instead of these gun-toting frowns. Our society can use a lot of help, and we're trying to offer our own way." □



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A HOLOGRAM OF **DIZZY GILLESPIE**



STORY BY
STUART BROOMER

handkerchief was a part of Louis Armstrong. The trumpet was bent and John Birks Gillespie was “Dizzy”.

When he played, his cheeks blew up like a puffer fish, until he looked like a man playing a trumpet with a basketball in his mouth. It made his facility even more impressive, and it was the kind of visual surprise that could ultimately lead to a hologram. Only Rahsaan Roland Kirk, with three saxophones stuffed in his mouth, ever achieved anything close to the same effect. As a result, Kirk’s likeness can be found in *No Hope* comic books and on the cover of Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Reverie*,

Gillespie was to bebop what Armstrong was, before him, to jazz, and, perhaps, what Mary Quant was after him to the mini-skirt. As “Satchmo” had, Dizzy sang, but he sang something called scat, a high speed vocal bebop made up of nonsense syllables and decontextualized phrases (like “Salt Peanuts”). He was, simply, outlandish, but gifted with a personality and virtuosity that somehow made him non-threatening. A nick-name like “Dizzy” will do that for you.

Fashions would change, however, and Gillespie gradually ceded his position to Miles Davis, who favoured elegant suits by Italian designers. Davis’ habit of turning his back to audiences brought special attention to the refined lines of his apparel. Unlike “Satchmo” and “Dizzy,” Davis hardly ever seemed to smile. His mouth favoured the hard, dramatic, horizontal line of minimalism, and he certainly didn’t sing.

Gillespie would follow his popularity into politics, making tours under the auspices of the State Department. Later, he would become an unofficial candidate for President of the United States, on what might have been called the hipster ticket. This was during the years after socialists had given up running and before it became popular for comedians and pigs and old actors to enter the fray. It was benign and harmless fun, also a matter of style, the ironic jibe of a happy minority, and a tribute to Gillespie’s humour. No one would want Charlie Parker or Miles Davis to be president.

Now style has done something else for him. It has turned him into a face, a visual trace, divorced from whatever he might have done. Louis Armstrong still sings, with a posthumous hit of *What a Wonderful World*. Dizzy, as lost avatar of the old modern, is silent, residing in clothing ads and holograms. □

IN THE ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE THERE IS A HOLOGRAM OF DIZZY GILLESPIE. As you enter a room, you pass a hanging acrylic plate with an almost life-size image of head, shoulders, chest and arms. As you move, the image moves. Dizzy smiles, lifts his bent trumpet to his lips, inflates his cheeks, takes the horn from his lips, smiles. Repeat the movement and he smiles, lifts his bent trumpet to his lips, inflates his cheeks, takes the horn from his lips, smiles ... You get, so to speak, the picture.

Reverse your movement and a hint of sorrow seems to flicker quickly across the lips as Dizzy lowers the trumpet and his neck deflates in a slightly mysterious way. Somewhere, in the hundreds of vertical images that artist Mark Diamond used to compose the white light reflection hologram, Gillespie looks like he might have been tricked.

A note explains how the illusions of three dimensionality and movement are achieved. It’s a perfectly named technology, not only whole but also hollow, a kind of miracle of absence.

Who, some viewers might ask in the instant that their attention is arrested, is Dizzy Gillespie? The reply comes tripping to the page. He is, of course, the man in the black and white billboard and bus shelter advertisements for Gapp clothing, an old black man possessed of a graciously worn face and a smile that is warm, wise, and whimsical. The use of such a model was revolutionary. In the hologram he wears a red velvet shirt and has a chunky gold medallion around his neck.

More? He was a trumpet player born in 1917, who in the 1940s was at the forefront of a revolutionary style called bebop, the first form of jazz to be called “modern”. It was epitomized by Gillespie, its only practitioner to gain any wide popular acceptance. The style was characterized by berets, hornrim glasses, zoot suits (with oversized jackets and broadly draped pants with tight cuffs), and tiny goatees, sometimes pasted in the valley below the lower lip.

Gillespie was responsible for all of that, and his visual signature was a trumpet with the bell twisted sharply upward, the horn enshrined in the hologram. The horn was his “hook”, as much a part of him as the

BEAUTY WITHIN

JAMES NEWTON ENSEMBLE • Suite For Frida Kahlo • (AudioQuest AQ-CD1023)
ZOOT SIMS • On The Korner • ((Pablo PACD-2310-953-2)
ART FARMER • The Company I Keep • (Arabesque AJ0112)
B SHARP JAZZ QUARTET • B Sharp Jazz Quartet • (Mama Foundation MMF 1008)
RAY DRUMMOND • Continuum • (Arabesque AJ6111)
RON HOLLOWAY • Slanted • (Milestone MCD-9219-2)
EDWARD SIMON GROUP • Beauty Within • (AudioQuest AQ-CD1025)
EDDIE PALMIERI • Palmas • (Electra/Nonsuch 61649-2)

REVIEWS BY JAMES KEAST

ENSEMBLES CAN CONTRIBUTE AMAZING THINGS

TO THE WORLD OF JAZZ, BUT ARE ALSO SOMETIMES SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE TRAPS OF THE FAMILIAR. THROUGH PERSEVERANCE AND GOOD ARRANGING, SOME REMARKABLE THINGS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT IN A WORLD OF RAPIDLY EVOLVING IMPROVISATION, MERELY MOVING WITH THE CROWD CAN OFTEN SEEM LIKE STANDING STILL.

Suite For Frida Kahlo, the new album by the **JAMES NEWTON** Ensemble has as its core strength excellent ensemble writing. Most of the recording is encompassed by the Suite, a four-movement tribute to the Mexican painter and revolutionary.

Flutist Newton leads the ensemble through each movement, based on one of Kahlo's works, from the poignant 1937 portrait *Frida*, through the torrid conflict of *The Broken Column*, and the reflective but at times frenzied *The Love Embrace of the Universe* which completes the piece.

Accompaniment is provided by George Lewis and George McMullen on trombone, Julie Feves on bassoon, multi-instrumentalist Pedro Eustache (flute, bass flute, bass clarinet and tenor sax), Kei Akagi on piano, Darek Oleszkiewicz on bass and drummer and percussionist Sonship Theus. Newton's strengths, alongside his superb flute playing, are his Mingus and European influenced compositions.

The album, recorded direct to a two-track captures the energy of live ensemble work, while making few sacrifices in sound quality. One unfortunate loss is that the work of bassist Oleszkiewicz is, with a couple of notable exceptions, too low in the mix.

Of strongest note are the playing of Akagi, who solos notably on *The Verdict* and provides excellent accompaniment throughout, and the fascinating drumming of Sonship Theus. The only weak

spot is *Elliptical*, a more outside duet between Newton and Lewis which in the face of the ensemble writing and performance comes across as gratuitous. In all, a note-worthy, at times brilliant piece of work.

There are also several interesting aspects to the new CD release by **Zoot Sims**, *On the Korner*, recorded live at the Keystone Korner in San Francisco in 1983. It is an opportunity to hear performances from three of its participants, Sims, drummer Shelly Manne and bassist Monty Budwig who are no longer living. It is also an opportunity, on the Ellington tune *Tonight I Shall Sleep* and on *Pennies From Heaven* to hear Sims make a rare foray into the realm of soprano saxophone.

Regretfully the music itself consists of a straight-ahead set of, for the most part, familiar standards and the playing on this live set is not particularly remarkable. In live performance, it would have been an opportunity to hear a jazz great in person; on CD, it is yet another recording by a good band of *I Hear A Rhapsody* or *I'll Remember April* — chestnuts that have not only fallen far from the tree, but have been kicked around the block more than enough times.

The evening was well captured, and aside from some hiss, has been competently remastered. The instrumental balance is



JAMES NEWTON • PHOTOGRAPH DEBORAH FEINGOLD

good, featuring the excellent playing of Budwig particularly (and almost uniquely for a live recording) high in the mix, and Frank Collett also makes some lovely contributions on piano.

Sims fans will find some treats on this recording, I'm sure, but for a general jazz audience, it comes across as business as usual.

For a fairly straight-ahead album of good hard bop, look to **Art Farmer's** new release *The Company I Keep*, which consists of interesting arrangements that keep the band on their toes.

Six of the eight tunes are originals composed by the participating musicians and this group is at its best when they are pushing the boundaries of expectation, rather than following along with them.

Farmer plays flumpet, a custom-made cross between a trumpet and the warmer sounding flugelhorn, and is accompanied

by Tom Harrell on trumpet and flugelhorn, and Ron Blake on tenor and soprano. Geoff Keezer (who penned one tune and arranged two) is on piano and Kenny Davis, also a contributing composer and arranger, is on bass. Carl Allen rounds out the rhythm section.

There are enough treats here to keep this interesting listening, but not enough to make it momentous.

The impressive debut of the **B Sharp Jazz Quartet** on their self-titled album provides hope for a new generation of young jazz musicians who are breaking out of a mold of expectation and dues-paying. "A lot of music has been done, and we don't want to rehash it. We want to play original material that keeps in touch with the past, but looks to the future. There's got to be a place for jazz to go," according to drummer and co-leader Herb Graham Jr. and this young band is living up to their word.

Almost all the tunes on this CD are written by the band members, including Randall Willis on reeds, Eliot Douglass on piano and bassist Reggie Carson. Although they have only been together four years, their playing displays a touch, funkiness and intimacy rarely heard in players so young. Their compositions show a knowledge of jazz lore, but a refusal to necessarily accept its conventions.

With roots in hard bop, B Sharp also branches into bossa grooves, funk, and swing. Their playing shows passion for their work that bodes well for the future. Watch out for this Quartet — if this first recording is any indication, they are here to stay.

By all accounts, I should really enjoy the new **Ray Drummond** record *Continuum*, and if an album was a conglomerate sum of its parts, this would in fact probably be an excellent recording. But it's not.

All the right elements have been brought together: Drummond bass, with Randy Brecker trumpet, John Scofield guitar, Kenny Barron piano and Marvin "Smitty" Smith on drums. The tunes are a combination of originals and rearranged standards, by notables such as Ellington, Strayhorn, Oscar Pettiford and Scott LaFaro. There is

even a take on an ancient Japanese traditional melody. The recording is of good quality, and it sounds nice.

But music is not a sum of its parts, and in this case, the missing element seems to be passion. It comes across as slick—although the musicians are doing all the right things, they are doing it so self-consciously it sounds mechanical instead of inspired. The final product sounds like Jazz by Numbers more than an impassioned expression of... well, of anything at all.

By the end, the longing for a misstep, for a wrong note, for a missed beat, for some humanity to this recording becomes almost unbearable, and perhaps because all of the factors have been brought together, the disappointment is all the greater.

Ron Holloway's *Slanted*, his debut as a leader, is a good album of straight ahead power jazz. Centred around the warm tone of his tenor saxophone playing, this combination of standards and originals puts zip to most tunes by chasing them, rather than letting the arrangements dominate the musicians.

The playing can be at times inconsistent by virtue of the fact that fifteen different musicians take backing roles, but at the core is the strength of Holloway's playing, reminiscent in some instances of Stan Getz.

Most of the arrangements are performed in a trumpet and rhythm section quintet format, and the occasional addition of guitar and/or vibes to the mix sometimes works, but sometimes muddles the ensemble sound, which degenerates into so-loing-in-the-round.

This is a solid debut for Holloway as a leader, although his talents would be better showcased if he recorded an ensemble album, rather than hand-picking various musicians for different tunes.

The driving rhythms of power jazz are also a feature on *Beauty Within*, by the **Edward Simon** Group, but with one twist thrown in — the lyrical and subtle play of Simon himself, on this, his first album as a leader.

The contradiction between the spinning

latin polyrhythms of drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, the rumbling bass of Anthony Jackson, and the light touch of Simon give this album an edge that fascinates and delights.

Simon's approach displays the latin influence garnered from his Venezuelan heritage, but his playing and composing (all but one of nine writing credits are his) also has a balanced influence of classical and jazz.

With the addition of Diego Urcola on trumpet for three tunes, this is a weighty recording by an already accomplished young pianist.

Continuing in a latin vein, groove is the order of the day on the new **Eddie Palmieri** album *Palmas*. Combining a huge latin rhythm section and a jazz oriented horn section, Palmieri creates a fun set of tunes set to remind listeners that jazz swing has its roots essentially in rhythm.

Palmieri, on piano, provides the musical bridge between the jazz and latin elements in the music, but no one player or influence takes centre stage. The initial impression is of the extensive rhythm section, consisting of Palmieri (who's piano playing often betrays the fact that he really wanted to be a drummer), Johnny Torres on bass, Richie Flores on congas, Anthony Carillo on bongos, Jose Claussell on timbales and Robbie Ameen on drums. Repeated listening, however, bring out the touch of the horn section, Brian Lynch on trumpet and Donald Harrison on trombone who fill out the ensemble in this well recorded disc.

This is Palmieri's first attempt at writing deliberately for an instrumental ensemble — his previous work has been in support of a vocalist, and although one composition, *Mare Nostrum*, features three vocalists, including Palmieri and his son Eddie Jr., its mantra complements the pulsing rhythm section.

Naysayers may claim that new ground is hardly broken with this recording, but in the realm of good fun listening, there are few who do it as vitally. □

JAMES KEAST is a freelance writer working, living and playing chess in Toronto.



WRITER'S CHOICE

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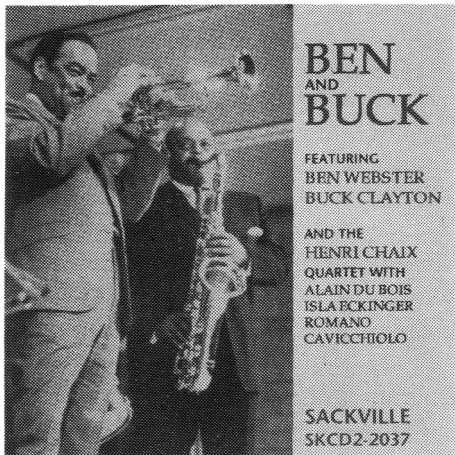
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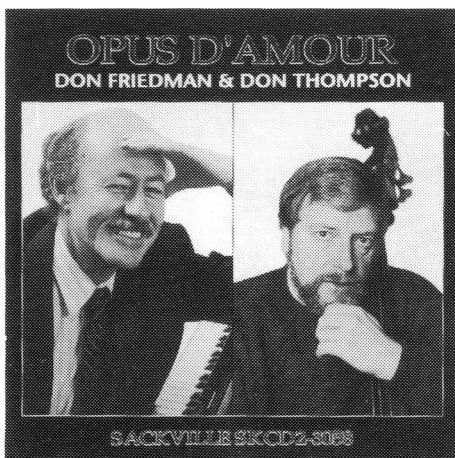
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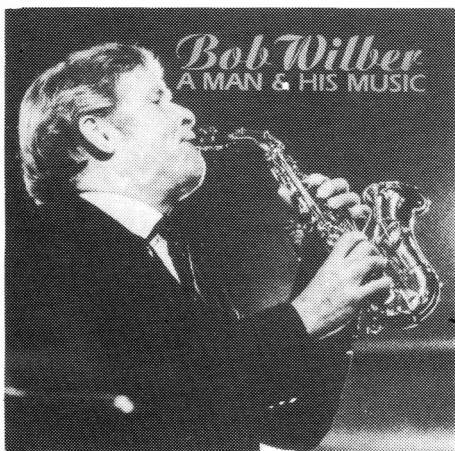


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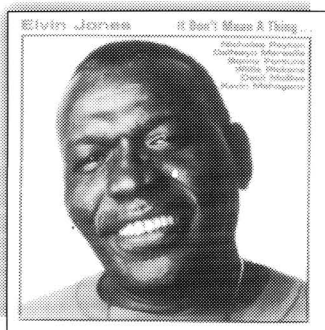
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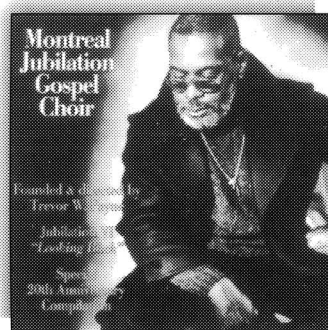
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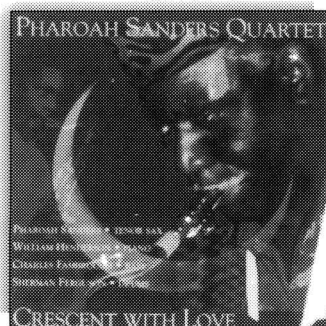
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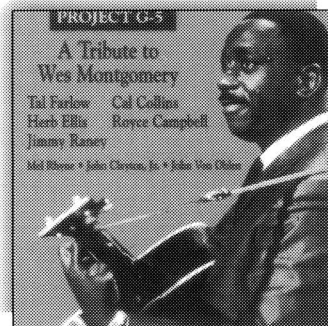
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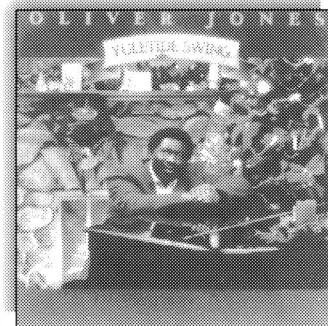
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