JANUARY 27, 1977 60c

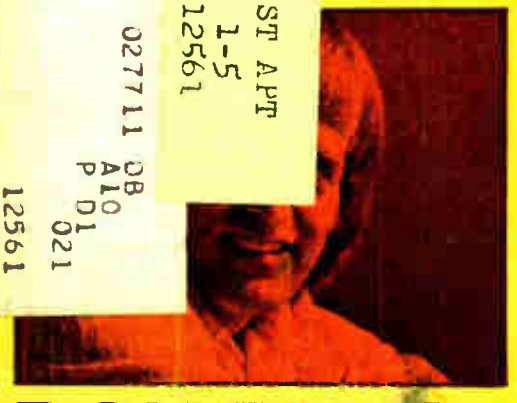
the contemporary music magazine

down beat®

HOW TO ease the ABC's

JACO PASTORIUS

BRAFF



DON ELLIS

BASS LINES

RON CARTER
STANLEY CLARKE
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CHARLES MINGUS
DAVE HOLLAND
EDDIE GOMEZ
RICHARD DAVIS
RUFUS REID
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A conversation with America's most-recorded keyboard artist—Herbie Hancock.

"It makes the music better because we can hear better."

First off, can you list the keyboards you use onstage for concert work?

Yeah, there are about seven or eight of them; Fender-Rhodes electric piano, Hohner D6 clavinet, an Oberheim four-voice synthesizer through a DS2 digital sequencer, an ARP String Ensemble, ARP Odyssey, a Micro-Moog, and a Yamaha electric grand piano.

Anything additional in the studio?

In the studio I also use a Syn-Key synthesizer, an ARP 2600, an ARP Pro Soloist, stuff like that.

Using eight keyboards in a concert setting must present a mixing problem—how do you handle it?

Well, right now I'm using a Kustom mixer, with twelve inputs, effects send and return, separate EQ for each input. And I have stereo monitoring onstage for the band.

And this gives you enough control?

Oh, definitely. It's solved a lot of problems. For one thing, we play mostly concerts, so the sound the audience hears is primarily through the sound system. The sound we hear onstage is different, because it has to be in order for us to hear properly. With the Kustom equipment, everybody can hear everything.

So you control your own mix from the stage?

Right. It makes the music better because we can hear better. We don't have to depend on some guy at the side of the stage.

So much for sound levels—how about quality?

Oh, the Kustom's clean—yeah, very clean.

With technical problems under control, do you find yourself free to really get into the audience?

I try to put the audience into my space. I feel I have the responsibility to, you know, be honest and at least give the audience some of my experience as a musician. Something they haven't been exposed to before.

Sometimes that isn't easy.

No, sometimes it isn't. If I'm in the frame of mind that's very mellow, and I want to play mellow, and the audience wants to boogie, then I gotta reach down inside me and find some boogie, fast. You can't speak a different language than the one the audience understands, in order to have a rapport happening.

This all sounds like it stems from a definite personal philosophy. What about that?

My music is a reflection of my life. As my life gets better, my music gets better. I'm into chanting—Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism. When I chant, I have more energy, direction, projection, even a better rhythmic sense.

The chanting centers your concentration?

Well, kind of. It's a matter of having greater control of oneself, and that even extends into technique on the keyboard. But it's a very relaxed control, not a rigid intellectual discipline. It's a clarifying of the relationship between your inner self and your environment.

And where will all this take you musically from here?

More records, more concerts, more work. Trying to keep the audience happy, and help them have some new kind of experience.

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down beat

January 27, 1977 Vol. 44, No. 2

(on sale January 13, 1977)

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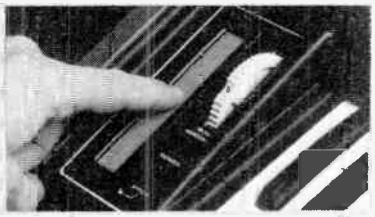

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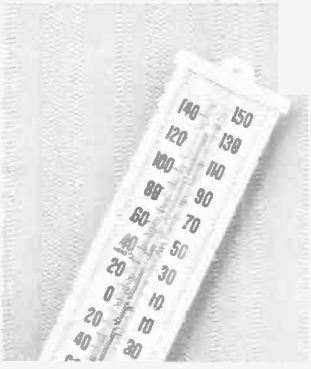
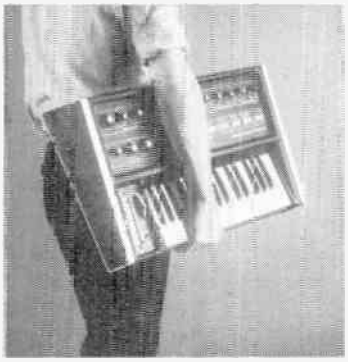


The stage temperature may drift, but the Micromoog never drifts out of tune. It's thermostated oscillator is continuously self heated at 130° F.



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the first chorus

By Charles Suber

This issue: 18—count them!—18 lead bass players answer two leading questions put to them. Has the bass been liberated? What is its future role? Their answers are very much to the point and give some definition to the future shapes of contemporary music.

All the bassists herein assembled agree—some vehemently *insist*—that the string bass has been liberated ever since Jimmy Blanton, in the late '30s with Ellington, rendered horn-like phrases from the innards of his bass viol. They also agree that their freedom on the acoustic instrument is also based on the harmonic and melodic liberties taken by Oscar Pettiford in the '40s with Gillespie, Paul Chambers in the early '50s with Miles Davis, Scott LaFaro in the late '50s with Getz and Bill Evans, and Paul Garrison in the early '60s with Coltrane. (Macabre note: these five innovators died tragically early deaths—Blanton was only 21, Pettiford was 38, Chambers was 33, LaFaro was 25, Garrison was 42.)

The assembled bassists do not agree about the "electric bass." Charles Mingus is mad at whomever invented electricity which "has put music *back*." George Duvivier prefers to assume the term means the amplified upright because he's not at all interested in bass guitar.

Other, basically upright players—Ray Brown, Richard Davis, Eddie Gomez, Dave Holland, Stafford James, George Mraz, Rufus Reid, and Larry Ridley—do not condemn the electric instrument. But they prefer the big warm sounds, arco and pizzicato, that the acoustic instrument offers. They also agree that despite the imperfectness of bass pickups, improved audibility is a desirable advantage.

The switch-hitters—Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke, Rick Petrone, and Alphonso Johnson—go with what's better for the music and the ensemble, although one can sense the pride they take in being able to play today's music with the traditional upright.

The primarily electric players—Monk Montgomery, Sirone, and Chris White—respect the acoustic instrument but prefer the electric's melodic facility and compatibility with other electric instruments.

Jaco Pastorius is the only player represented in this issue who decidedly and determinedly chooses to play only the "fretless electric bass guitar." Jaco is also a likely candidate for greatness. He has much going for him: a remarkable musical memory, amazing technical facility, unusual writing talent, and not the least professional asset—a large ego and the self-assurance to project that ego to his peers and to an audience.

(Memory note: Bobby Colomby, who produced *Jaco Pastorius* for Epic, excitedly calling me from New York and playing the *Donna Lee* track over the phone. "What do you think?", says he. "Sounds like Bird on electric piano," says I. "Gotcha!" says he triumphantly, "and I'm flying out there and play the whole tape for you." And he did just that.

Also in this issue, and not to be missed: Don Ellis' comeback from the other side; and Ruby Braff's irascibly honest commentary.

Next issue: a free trip, *Jazz Scenes Around The World;* plus interviews with tenor saxist Dexter Gordon, trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff, and trumpeter Lew Soloff. db

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chords and discords

WRVR Problem

I agree 100% with Jack Singleton (**db**, 12/2) on his comment about the prejudice shown against white musicians by station WRVR in New York City. If you listen for 24 hours a day you will hear only a handful of white cats. All they say is how great these black cats are. They never have any praise for white musicians.

Everytime they have a tribute to someone it is always a black. . . . This is outright discrimination . . . and I am really sick of it.
Sam Copland New York, N.Y.

He'll Try Harder

I never thought I would ever write to thank you (or anybody for that matter) for giving me a bad review, but thanks to the review of the *Sometime Other Than Now* album (11/18), I was hit with a fact that I have long been lax in recognizing.

While I don't feel I'm as bad a player as Mr. Townley says, I must agree with just about everything else. Thanks, Townley . . . I'll try harder next time.
Steve Marcus New Hope, Pa.

Jolly Giant Scores

The article on Clark Terry (11/18) was the most fantastic one I've ever read in **db** (within a two year span). I'm 17 years of age with jazz playing a major part in my life. Clark Terry . . . has widened my scope musically, and has given me a better perspective on today's music scene.

I think this article . . . should be read by all young musicians who plan to make music a career.
Mitchell Regenbogen Oceanside, N.Y.

Hip Shakin' Matter

While reading the article on Nat Adderley (11/18), I came upon a mistake on Nat's part. Elvis (Presley) shook his hips on the Dorsey Brothers show for the first time, not Ed Sullivan's show.
Glenn Olsen Santa Cruz, Cal.

Changing Times

A mere two stars for Bob James' *Three*? Fascinating.

Recently I was looking through some old **db**'s and I found two very interesting reviews. In your April 13, 1972 review of Grover Washington, Jr.'s *Inner City Blues*, you stated "Bob James' arrangements are excellent. Everything is done in the best of taste; the strings are used subtly, there is no relentless pounding out of the beat, yet everything moves." In your December 23, 1971 review of Hubert Laws' *The Rite Of Spring*, you said Bob James was "a hero throughout—what a touch!"

But now, unfortunately, too many people are listening to and enjoying the work of this fantastically talented man. His records have become big sellers, and that is something you jazz "purists" can't seem to tolerate, no matter how brilliant the music is. What a shame; you're missing a lot. You were more honest in '71 and '72.
Walter J. Conlan Seattle, Wash.

Premature News

The report in **db** (12/2) that I am quitting active journalism is premature, to say the least. On the contrary, I have never been busier, and it was an overcrowded schedule that obliged me to give up a monthly column I wrote in *Jazz Journal* (London) for 28 years. However, I intend continuing to contribute to that magazine as time permits. Currently, my *The World of Earl Hines* is in production for publication . . . and I am working with Mercer Ellington on a discursive book about his father . . . I continue to write regularly for *Music Journal* (New York), as I have done for 15 years. . . .
Stanley Dance Rowayton, Conn.

Arranging The Facts

Thank you for your recent review of *From Ragtime To No Time* (12/2). . . . I would like to make a correction on the A side, on which Marshall Brown arranged all the music. On the B side, Dave Burrell arranged. Actually, we collaborated. However, on the album they indicate Dave arranged.
Beaver Harris New York, N.Y.

Bound And Filed

As an avid reader of **db**, I have had my copies since 1956 bound in 20 volumes. I find them a terrific back source of artists and records. It makes an excellent reference library of the best music mag on the market.
Jan Noordberg Fresno, Cal.

Whiteman Rediscovered

NEW YORK—Paul Whiteman was the self-aggrandized "King of Jazz" in the '20s. He was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a swinger, but the alumni of his orchestras allowed the title to stick: Mildred Bailey, Jack Teagarden, Johnny Mercer, Willard Robinson, Bunny Berigan, Bing Crosby, Frankie Trumbauer, Bix Beiderbecke, arrangers Bill Challis, Lennie Hayton (the man who first orchestrated Gershwin), and Ferde Grofe, who was a composer in his own right *(Grand Canyon* and *Mississippi Suites).* At a recent concert at Carnegie Hall the Whiteman era was rekindled by an all-star orchestra headed by cornetist/trumpeter Richard Sudhalter, the Bix expert, and conducted by Emery Davis.

Singer Larry Carr, who took all of Crosby's parts, quoted Mary Margaret McBride. "P. W. made a lady out of jazz . . . then took her across state lines." Carr's Crosby was as romantic but not always as "jazzy." He literally read the lyrics on each tune, which alternatingly proved annoying and gave the impression of being at a radio broadcast of the time. There were moments, however, when the voice was reminiscent of Der Bingle's. Fortunately, most of the audience was unaware that those early recordings of Bing with the Mississippi River Boys are available for comparison.

Among the outstanding soloists was Johnny Mince, whose joie de vivre shines through every time. He took Tram's parts and added new life to the alto saxophonist. Al Gollodoro, an original member of Whiteman's orchestra, was the clarinetist heard on Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* and the alto sax on Jimmy Dorsey's *Oodles of Noodles,* from which eventually was extracted the JD theme, *Contrasts.* Bobby Rosengarden's drums kicked throughout, but were especially fine on *Sensation Rag* and *You Took Advantage Of Me.* A hot violin solo, no doubt patterned after Joe Venuti, who played with the orchestra and individuals from it, was taken by the entire violin section (the peerless half-dozen) on *From Monday On. Tiger Rag* closed the show as the planned encore, featuring quartets of trumpets, trombones, clarinets and Milt Hinton's bass trading fours.

New York has of late seen a good deal of these kind of offerings. Reproductions have been offered by the New York Jazz Repertory Company, the National Jazz Ensemble, and Bob Wilber and Dick Hyman's touring groups. They have not always been completely successful. *Whiteman Rediscovered* was among the more detailed transcribing chores, but the music of the times must have been more enjoyable due to its danceability. We were chained to our seats, making trucking or Peabodying or pecking or whatever almost impossible.

WICHITA FEST NO. 6

WICHITA—This year's Wichita Jazz Festival will be held from April 22-24. College bands and combos wanting to participate are invited to write for application forms. Bands and combos will be judged by well-known musicians and educators.

Among the big names appearing at the fest will be the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band, McCoy Tyner, and a group of all-stars featuring Milt Hinton, Alan Dawson, Carl Fontana, Hank Jones and Clark Terry.

Many clinics will be held during the three-day event. Only one band and combo from any one school will be invited.

Other musicians, vocalists and musical groups interested in performing at the Wichita Fest should write for application forms. The applications will indicate the method of tape submission and assorted details.

Museum On Upswing

NEW YORK—The New York Jazz Museum, operating on tenterhooks for awhile, seems to be coming around. It was recently announced that the Museum has resumed its popular Friday concert series. From 12 noon to 2 p.m. each Friday afternoon, businessmen/musicians will provide lunchtime fare for Museum visitors. Herb Storfer leads the group, but more musicians are needed. Admission is free.

The museum, operating out of a building at 236 West 54th Street (west of Broadway), has been slowly building up to its full program of events and exhibits. They have been offering a series of jazz films featuring some of the greatest artists in the idiom. The trumpet exhibit is still showing. Sunday concerts have not as yet been rescheduled, but there are signs that these, too, will resume shortly.

potpourri

Bismarck Junior College in Bismarck, No. Dakota is throwing an interesting bash on January 20-21. The school is hosting a jazz celebration, with **Jaki Byard, Cat Anderson** and **Ernie Wilkins** sharing the spotlight. The three jazzmen will participate in a variety of activities, including workshops, classes, open rehearsals and concerts with the campus jazz ensemble.

●

Veteran arranger/producer **Claus Ogerman** has signed an artist deal with **Warner Bros.**

●

Six guitarists linked up with five pedal steel players in a recent six hour super-session at Dallas' **Longhorn Ballroom**. Guitarists included **Tal Farlow, Joe Pass, Les Paul, Howard Roberts, Bucky Pizzarelli,** and **Herb Ellis;** pedal steelmen were **Buddy Emmons, Doug Jernigan, Curly Chalker, Julian Tharpe,** and **Maurice Anderson**. The gang received support from **John Gore** on sax, **Slam Stewart** on bass and **Louie Bellson** on drums. Hopefully some of the highlights will emerge on disc.

●

The **Fourth Annual Santa Cruz Poetry Festival** took place recently in California, with readers including **Ishmael Reed, Charles Bukowski, William Burroughs, Jerry Karestra, Michael McClure,** and **Jim Dalessandra**. Providing instrumental backing for the poets was saxophonist **John Klemmer,** whose album *Barefoot Ballet* has been chosen for a taped *Hour Of Poetry And Jazz* that is being aired on Northern California radio stations.

●

An Atlanta group called **Brick** is developing a new jazz-disco fusion called "dazz." Tired of the repetitious discotheque rhythms, hornman and leader **Jimmy "Lord" Brown** has come up with a sound that attempts to be both progressive *and* danceable. Brick has a single and album out on the local Bang Records, called *Dazz* and *Good High* respectively.

Scattin' **Jon Hendricks,** along with wife **Judith** and offspring **Michele** and **Eric,** is taking his *Evolution Of The Blues* to Broadway with a $400,000 budget. He's been getting his family act together around the San Francisco Bay area, putting in an appearance at this year's Monterey Jazz Festival. In fact, it was at Monterey that *Evolution* made its debut in 1961. Some changes have been made in the original, but the stage presentation still documents the development of the Afro-American music idiom.

●

Violinist **Joe Venuti** is experimenting with the relationships between traditional swing music and the country derivative called "western swing." Recording on **Flying Fish** with hillbilly **Jethro Burns** (the mandolinist from **Homer & Jethro** yore), steel player **Curly Chalker,** and Texas Playboy guitar alum **Eldon Shamblin,** Venuti intends to market his results early in '77.

●

Multi-keyboardist **George Duke** has signed with **Epic,** with an album expected shortly.

●

Reedmen **John Stubblefield** and **James Spaulding** have signed new deals with **Storyville Records.**

●

Pablo info: Of the 77 albums released by Pablo so far, 13 of them feature **Oscar Peterson.**

●

Tim Weisberg recently cut a single for **United Artists.** The number in question is called *Rocky,* and is the theme from the much-talked about boxing flick of the same name.

●

Rumor has it that **Bill Evans** may be moving to **Warner Bros.**

●

Dr. George Butler, mogul of **Blue Note Records,** recently received a special FORE award from the black record executives' group.

down beat NEWS

Jazz Necessity

LOS ANGELES—The Arts & Lectures Committee of the University of California at Berkeley has expanded its cultural program to include a jazz and contemporary music division.

The university has planned some 20 jazz programs for the new year, featuring such artists as George Benson, Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, Earl Hines and Oscar Peterson.

According to Gregg Perloff, a campus program representative, "We've found it to be a necessity to book jazz acts."

Schlitten Tapes Gordon

NEW YORK—Don Schlitten, president of Xanadu Records, recently produced a session featuring Dexter Gordon. The taping took place in RCA's Studio B, with sufficient material being recorded for a projected two album release.

Joining Dex were Al Cohn, Barry Harris, Louis Hayes, Sam Jones, Blue Mitchell, and Sam Noto.

db Publisher Charles Suber presents Roy Kral and Jackie Cain with '76 Critics Poll plaque

BMI COMPOSER AWARDS

NEW YORK—Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) is making $15,000 available to young composers in their 25th annual Awards To Student Composers competition.

The program was established in 1951 in cooperation with music educators and composers. The project annually gives away cash prizes to encourage the creation of concert music by students (under age 26) of the Western Hemisphere and to aid them in financing their music education. Prizes range from $300 to $2500 and are awarded at the discretion of the judges. To date, 214 students, ranging in age from 8 to 25, have received BMI Awards.

The 1976 Awards competition is open to student composers who are citizens or permanent residents of Western Hemisphere nations and are enrolled in accredited secondary schools, colleges and conservatories or are engaged in private study with recognized and established teachers. Entrants must not have attained their 26th year by December 31, 1976. No limitations are established as to instrumentation or length of works submitted. Students may enter no more than one composition which need not have been composed during the year of entry.

The permanent chairman of the judging panel for BMI Awards To Student Composers is William Schuman, the distinguished American Composer. Others who served as judges in the 1975 competition were George Crumb, Ross Lee Finney, Harley Gaber, Ulysses Kay (who also serves as consultant), David Koblitz, Donald Lybbert, Daniel Pinkham, Lester Trimble and Frank Wigglesworth.

The '76 competition closes February 15, 1977. Official rules and entry blanks are available from Oliver Daniel, Director, BMI Awards To Student Composers, Broadcast Music, Inc., 40 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Notre Dame 19

SOUTH BEND, IND.—The University of Notre Dame has scheduled its 19th annual Collegiate Jazz Festival for the weekend of April 1-2.

This year the festival will have the following format: 15 bands, chosen on the basis of taped auditions, will play before a panel of selected jazz musicians and critics who will judge their performances. Various prizes and awards will be given to individual bands and musicians on the basis of their performance. Highlighting the festival will be a judge's jam on Friday evening and a scheduled award winner jam on Saturday evening.

Interested schools are asked to write to this address for more information:

Collegiate Jazz Festival
Box 115
Notre Dame, Indiana 46656

HOP SINGH'S OPENS DOORS

MARINA DEL REY, CAL.—Rudy Onderweiser, owner of the world-famous Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach, has announced the opening of a new night club in Marina Del Rey. Hop Singh's, as it is to be known to live music lovers in So. Calif., will feature a 360 degree booking policy of jazz, pop, blues, and folk, as well as interesting combinations of groups in double bill bookings. The club seats 400 and thus will attract artists whose drawing power is greater than that which the limited confines of the Lighthouse can accommodate. Onderweiser hopes the clubs will complement each other, with the Lighthouse retaining almost a total jazz format, while Hop Singh's will spotlight other idioms as well as jazz.

New Releases

New efforts from **Black Saint** include *Trickles*, featuring **Steve Lacy, Roswell Rudd, Kent Carter** and **Beaver Harris**; *Healing Force*, **Don Pullen**; and *In:Sanity*, with **Beaver Harris, Dave Burrell, Cecil McBee, Hamiet Bluiett, Azar Lawrence, Francis Haynes, Keith Marks, Sunil Garg** and **Titos Sompa**.

●

The latest batch from **Muse** includes *Creative Construction Company, Vol. II*, with **Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, Richard Davis, Leroy Jenkins, Steve McCall** and **Leo Smith**; *Together*, **Eric Kloss** and **Barry Miles**; *Ms. Jones To You*, **Etta Jones**, with backing from **Buster Williams, Houston Person, Jimmy Ponder** and **Grady Tate**; *My Family*, **Dom Salvador**; and *Cosmos Nucleus*, **Carlos Garnett**.

●

Soulgoodies from **Philadelphia International** and **TSOP** are *Where Will You Go When The Party's Over*, **Archie Bell and the Drells**; *Get Down With The Philly Jump*, **Instant Funk**; *My Music*, **Bunny Sigler**; *Let 'Em In*, **Billy Paul**; and the latest effort from vocalist **Jean Carn.**

●

Percussionist **Bill Summers** has an album coming out on **Prestige.** Tagged *Feel The Heat*, the disc features **Alphonse Mouzon, Paul Jackson, Charles Meeks, Roy Obledo** and **Mark Soskin.** Producer for the session was **Skip Scarborough.**

●

Recent goodies from **RCA** include *Renaissance*, **Lonnie Liston Smith and the Cosmic Echoes**; *The Complete Lionel Hampton*, a six volume set of the Bluebird Hamp sessions from 1937-41; *The Complete Glenn Miller, Vol. III*; *The Complete Benny Goodman, Vol. IV*; *Leonard Feather's Encyclopedia Of Jazz In The '70s*, various artists featured.

Pablo newies are *In The Evening*, **Joe Turner**; *Leblon Beach*, the **Al Gafa Quinteto**; *Edison's Lights*, **Harry Edison**; *Carter, Gillespie, Inc.*, **Benny Carter** and **Dizzy Gillespie**; and *Straight Ahead*, **Eddie Lockjaw Davis** and the **Tommy Flanagan Trio.**

●

New **Atlantic** etchings are *Tomorrow: Barretto Live*, **Ray Barretto**; *Hummin'*, **Nat Adderley**; *New England*, **Wishbone Ash**; *Garden Of Love Light*, **Narada Michael Walden**; *It's About Time*, the **Impressions**; *Ten Years Of Gold*, **Aretha Franklin**; *Still Stills*, **Stephen Stills**; *Golden Soul*, an anthology of r&b hits spanning 1959-74; and *Chick Corea/Herbie Hancock/Keith Jarrett/McCoy Tyner*, a disc featuring several cuts by each of the aforementioned.

●

Columbia has reissued 38 big band era singles. Among the Hall Of Famers in the rerelease program are:

Harry James: *Ciribiribin/The Mole; Flight Of The Bumblebee/Carnival Of Venice; Back Beat Boogie/Night Special; Jalousie/Cherry.*

Kay Kyser: *Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree/Woody Woodpecker; Three Little Fishies/Slow Boat To China.*

Woody Herman: *Caldonia/Four Brothers; Northwest Passage/Bijou.*

Les Brown: *I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm/Sentimental Journey; Twilight Time/Leap Frog.*

Gene Krupa: *After You've Gone/Dark Eyes; Let Me Off Uptown/Drumboogie; Opus One/Disc Jockey Jump; Star Burst/Drummin' Man.*

Other artists with recordings in the series are **Frank Sinatra, Hal Kemp, Xavier Cugat, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Ken Griffin, Duke Ellington** and **Ella Fitzgerald.** db

Four Torches Big Bands

CHICAGO—Big band bookings have returned to the Four Torches, the North Side nitery. Recent attractions have included the orchestras of Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton and Tommy Dorsey.

According to club manager Dorothy Francisco, the nostalgia craze has proved stronger than ever and big band demand has increased steadily.

Chesapeake Fest

EDGEWOOD, MD.—The 12th Annual Chesapeake Jazz Festival will be held on March 18, 1977, at 7:30 p.m. in the Edgewood High School auditorium, Edgewood, Maryland. Adjudicators for the festival will be Hank Levy, Manny Albam, and Evan Solot. A tape and $5.00 adjudication fee is required for all interested bands for entrance into the festival. Tapes of the six finalists will be sent to Mobile, Alabama for entrance into the All-American Jazz Festival, to be held in April.

Special featured exhibition will be the Towson State Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Hank Levy.

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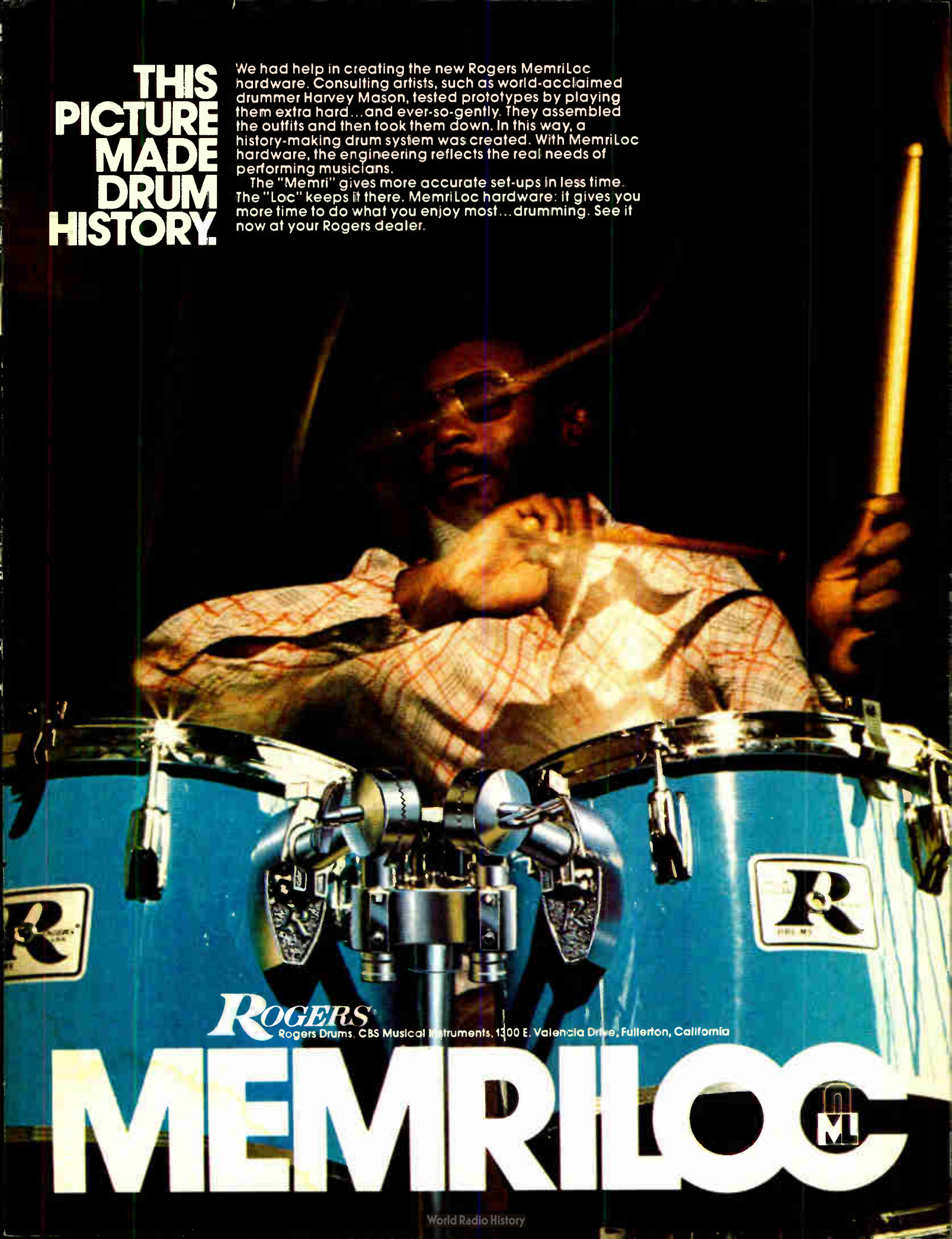

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JACO PASTORIUS
The Florida Flash

by Neil Tesser


DON HUNSTEIN

"There's a real rhythm in Florida," Jaco Pastorius says in a voice saturated in matter-of-fact. "Because of the ocean. There's something about the Caribbean Ocean, it's why all that music from down there sounds like that. I can't explain it, but I know what it is." He pauses to unclasp his hands, like gangly sandcrabs, and drop his lanky arms to the sides of his lanky body. "I can feel it when I'm there."

The concept of Florida is not a constant among Americans. Some people think of Miami Beach, others warm to the less hectic conjuration of Ft. Lauderdale or sleepy St. Petersburg; for some it is the gateway to the new frontier represented by Cape Canaveral, for others the far older frontier that is the Everglades. Still others revel in the broad paradox of a mecca for retirees on the site of Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth, or the full-circle irony of a land discovered by Spaniards being gradually inundated by the Spanish-speaking. But *no one* thinks of Florida as a source of American music. No one thinks of it for jazz.

"The water in the Caribbean is much different from other oceans," Jaco says. "It's a little bit calmer down there; we don't have waves in Florida, all that much. Unless there's a hurricane. But when a hurricane comes, look out, it's more ferocious there than anywhere else. And a lot of music from down there is like that, the pulse is smooth even if the rhythms are angular, and the pulse will take you before you know it. All of a sudden, you're swept away."

The corresponding hurricane of music that has been unleashed by Florida on a hardly expectant world goes by the unlikely name of Jaco Pastorius, the 25-year-old man-child of the Caribbean who popped up in early 1976 on a startling debut album of his own design, simultaneously replaced Alphonso Johnson in the fusion music showcase Weather Report—whose music he had never listened to before joining the band—and at once began to redefine the conception and connotations of the electric bass guitar. Jaco's playing is nothing less than revolutionary. In fact, he has almost single-handedly opened a heretofore unimagined world of resources for the instrument, forging an ultrasuede sound that at once encompasses the tonal characteristics and phrasing idiosyncracies of amplified guitar and bass fiddle. In his extraordinary control and imaginative usage of the electric bass' harmonics alone, he has sketched a stylistic device of sizable potential.

But more than that, he has burst upon the scene with a wholly mature and wildly successful compositional ability that draws in varying doses upon jazz, modern rhythm and blues, the classics and the music of the by now familiar Caribbean, from the reggae riffs of Kingston Town to the steel drum bands of Trinidad. "I consider myself as much a writer as a bass player," says Jaco, who avoids boasting but never slights what he perceives as his real assets. "I've always done both. The people at Epic (which released his first album, *Jaco Pastorius)* probably got a little more than they bargained for when they signed me. They knew they had some guy who could play a lot of bass, but they didn't know they had a *writer* as well."

Neither did his father, a drummer and singer in Norristown, Pa., when John Francis Pastorius III was born on Dec. 1, 1951. "He didn't want anyone calling me Jack, like everyone else named John, so he started calling me Jaco. And when we moved to Ft. Lauderdale, in 1958, that's how it got the spelling I use (Jaco substitutes a *t* for the *d* in Lauderdale), because that's how the guys from Cuba and Jamaica would spell it." His father provided the influence and the example, but there were never any lessons: Jaco developed his unique approaches to both performing and composing completely on his own, based on what he heard. And what he heard consisted mainly of the handful of jazz musicians—Ira Sullivan was one of them—in the area, as well as the bands and musical shows that toured the state and the Afro-Cuban rhythms that filtered up from the relatively nearby Islands. But Jaco owned few records and listened to them infrequently, opting most often for the flesh-and-blood performance.

"I've just always had big ears," he shrugs to explain his self-taught talents. "I never had any money, so I had to work, and I caught on quick."

He actually caught on to a multitude of instruments before he eventually settled on the bass guitar. He also worked out on drums, piano, saxophone and guitar, and eventually started playing piano or bass behind many of the concert headliners that came through Florida: Wayne Cochran and the C. C. Riders, the Temptations, the Supremes, Nancy Wilson and Charo, of all people, among others.

"I was playing like five instruments, and I was pretty good on all of them, but I wasn't *really* good on any of them. I mean, there's no way you can play that many instruments at a time. I had to concentrate on just one.

"That's not to say I was wasting time," he quickly continues. "I mean, I'm glad I fooled around with all of them, like for writing and stuff; I can write as fast as I can think for all those instruments, I'm not hung up on different keys or anything like that," a situation that facilitated his early big band charts for the University of Miami stage band and Ira Sullivan's Baker's Dozen. The precocious youngster was still in his teens. "But I finally realized that in order to do something really well, I'd have to settle on one instrument."

The impetus for that decision was the steady persistence of his daughter Mary—whose birth was imminent. Just 18, Jaco was already married, his wife Tracy was pregnant with the first of their two children, and he was working at a car wash, which he frankly admits "wasn't much fun. We needed money, and so I had to ask myself, 'OK, what do you really want to play?' And I decided to work on the bass.

"The truth is that I couldn't physically play the bass—at least, not like I play now—until I was 18 anyway. I had been injured playing football when I was 13, and my right arm had never healed correctly. It was sort of dead." As a result, Jaco had to give up his first dream—to follow in his father's steps as a drummer. "Finally, when I was 17, I figured I had to go see the doctor. It took about a year after the operation before I was strong enough to really *play* the bass. I could get by on it before then—I could play *Soul Man* and *Funky Broadway*, play reggae lines and walk a jazz line in four/four—but I couldn't solo. I couldn't have played *Donna Lee*," he says, alluding to the stunning and audacious version of the Charlie Parker tune that opens his album.

"So it was really the influence of my family that got me to play. I had to be pragmatic about it, and they inspired me to actually get down to doing things. That's why I call my music Family Music. There's so much more involved than just playing the notes. I mean, a chimpanzee could learn to do what I do—

physically. But it goes way beyond that. When you play, you play life. And my family is the main influence on my life. They're the main influence on my music."

Jaco relates a story to underscore the importance of his wife and children. "When my daughter was born, I had about $700 saved up to pay for all the hospital bills and all. This was about a month before she was born. And I went out and spent it on an amplifier instead. I needed it; *we* needed it. Playing was my life, and if I didn't have a good amp, I realized no one was going to hear me. And by the time she was born, I had already earned about $500 back, working with that amp. It was a decision forced on me by the realities of the situation.

"And something happened to me when my daughter was born. I stopped listening to records, reading **down beat**, things like that, because I didn't have the time anymore. That wasn't bad—that's why my sound is different. But there was something else. A new personality being born made me see that it was time for my musical personality to be born; there was no need for me to listen to records. I knew music, I had the *makings* of a musician; now I had to *become* one. My daughter made me see all this, because she was depending on me. I wasn't going to let her down."

The sound that Jaco was developing is indeed "different." In some respects, it is even unique, all the more so since the bass guitar is not an instrument that easily lends itself to a great range of individual expression. At least it didn't before Jaco, with a few notable exceptions such as Stanley Clarke, Alphonso Johnson, and especially Steve Swallow, whose style is the closest thing to an antecedent that one could find for Jaco's playing.

To begin with, Jaco conceptualizes the instrument as a guitar—which, of course, it essentially is. But whereas others have treated the instrument specifically as an *electric* guitar, Jaco somehow urges the rounded tone and fluidity more commonly associated with the amplified acoustic guitar, the hollow-body instrument favored in mainstream jazz. Very smooth, deeply resonant, Jaco's tone is a confluence of three important instruments: his left and right hands, and the Fender fretless electric bass.

"It's all in the hands; in order to get that sound, you have to know exactly where to touch the strings, exactly how much pressure to apply. You have to learn to feel it. And then it just sings."

"It sings," says Jaco in explaining the preference for the fretless instrument. "I've been playing it for about six years. It's all in the hands; in order to get that sound, you have to know exactly where to touch the strings, exactly how much pressure to apply. You have to learn to *feel* it. And then it just sings." Jaco's sound has come to embody a sometimes bewildering array of chord clusters, nearly tangible overtone qualities, swift improvisatory lines that retain a surprising tonal depth and a penchant for using the instrument's harmonics in both melodic and percussive senses. Quite simply, never has so catholic an imagination been applied to the bass guitar.

Still, there is one added dimension to Jaco's musical persona, as it is conveyed through the bass guitar: its uncanny ability to sound, in its sonorous tonality and innovative phrasing, as much like an acoustic bass fiddle as it does a guitar. The nature of the instrument is not always clear to even the most experienced listeners. When Weather Report's Joe Zawinul first heard a tape of *Continuum*, which appears on Jaco's album, he drank in the velvety richness of Jaco's bass lead, then turned to the young musician and asked him if he also played the bass guitar. Which, of course, was what Joe had been listening to.

Jaco himself can present the clearest analysis of his technique: "I felt that I had never heard anyone clearly outline a tune on the bass. Maybe someone has done it before, I don't know because I don't listen to that many records, but I had never heard it before. I had never heard someone take a tune like *Donna Lee*, and play it on the bass without a piano player so that you always could hear the changes as well as the melody. It's a question of learning to reflect the original chord in just the line. Players like Wayne Shorter, Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Ira Sullivan can do that. I wanted to be able to do it, too."

Choosing to display this on his record with a dazzlingly fresh version of *Donna Lee* was no accident. Bebop was his self-imposed theory class. "The first jazz record I heard was a Max Roach quartet date," he says, "with Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley; I don't even know who the bassist was. The record was old, and shot, and I couldn't hear the bass player at all. The only thing I could hear was these lines. So I just worked them all out on the bass, without thinking anything of it. And at 15, I already knew how to play most of Bird's tunes. I couldn't play them very fast, because of my arm, but I studied them, and I knew how they worked. Just the heads. I didn't mess with the solos, man; I figured that was personal."

Jaco left the formal educational process after one semester at the University of Miami. He was never enrolled there: he taught bass in the music school. His dissatisfaction with high school—"I should've quit when I was ten, the schools in Florida didn't have much to offer"—was reflected in his decision not to go to college. Although he had excelled in art as well as music during his high school years, Jaco never had a second thought about which medium to pursue.

"I could draw real well, but it's just not spontaneous. You gotta buy material, you gotta have all this stuff. . . . But music; I mean, the best musicians are singers. They can go to the beach, they don't need to take anything with them, they can go swimming and be making music. That's where it's at. Or like Hubert Laws, who played piccolo on my album. That thing is eight inches long, he can stick it in his back pocket, and yet he can make all that music from it. That's what I like about music. It's always there."

It was at about this time that Jaco, who had been exposed to the eclectic blend of Caribbean music that infused Florida during his entire lifetime, began to explore that heritage in a more first-hand manner. He became a show musician on the tourist cruise ships that would set off from the southern tip of Florida for a week at a time.

"These were hip little jaunts," he recalls, "not musically—the music we had to play was even below the normal show band thing—but we would sail all around. We'd go to Mexico for a couple of days, or to Jamaica, the Bahamas, Haiti. We'd go out for a week, get back on a Saturday about noon, and then leave again a few hours later.

"So when we were docked, I'd just hang out, hit the streets. I got close to some guys in the Wailers. When I got back to Florida, and I left the tours, I played country & western music. Or soul. Or the reggae that got up onto the mainland. You see, coming up in Florida, there was nobody really to hang out with. I mean, I had friends who were into music; but there was no one with a national reputation to hang out around. There weren't even that many of my friends that I could share this stuff with. There weren't any cliques of young musicians, like you'd find in New York for instance. And they're all talking so much, feeding off each other . . . for me, that wouldn't have been good. The diversity that I've developed came from me just being in Florida, just growing up and liking whatever I heard. No one convinced me if something was cool, or not cool. I was into the Beatles, the Stones, the Wailers, Sam and Dave, along with Max Roach."

Jaco's abilities, as well as his emergence onto the national scene, remained one of Florida's best-kept secrets for several years. He made brief and generally unnoticed inroads: during his time at the University of Miami, he had met Chicago guitarist Ross Traut, then enrolled there, and Traut introduced Jaco to Paul Bley, with whom he played a few dates. Also at the University, Jaco came into contact with guitarist Pat Metheny, with whom he would occasionally play in Pat's home town of Boston, and on whose album for ECM he appeared.

During this time, Jaco played frequently with reedman-trumpet legend Ira Sullivan, and kept body and soul together by playing in the house band at Ft. Lauderdale's Bachelors III club. In the middle of 1975, Blood, Sweat and Tears were booked into the club for a short engagement, and Jaco met Bobby Colomby, the BS&T drummer, guiding light, and soon-to-be producer of Jaco's as yet unanticipated album.

"My wife was working at the club at the time," says Jaco, "and she, along with all the help, the maitre d's, the light men, everyone at the club who knew me, had been telling Colomby about me. His reaction, predictably, was 'Oh, big deal.' He had met my wife, and he knew that she was married to this guy everyone was talking about. Then one night, I dropped in just to see my wife—I didn't even know that BS&T were working there—and I saw Colomby, and we started to talk. We talked for about an hour and a half, about all kinds of things, and then my wife came by and kissed me. Colomby said, 'You're Jaco'—I hadn't even introduced myself. And he asked me if I'd like a record date.

"I figured he was just talking—I mean, he hadn't even heard me play, we had just talked

continued on page 44

JACO PASTORIUS DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader
JACO PASTORIUS—Epic PE-33949
with Weather Report
BLACK MARKET—Columbia PC-34099
with Pat Metheny
BRIGHT SIZE LIFE—ECM 1073
with Ira Sullivan
IRA SULLIVAN—Horizon SP 706
with Ian Hunter
ALL-AMERICAN ALIEN BOY—Columbia PC-34142
with Paul Bley
PASTORIUS/BLEY/METHENY/DITMAS—improvising Artists Inc. 373846

BASS LINES

Crystal Gazing With A Bonanza Of Experts

compiled by arnold jay smith
with assistance from bob henschen

Has the bass been liberated? Traditionally, the bass has been part of the rhythm section, but recently, with the advent and improvement of the electric bass, traditional notions of the function of the bass have come under examination. What do you see the role of the bass being in the future? Will it continue to be supplemental and supportive, or will it take on a new, more dominant role?

RUFUS REID: I think the bass more than any of the other instruments has improved and grown in the last 15 or 20 years, surpassing what the others have done. The speed with which this growth has taken place has also been proportionately greater. This is due to the availability of better strings, electronic pickups for the string bass. The roles have melded a bit. My experience, for instance, has roots in bebop, and living in 1977 I am aware of the more contemporary ways of playing bass. The melding of the two will take place at a more rapid pace as we go along. There will always be someone who takes one aspect of the bass and says more with it, in terms of solo capabilities. The supportive role will still be there; it's got to be. Both areas will be expanding.

It's difficult to say exactly what will happen. There are so many electronic things that people have been delving into. There are different kinds of sounds happening. But it can only be sustained if the music is still there, and the technique on the instrument can rise above it all. Those devices are there to enhance the music. Musicianship is being made easier. Pickups are better; bass players are now beginning to *play* things, express themselves better. . . . Now they can be heard even in large ensembles. There's only one bass player needed. At one time there were few jobs for stand-up bass and a specialist was hired to play bass guitar. He was a guitar player, after all. That forced a lot of guys to take up electric bass. Now, that doesn't have to happen anymore.

I do a great deal of clinics around the country, and I think the schooling could be a lot better. I feel that guitar players and bass guitar players don't have the facilities to learn the instrument like a trumpet player or saxophone player. It's getting better. There were a lot of kids who had never even heard that the string bass can be played the way it has been played. In that regard, there has been more attention paid to the string bass. They are realizing the sound that Stanley Clarke gets was obtained from string bass. They enjoy the sound that Ron Carter gets. I think educators should start at the junior high school level in instilling this interest. The discovery of the one student who rises above it all will help him or her make it. He or she's the one who will try to hear more of the music anyway. *I* questioned the existing players when I came up. In one clinic I had 15 out of 25 who were players of the string bass. So they are out there, but due to the difficulty of the instrument, they need someone to show them what can be done and how to do it. Society may dictate that the band leader get a monster amp rather than a pickup to make his band sound better.

I think the bass is growing and I think it's going to grow some more in every field, jazz and classics. The players are getting younger and faster, with a lot more knowledge. This means that the groups are going to sound better because the bass players sound better.

GEORGE DUVIVIER: When you say "electric bass" I assume you mean the amplified upright, because I am not interested in Fender at all. Yes, the amplified upright has become liberated. It has grown in leaps and bounds from the days of Blanton with Ellington until you now have the Ron Carters, the Richard Davises, the Stanley Clarkes, who are each able to play rhythm and solos with different styling.

CAIRATI

Holland

As far as the future is concerned, the bass will always be fundamentally a rhythm instrument, adding notes to the time that the drummer is keeping. I expect more to be done solowise with the instrument and more written for it. Other people have taken notice of it as more of an accompanist in the same vein as the piano. Singers, for instance. Years ago, I did probably the first bass/vocal duet with Lena Horne. Ron did one later with Lena and there have been many more. In music, the two most important things are the bass line and the melody, so why shouldn't others follow suit? There are more bass-and-one-other-instrument duets cropping up every day.

A Fender bass is really a guitar, and the technique for playing it is totally different from playing an upright, which is a violin. It's an entirely different field and I'd rather not be involved in it. I think that the continued "liberation" of the instrument will come from upright rather than Fender simply because I'm not a Fender player. I'll say this, I *am* watching the development of the bass with interest and gratitude. It's the instrument to watch.

RICHARD DAVIS: I think it will take on a more dominant role and be supportive as well. Each instrument in a group is supporting the other anyway. If you are talking about it being supportive from a traditonal point of view, I don't think that will ever leave because of the range of the instrument as the lowest pitch in the family of instruments, except for the keyboards.

I don't think that the use of other instruments such as the bass saxophone and bass trombone will take its place. In fact, I don't think it's even worth mentioning when you stop to think of the thousands of bass players' roles that these other instruments have to substitute for. The development of the bridge pickup and the electric bass made the bass more pronounced, more of an enunciation in the articulation and the speaking powers of the instrument. It brings out the things that were once only subtle. It makes those subtleties more prominent. The Fender has the quality of being even all over and the upright pickup makes *it* more even all over. You can play more things on the upright that just didn't come off before. The finger techniques you weren't even able to try can now be heard.

I haven't heard about much use of electronic amplification in the classical groups, but that could be because I haven't asked them yet. I think the bass has more of a chance now of being a more climactic instrument, more dramatic, more subtle. Where, say, a saxophone player used to build up to a climax, now a bass player can develop this drama also. And that's because they can be heard without too much straining.

JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

Davis

RON CARTER: The term "liberated" has such negative overtones to it—it means that someone has been in bondage up to this point. As a person who came up during the era when people tagged the bass as a non-liberated instrument, I've never felt inhibited in what I was trying to play. I didn't necessarily feel that I was a bass in a rhythm section that played behind or accompanied a soloist, that my function was just a function. I never felt inhibited from creating or attempting to enhance whatever direction the music was going at that time. I don't feel that the electronic bass has done anything to liberate the upright bass. In talking to upright players, I found that they see the Fender bass as having a function, but certainly not in conjunction with the upright. Since the music it is predominantly used in is so different from the acoustic bass, it's like comparing apples and oranges. I don't see the electric bass as having any major input in regard to the development of the upright bass at any time. I do see the upright as being more and more in demand in the studio dates that I am being called upon to do. If that trend continues, I'm sure those players who only play electric bass will have to sit down and get the upright together because most of them came on the scene just playing electric bass. Most of the upright players who do double were acoustic players to begin with.

The bridge pickup has made the acoustic bass more audible, but I don't see that it has served to "liberate" the instrument. I still shy away from that term because I never felt the instrument had been in bondage. Players' attitudes have been in bondage, but the instrument has been there all along. There have been players during this period who have always tried to make the instrument do something differently than it had before.

The sound of the string bass will go wherever the music is. Once a&r people and producers realize that there are other sounds available to the bass section of the band and they realize the actual limitations of the electric bass, and as the public does what they are doing now, reaching for a different shade of music, the upright will be a prominent factor in influencing that musical change.

What someone like Jaco Pastorius does is done with an amplifier, number one, and number two, from what I've heard, he is trying to emulate an upright sound. I don't know how many electric bass players are dedicated to imitating an electric sound. From the records I have heard there aren't very many. Even when it's done it's not as pure as the real thing and at some point people are going to want to hear the real thing.

CHARLIE HADEN: The acoustic bass violin is the most beautiful instrument in the world. As far as creative music is concerned, there can only be the acoustic bass—there cannot be electric bass. The only place that I hear and feel close to electric bass is with r&b—if you want to call it that—rock and roll. You cannot hear an acoustic bass playing with, for instance, B. B. King. The bassist with him is one of the best Fender bass players I've ever heard in my life. Most electric bass players who are dedicated to the instrument were either guitar players before or have never played acoustic bass in their lives.

In 1956, when I started playing, I didn't even think about having an amplifier. Never needed it. The sound level of the music . . . never rose above a volume where an amplifier was needed. With the advent of rock, the volume rose in decibels, damaging the nerve endings of my eardrums so that they are more sensitive to sound than most. B. B. King is a very creative artist. His bassist is a very creative bassist. But it is a different idiom. My stand in creative music is with the acoustic bass. I feel close to Ray Charles' singing, his band and James Clay (Ray's tenor player). Now in Ray Charles' band, the Fender bass sounds great.

Because of the rock movement, I was forced into making myself more audible. . . . When my son was born, I was forced into thinking about how to make more money. So I bought Fender. You have to do the jingles and the studio dates on electric. I had to quit that because I was aiding and abetting those very people who were destroying creative music. I sold my Fender bass and never picked it up again.

In order to hear myself, I had to get an amplifier. I went to Ampeg and they sold me a real good one. Certain pickups were inadequate. They were great for guitars, violins, mandolins, but not for the bass. The bass pickup has to be designed in a way so that the natural sound of the acoustic bass comes over the speakers—the wood sound.

Almost every bass amplifier that you hear has been designed for a Fender bass, not an acoustic bass. Recently Barcus-Berry has made one. The people there have been so helpful. They want to find a way to amplify a beautiful instrument. No way could you call a solid-body, put together in a factory, beautiful.

The instrument that I play has got to be the most beautiful instrument in the world. John Berry had his people design an amplifier for acoustic bass that brings out the real sound of the instrument as much as it can be electronically. . . .

The bass has always been the most important instrument in any musical group because it makes the sound full. . . . The strings have a lot to do with that. It is disturbing to me that other acoustic bass players play with their G and D strings made of flat metal. Classical players in orchestras use them because of the bowed sound that they must get. When you play strings with your skin or fingertips, the strings should be equally natural—from life, not from man. . . . Gut is as natural a substance as wood and fingertips.

As far as the supportive and/or assertive . . . I am with Ornette Coleman. I have to be all the harmonic instruments—the piano, guitar, as well as the bottom. Our relationship has made the bass an undefined instrument—noncategorical. Being a bottom is very, very important. Without it you have nothing. It's the earth.

I do think because of this environment, the bass can no longer be regarded as merely that bottom. It is forevermore a full-range instrument.

ALPHONSO JOHNSON: I can only speak from my own personal planet, and I don't really have that many objective thoughts on other people's playing. To me the bass has always had certain limitations on it, sure, but within, let's say the past five years, I've sort of been developing a different concept of playing. Due to the situations I've played in, namely one situation where the orchestration of the quartet was fluegelhorn-saxophone-bass-drums, I had an opportunity to expand the harmonic capabilities and structure of the band. So situations like that prompted me to respond to the bass in more than just a supportive role.

As far as the electronic situation goes, there have been so many different types of effects and synthesized pedals and things that have come about, that it's pushed me into new areas of thinking as far as what I'm playing. The stick . . . is still a very, very young instrument, very new to me, and what I'm trying to do is not approach the stick, or the stick bass I will say, as I would the normal bass.

In other words, if I'm playing stick bass I won't try and think of it as 'okay, I'm playing my Fender bass.' That's the main reason I play two basses, one is a fretless and one is fretted, and I approach each of them differently. It's like playing a different instrument. The stick is just a very new and unique instrument, and I'm still finding out what I want to do with it. The stick bass is more supportive . . . more determining what else is happening on the instrument. There are five bass strings and five melody strings, and right now the bass part isn't as rhythmic as, say, I would play my Fender basses.

You can't really predetermine what's going to happen so far as the future of the bass is concerned. I think it's good that more people are looking at the bass in a more respectful way, and also it's become more challenging for writers. I mean, there are so many cliched bass patterns that are written. . . . Now the players are demanding that the writers create more demanding parts. It's good all the way around. I wouldn't try and predict anything that's going to happen. I don't think that's really possible.

CHARLES MINGUS: Jimmy Blanton was doing everything that they are doing on electric bass now. This has been done in 1937. Gil Hadnot, Blanton, Adolphus Albrook. You never heard of them because you never heard jazz. A question like that . . . electricity has made a difference in the playing of somebody? Electricity has put music *back*.

You can't bow electric bass. The acoustic kind with a pickup is another story, but you can't bend it because once you put in that amplifier you can't bend your notes. A real bass player will tell you. They had amplifiers way back in the '40s. Joe Comfort with Nat Cole had one; in fact, I think he invented it. Oh, you can hear it better, but on one level, one volume. There's no dee-ah, dee-ah; it's all ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. I don't know if it will ever be able to happen. I'm not an electrician, man. Once a microphone touches that wood, the wood is no longer wood. It's something beyond human control. The wood and the strings make it happen. Get rid of the steel strings if you want to hear straight music, good music. You must go back to gut. Ask that little kid who was with Ornette Coleman, what's his name? Bass players are not particular anymore. They know that nobody really listens so they go out and bullshit.

I don't want to take the bass anywhere. I'm just playing it. I always play the same, probably less now than I used to. Your question went out with high-button shoes. When I came in there were already soloists. As a leader? I don't think of myself as a leader. I don't know


VERYL OAKLAND


GIUSEPPE G. PINO


MIKKI FERRILL


JAN PERSSON

Brown **Gomez** **Carter** **Haden**

if my instrument can be a lead instrument. I don't understand. I understand what you are saying, but I don't understand the reason why you ask. I never pay any attention to where my sidemen go from me. I'm too busy *playing*. When I'm playing I don't pay attention to who's listening. When I was listening I listened to symphony orchestras, Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Stravinsky. You don't listen to one instrument; you listen to music. String quartets, whatever there is. How can I cut off something else because I'm a bass player? I'll see you later. Call me some other time!

EDDIE GOMEZ: It seems that the bass has been "liberated" every few years. Jimmy Blanton liberated it to some extent. Oscar Pettiford, Mingus, Scott LaFaro. The instrument was so far back in relation to the others that there was a lot more room for liberation. It will always be that way, some kind of breakthrough on the instrument, either having to do with sound or a new concept in approach.

The pickup is not necessarily a step backward, but a step forward as far as being able to hear the bass. With all the advances in the recording field, it has become part of that. It's not so much a musicological breakthrough, though.

The bass will always be supplemental or functional in the rhythm section. That won't disappear, but it will become a solo voice more and more, a voice unto itself. It will become thought of as more than solely a rhythm instrument. But that's always been the case. Jimmy Blanton, again, freed the bass in that respect. There will always be this revolution with all instruments, specifically the bass because it started so far back.

As far as pickups are concerned, I don't think the acoustic bass sounds better with one. It is hindered—that beautiful sound the bass gets without it—but it gets it out there for the masses. In that regard the pickup is a beautiful device. It's extremely useful for the modern bass player.

Other instrumentalists have been listening more to the bass. They'd have to be deaf not to. There's too much happening, so much more music coming from both acoustic and bass guitar. It can no longer be ignored. It's too strong a voice. This may cause new bass leaders to come up. More bass leaders are tapping this internal force that's always been there. I think that a lot of bass players are going to be leaders and innovators for new musical directions.

One last point. I don't play bass guitar, but on acoustic, I think the arco aspect is really one of the important future roads that's going to be followed. The fact the acoustic bass can be bowed and the bass guitar can't is an important distinction. I think that it will become more evident as time goes on. The fingerboard and neck must be curved and that's what distinguishes the violin family from the guitar family. People like Jean-Luc Ponty and Michal Urbaniak have done it and it's time for the other string instruments to follow: bass, viola, cello.

DAVE HOLLAND: The development of the bass has paralleled the development of the music. In the last 20 years the music has been moving toward a group interaction and a closer more intimate relationship between the musicians on the stand in terms of counterpoint and sharing the role of carrying the idea of music. The bass has developed along with this. For a long time there was definitely a very specific job it was supposed to do. All of the instruments have gone through changes as far as their vocabulary is concerned. When I first started, the bass was not very often amplified. What you would do was take the house mike, wrap a towel around it and put it in the bridge. Since the pickup has become more sophisticated, more players have been encouraged to use one. Where the sound was formerly destroyed by the pickup, now you can get a reasonable approximation of the bass sound. With the pickup, however, the overtone sound of the string has changed because you actually are playing the speaker. It's making the sound so the overtone is greatly reduced from what it was meant to be, a large wood chamber. You certainly aren't going to get the richness of sound from the speaker that you would from the bass itself.

With the bass guitar, the concept of the string bass has changed a lot. It's a much longer sound. People are looking for a more sustained sound from the instrument. The concept of what the instrument can do has been enlarged as well—what the bow can do, the different kinds of pizzicato sound. There's a tendency to think of the sound as being stereotyped "bass" sound, but in fact the tone color is so enormous and the range is so enormous that you can't really talk about a standard sound for it these days.

While I treat each instrument (electric and acoustic) differently, I don't think of them in group contexts. Each has its own sound, but I think that it has to with the player rather than the instrument. I teach quite a bit and see a lot more interest being taken in the acoustic bass again than say four years ago. There was more of a tendency to play electric bass then. A young musician who wanted to play bass would start on electric. Now I notice more young players are getting into acoustic sound because they find something "new" about it. As a result, I think it will be used much more than in the last few years. Not too long ago the bass was a very important part of any group, but this whole concept of roles is something that the bass has certainly moved away from. We now deal with groups that have no bass, no piano—horn duos. You may have now a bass appearing in a situation that doesn't necessarily deal with any traditional ideas of it. There are certain problems of timbre and volume and so on, which make the instrument have a certain role in an ensemble. But with the group concept the bass just takes an equal part in contributing to the music.

STANLEY CLARKE: I feel funny about that question. The actual role of the bass is obvious as is all other instruments'. But what is happening recently is that we kind of stretch out from that role and play another role. It was never conceived that a bass player would play a solo; nobody ever thought of it. When I do my own albums I treat my creations just like a piano player or trumpet player would. I am a soloist, but I am also a rhythm section person too. I play the time-keeping game. What I am saying is that it all leads down to the individual. It's almost impossible to say that the bass is going here, or music is going there. Charles Mingus, in this life, may never pick up an electric bass, so that's how far the bass is going for him. Jaco Pastorius may never pick up the upright bass. That's as far as he goes. I may never pick up the cello; I may never give a solo concert on the bass, which is an idea I have. My goal is not to bore anyone.

All the real true leaders, regardless of what they play, know that they are leaders. The trip about being a leader doesn't have to do with the instrument. That's the lie. Trumpet players, saxophonists, piano players have traditionally been the leaders. The bass players have traditionally *not* been the leaders simply because of the instrument—that's bullshit. A guy should be a leader because he's a leader. True leaders don't even wait to be told so. No matter what is done to the instrument, it's the person. Pickups or amplifiers notwithstanding, leaders get the sidemen, write the music, play, organize. I can conceive of a leader not playing anything. I have seen bands where the bass player had more knowledge than anybody else in the band. He'd just sit back there thumpin' and not say a thing. It's an attitude.

When I was about 17, I said to myself that the electric bass was not really an instrument. I threw it away and played acoustic. But when those electric pianos started coming out and all those drummers started playing loud it was kind of hard to hear. I like to have an acoustic bass amplified because I can play with any instrument. I can do anything I want with it. All it does is amplify the sound. I use an electric bass when everyone is playing electric instruments. I find it goes well with electric guitar especially. I find playing an upright with electric guitar doesn't go. Either they don't match, or the guys who are playing electric guitar don't know how to play with upright bass.

The bass is going wherever the individual takes it. Not even wherever the music goes, because individuals create music. Amplified or otherwise, makes no difference.

SIRONE: The bass, in my eyes, was never just a rhythm instrument. It has slowly become a solo instrument and over the last 15 years that pace has been accelerated. As I get

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Ridley

Montgomery

Mingus

Clarke

RUBY BRAFF

Salty Dog With A Hot Lip

by John McDonough


VERYL OAKLAND

Warning: This is an article on Ruby Braff. Parental discretion advised.

I say that because the diminutive Mr. Reuben Braff is not a man to mince words. He is not arrogant. He is not braggadocious where his own playing is concerned. Quite the opposite, in fact. He seems to be his own severest critic. Yet he's extremely defensive over his prerogatives. Integrity is a good word for it. No musician over the last quarter century has made himself more immune to the pressures of contemporary taste—good, bad and indifferent. And anyone who challenges Braff's sense of iron self-determination does so at his own peril. No one tells Ruby what to do.

My first contact with him was a year ago this past summer. I was serving as co-producer for a PBS *Soundstage* show about John Hammond. And I was exposed to the wrath of Braff without any warning of what to expect. I was attempting to put together a band for the show. Everything was in place. We had Jo Jones, Milt Hinton, George Benson, Teddy Wilson, Red Norvo, Benny Carter and Harry Edison—at least until Edison was forced to cancel due to a conflict. My first choice for a replacement was Roy Eldridge, but he was unavailable. Then I thought of Braff. After complimenting myself on a brilliant stroke of the obvious, I proceeded to call him.

A deep, unsmiling voice answered in New York. I introduced myself and told him about the show we were putting together. I don't remember his exact words, but his attitude toward the whole business seemed to add up to "big deal, so what." I apologized for the meager fee I had to offer—$200 plus expenses—but reemphasized that this was, after all, a show on John Hammond. He assured me in no uncertain terms that he heard me the first time and that at that price he wanted no part of it. I felt maybe I could lure him by reading off the list of musicians he'd be playing with. "Jo Jones on drums," I said. "Oh shit," he sighed. "Good luck with your show." I went through the other names.

"Look," he said. "When I play anywhere, *I* pick the musicians. *I* pick the songs. Nobody else. I don't accompany anybody. I'm not interested in your goddam show. Anything else you want to say?"

I couldn't think of anything offhand, aside from "so long, you son of a bitch," which I did not say. So that was that.

Several months later, I spent part of an afternoon with Teddy Wilson and Ruby was around. But now he seemed delightful, full of funny stories, hilarious gripes of one sort of another, and general good cheer. I enjoyed him ... thoroughly. I reminded him of my phone call and he remembered. He apologized for his abruptness, but expressed no regrets. Seeing him face to face and hearing him talk at length, I found it easier to accept his attitude. What seemed to make him maddest about the whole thing was the idea of asking a working musician to accept a nominal fee to work on a show billed as a tribute to a very rich man. "I wouldn't do any goddam show like that," he huffed. "I like John but that has nothing to do with it. I wouldn't do a show if Basie were the subject. And I love Basie. Winners don't need tributes like that. They don't need donations of time and talent to prove how great they are. And I don't make such donations."

Fair enough. Braff has already paid his dues. "If I took all the hours I've spent on music," he insists with more than a tinge of resentment over the unfairness of it all, "and translated them into what I might have made as a mailman, I'd probably be rich." He seems to feel threatened by and vulnerable to manipulation by those who've become rich and powerful through music. All he has is talent and fame, fragile commodities in a hostile world. So he wraps them in a protective personality quick to do battle with anyone who'd compromise his individuality.

Sometimes it hasn't worked in his best interests, and even he'll admit the negative effects it's had on his ability to get work. Take 1957, for example. In his passion for personal integrity and his determination not to be intimidated by power, he crossed swords with the then powerful Joe Glaser, manager of Louis Armstrong and head of one of the biggest booking agencies in the country.

One morning the phone rang at Braff's bedside, in itself a bad way to start any relationship with a musician. It was Glaser asking Ruby if he'd like to go to England.

"I love to go to England with my band," he said.

"No, you stupid son of a bitch," Glaser replied, according to Braff's telling of the story. "I don't want your goddam band. I want you to be part of a band with Teagarden and Hines."

"Who are you calling a son of a bitch, you asshole," Braff barked back and hung up.

Braff then thought over what he'd said. He called Glaser back almost immediately.

"You don't deserve to know Teagarden and Hines, you—" he added and hung up again.

The story doesn't end there though. Braff told Nat Hentoff about it, and Nat printed it in an Esquire article. About that time Glaser called again, sounding very accommodating and forgiving. He invited Braff to sign a contract with his booking agency. Ruby was pleased and maybe just a little surprised. When they finally met face to face to conclude the deal all was very friendly. As Braff bent over to sign the contract, he noticed right next to it on Glaser's desk a copy of Esquire opened to the Hentoff article. Braff looked up, laughed nervously and said, "You don't take this thing seriously, do you?" Glaser gave a hearty laugh and told him to sign.

He did, and of course Glaser not only never got him a booking, but, in the clubbish way in which agents deal with other agents, effectively diminished his ability to obtain work anywhere. "Agents talk to other agents," Braff says today. "They cooperate. I remember I'd be sitting in someone's office and they'd get on the phone and say yes, yes, yes. I could see the expressions change on their face. Then they'd turn and say they'd get back to me. I'd say, 'That was Glaser, wasn't it.' They'd never admit it though. If I could have proved Glaser was doing this, I could have sued him."

It's fascinating to watch Braff talk, particularly when he gets worked up over something, which he usually is. Words come easily and hilariously to him as his fury mounts. Take critics, for example. Not specifically, but generally. Not critics of his work, but critics of the jazz scene in general. Looking back over

the late '50s and '60s and his own difficulties in getting work, he points an accusing finger to commentators whom he credits with driving jazz out of the market place with "all their bitching."

"That's how those Timex Jazz Shows went off the air," he recalled, referring to a series of jazz specials sponsored by Timex between 1957 and '59 and recently revived in 1973. "The critics could hardly wait to get depressed about what lousy shows they were. To point out its faults. Louis did this. Or Mulligan didn't do that."

The cadence picks up as he becomes more intense on his subject.

"So the Timex people look around and see all the music people slamming their shows. They figure what are we wasting our money for. So they take them off the air, and the goddam critics are wondering why there's no jazz on TV. What idiots!"

He's pounding the table for emphasis now. His volume is ascending fast. I meekly suggest that perhaps there was the feeling that the shows were trying to be all things to all people, that they sacrificed integrity for commercial considerations. He leaped on the word commercial like a jackal.

"Commercial." he shouts. "Shit! What do they want? To have Charlie Mingus go up and vomit for half an hour? Or Miles Davis to shit on the stage? Or John Coltrane fart up and down on his horn? Or would they rather have people who know how to play jazz like Louis Armstrong? People who've communicated to audiences all over the world. Who do they think is going to turn on the goddam program and watch one of these idiots? Jesus Christ!"

He's peaked by now. His invective spent, he's running down like a giant turbine that's been turned off. Slowly he quiets down and comes to a halt. My running commentary on the manner of his conversation, by the way, is not intended to divert attention from the validity of its matter. Many share his complete lack of sympathy with the extreme self-indulgence he sees in contemporary music.

"I used to love the way Miles Davis played. He had his own sound and it was great. There were many qualities about his playing that seemed wonderful and original to me. I don't know what's happened to him in recent years. It's like a tent show. He gave up a beautiful tone and a superb sense of ensemble. I don't understand."

He pauses for a few seconds. "Actually I know what it is with all these guys. Some militant cat scared them and said don't play any of whitey's tunes. Every single one has got to be Mr. Black today. But all they did was erase themselves from music. If they think any of their originals are going to be one zillionth as good as something by Irving Berlin, they're out of their minds. All they're going to do is isolate themselves and their music from the world. Which is wonderful. I love it. I hope they get deeper and more frantic so that they go completely off the planet. All this bullshit about black separation has nothing to do with music. It's intimidating to real musicians. But anybody who wants that separation has got a deal with me."

So now you've had a sample of Ruby Braff. But don't draw any conclusions just yet. Yes, he's as opinionated as they come. But he's also about as honest as they come. You always know where you stand with him. You don't have to guess about it. He's a PR man's nightmare.

It should also be reported, however, that he can practice restraint, although some might feel he needs *more* practice at it. In any case, he is not necessarily one to fire off angry epithets at the drop of a name. When he has nothing good to say about someone, he prefers to plead ignorance. "Tony Bennett," he asks, "Who's he?" Or "Jo Jones? Never heard of him."

On the other hand, where praise is called for, Braff is extravagant. On Count Basie: "As great a man as he is an artist. There's nobody on this planet who means an eighth as much to me as Basie. My greatest ambition is to make a record with him." On Illinois Jacquet: "He's a genius." On Norman Granz: "A very smart man and a very fair man, and superb taste on top of it." And so on down the line.

It may also be hard to imagine such a volatile and spunky fellow receiving the often ill-informed comments and questions of his audience with cordial patience and courtesy between sets. But he does. His standards won't permit the insertion of a chorus of *Happy Birthday* in a set, but he's always pleased to dedicate a song to such celebrants. He also likes to laugh, talk, gossip, and enjoy the company of interesting people. I point this out so as not to leave a Napoleonic impression in the minds of those who have yet to meet Braff. He asserts his feelings without doubt or apology. He may invite you to disagree. But he doesn't dare you. His conversation is playfully combative.

Ruby has just wound up a four-week engagement at Rick's Cafe Americain in Chicago as we are talking. It's his second gig here in a year and he's certainly likely to be back again very soon. There are few if any places in Chicago or anywhere in the country in which one can hear good music in a more unpressured atmosphere. Patterned after Rick's of Casablanca fame, it's tucked nicely away on the ground floor of the Holiday Inn on Lake Shore Drive near Navy Pier. Out-of-towners passing through would do well to look up the place. The booking policy was established by pianist Bill Snyder, who has obtained the services of a remarkable lineup of musicians for extended engagements: Urbie Green, Red Norvo, Billy Butterfield, Benny Carter, Joe Venuti, Clark Terry, and Art VanDamme. On their way soon will be Buck Clayton and Buddy Tate.

Ruby initiated Rick's present name policy and feels a special affection for the place. Which explains his distinct lack of affection for the local press. "They always keep ranting that there's no place for good jazz," he says. "When one opens they ignore it. One guy—Will Leonard—has come in for this engagement. Other than that, not a word. One jazz writer at the Chicago *Tribune* says she'll run a review and she talks about the drab stage and the bad sound system. I should have told her forget that. Why doesn't she say this is the cheapest place in town to hear music. I don't care what anybody says about me. But the place needs all the support it can get. I don't know of any other city in the country where the press is as lazy about covering jazz. Even in New York, where I live, if I play anywhere for a minute the *Times* and the *New Yorker* do something on it. But in Chicago, where's the *Daily News*, the *Sun-Times?* Where's **down beat**?"

down beat was there, thank you Ruby. And pleased by both the room and the artists. Working with Braff was a fine rhythm section of Jerry Coleman, Jim Atlas and probably the finest, most stimulating pianist in town—Bob Wright. As Braff moves through a program of relaxed standards such as *Foolin' Myself, Just You, Cocktails For Two, I Got Rhythm* (with a stop time first chorus), *Them There Eyes* and more, we hear the work of a mature and assured artist. It somehow seems remarkable that this man is a self-taught musician.

Born in 1927, he took up the trumpet in 1935—the year Louis Armstrong resumed his career in America. But one had little to do with the other. He wanted a tenor sax because it looked cool and hip. But the first sax his parents laid eyes on at the store happened to be a baritone. They knew he wouldn't stand a chance against a beast like that, so they brought home a trumpet. His only formal training consisted of a teacher who received 25 cents a week for showing him the fingering positions for basic marches.

"My parents really didn't encourage the music. Some relatives on my father's side were musicians, but my parents always told me it was no way to make a living. A life of drinking. No steady work. Everything was wrong with it. The usual stuff, you know." He pauses and cocks his head in contemplation. "I just realized. They were right."

Anyway, he liked playing. Without the discipline of formal instruction, he simply played merrily along with the radio. Anything that came along with a melody. It might be Lombardo, Kay Kyser, Tommy Dorsey. It was all the same. But he began to develop a technique. "Even without a teacher," he says, "you'll develop as much technique as is necessary to do what you want to do. I needed enough to play tunes with the radio. That's what I did, every day. I had no taste, though, or sense of who was good or bad."

Braff's real teachers were the folks in the neighborhood who played him records and pointed out the significant things to him. "I was lucky to live near a lot of guys who had record collections—not musicians, but people who listened and understood what they heard. You can listen to music for years and not come to any proper conclusions about what you hear. They helped me to understand. In those days—the early '40s by now—there wasn't a cat in the pool hall or on the street who didn't know more than any critic on any magazine.

"There was one ambulance driver down the street—Mr. Rosenthal—who always used to ask me if I'd heard Louis Armstrong yet. I'd say no, and he'd scowl off down the street. Always asked me that, grinding on his pipe. Once when I was about 10, a guy on the radio

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". . . Technique has nothing to do with music. . . . The question is what you do with it. I may have been able to do anything I wanted on the trumpet by high school, but that doesn't mean it was any good. I feel I've only really matured as an artist within the last couple of years."

DON ELLIS
Most Alive And Well

by don heckman


JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

I came very close—so close—to just letting go and drifting over to the side of death. It would have been very easy." Don Ellis, healthy and together now, returning to the jazz wars once again, is sitting with me in a Los Angeles restaurant, gazing thoughtfully out the window at a rare, smog-free skyline, and musing about the illness which very nearly killed him.

He laughs. "It was a *very* strange way to spend a summer vacation. Somewhere in the middle of it all I can remember telling them to let me die. Dying seemed very peaceful and good, whereas living meant coming back to all that pain."

It all began in the spring of 1975. Feeling extremely run down—"I was out of breath after I walked up a single flight of stairs"—Ellis checked in with a doctor in New York City and was told he had mitral-stenosis, a disease of the heart valve. Medication was prescribed and Ellis split for his home in Los Angeles. But as soon as he returned he began to feel extremely odd once again. "My heart had gone into atrial-fibrillation," he explains. "It means that the upper chambers were beating in—get this—a very fast odd rhythm. 19/4? I couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry. Anyhow, they drugged me into unconsciousness and then zapped me with a jolt of electricity, which has the net effect of stopping the heart entirely and then starting it up again into a more comfortable medium 4/4.

"It worked, for a while, and my local doctor *re*-diagnosed the problem as an atrial-septal defect. This means that he thought I had a hole in the wall of my heart that separates the two upper chambers—a birth defect. He advised open heart surgery."

Ellis was agreeable, but put things off until he could work out some time in his busy schedule. He was just wrapping up his score for *French Connection II* and, as usual, was in the thick of ten different projects, all of which demanded immediate attention. Suddenly his heart went into atrial-fibrillation again. A very uncomfortable 19/4. He was soon back in the hospital for further diagnoses and possible open heart surgery.

After extremely uncomfortable tests that included catheterization through the groin ("*Please* be careful, I told them," says Ellis), yet another diagnosis was announced. "I was informed that I had a condition known as cardio-myopathy. In very simple terms this means that my heart was enlarged. Can you dig it? I had a *big heart!!*"

This time the prognosis was for prolonged bed rest, but first it would be necessary to "revert" Ellis' heart back to "4/4" once again, this time with drugs. Something went wrong. Ellis thinks that conflicting medications may have depleted his body of potassium, which in turn fouled up his heart's electrical system. Whatever the cause, he went into ventricular fibrillation. "My heart was sitting there quivering like a mass full of helpless jelly and no blood was being pumped through my body," he explains. "If this condition persists for more than three to five minutes you are permanently brain-damaged, or dead, or both. Fortunately the head nurse caught it on the monitor and ran into the room, leaped up onto the bed and began thumping on my chest. Another nurse came in and gave me mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. This kept the circulation going through my body until the staff doctor could get there. He gave me two electric shocks at maximum voltage, but neither of them was successful. Finally my own doctor—who had literally outdistanced a police car getting there—gave me a third jolt, and my heart started beating once again.

"I vaguely remember feeling the electric shock, along with a tremendous amount of noise and bustle. And then—as if it was from a great distance—I heard my doctor say, 'Well, I don't think we broke any ribs.' Terrific. *That* was reassuring in a state of half-consciousness."

But he knew that, wherever he had been, he was coming back. Like many people who have had a taste of clinical death, Ellis describes the feeling euphorically: "It sounds weird, I know, but it was a remarkably beautiful experience, maybe the ultimate high. At one point I think I was really tempted, but somehow I couldn't tell whether or not I'd be able to make it over to the other side. And I knew that if I didn't, they'd give me another electric shock, which really scared me a lot more. That shock is so bad, so terrible, that I knew that I had to get it together or else I was just going to hurt some more. I think that's what brought me back, more than anything."

Ellis bears no particularly visible scars from the experience—either real or metaphoric. I've known him for more than 15 years, and he still looks (as he did in 1960) as though he's a year or two removed from under-graduate classes at U.C.L.A. If anything, the harrowing experience—which effectively stilled his musical activities for nearly a year—seems to have left him more relaxed, more laid back and pensive, than he was in the months before it happened.

"It's true," he says. "In many ways I feel better than I've felt in years. I'm not afraid of physical death anymore—pain, yes, but not of the *experience* of death; I think I feel kind of positive about that now. But I'm also aware of my physical limitations and of the need to pace myself properly."

Ellis still stands as an *eminence revividus*, surrounded by the 20-odd instrumentalists who make up the new and current Don Ellis Electri Orchestra. Ten years—a decade—have passed since the first Ellis orchestra was assembled, ten years of persuading studio drummers that, yes, 11/4 really can swing, and telling resisting brass players that quarter tones can indeed be played in tune. Ten years in which musicians like Steve Bohannon, Glen Ferris, Sam Falzone, Milcho Leviev, Fred Selden, Tom Scott, John Klemmer, Mike Lang, John Williams, Hadley Caliman, Carol Kaye and Ralph Humphrey have passed (and, in some cases, continue to stay) through the ranks.

Ellis is relaxed, content and thoroughly in control. One of the fiddle players has a problem with some tricky phrasing in 9/4; Ellis grabs his trumpet, plays the lick perfectly, crisply accenting the articulations that make the phrase work. A few minutes later he stops the drummers and pounds out a corrected rhythm pattern in an extraordinary display of hand, foot and head dexterity; the drummers respond by repeating their mistake. Ellis patiently stops them again and repeats his rhythmic dance; this time they get it right. Trombonist Glenn Ferris plays a series of glorious clams; he is obviously lost. He rolls his eyes, Ellis laughs and starts the piece over again. There is a sense of musical enjoyment in the room, even though the rehearsal is rough and tumbling and the music brutally demanding.

The band sounds like—there's really no other way to describe it—a Don Ellis Band (actually, with the addition of the strings, it is an orchestra). But there are some interesting and unexpected elements. Sitting quietly but

continued on page 37

RECORD REVIEWS

Ratings are:
***** excellent, **** very good,
*** good, ** fair, * poor

STANLEY CLARKE

SCHOOL DAYS—Nemperor NE 439: *School Days; Quiet Afternoon; The Dancer; Desert Song; Hot Fun; Life Is Just A Game.*

Personnel: Clarke, acoustic and electric bass, handbells, vocals, piccolo bass guitar, acoustic piano (tracks 2, 3); David Sancious, organ, synthesizer, electric guitar (track 5); Raymond Gomez, guitar; John McLaughlin, acoustic guitar (track 4); Icarus Johnson, acoustic and electric guitar (track 6); Gerry Brown, (tracks 1 and 3), Steve Gadd (tracks 2 and 5), Billy Cobham (track 6), drums; Milt Holland, percussion; George Duke (track 6), all keyboards; David Campbell, Dennis Karmazyn, Lya Stern, Thomas Buffum, Janice Adele-Gower, Maria Van Dyke, Karen Jones, Robert Dubow, Ronald Strauss, Rollice Dale, Gordon Marron, John Wittenberg, Marilyn Baker, strings; Jack Nimitz, Buddy Childers, Lew McCreary, Robert Findley, Gary Grant, George Bohanon, William Peterson, Stuart Blumberg, Albert Aarons, brass.

★ ★ ★ ★

On *School Days*, Clarke has fortunately eschewed the predictability of his last two efforts on Nemperor, *Stanley Clarke* and *Journey To Love*. His reliance on formula approaches, strictly-timed solos, shopworn synthesizer bass dialogue and similar shortcut subterfuges left one relishing the peak RTF and early solo days; these later releases were symptomatic of a dreaded disease known in music medicine as *restingus on laurelitus*.

Not so here. Admittedly, it has been long overdue, but there is a distinct freshness in terms of compositional ideas, something not seen from Clarke since his initial debut, the brilliant *Children Of Forever*. There are more chances taken, more unexpected twists and turns, a greater reliance on color than on derivative pyrotechnics.

Although this is not the first time they've crossed paths on vinyl, Clarke and David Sancious seem to have struck a natural common bond, especially on the title track. Especially on synthesizer, Sancious' ability has long been ignored by those who plebianize his rock heritage. The simple matter of fact is, that with one or two other exceptions, he is the only ARP-Moogist working today who can draw feeling out of this basically Strangelovian axe. While Hancock's toy store doodling gets all the plaudits, it is Sancious whose sustained notes, overdubbed upper-register tonalities, and minor key gauchisms provide the instrument with a valid emotive interpreter. When overlayed by one of Clarke's more creative and peripatetic electric bass guitar solos, the title track becomes a worthy flagship.

Fortunately, such races up and down the fretboard are not the only input. Clarke, possibly as fluid on upright as on electric, depends more on the wooden instrument here than on any album since the first. *Desert Song* is a welcome exercise, with McLaughlin on a hypnotic wood and Clarke brandishing his bow. Ultimately, Stanley puts it down and gets into a run slower than, but esoterically familiar to, his best composition to date, the classic *Bass Folk Song* from that memorable *Children Of Forever*.

Faults? None really, except for the small yet undeniable concessions made to "funk" on the brief and trivial *Hot Fun*, and the clockwork solos of Clarke, Duke and Cobham on the nine minute *Life Is Just A Game*. Perhaps on the latter track, the onus is on Cobham rather than Stanley; the trapper, lately more of a gymnast than a drummer, tends to bog down otherwise creative instrumentation with his aimless, vagrant pounding. All in all, when confronted with the mass of unique little surprises present throughout, occasional lapses must not be allowed to distort the overall impression that *School Days* is a worthy, potential-filling effort. *—shaw*

THE BILLY COBHAM-GEORGE DUKE BAND

"LIVE"—ON TOUR IN EUROPE—Atlantic SD 18194: *Hip Pockets; Ivory Tattoo; Space Lady; Almustafa The Beloved; Do What Cha Wanna; Frankenstein Goes To The Disco; Sweet Wine; Juicy.*

Personnel: Cobham, percussion, drum snythesizer, background vocals (track 5); George Duke, keyboards, lead vocal (tracks 3, 4, 5 & 8); Alphonso Johnson, electric bass, Chapman Stick, background vocals (track 5), lead vocal (track 4); John Scofield, electric guitar.

★ ★

I give up. Recently, in these very pages, I wrote about the Cobham-Duke Band, citing it as an improvement over any of Cobham's previous groups "simply because they function as a working partnership," and concluded by offering a favorable prognosis of their collaboration, especially since bassist Alphonso Johnson had just joined the lineup. I actually looked forward to this record. I thought these musicians would challenge each other, and their audience, in turn. I fully expected to hear something new and exciting. As it turns out, my hopes were in vain, but not as vain as this recording. I can't imagine this conclave will ever produce anything more interesting or worthy than *"Live,"* an assumption I take no pleasure in offering.

The saddest part is that these cats fail to even *try*. They are perfectly content regurgitating every tiresome jazz/rock/funk riff to the point of nausea, passing off familiar, underdeveloped blues phrases as compositions and flashy, insubstantial flurries and rolls as improvisation. In attempting to reach the broadest audience possible, they've kept complexity at a minimum, offering simple pyrotechnics in its place. In so doing, they have failed to realize that what can be provocative and substantial in rock and soul is generally dull and limiting when translated to the jazz idiom. But dullness and a lack of originality are nothing unique to Cobham and Duke, nor are those factors the worst part of *"Live."* No, this album achieves a new standard in lowness in a trio of pointlessly indulgent tracks: George Duke's thoroughly embarrassing *Space Lady*, an attempt at Zappaesque humor; Johnson's do-it-to-death *Almustafa The Beloved*, all the more pitiable because he probably takes the pompous recitation and lyrics seriously; and Cobham's meandering electronic-percussive display, *Frankenstein Goes To The Disco*, which sounds like a theremin in heat. (Or is it a Toyota overheated?) The only musician who distinguishes himself in this whole shameless affair, who attempts to prod his companions and frame interesting solos in the midst of handicapped material, is guitarist John Scofield. Given the talents of his companions, that should serve as a fairly serious indictment of the band as a whole.

The Cobham-Duke Band is a collection of monstrously talented and wasteful musicians. None are proven leaders or writers, and all have done their best work under the direction of others. So far, as represented on record, the Cobham-Duke Band is indicative of everything that is stale and imitative about jazz-rock. Where the individual members should underscore each other's strengths, they instead dilute the band's effectiveness as an entity. The end vinyl result is one of the most expendable recordings of this or any year. Give me the Ramones anyday. *—gilmore*

JOHN ABERCROMBIE/ RALPH TOWNER

SARGASSO SEA—ECM-1-1080: *Fable; Avenue; Sargasso Sea; Over And Gone; Elbow Room; Staircase; Romantic Descension; Parasol.*

Personnel: Abercrombie, electric and acoustic guitars; Towner, 12-string and classical guitars.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

John Abercrombie and Ralph Towner are two young musical masters whose technical virtuosity and musical maturity are perfectly balanced in this set of stunning musical sketches. Drawing upon a wide range of colors, they have succeeded in evoking an extraordinary range of moods, atmospheres and associations.

As with their recent concert at the acoustically refurbished Avery Fisher Hall, Abercrombie and Towner's mutual respect and trust make possible an emotive/dramatic/structural interplay of unusual depth. On *Fable*, for example, the sonorities of Abercrombie's electric guitar and Towner's 12-string acoustic guitar meld together to gently narrate Abercrombie's childlike musical allegory. With *Avenue*, the guitarists' episodic developments segment Abercrombie's street of dreams into blocks of mystery, romance and adventure. For the Towner/Abercrombie collaboration *Sargasso Sea*, Abercrombie's electric glides and Towner's cobalt pianistics suggest a lost underwater world shrouded in deep aquatic greens and icy blues. *Over And Gone* is Abercrombie's poignant song of love lost.

The second side opens with another collaboration, *Elbow Room*, in which Abercrombie's hard-edged, echoplexed lines are supported by Towner's percussive 12-string comping. *Staircase* features a rapidly ascending doubled line and Towner's single-note acoustic probes against Abercrombie's acoustic backdrop. *Romantic Descension* is a low-key contrapuntal interchange developed at a leisurely pace while *Parasol* establishes a lazily swirling daydream-like trance for Towner's sensitive piano arabesques.

In sum, *Sargasso Sea* offers a series of consummately crafted and moving musical essays. It also demonstrates that, in the hand of talents like Abercrombie and Towner, electric and acoustic instruments can be integrated in challenging fulfilling configurations. *—berg*

HUBERT LAWS

ROMEO AND JULIET—Columbia PC 34330: *Undecided; Tryin' To Get The Feeling Again; Forlane; Romeo And Juliet; What Are We Gonna Do; Guatemala Connection.*

Personnel: Laws, flutes, piccolo; Barry Finnerty (track 2), acoustic guitar; Finnerty (tracks 3, 6), Eric Gale (tracks 1, 2, 4, 6), electric guitar; Steve Khan (track 4), electric and acoustic guitar; Mark Gray, Clavinet (track 6); Bob James, electric piano and

Clavinet; Gary King, bass; Steve Gadd (track 1), Andy Newmark, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis, Bernie Glow, Alan Rubin, Marvin Stamm, trumpet and fluegelhorn; Wayne Andre, Alan Raph, David Taylor, trombones; Seymour Barab, Alfred Brown, Harry Cykman, Max Ellen, Paul Gershman, Emanuel Green, Harold Kohon, Harry Lookofsky, Guy Lumia, Charles McCracken, David Nadien, Max Pollikoff, Matthew Raimondi, Alan Shulman, Barry Sinclair, Emanuel Vardi, strings; Kenneth Coles, Stanley Stroman, Shirley Thompson, Denise Wigfall, Robin Wilson, voices.

★ ★ ★

An engineer named Bill Szymczyk developed a trademark some years back. Many of the records he worked on bore the liner-noted *caveat emptor,* "Made Loud To Be Played Loud." The same seems true of this latest Bob James package.

Of course, the best albums don't come with such qualifications. But I'll just dock *Romeo And Juliet* two stars on more conventional grounds: the dull *Gonna Do* and *Guatemala* are hardly developed enough to be called charts, and the 7:41 title track runs its first four minutes before meshing melody with an initially cosmetic disco funk pulse. But, once the mesh happens, whew. First, there's a cooking, vaguely flamenco-flavored groove introduced by neatly laid back electric piano; then, an intense orchestral take-out that's peak James arranging (especially at full volume). And just as good is the standard *Undecided.* While its perky, quirky treatment proves a natural for rhythmic updating, James goes beyond syncopated cutesy in his shifting, subtly building arrangement.

But even better elements here are the star's flutes (often overdubbed in harmony), and James' appropriate showcasing of them. Though sucked into the banal undertow of *Gonna Do* and *Guatemala,* Laws strokes strongly through *Tryin'* and makes the chart come alive; he's rhythmically sensitive to the complex *Undecided,* while richly emotional in stating *Romeo*'s theme and the almost-solo exercise *Forlane.* Of course, this album could still be much more *his,* were it not for James' incursive role. But I won't explore that well-worn critical reservation any further. Suffice it to say: I think three stars is high praise for any overproduced album. —*rozek*

FLORA PURIM

500 MILES HIGH AT MONTREUX—Milestone M-9070: *O Cantador; Bridge; 500 Miles High; Cravo E Canela; Baia; Uri (The Wind); Jive Talk.*

Personnel: Purim, vocals, percussion; David Amaro, electric and acoustic guitar; Pat Rebillot, electric piano, organ; Wagner Tiso, electric piano, organ; Ron Carter, bass; Roberto Silva, drums, percussion, berimbau; Airto, drums, percussion, berimbau, vocals; Milton Nascimento, vocals, acoustic guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is vintage Flora, in all her magnificent dimensions, recorded live at Montreux in July of 1974, peerless Flora, with a spirit and zest that only a live recording could capture.

All of her many vocal talents are encapsulated here on this flawless package. There is the incomparably seductive whisper of the Brazilian love song in *O Cantador,* sung with all the triumphant highs and cooing lows that Flora has long been noted for. The semantical constructs of the Portuguese language, with the percussive resonance employed in the pronunciation of consonants, is a perfect backdrop, both for Purim and the supporting percussionists employed on the date.

This instrumental accompaniment defies qualitative description. Some call it skill; oth-

ers deem it magic. Whatever it is, the collective workings of Airto, Silva, pre-disco Ron Carter and Wagner Tiso, among others, ebb and flow just like the tide. And as in all worthy rhythmic-scat joint projects, the imagery of the various artifacts perfectly matches the nuances of the singer.

Cravo E Canela proves this point explicitly. Organ notes hang in the air, Airto and Roberto Silva play one of their endless rhythmic configurations, and the lady of the day comes in mystically, gorgeously. A contrast is provided on *Baia*, as both Flora and company occupy musical space somewhere in the next galaxy.

Despite Purim's occasional orbits, she, unlike other singers who lack her discipline, is always at least partially accessible. As one who is totally aware of the musical possibilities of her native language, she employs just about everybody short of the mixing engineer in a four minute rap, appropriately christened *Jive Talk*. The multiperson trading of various Brazilian sentences, done at lightning speed, is almost an instrument in itself. Yet, magically, David Amaro breaks in with a perfectly standard electric jazz guitar solo, and all becomes normal. Then, all through, there are those countless tinkertoys, everpresent even when their role is merely embellishment. It all adds up to uncountable pleasure. —*shaw*

BUDDY RICH & THE BIG BAND MACHINE

SPEAK NO EVIL—RCA APL1-1503: *Speak No Evil; Yearnin' Learnin'; Storm At Sunup; Love Me Now; Fight The Power; Games People Play; Sophisticated Lady; Sneakin' Up Behind You; How Long.*

Personnel: Rich, drums and percussion; Morris Jennings, drums and percussion; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Victor Paz, trumpet; Janice Robinson, trombone; Howard Johnson, tuba; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Rhetta Hughes, Vivian Cherry, Lani Groves, vocalists; Ross Traut, guitar (tracks 1, 7, & 9); Jon Faddis, trumpet (tracks 1, 2, 3 & 9); Wayne Andre, trombone (tracks 1, 3 & 5); Kenny Barron, electric piano (track 2); David Tofani, alto sax (tracks 2, 6); Steve Marcus, tenor sax (tracks 3, 8, 9); Jerry Dodgian, alto sax (track 4); Tom Malone, trombone (tracks 4, 8); Lew Soloff, trumpet (tracks 5, 6 & 7); Joe Farrell, tenor sax (tracks 5, 7); Turk Mauro, baritone sax (track 6); Danny Moore, trumpet (track 8).

★ ★

The whole idea of big bands transforming their character to fit the disco idiom is more than a bit sad, and, in Buddy Rich's case, something of a quandary. Rich solos only once on *Speak No Evil* (during *Storm At Sunup*, the best of a bad lot), and beyond that his style is indistinguishable from compatriot Morris Jennings or any other drummer who surrenders to the rhythmic confines of funk. Is Rich attempting to cash in on the present crossover market? He certainly doesn't need the money, but maybe he needs the recognition, an affirmation of his perpetual youth and virility. Maybe he's simply trying to make the world safe for disco, or vice versa. It hardly matters. *Speak No Evil* is merely another throwaway in a long career that seems hellbent on being remembered for its wastes as much as for its achievements.

The song titles read like a fake book of *au courant* disco hits, all of which were preferable in their original versions. The Isleys' *Fight The Power* was a nice, intoxicating riff, ideally suited for the dance floor or car radio, yet it's hardly a suitable piece for sustained improvisation. The same applies to the Pointer Sisters' *How Long*, which turned a monotonous chant into a mesmerizing one. Here it forces soloists Jon Faddis and Steve Marcus to virtually ignore its structure before they can make any worthwhile musical statements. In fact, one can't help finding something inappropriate, if not reprehensible, about musicians like Faddis, Andre, Farrell, Barron and Rich wasting their talents in a genre that literally demands circumscription. It's like asking Oscar Peterson to play *Chameleon*. What's the point? To show how much one can strip one's style of its personality?

Buddy is falling into the same trap that seems to have ensnared Maynard Ferguson, Doc Severinsen, and several others: They've forgotten that the best big bands were always a union of subtlety and power, not instruments of overstatement to the degree of impotence. Rich can still hold his own with the best (anyone in doubt check out *Transition*, with Lionel Hampton), but before he can expect us to take seriously his behest to *Speak No Evil*, he should keep in mind a more germane commandment: play no shit. —*gilmore*

MICHAEL HENDERSON

SOLID—Buddah BDS 5662: *Make Me Feel Better; Time; Let Love Enter; Treat Me Like A Man; Solid; Be My Girl; You Haven't Made It To The Top; Valentine Love; Stay With Me This Summer.*

Personnel: Henderson, lead vocals, bass, drums (track 5), guitars, background vocals; Rudy Robinson, keyboards, strings; Lester Williams, Rod Lumpkin, keyboards; Mark Johnson, synthesizer; Bruce Nazarian, synthesizer, guitars; Muruga Sharma, percussion; Leslie Daniels, Jerry Jones, drums; Travis Biggs, strings; Eli Fontaine, Marcus Belgrave, Norma Bell, horns; Brandy, Rose Henderson Williams, background vocals.

★

Solid is highly arranged soul/funk/disco, with an intimate vocal touch by Henderson, whose singing I like. He has crisp diction and a restrained style that suggest an elegant soulfulness. But judging by this debut, he is no instrumental conceptualizer; his charts are embarrassingly uninventive, especially considering his heavy rep, and often reliant on other folks' licks. (A quick rundown of side one: *Make Me Feel Better* reminds me of the Brothers Johnson, with a few Isley "heys" and weak, Breckerish horns thrown in; *Time* suggests, in spots, Mountain's *Mississippi Queen;* a whole passage of *Let Love* cops *Uno Esta* by Bobbi Humphrey; *Treat Me* uses vocal voicings a la Marvin Gaye and an organ-backed beat recalling Mandrill. The title cut—admittedly possessing *some* originality—sounds like a rhythm track from *Agharta.*) I think I'm stretching the meaning of diplomacy to note that *Be My Girl* is acceptable doo-wop soul, that I like the melody of *Valentine Love*, and that *Stay With Me*, an atmospheric piece, could have had possibilities, if approached more subtly. The fact is *Solid* also suffers from uninspired, even sluggish musicianship, and a cloudy mix. It's just not a very creative, or very interesting, record. —*rozek*

RICHARD KAMUCA

RICHARD KAMUCA: 1976—Jazzz Records 104: *I Concentrate On You; If I Love Again; Some Other Spring; Say It Isn't So; Symphony; Flying Down To Rio; When Day Is Done; 'Tis Autumn.*

Personnel: Kamuca, tenor sax; Mundell Lowe, guitar; Monte Budwig, bass; Nick Cirello, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This album should firmly establish Richie Kamuca as one of the leading exponents of the Lester Young school. Instead of just working the melody and harmonic changes, Richie plumbs each composition's emotional and dramatic core to discover its inner life. In his

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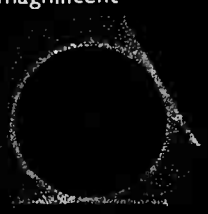

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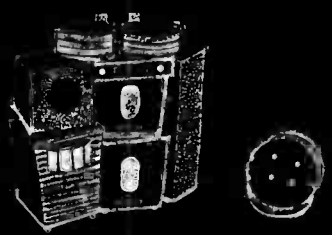

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revealing notes for Irving Berlin's hit of 1932, Kamuca says: "*Say It Isn't So* is a good example of what Lester Young used to preach—before you play a song you should learn the lyric. How about the lyric on this one? Like when it says, 'Say that everything is still o.k., that's all I want to know.' How many times have you felt that?"

Each of the eight standards receives Kamuca's thoughtful attentions. "The tunes we played are very personal. I love them all. Each one has a strong melody and very good chord changes, and each one has the strength to provide a solid basis for individual expression."

What sets this album apart is Kamuca's willingness and ability to express his innermost thoughts and feelings. On the haunting ballad *Some Other Spring*, Richie reflects the pain of an unsuccessful relationship with a compassionate, vulnerable tone. Then on *If I Love Again*, he assumes a jaunty air by calling on a bouncy tempo and full-blown, effervescent lines. With *When Day Is Done*, the mood is appropriately mellow and relaxed.

Throughout, Kamuca is ably supported by friends—Lowe, Budwig and Cirello—who are obviously sensitive to the tenorist's musical/dramatic goals. As for the leader, *Richard Kamuca: 1976* presents a sublimely lyrical essayist with remarkably balanced control over both form and content. —*berg*

TONY WILLIAMS LIFETIME

MILLION DOLLAR LEGS—Columbia PC 34263: *Sweet Revenge; You Did It To Me; Million Dollar Legs; Joy Filled Summer; Lovely Jade; What You Do To Me; Inspirations Of Love.*

Personnel: Williams, drums; Allan Holdsworth, guitar; Tony Newton, bass and vocals; Alan Pasqua, keyboards.

★ ★

It seems as though our friend Mr. Williams is suffering from a musical identity crisis, precipitated no doubt by the fact that some vastly inferior trapmen are dwarfing his sales figures. Tony must be aware of the fact that if he had made the right moves in the past, he could have easily been a fusion drummer recognized by many more people. After all, his work with McLaughlin and Larry Young on *Emergency* represents some of the most frenetically robust drumming ever heard on a jazz-rock type of release.

Those days, however, are gone forever, and unfortunately we must now observe an artist trying to fit into a bag. Several of the tunes here harken to disco, yet the spark has not been totally drained. Even though *What You Do To Me*, for example, features endlessly repeated, thrusting lines and stereotypical Hancockesque keyboard figures, the metronomic drumming is embellished by several bass drum rolls. *Inspirations Of Love* bears similar input; the total plagiaristic Rhodes runs of Alan Pasqua yield to the album's only drum solo, a high-hat riding, precise tantrum by Williams.

Then where's the rub? Despite the promising moments, inanities are in abundance. *Sweet Revenge* is composed mainly of Dorian mode drone, replete with hammering Rhodes, thudding bass, C-Major "solos." And the lyrics of *You Did It To Me*—really! Thanks to the vocalise of lead singer Tony Newton, we are informed that his lover "did it to me with the tight pants you own."

As disco drumming, this doesn't quite make it; give me the simplicity of Hamilton Bohannon or the Fantastic Four. Yet any validity as a jazz exercise is undermined by the presence of numerous trivialities and cliches. Meanwhile, Tony Williams, a gifted drummer, reveals his inconsistencies and lack of focus to a world that, if only given the true measure of his ability, would respond much better than Tony seems to believe. —*shaw*

COUNT BASIE

I TOLD YOU SO—Pablo 2310-767: *Tree Frog; Flirt; Blues For Alfy; Something To Live For; Plain Brown Wrapper; Sweep Pea; Ticker; Too Close For Comfort; Told You So; The Git.*

Personnel: Basie, piano; Sonny Cohn, Pete Minger, Bobby Mitchell, John Thomas, Jack Feierman, trumpets; Al Grey, Curtis Fuller, Bill Hughes, Mel Wanzo, trombones; Jimmy Forrest, Eric Dixon, Danny Turner, Bobby Plater, Charlie Fowlkes, reeds; John Duke, bass; Freddie Green, guitar; Butch Miles, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

This is superior, hard-hitting Basie in the best tradition of the postwar Basie era. It's superiority centers almost entirely on the arrangements, which are by Bill Holman and are among the finest the band has played in recent years. The sax voicings are richly orchestrated and built to swing, for the most part. The heavyweight reed team plays them with assurance and flair.

Tree Frog is compelling in its simplicity. Holman moves his sections through a series of riffs and longer lines on parallel but completely complimentary tracks. Basie tiptoes in and out along the way. The effect is an accomplished sense of tenseness and relaxation at moderate tempo.

Ticker and *Brown Wrapper* feature Basie against the crackle of Butch Miles' punchy sock cymbal triplets. The orchestral environment adds further power to the momentum. Eric Dixon recalls some Paul Gonsalves licks in *Ticker*.

Jimmy Forrest, among the band's major soloists and its strongest big-toned tenor since Lockjaw, is typically spectacular on *Close For Comfort*, which also includes some ingenious interweaving of Basie with the reeds and brass in the first chorus.

Perhaps the most moving and substantial arrangement is *Sweet Pea*, a beautiful original melody superbly scored for brass and reeds. Curtis Fuller and Basie are the soloists, but Holman is the star.

There is much that is familiar and admittedly cliche here as well. Some of the blaring brass and drum fills have an oppressive sameness about them, standard stuffing to fill out an otherwise interesting chart. Occasionally one feels that the band is playing with its emotions too well under control.

Nevertheless, it is a better band than that which played on Basie's last Pablo outing, and certainly it's blessed with better material.

—*mcdonough*

RYO KAWASAKI

JUICE—RCA APL 1-1855: *Raisins; Sometime; The Breeze And I; East Side Boogie; El Toro; Bamboo Child; Andes.*

Personnel: Kawasaki, lead guitar and string synthesizer; Hugh McCracken, rhythm guitar; Tom Coster, keyboards and synthesizer; Mike Lipskin, synthesizer and percussion; Andy Laverne, piano (tracks 4, 6); Stu Woods, bass; Jimmie Young, drums; Muhammad Abdullah, percussion; Sam Morrison, tenor and soprano sax, flute.

★

All the tunes here, except of course *The Breeze And I*, are Kawasaki originals, and they were all arranged by him, too. Yet there's not an exceptional composition in the lot, not

A backstage talk with America's favorite country artist, Roy Clark.

"I was impressed ...they kept the quality!"

You've just started a new tour, after wrapping up taping of *Hee-Haw* in Nashville. How long will you be out this time?

Forever. No, I take that back... probably only eleven or twelve days. I finished taping *Hee-Haw* last week, we have a day off tomorrow, and then we open in Massachusetts.

You're one of a handful of American artists who have played Russia. How did it go?

We were there eighteen days, and we got a fantastic reception! It was kinda different dealing with the language barrier, though. I had an interpreter who worked onstage with me. Really good. I'd set things up like I wanted to do them, and he'd explain to the audience. I could change things around in American slang, and he'd do the equivalent in Russian. It was a lot of fun.

And there's been some talk about a return engagement?

We've tentatively been invited back for a tour in the summer of '77. We've also been talking about going to England this year for the Wembley Festival.

A return invitation to Russia has to be a real compliment for any American entertainer.

Yeah, it is. When we were there before, it was winter, and we played to houses of six or seven thousand. They're talking about outdoor shows this next time, anywhere from sixty-five to eighty thousand people. And they said there's no question it'll be sold out.

Our Russian friends really like live entertainment?

Well, Russian television leaves a lot to be desired. And that means that the opera and the ballet there are sold out year 'round, year after year. Live entertainment does really well there.

Your first big hit record, *The Tips of My Fingers*, was released in the Fall of '63. How many records ago was that?

It's either twenty-six or twenty-seven, I can't remember which.

And the vast majority of your hit singles have been romantic ballads. That contrasts sharply with the comedian in you. Is there a serious actor in there someplace?

Yeah, I've been thinking about it. In fact, I just sat down with my management and cleared some time to pursue that a little bit.

How do you handle equipment problems on the road?

By not having any to begin with. Seriously, I've had some problems with one of my guitars on this tour. It's brand new, but there's something fouled up in the controls.

Any problems with your amp?

Nooo! Not this one. I went through a period of about two years trying to find the right amp. The road is tough on amps... handling or mishandling, and then you've always got the power supply to worry about. A lot of amps won't operate correctly unless the line conditions are just right.

What kind of amp do you use?

A Kustom. I first tried a Kustom years ago, before they were a known brand. Somebody plugged it in and I tried it, and it sounded great.

But you didn't get one right away?

No, I'm cautious like that. I knew there were new amps coming onto the market all the time, and some of the brands disappear as fast as they came onto the market. You know, the companies get really big, and the production quality starts slipping as soon as the quantity increases. But with the Kustom, I was really impressed. After I tried my first Kustom amp, they came out with a full

line of amplifiers, and I was impressed that they kept the quality and weren't just in business to make all the amps they could, and sell them. I forget what I was playing before Kustom. Little by little, the older you get, the more you demand from an amp. I got back in touch with Kustom and got an amp, and really liked it. I just thought I'd better stay with them.

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even a distinctively arranged one; *Juice* is stale, New York-studio-based-disco-funk, with emphasis on the stale part.

Actually, I find some of the guitarist's melodies, like *Raisins* and *Bamboo Child*, downright unattractive. In mild contrast, *Sometime* and *El Toro* are presumably meant to sound mellow, but they're so low-key they turn out somniferous instead. And *The Breeze And I* gets a dull, straight disco treatment, including a hokey, sing-song "oriental" riff I *hope* Kawasaki came up with, since it'd be an ethnic slur stemming from anyone else listed on the date.

The two best cuts here are *El Toro* and *Andes* (the latter's head echoes Eleventh House trumpet-guitar lines, except who plays trumpet on the date?); Coster smokes through a too-brief synthesizer run on each, and both charts are at least somewhat diverting, compared to those on the rest of the album. But on every track Kawasaki shows me little on his axe, aside from an effort to sound fluid; he plays with almost no shading, his ideas usually center around one trademarked lick, and his style radiates little communicable intensity. He's been better served, in all ways, on his recordings as a sideman. *—rozek*

GABOR SZABO

NIGHTFLIGHT—Mercury SRM-1-1091: *Concorde (Nightflight); Funny Face; Baby Rattle Snake; Theme For Gabor; Keep Smilin'; Every Minute Counts; Smooth Sailin'.*

Personnel: Szabo, guitar and vocals; Bunndino Siggalucci, guitar, piano, and vocals; Raymond Earl, bass; Ken Miller, guitar; Theodore Life, guitar and vocals; Scotty Miller, drums; Johnnie McCann, conga and bongo; Jimmy Sigler, organ; Dexter Wansel, synthesizer.

★ ½

Nightflight opens with Gabor Szabo's romantic, flamenco signature, gradually surrendering to ominous, bombastic synthesizer tones, funky rhythm guitar tracks, and discofied string and flute settings. For the most part, it's silly and dispensable, but Szabo alone manages to keep his melodic integrity intact. *Concorde,* like the rest of the album, persists without progressing. The methodical backup is inflexible, and as complex and resourceful as Gabor's playing gets, it can't buck the drudgery of Bunny Sigler's Philadelphia-and-then-some arrangements.

Keep Smilin' is ponderous, neanderthal funk, replete with a goosey, disposable douche vocal chanting (What else?) *Keep Smilin'. Baby Rattle Snake* features a fetching riff, certainly more to get excited about than the Stones' *Hot Stuff,* and it might even catch a fire except that by the time it rolls around for the fourth time, one can't resist the impulse to check out the next track, *Theme For Gabor.* Which is fortunate, because it's unquestionably *Nightflight*'s highlight. Although it's definitely movie theme fare, it does manage to reach you, to touch you, as much for Sigler's Evanesque piano style (Bunny! I never knew you had it in you.) as for Szabo's understated lead. Similarly, *Every Minute Counts* is in a healthier vein, more reminiscent of Szabo's Montgomery style than anything else herein, but shamelessly padded.

The true burpers here are *Funny Face* and *Smooth Sailin',* which are rough takin', because Szabo sings on them. I think. At least he sniffs and grunts and moans to the point of nausea (mine, that is). On the latter, he sounds like he does his laundry in his mouth, and Sigler proves he carries his in his brains by mindlessly shifting the tempo into overdrive about a third of the way through, leaving the musicians to struggle with keeping this travesty together. Not me, though. I took the record off. *—gilmore*

DAVE PIKE

TIMES OUT OF MIND—Muse MR 5092: *Dance Of The Grebes; Wee; Times Out Of Mind; Djalma; Morning In The Park; I Love My Cigar.*

Personnel: Pike, vibes; Tom Ranier, piano, synthesizer, alto and tenor saxes; Ron Eschete (tracks 1, 4, 6), Kenny Burrell (tracks 2, 3, 5); guitar; Luther Hughes (tracks 1, 4, 6), Harvey Newmark (tracks 2, 3, 5), bass; Ted Hawke, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★

Times Out Of Mind should help reestablish 38-year-old Dave Pike at the top of the mallet world. During his 20s, Pike built a solid reputation through associations with Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Herbie Mann, Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry. Then in 1966, Pike, like so many other American jazz musicians, headed for Europe. Returning in 1973, Dave set up his musical base of operations at Hungry Joe's, a club in California's Huntington Beach. This was the laboratory in which these performances were developed.

Pike's style is based on the canons of bop. Dave's energetic, driving single-note runs in Denzel Best's *Wee* and his own *Morning In The Park,* for instance, flow directly from Bird and Bud. There is, however, a Brazilian current that redirects his fiery intensity into more lyrical and reflective channels. But even in Pike's samba-derived *Dance Of The Grebes* and *Djalma,* the vibist remains essentially a steely, swinging soloist.

The album also marks the recording debut of a quartet of fine young players. Ranier, Eschete, Hughes and Newmark contribute first-rate solo and ensemble work. Ranier, however, is the real find. His acoustic and electric keyboard efforts along with his reed work reveal an uncommon versatility, finesse and musicality. Ranier also pitches in a witty original, *I Love My Cigar.*

The album's only serious shortcoming is the overuse of the string synthesizer, which oozes its artificially processed goo over four of the six tracks. Its intrusion emasculates solos and reduces the texture to a homogenous blandness. To Pike's credit, however, the string synthesizer is used, in comparison to many other current groups, somewhat sparingly. Consequently, the bulk of the music retains its exuberance.

Because *Times Out Of Mind* is Pike's first venture in an American recording studio since working a Lee Konitz date *(Doors To Perception)* back in the mid-'60s, this is really his vinyl homecoming. And that's good because the return of Dave Pike is well worth celebrating. *—berg*

PATRICK GLEESON

BEYOND THE SUN: AN ELECTRONIC PORTRAIT OF HOLST'S 'THE PLANETS'—Mercury SRI 80000.

Personnel: Gleeson, programmer, producer and performer.

★ ★ ★ ★

In the jacket notes to his debut solo album, Gleeson states that his Eu Polyphonic Synthesizer is "a more flexible and consequently a more human instrument than its predecessors." As regards the range of options available with this synthesizer, I would certainly have to agree with Gleeson. Never before, even on Walter Carlos' recordings, have I heard an electronic realization that sounded so much like an orchestral performance. But as Carlos himself points out in the album notes, "the accurately rigid translation of the written score via Gleeson's system (of automated sequencer-control of pitch and duration) . . . does lead to a subtly mechanized feel to the music."

Thus, while Gleeson's electronic version of *The Planets* encompasses unique timbres and special effects which cannot be obtained on conventional instruments, one would not want to own only this recording of the work. Gleeson's achievement may point toward a future in which most recorded music is synthesized and indistinguishable from sounds produced directly by human beings; but that day has not yet arrived.

Highpoints of the album include *Mars,* the opening section, where the "subtly mechanized feel" of the music fits Holst's conception perfectly; the wail of feedback, reminiscent of acid rock, that initiates Gleeson's reading of *Saturn;* and the synthesized sound of waves which augments the synthesized female choir in *Neptune, The Mystic.* *—terry*

CHUCK MANGIONE

MAIN SQUEEZE—A&M SP-4612: *(The Day After) Our First Night Together; If You Know Me Any Longer Than Tomorrow; Love The Feelin'; I Get Crazy (When Your Eyes Touch Mine); Doin' Everything With You; Main Squeeze.*

Personnel: Mangione, fluegelhorn and electric piano; Bob Mann and John Tropea, acoustic and electric guitars; Don Grolnick, electric and acoustic piano; Tony Levin, electric bass; Ruben Bassini and Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Richard Tee, organ; Steve Gadd, drums, percussion; Jon Faddis, Jeff Tkazyik, Lew Soloff, Alan Rubin, trumpets; Bill Watrous, Wayne Andre, Tom Malone, Dave Taylor, trombones; Jimmy Buffington, Fred Griffin, Bob Carlisle, John Clark, french horns; Gene Orloff, concert master; unidentified string section.

★ ★

When I say this album is a sleeper, I mean only that it is a godsend to insomniacs. Mangione's soporific formula should be all too familiar by now, even to his most ardent admirers: with its Latin pop rhythms, predictable syncopations, and changes with an all-too-frequent flamenco twist, Chuck's style is a study in commercial sameness.

Main Squeeze is almost saved, however, by the strengths of the rhythm section. The two guitarists provide energetic support, and Gadd is as sympathetic as possible, considering the charts at hand. Richard Tee's organ emerges as the strongest solo voice on the session, though he gets but one good shot, on the title cut, which manages to cut through the boredom with its jamming exuberance.

Of Mangione's horn playing, little need be said: he is generally uninspired, if fluid, and he altogether fails to realize the fluegelhorn's expressive potential. Combine this mellow monotone with tunes that run together like melting ice cream in a banana split, and you have a reasonable idea of what Mangione's latest is all about. Sweet dreams. *—bennett*

ANTHONY BRAXTON

SAXOPHONE IMPROVISATIONS/SERIES F—Inner City 1008: *BWC-12 N-48K; NR-12-C (33M); RFO-M° F (32); JMK-80 CFN-7.*

Personnel: Braxton, alto sax.

★ ★ ★ ★

I write this the week of hearing Braxton play a typical show before what I suspect is a typically large, typically young, and typically (and justifiably) delighted crowd. Braxton's current popular success is so satisfying because he is a truly valuable musician, as evidenced by his *Five Pieces 1975* (Arista 4064), his duets with Dave Holland (Sackville 3007),

and his Town Hall 1972 concert (as yet unavailable in the U.S.) in particular. Hopefully his newfound audience will discover two other remarkable facets of his musical thought, the ensemble experiments that began in 1968 and culminated in the Creative Construction Company (yes, I know that it was a co-operative group, but the motivating force was Braxton) and his unaccompanied alto works.

This is probably the better half of a two-LP set recorded four years ago in France, though American buyers are the poorer without his long *104° Kelvin* experiment, a sort of ultimate distillation of his phrasing methods, and his vivacious—there's no other word for it—dedication to George Connolly. While it has its ups and downs, this Inner City reissue is a more varied program than his earlier alto solos for Delmark. Joseph Jarman, Roscoe Mitchell and Lester Bowie began the current trend to solo horn works in the mid-'60s in Chicago, and Braxton, Steve Lacy and Marion Brown have developed the concept with special success since then. It's an almost final refinement of free horn improvising, for the artist must begin naked, then peel off epidermis, dermis, and innards as he creates.

While the others have definite structural aims when playing solo, Braxton's method is either extremely or entirely dependent on free association. That is a most dangerous choice to make unless, like Braxton, the soloist has mastered so many different sax styles and techniques that he has worthwhile musical ideas to associate freely. Nor is "free association" an unvaryingly precise description of Braxton's art, for the most typical Braxton phrase will incorporate a melodic element of the preceding phrase and include melodic element of the phrase to follow. In *RFO* especially this sort of minimal form leads to long up-down lines that fail for their repetition of inner rhythms and lack of melodic vigor. Yet much of *NR*, which uses very similar legato lines, works because he lets bits of alternative melody break into his "cool" sax playing.

But *JMK*, all of side two, is an unusually self-aware work for him. Though he begins by exploiting the contrast of sections of quiet even triplets against increasingly intense sections of overtones and harmonics, the two contrary motivations (not really motives) blend, and eventually nearly all of his methods are brought into play. His "cool" phrasing is reproduced with heat, his fragment repetition-and-evolution method, his Roscoe Mitchell-derived overblowing and tonal manipulations, quick tempo speed shifts, even moments of silent, merely fingered notes and an Ayler dirge, all appear in the course of a work that is surprisingly fresh with tension. Braxton has long exploited his special skills and understood his limitations, so this potentially forbidding track is on the whole a success.

Best of all are the three pieces linked as *BWC*, and best of these is the third. Dedicated to chessman Bobby Fischer, they are in fact cameos of Mitchell's style, almost more Mitchell-like than Roscoe himself. Growled tones initiate wide staccato leaps and set a fast pace, then a slower pace, then a composite of both with new material added, and each piece growing in sound variety. The third stage of *BWC* admits new rhythmic spirits as well, and the entire work is so controlled as to deny the validity of his free association mode of thought. Hearing this LP, you feel you're approaching the heart of Braxton's improvising. Incidentally, those who complain of Braxton's eclecticism—his mixture of cool, avant garde, European, Coltrane and bop styles and techniques—are merely complainers, I feel. Eclecticism is a fault only if it lacks what might accurately be termed soul, as evidenced by the tension, consistency and creative intelligence of the art. In this regard, Braxton is without fault. —*litweiler*

JIMMY OWENS

JIMMY OWENS—Horizon SP-712: *Caravan; What's The Use; Do It To It; Secret Love; My Life.*

Personnel: Owens, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Kenny Barron, piano; Chris White, acoustic and electric bass; Brian Brake, drums; Warren Smith, percussion (tracks 1, 2, 3); George Davis, guitar (tracks 1, 2, 3, 5); Lloyd Davis, guitar (tracks 1,2); Carl Lynch, guitar (track 3).

★ ★ ★ ½

In the liner notes to *Jimmy Owens*, the hornman takes a stand against over-categorization of music. That stand is reflected in this music, which takes strides towards an aesthetically viable crossover music.

Caravan, for instance, is here rendered in a slowed-down, funked-up setting. Owens makes the most of his superb control and inflection of the trumpet in drawing the melody out through the phased spaces opened up by the band; Barron adeptly handles the bridge, extracting from his synthesizers a sound that one might hear from some futuristic calliope. The familiar changes are augmented tastefully, for the most part, by the players' electronic adjuncts.

At the other end of Owens' spectrum, *My Secret Love* gets a straightahead, uptempo reading from the basic quartet, with no string ensembles attached. The piece swings brightly, with Barron comfortably covering the harmonic spread as Owens stretches expressively, fully realizing each phrase before taking up the next.

Do It is built on lots of electronic texture, but Owens avoids the pitfalls of purely vertical, 4-bar organization, with an added element of melodic continuity supplied by fine trumpet and piano solos. *What's The Use* would benefit from some harmonic variety, and bassist White's *My Life* seems somewhat overdone, but these are minor flaws: the album as a whole is well-placed, a solid sampler of jazz and funk in harmonious community. Owens' catholic tastes are a credit to the musical cause, and are definitely worth following as they develop further. *—bennett*

DAVID BROMBERG

HOW LATE'LL YA PLAY 'TIL?—Fantasy F-79007: *Danger Man II; Get Up And Go/Fiddle Tunes; Summer Wages; Dallas Rag/Maple Leaf Rag; Whoopee Ti Yi Yo; Young Westley; Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues; Bluebird; Idol With A Golden Head; Chubby Thighs; Kaatskill Serenade; Sloppy Drunk; Bullfrog Blues; Sweet Home Chicago; Come On In My Kitchen; Will Not Be Your Fool; Such A Night.*

Personnel: Bromberg, guitars and vocals; Hugh McDonald, bass and background vocals; Steve Mosley, drums; Dick Fegy, electric guitar, banjos, and mandolin; Brantly Kearns, electric fiddle; Curt Linberg, trombone; John Firmin, saxes; Ecklund, trumpet, mellophones, cornet; George Kindler, fiddles; Hank De Vito, pedal steel guitar (tracks 3, 5, and 6); Evan Stover, fiddles (tracks 3 and 6), violins (track 11); Steve Burgh, guitars (track 5); Herb Pedersen, background vocals; Mac Rebennack, piano (tracks 5 and 7); Bernie Leadon, background vocals (track 6); Bobby Bruce, violins (track 10); Alex Nieman, violas (track 10); Nathan Gershman, cellos (track 10); Jim Rothermel, recorder (track 11); Jane Sharp, vocal (track 11); Phoebe Snow, Phil Kearns, background vocals (track 11).

★ ★ ★

I've been a committed follower of David Bromberg ever since I discerned his savory style on Dylan's *Self Portrait*. Bromberg's never made a record without its moments, nor one without an idiomatic depth and breadth as consummate, say, as Ry Cooder's, although of a different latitude. At the same time, with the exception of *Demon In Disguise*, David's never really hit his stride.

How Late'll Ya Play 'Til marks several major changes for Bromberg; a new label, a new "band," a more grandiose, opulent sound, and a new trait, self-indulgence. While the morsels on this record are so fine, so special, that they merit its qualified recommendation, the refuse will make you wince and cringe. Anyone who can endure more than one listening to *Bullfrog Blues* can truly claim to have experienced a fate as lamentable as EST (Electric Shock Treatment, that is, although the more *au courant*, lower case connotation is equally appropriate), while those who have felt the deep yearning of *Kaatskill Serenade* know the meaning of the word pathos.

Bromberg's problem isn't unique among modern recording artists, namely, that regardless of stature, genre, or good intentions, even the sharpest have a weakness for overstatement. *How Late* is a two-record set, one album live, one studio. Taken as a whole, it's devoid of a sense of continuity, which is Bromberg's or any other artist's prerogative, but one that generally results in a forgettable upshot. The closest thing here to a theme is a fascination with gamblers (*Summer Wages, Danger Man, Young Westley*), but for David, the whole affair is a gamble that barely breaks even. Among the best tracks are the deceptively lazy, countryish ballads, such as *Get Up And Go* and *Summer Wages*, successful amalgams of common bluegrass changes, jazzy saxophone, and startling Djangoesque guitar breaks. But the apexes (perhaps of Bromberg's career thus far) are the lovely, haunting *Kaatskill Serenade* and Mary McCaslin's *Young Westley*, particularly the latter, a thoughtful evocation of the myth of the American West, a rare act of interpretation that manages to transcend the original author's vision, similar to Bromberg's recreation of Jerry Jeff Walker's *Mr. Bojangles*. For all time, *Bojangles* and *Westley* rightfully belong to David Bromberg as much as their authors.

The live record is most aptly described by its initial track, *Sloppy Drunk:* messy and obnoxious, with all the attendant miscalculations of an inebriated mind. *Bullfrog* is the nadir, tasteless and boring, and according to the sleeve notes, an albatross that's been in David's repertoire for eight years. The audience's reaction only serves to prove that stupidity, as Ron Mael of Sparks has already suggested, is infectious. David's reading of Robert Johnson's *Come On In My Kitchen* is broadly off-target. For all his overtures to blues authenticity, it's the one pose Bromberg wears the least convincingly. My suggestion? Send the live album back to Bromberg or Fantasy and ask for a proportionate refund. And keep the better stuff around for the rest of your life. It's that good, *and* that bad.

—gilmore

BARNEY BIGARD

CLARINET GUMBO—RCA APL1-1744: *Memoir De Bayou; Clarinet Gumbo; Off Shore; Satchmo's Dream; Struttin' With Some Barbecue; Mood Indigo; Wampum; Tea For Two; Florence Off Ramp; Easy On The Ears; Slings And Arrows.*

Personnel: Bigard, Albert system clarinet; Eddie Safranski, bass; Nick Fatool, drums; Dick Cary (tracks 1, 3, 4, 6, 10), Ray Sherman (tracks 2, 5, 7, 9, 11), piano; Dave Koonse (tracks 1, 3, 4, 6, 10), guitar; Cary, alto horn (tracks 5, 8, 9, 11), trumpet (tracks 2, 3, 7, 10).

★ ★ ★ ★

Clarinetist Barney Bigard is a living legend. Born in New Orleans in 1906, Bigard studied clarinet with Lorenzo Tio, who also taught Sidney Bechet and Albert Nicholas. Bigard, however, focused his early energies on tenor and soprano saxophones. Then in 1924, he departed from the Delta to join King Oliver in Chicago. It was Oliver who led Bigard back to clarinet.

Barney explains his conversion in the liner notes: "Oliver was running out of players. [Johnny] Dodds had split, then Lil Armstrong. Now [Albert] Nicholas. So he asked me, 'Didn't you once play clarinet?' I said yes, but compared to Nicholas and Dodds I was so terrible, I didn't play. But I guess Oliver had more faith in me than I did and said, 'If I buy you a clarinet will you try it again?' What else could I say but yes. Well, I started woodshedding. Practice and more practice. I soon found that I began to love it more and more than the sax. I didn't really care to solo on sax anymore."

That love affair between Bigard and his Albert system stick became a hallmark in the bands of Oliver (in the '20s), Duke Ellington (1928-1942) and Louis Armstrong (1946-1955 and 1960-1961). And now with *Clarinet Gumbo* (recorded in 1973), it is obvious that their bonds have deepened and mellowed even more.

Using a tone suggesting both warmth and

mystery, Bigard spins out gracefully legato improvisations. Listen, for instance, to the rich woody resonances from his chalumeau register in the nostalgic *Memoir De Bayou.* This basic approach is also used in Barney's poignant recollections of Ellington *(Mood Indigo)* and Armstrong *(Satchmo's Dream).* Bigard's buoyant swing and dramatic use of space are showcased in *Wampum* and *Struttin' With Some Barbecue.*

Throughout each delicacy, Bigard's clarinet is seasoned with the fine contributions of Safranski's bass, Fatool's drums, Koonses' guitar, Sherman's piano, the varied offerings of Cary's trumpet, alto horn, and piano. It is the magical work of master chef Barney Bigard, however, that makes *Clarinet Gumbo* a simmering, delectable treat. *—berg*

WADE MARCUS

METAMORPHOSIS—ABC ASD-9318: *Metamorphosis; Sugar Loaf Sunrise; Would You Like To Ride; Journey To Morocco; Poinciana; Feelings; Funk Machine; Daniel.*

Personnel: Marcus, arranger, conductor; Joe Sample, Sonny Burke, keyboards; Lee Ritenour, guitar; Red Holloway, Fred Jackson, Jr., Jerome Richardson, Buddy Collette, Bill Green, reeds, woodwinds; Henry Davis, Scott Edwards, bass; Chuck Domanico, acoustic bass; Warren Luening, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Britt Woodman, trombone; Harvey Mason, drums; Gary Coleman, vibes; Bill Summers, percussion; Dorothy Ashby, harp; Maxine Waters Willard, Julia Waters Tillman, Jessica Smith, Oren Waters, Luther Waters, background vocals; anonymous string section.

★ ★

Wade Marcus is an independent producer with a Motown background who is as adept as anyone in packaging jazz for easy listening consumption. These are the days of 16-track productions where jazz musicians such as Stanley Turrentine, George Benson, and a host of others get to play their music (or the producer's music) in the midst of string, woodwind, and vocal tracks with all sorts of electronic support, some of it recorded several days apart. Sometimes these records are good—pleasant—but a great percentage end up sounding the same. But production jazz is making money—in some instances lots of it—for both musicians and record companies.

Metamorphosis is production jazz, with Marcus arranging and conducting. The album features a number of fine West Coast players soloing or providing the leading in various Marcus-made settings, including Jerome Richardson, Lee Ritenour, Joe Sample, Harvey Mason, Red Holloway, Fred Jackson, Buddy Collette and Bill Green. Some of the recording is good, especially the title track, and some of it is a little flat—listenable but not memorable.

The album does have all the standard ingredients, vocal backgrounds, strings soaring like romantic seagulls against a Hawaiian sunset and woodwinds on top of some jazz solos and funk disco rhythms.

Metamorphosis is the one track that permits some straightahead blowing; it begins with a disco-funk feeling but evolves into a vehicle for Richardson and Holloway to open up on tenor with some solid 4/4 jazz.

Marcus uses voice and string colors well, but often with predictability. Sometimes his string passages come off sounding too sweet, lacking darker colors and a harder edge.

The solos range from routine to excellent, especially Green's slightly out alto work on *Funk Machine,* played against a vocal background repeating over and over "it's a funk machine and it's really mean." So much for great lyrics. *—nolan*

WAXING ON....

The Bethlehem reissue series features some outstanding, some modest, music, all from the independent production company's early '50s output. Though they haven't spruced up their dawn-of-the-midcentury album concepts, the Bethlehem records do provide a slice of musical essence from a most transitional period.

The Best Of The Folk Bluesmen, originally entitled *Blues And Folk,* is a misnamed anthology of singles issued by King and Federal during the late '40s and the years of the Korean War. What has been collected here is not the root music of rural primitive players, but electric urban blues that owes much to pop trends, rhythm and blues instrumentalists, and jazz arrangements.

John Lee Hooker's powerful backbeat drives along as indestructibly now as it did 20 years ago, and his rasping vocals are urgent as ever. Johnny Temple's *I Believe I'll Go Downtown Again* carries some of the same rough energy of the early boogie. *Tomorrow Night* and *Little Things We Used To Do* are both pop tunes, and while Lonnie Johnson's performance on the former approaches a blues feeling, Sticks McGhee's singing on the latter does not.

Cleanhead Vinson's *Person To Person* and Jimmy Rushing's *She's Mine, She's Yours* swing in medium tempo with Kansas City style support from the riffing sections. Though Smokey Hogg's vocal on *Keep A-Walking* is flat and ugly, his tenor man contributes a gritty chorus. Jack Dupree's *Two Below Zero* is funloving in its loquacity; obscure Washboard Bill's echo chamber effects interrupt the credible tenor and guitar playing on *In The Morning.*

This album could have benefited greatly from an in depth essay on the era or from more information on some of the seldom heard artists and numbers. Robert Palmer's notes are disappointing—merely introductory.

The McRae showcase claims to make available all her Bethlehem singing; at 21 minutes total length, the record attests to how little work she did for the company. Accordionist Mat Matthews and his quartet, with Herbie Mann, adorn all of side one. They are not rhythmically daring and the singer seldom takes off, but her precise articulation gets the lyric across and her controlled tonality makes for surprising warmth. With the more sympathetic Tony Scott quintet behind her on side two, Ms. McRae fairs better, singing melancholy verses over the clarinetist's even obliggato, slow strolling bass, shuffle brush work and tinkling piano.

Carmen's frequent themes of lost love and torchy tenderness don't soil her innocent pose; only the relatively sophisticated *Easy To Love* and *Tip Toe Gently* indicate the woman has lusted in her heart and her bed. On *Tip Toe* Matthews and an unidentified guitarist comment boppily. Carmen's interpretations here are reminiscent of the Doris Day sorority of chirpy bandgirls, a mold Ms. McRae has broken since this old date. She's also found better backup.

Bob Dorough's lasting contribution to bop vocalese is reproduced in its entirety—though,

as he says, "Turned over and called *The Yardbird Suite.*" To keep it in context, the reissue jacket photo shows longhaired Bob in a plant-filled environment; in the foreground is the old album, *Devil May Care,* with Bob's butch-cut head in full face.

Dorough's voice, though ingratiating and somewhat repellent, speaks authoritatively for a particular cognoscenti who revered the Bird and turned the hip lifestyle into Beat literature. The quintet is workmanlike, with occasional strong moments, but the star is plainly sincere, breezy, flippant, sentimental young Bob. His piano playing as well as his delivery makes Mose Allison seem very pallid; his metaphors and attitude make Ben Sidran seem tonguetied in his prosody.

Dorough's songs, from the understanding *Baltimore Oriole* to *Johnny One-Note* ("Who sings it with gust-O") are inventive stories with memorable characters. Though Dorough's voice has gotten more mellow (hear *Children Of All Ages* on the Different Drummer label), his sketches have become more abstract. I'm still ambivalent about this album, having difficulty with the troubadour's nasality; but I like it fine in small doses.

Dexter's date, the last before a six year recording hiatus for the tenorman, features Kenny Drew on piano, bassist Leroy Vinnegar, and drummer Larry Marable. Ira Gitler's liner notes make a case for the long tall man's work being out of vogue at the time the session was cut, and Daddy does sound disillusioned, if not embittered, on the title track. His phrases don't quite connect to each other, and there is little joie de vivre in his blues variations. But Gordon's fast tongue, sharp mind, and firmly centered tone are equal to *Confirmation,* and his ballad playing is typically convincing, strong, subtle, and gentle.

Perhaps Dex should have recorded this in New York instead of California. The jacket photo of roasting chestnuts from a sidewalk cart can make anyone homesick for Manhattan. If Dex was not the main man of 1956, he nonetheless left his mark—listen to the spirit of *You Can Depend On Me.*

John Coltrane's *Turning Point,* spliced from *Art Blakey's Big Band* and *John Coltrane In The Winners' Circle,* maps the land from which Trane took his giant steps. He can't stretch out much in the big band setting, surrounded as he is by hornmen like Idrees Sulieman, Bill Hardman, and Al Cohn (on both baritone and tenor). Trane makes up one quintet with Donald Byrd, Walter Bishop on piano, and Wendell Marshall on bass, driven by Blakey; he also serves with a gathering of **db** Critics' Poll winners, including Eddie Costa, Oscar Pettiford, drummer Ed Thigpen, and trombonist Frank Rehak.

The arrangements for post-bop big band are overweight; despite Blakey's modern-sounding small groups, his bluesy tunes don't stand up under thick instrumentation. *If I'm Lucky* seems especially cumbersome; the quintets *Pristine* and *Tippin' In* contain the germ of the tenorist's music to come, with one solo all jagged descending runs that end with as much force as they begin. The other soloists are not so singleminded, nor their contributions so memorable.

Though there was apparently harsh criticism of Duke Ellington's *Historically Speaking* when it was first released in '56, the bad raps seem like mere quibbling now. Especially when considered along with the Blakey band charts, Duke's orchestrations are spare and graceful. There is great plunger work by Ray Nance, fine Hodges (on *The Jeep Is Jumpin'*), sweet Russel Proscope clarinet decorations, and just enough percussion work to keep things swinging. Two Strayhorn compositions, *Lonesome Lullaby* and *Upper Manhattan Medical Group,* raise the question of how critics could ever have been so wrong.

Duke's wisdom, so generously given and pleasurably received, has been one of the constants in jazz history; if '56 was a transitional year for his living orchestra in terms of personnel changes and critical notice, we realize that the whole state of American improvisational music must have been in flux. Bluesmen trying for hits, singers looking for personal modes of expression, hornmen searching themselves for weaknesses and strengths—the uncertain times allowed for offbeat, fringe enterprises as well as small record companies. Without any master plan, Bethlehem captured some good music during some relatively lean years; in playback, the music is memorable as well as instructive. —*mandel*

Duke Ellington, *The Bethlehem Years, Vol. 1* (Bethlehem BCP 6013): ★★★★
John Coltrane, *Turning Point* (Bethlehem BCP 6024): ★★★
Various Artists, *The Finest Of The Folk Bluesmen* (Bethlehem BCP 6017): ★★★
Carmen McRae, *The Finest Of Carmen McRae* (Bethlehem BCP 6004): ★★
Bob Dorough, *The Yardbird Suite* (Bethlehem BCP 6023): ★★★★ ½
Dexter Gordon, *The Bethlehem Years* (Bethlehem BCP 6008): ★★★

BLINDFOLD TEST

Benny Powell

by leonard feather

Although Benny Powell's principal image in the public eye is that of a trombonist, since ending his 12 year association with Count Basie in 1963 the New Orleans-born Powell has worn many hats.

During the middle and late 1960s he became increasingly active as a propagandist for jazz. He helped formulate a lecture course for the New York public school system, served on the board of directors of Jazzmobile, and became an executive with Jazz Interactions. During his last few years in New York he worked with the bands of Thad Jones/Mel Lewis and Duke Pearson.

Moving to Los Angeles in 1970 as a member of the staff band on the Merv Griffin show, Powell soon became involved in similar enterprises with the public school system. Married in 1971 to the versatile composer and group singer Petsye Powell, he has worked with her as co-leader of Life-Style, a combo seen locally in concerts. Benny also has played with the bands of Bill Berry, Bill Holman and Terry Gibbs.

This was his first blindfold test. He was given no information about the records played.

1. DUKE ELLINGTON. *Minnie The Moocher* (from *Recollections Of The Big Band Era,* Atlantic). Cab Calloway, composer; Lawrence Brown, trombone.

Well, I told you these things could make you look like a dummy . . . and look at the dummy! First of all, it was a classic performance and I'd like to give the trombonist, whoever he was, four and a half stars. I think it was recorded very well and sounded like it was perhaps a reissue that was fooled with electronically for a little better sound. It sounded like one of the bands from the '30s or '40s—I'd say '30s.

Taking a guess, I'd say the trombone soloist was either Quentin Jackson or "Tricky Sam" Nanton. I don't know the name of the song but I kept thinking of Cab Calloway. I think the band performed very well and it was a very clean recording. I'm assuming it was Ellington—both the trombonists played with Ellington, but I don't know why Cab Calloway kept intruding . . maybe it was one of the compositions associated with him.

2. COUNT BASIE. *Doubling Blues* (from *Basie Jam,* Pablo). Basie, piano, organ, composer; Louie Bellson, drums; J. J. Johnson, trombone; Ray Brown, bass; Irving Ashby, guitar; Harry Edison, trumpet; Eddie Davis and Zoot Sims, tenor saxes; Norman Granz, producer.

First of all, I recognize Count Basie. I like this record very much—it's the kind of record that incorporates all the improvisational qualities of jazz and all the good things about jazz—the happiness and so forth. It sounded like a live performance, perhaps something that Norman Granz would record—an all star kind of group.

I liked the drummer very much. I was trying to guess who he was and I came up with . . . well, he's out of the Jo Jones school . . . I would hazard a guess that it was Louie Bellson. The trombonist sounds like one of J. J.'s disciples, if not J. J. himself. The tenor saxophonist could have been—the first solo—might have been Stan Getz or Zoot Sims and naturally you can't mistake Sweets, who has such a personal kind of sound, as well as Lockjaw Davis. I don't know who the guitarist was. I imagine it might have been somebody like John Collins—you know, classic, who really does everything well. And I wasn't able to guess who the bass player was.

For the performance and professionalism involved I'd give it three and a half stars—four perhaps.

3. BILL WATROUS. *Zip City* (from *Manhattan Wildlife Refuge,* Columbia). Phil Kelly, composer; Watrous, trombone; Ed Soph, drums; Juroslav Jakubovic, baritone sax; Danny Stiles, trumpet.

I believe that the leader of this band is a trombonist and the reason I said that is because the trombones are mixed so hot. Incidentally, it was an excellent trombone solo and the guys who come to mind who can play that fast and with that much coherence are Bill Watrous and Carl Fontana. I imagine it would be Bill Watrous. The band was very clean. I can't identify too many of the players—I don't know who played the baritone saxophone solo—but I particularly liked what the drummer was doing. It sounded like he had two bass drums going and at that fast tempo he was still able to articulate something. It sounded like it could have been Grady Tate. It was perhaps Danny Stiles playing lead trumpet on there. I would rate it, for the cleanliness and professionalism involved, plus for the excellent trombone solo in the beginning, I'd give this three and a half or four stars. I liked this. It was pretty subtle and very slick.

4. WOODY HERMAN. *Crosswind* (from *Herd At Montreux,* Fantasy). Billy Cobham, composer; Jim Pugh, arranger, trombone; Jan Konopasek, baritone sax.

You picked an excellent choice of material for me. It sounded like—and this is not a putdown by any means—it sounded like one of the finer college bands. I didn't recognize any of the soloists. I liked the loping feeling, the loose feeling that the band was able to achieve. Actually it was kind of reminiscent in some spots of the feeling that the Crusaders get, but I know it's a large orchestra. It kind of went on a little too long for me because it really grabbed me at first and after a while it had kind of a sameness after three minutes—it was probably a four minute tune and would have worked better if it had been three minutes and 20 seconds. But I guess I'm really being picky when I say that. But I can't tell you who the band was or who the soloists were.

Feather: Well, there's a good reason for the college sound, because the rhythm section all came out of North Texas State and many other members of the band were drawn from colleges in recent years by the leader, who is Woody Herman. So in a sense you're almost right.

Powell: Woody is a champion at giving younger musicians exposure. I imagine this might have been one of those efforts. It sounded like it. I'd like to rate it three for its organization. It was a nicely recorded piece.

5. TROMBONE WORKSHOP. *Uli's Dance* (MPS-BASF). Albert Mangelsdorff, composer, arranger, first trombone solo; Slide Hampton, second trombone solo; George Gruntz, electric piano.

Again, I felt like it was an experimental situation. I didn't recognize any of the soloists, but I did like the fact that a trombone choir got together and did something. For my own personal choice, I would have looked for a little more variety in the rhythm section, at least a guitar and perhaps a percussionist would have helped to add just a little color. I liked it, I thought it was a good arrangement. It didn't really knock me down, but I know what was done wasn't the easiest thing to do, to play all those intervals that fast, so I must appreciate it from that standpoint. Other than that, I would rate it . . . this rating thing is becoming complicated. . . .

Feather: Two is fair and three is good. It sounds like you're two and a half, but I don't want to influence you.

Powell: I'll go along with that. It's definitely two and a half. . . .I'm surprised, now that you've told me who it was, because I do believe it was the setting and the type of music they were trying to play, because you named some of my dear friends—guys I know very well. I knew Ake Persson, I've always been a fan of Slide Hampton and Albert Mangelsdorff. All these guys are extremely individual musicians, but that record to me wasn't an indication of individuality. They sounded the same, and I think they were sort of locked into the arrangement and the type of music—that electric piano pounding relentlessly. I think they were not really able to express themselves individually.

6. HERBIE HANCOCK. *Toys* (from *Speak Like A Child,* Blue Note). Hancock, composer, piano; Thad Jones, fluegelhorn; Peter Phillips, bass trombone; Jerry Dodgion, alto flute; Ron Carter, bass; Mickey Roker, drums.

Who knows? You would give me one that would stump me for the last. I started off like wildfire and here I am going out like a bum. Well, I would hazard a guess that the leader is the pianist. I have to try to think of who he might be. If he was the arranger as well, I liked what he played and the arrangement was very interesting—very interesting voicings, and I liked the way the bass trombone was used in the opening, and I like some of the woodwinds, the way he had them voiced in the same register, complementing what he did. In fact I enjoyed the piece very much; I'd give it four stars.

The drummer . . . there are a number of people who play that way. The one who came to my mind, and who is an excellent drummer by the way, is Freddie Waits. Again I kept thinking of Cedar Walton or a number of pianists who are excellent and who play this kind of impressionistic jazz, and I use that in the best sense of the word. It really paints pictures to me. That's all I can come up with. ♭♭

Profile

ARMEN HALBURIAN by arnold jay smith

"A gift for my parents," is how Armen Halburian describes his coming to this earth on Christmas Day, 1933 in the Bronx, New York. "I have a good feeling about that, good vibes. It's a day of love and giving, at least in the spiritual sense. When I get up in the morning, I try to keep a perspective about what's in store for me. Control is what it's all about."

And "control" describes how Armen handles his axes. He plays what have come to be known as "toys," the small percussion instruments that have wound their way into almost every session, live and recorded. To see Armen set up is to wonder if he'll ever be able to find everything. He prepares his place well before show time, spreading a rug (Armenian, to be sure) in a corner, placing his Erector set of stands just so, then hanging bells, gongs, cymbals of every type, and various wooden things from those stands. On the floor is a child's dream—one dinner bell, one cowbell, drum sticks, timbale sticks, claves, rattles from all over the world, Latin gourds filled with beans. The dream is not merely childlike—which one of us doesn't have the urge to slap a conga, shake a maraca, or beat a clave to a pulsating rhythmic tempo?

With a name like Halburian one would think he comes from the Middle East and has brought the tools of his trade with him. Not so.

"I was educated in the Bronx and went to Monroe High School where I made the band. You know, one of those city school bands that loaned you the instruments. I had no formal training; everything I learned was either through private lessons or on my own. In fact, my first drum teacher put sticks in my hands and said, 'That's how you hold them.' He never bothered to find out that I was left-handed. He only knew that that was the way he did it, so I had to do it that way too. In a way, that worked out very well. Now I am a bit ambidextrous in that I can handle sticks naturally. As soon as I pick them up, I go to the right-hand position, and I can play a shaker, say, very strongly with my left."

His rudimentary training started at age 12. "It kept me off the streets, and that made my mother happy because there were gangs roaming the streets then. Very little has changed in the teaching of basic drumming except one very important thing: after all these years I have switched to matched grip, which was easy for me. I was using that grip while I played timbales and other non-trap setups. Tympanists also use the matched grip and I played them as well. And don't forget, the Africans on those drums they made out of logs and barrels still use it since it's the only way they know how. The wrist isn't as loose, but there's more forceful stroking. Hell, Gene Krupa played that way when he did those tom-tom beats. It's not really new, just newly taught.

"I also design my setup so that I can play more than one instrument at once and add textures to the beat. If I'm playing ride, I would want to merely pick up something else without breaking the tempo. The first thing I did was design a gong rod so that I could get some real bottoms out of my cymbals. The stands that were available didn't allow the gong the freedom I desired, so I simply set it up with complete free movement. Then I added a bell tree in a horizontal position, spanning the two cymbals that were on top of my bass drum. Eventually, I switched from traps completely, so the tom-toms disappeared as I hung other items from the bell tree. I can stand in one position and play almost anything. There is also a table in front of me with the percussion instruments that have handles and are easily grabbed."

Halburian's playing experience came from the trail of hard knocks. He landed a job with Marian McPartland's trio in 1953 after having studied technique with Joe Morello, Marian's drummer at the time.

"That was right after the army, which was another trip. I was in the bagpipe band there, an *American* bagpipe band. Some of those cats playing the field drums were fantastic; what technique! I had no formal training, conservatory-wise, don't forget. All of them had some kind of schooling. My first introduction to any kind of outside drumming came through records of swing bands. And a janitor in a synagogue introduced me to a recording of Max Roach . . . that was something else again."

That's how it went, picking up tips, listening to others. He played the Catskill mountain resorts and found he needed tympani, so he went out and took some lessons. But the gig with Mrs. McPartland didn't make it.

"The bass and drums were not together so I thought it best to leave. It was a tremendous experience, but . . . it didn't work—it never does when you are trying to fill someone else's shoes.

"I had started to listen to Middle Eastern and Oriental music about the same time. Also, I had a friend whose lineage was Puerto Rican and Brazilian so I picked up on the Latin things. My bag of tricks was growing more diverse. I would hear sounds and become frustrated that I couldn't reproduce them. I wanted to play those instruments."

Meanwhile, Armen's father was a photoengraver with a lucrative union membership and a talent for metal work.

"While I was working a day gig at photoengraving I designed all of my rods and stands . . . and a drum tool. It is shaped like a cross, with a screw driver, socket wrench, wing nut tightener and a drum tuning key as legs. I designed it to fit all existing drum sets and every possible need that any drummer could have. It really taught me how to be a businessman . . . and I couldn't handle that and practice and play gigs all at once. I sold it to Ludwig outright.

"The experience showed me that if I put all my energies into one thing, I can be successful. I apply that to my trade. There was a time when I felt the pangs of jealousy due to the fierce competition in New York. I was hanging out in a loft on East 19th Street with Richie Beirach, Dave Liebman, Chick Corea and Airto, when he was first coming up. He told me something that I maintain today. He told me to be myself. He said that he always tried to be individual, unique. I felt that the way for me to do that was to accumulate as many instruments as interested me and learn about them. I found out that all that stuff about trying to be great, trying to follow the Morellos or whoever, trying to be the fastest, the best reader, was destructive. I settled into the percussion thing a little more relaxed as a result. Connie Kay had begun to use some small percussion instruments with the MJQ, so it had already become easier.

"Funny, as I began to think of my music as a whole, I also began to think of my instruments as a total unit—as one. All the free gigging I was doing paid off because Pat Rebillot heard me, told Herbie Mann, and Herbie called me to dub tablas over *London Underground*. I begged off the tabla date but suggested that he let me do small percussion. He liked it and hired me on the spot. I've been with him now for two years.

"Which brings up an important point. Herbie gets his inspiration from anyplace or anything. He recently recorded some Buddhist monk chants he heard in Japan. I'm the same way. For instance, my nephew, whose legs were too short for the bass drum, tried to kick a tempo on my set. The things he was getting were rhythmic and natural. He was making two and three consecutive beats in a random fashion. By controlling a back-and-forth rocking motion of your foot you can achieve that same syncopation."

From the streets of New York to the temples of Japan, Armen has brought his own brand of life. He has graced the studios with Mann, Rebillot and David Newman. He formed a group of percussionists from various parts of the world called International Percussion.

"Included in the group were Badal Roy, the tabla player who was with Miles Davis at the time, Mike Mahaffey, a drummer who was with a rock group called the Angels, and Guilherme Franco, from Brazil. We were quite diverse, culling from India, South America, England, the U.S., you name it."

Larry Young's *Lawrence Of Newark* was a landmark date for Armen.

"I was starting to get calls then, real record date calls, for the percussion things. Joe Farrell, Dave Liebman. Then Attila Zoller asked me to tour with him. The Japan tour with Herbie was especially rewarding. I had done dates and gigs with other drummers, but working with Steve Gadd was exciting. He can be free or tight. It's good to work with someone so well-versed that way.

"My ultimate goal is to bring something to others with my music—to try to tell, through percussion instruments, what music has given me, and to send that out to my audience."

PETE ROBINSON

by bob ness

Pete Robinson is not to be confused with the Englishman by the same name who was on *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Lenny White's *Venusian Summer*. This Pete Robinson is the American who was recently the keyboard player with Freddie Hubbard, March-July, 1976. He has also recorded with Phil Woods *(Phil Woods Quartet)* in 1974 and with his own group *(Dialogues For Piano And Reeds)* in 1972. His earlier group, Contraband, recorded *Time and Space* in 1970.

Pete was born in Chicago in 1950 and moved to Vancouver, Canada three years later where he began piano lessons at the age of six. In 1962 he moved to San Francisco where he started playing with local rock bands and studying with Lev Shorr, former pianist with the San Francisco Symphony. At 15 he was a **down beat** Scholarship winner to

the Berklee School of Music in Boston. The following year he moved to Los Angeles where he joined the Don Ellis Orchestra for two years. In 1969, he worked with Shelly Manne for a year.

"I started playing classical music at the age of six," Pete recalls, "and continued up to the age of 12 when I started to get involved with other forms like jazz and rock. The transition from classical to jazz began, I guess, when I started changing the classical pieces around. I once had to play a Prokofiev piece for a jury at the University of Southern California and what I did was read the piece down and get the basic structure memorized and then I improvised the rest. My teacher didn't even know it through four readings until finally he noticed something and caught me.

"To me the transition from classical to jazz was a natural extension because I didn't want to be locked into just plain straight classical music. At the time, in the early '60s when I was 12, I hadn't been introduced to much 20th Century classical music, and rock was incredibly boring to me. My father had a few jazz records around, like Art Tatum, and I found myself being pulled in that direction. Tatum did not use improvisation very much. If you listen to pieces by him that were recorded over a period of time, say *Willow Weep For Me* or *Elegy*, you'll find that 80% of them are very close to each other. Within the basic structure there are only slight deviations and in that sense he was like a classical composer."

At his home in Los Angeles, Pete has a "priceless" collection of keyboard instruments, synthesizers, and other sound processors, many of which he has designed and built himself. Like the proverbial mad scientist, he is often lost in his laboratory working out the subtleties of sound that he hears in his head.

"Up until about 1970, most of my music was involved with improvisation. At that time I didn't want the discipline of writing everything out and it was a time of experimentation. Since then, however, it's been a process of whittling out what I don't want. Now the music I'm involved in is basically self-derived in the sense that I'm recording it all and I'm building all the instruments myself. And when I don't play the parts myself, I teach the musicians not only how to play the parts, but how to play the instruments as well.

"I feel that I need to do this for several reasons. For one thing, the state of the art has either forced or persuaded many good musicians to go in directions other than those which I believe to be artistic and there is now a dearth of really good creative musicians. The financial situation prevents most musicians from spending hours and hours learning to play my music. And if I can play a part better than anyone else, why not do it that way? This way I can completely control my product and I don't have to rely on other people.

"Like Art Tatum, I leave very little room for deviation in my music. My music is notated as much as possible. I leave just enough room for the other musicians so that they don't feel locked into the piece and yet as a composer I can get exactly what I want. For example, I'll write out a part for a drummer and have him play it continuously while I record it. Then I may spend a week running it through my equipment, processing it to exactly what I want before I'll drop it into the piece. In that way I can get the maximum result with a minimum of effort on the musician's end."

In addition to his jazz interests, Pete has already had a lot of experience in producing, engineering, and arranging in the pop music field for such people as Elaine Thomas, Pat Boone, Dick and Dee Dee, Billy Preston, Redbone, and the Four Seasons. He has also done some film scoring including six documentaries for the Pasadena and Santa Monica school system, and he has worked on soundtracks for most major film studios.

The question/charge of "selling out" is often levelled by jazz purists at anyone who deviates from the "true form" and Pete's comments on this were very interesting.

"'Selling out' is usually accompanied with a negative emotional response. It's a catch-all phrase that encompasses a lot of things—your musical style, your personal style, your financial style. It's very hard, once you take the first step, to go backwards. Things begin to snowball. If you do one record that's in a certain vein, you have incredible pressure to do another one just like it. The pressure is not only from the outside—the record companies, managers, friends, fans—the pressure is also on the inside because if you attain a certain amount of success, you not only don't want to lose the financial gains, you also don't want to lose that egotistical thing.

"People all of a sudden like you, whereas before when you were playing all that weird music nobody liked you. There are a lot of business hassles trying to keep a band together when you're not making any money. There are hassles trying to keep your marriage together when your old lady has to go out and work 12 hours a day to support you. There are a lot of things and that's why I don't put down any other musician for changing his style to try to fit what's current. Nobody can make that decision except the person that's doing it.

"It's not just a matter of making a conscious decision because usually your mind will not allow you to accept the fact that you sold out so you start saying to yourself, 'Yeah, this isn't actually that bad.' And in a certain sense a lot of the music that's going on right now is not that bad, except that it's very basic and superficial. No matter how complex you make a funk riff it's still a funk riff and playing that kind of music is not very interesting or challenging to me. I'm much more interested in trying to keep my sanity rather than playing that game of trying to please this person, that person, make some money, get a house . . . those things are important to me only if I can keep my sanity and keep my music as pure as I want it to be."

Although there has been work going on in electronic music since the early 1900's, the actual development of the popular synthesizer happened in the last 10 to 15 years and the big boom of interest has been in the past three years. Pete feels that a hundred years from now only about two or three works from the present will be remembered.

Ultimately it is the gut-level reaction to the music by the listener that is important. "The process of getting to the music," Pete says, "the notating, the instruments that I design and build, the recording complexities, and all that means absolutely nothing if the music doesn't sound good. Harry Partch once said that a strange thing sometimes happens in the academic world to musicians who say, 'OK, today I'm going to write a sonata,' and then they get all their themes together and recapitulations and all the rest of it. They fulfill all the requirements of a sonata, but that doesn't mean they've written a good sonata.

"To me the only way to react to music is to the sound of it and that's why I'm always very hesitant to describe what I do—in fact I usually just refuse. It's much more important to listen and then derive whatever you want out of it. The best example I can think of, of words superseding the music, is to read liner notes. I haven't bought an album in three or four years, but if I was to go on the basis of liner notes I should have bought 200,000 albums. My feelings are let the listener, the critic, other musicians, whoever, make up their own minds. Whatever historians call it, that's fine with me because the words are not that important—it's the music that's important."

caught...

ECM Festival: Creative Family of Artists . . .

Ailey/Ellington: Extension of Life and Music . . .

ECM FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

Royce Hall, University of California at Los Angeles

Personnel: Art Lande's Rubisa Patrol (Lande, piano; Mark Isham, trumpet, soprano sax; Bill Douglas, bass, flute; Kurt Wortman, drums); Terje Rypdal Group (Rypdal, guitar, soprano, sax; Sveinung Hovensjo, 6-string Fender bass; Palle Danielsson, bass; Jon Christensen, drums); Enrico Rava Group (Rava, trumpet; John Abercrombie, guitar; Danielsson, bass; Christensen, drums); Gary Burton Quintet (Burton, vibes; Steve Swallow, bass; Pat Metheny, guitar; Danny Gottlieb, drums; Eberhard Weber, bass); Steve Kuhn's Ecstasy (Kuhn, piano; Harvie Swartz, bass; Michael Smith, drums; Steve Slagel, alto and soprano saxes, flute); Abercrombie and Towner (Abercrombie, electric and acoustic guitars; Ralph Towner, acoustic guitar); Eberhard Weber's Colours (Weber, bass; Charlie Mariano, soprano sax; Rainer Bruninghaus, keyboards; Christensen, drums); Jack DeJohnette's Directions (DeJohnette, drums, tenor sax; Abercrombie, guitar; Alex Foster, tenor and soprano saxes; Ron McClure, bass; Warren Bernhardt, piano).

It was more than a bit disheartening to find Royce Hall, an acoustically sound setting that comfortably seats 2000, more than half empty on the opening evening of the two-day ECM music festival. Apparently, word had failed to circulate that the purveyors of the Eicher philosophy (refer to **db** Perspective 1/15/76) were scheduled to saturate the city with contemporary sounds of a quite profound nature. This was largely the fault of the uncaring, insensitive broadcast media in this city. Although Polydor bought a few spots on two local "jazz"/pop radio stations, neither of these stations expose their audience to the music of *any* of the artists included on the ECM tour.

It is significant to note that the second concert was well attended, a dramatic reversal from opening night and proof positive that people are indeed ready to embrace serious cosmopolitan communication if they are made aware of its existence. The news about the music presented on opening night had apparently spread by word of mouth, from the conoscenti to their peers. It seems that the first concert proved to be both an artistic success and a viable promotional vehicle. The artists themselves served as sort of grass roots promotional representatives, communicating to the half empty hall with all the enthusiasm usually associated with a S.R.O. situation.

Let's examine exactly what elements of the first evening's performance had such a far-reaching impact on the second night's attendance figures. First of all, virtually every artist communicated in an intimate manner, delivering an authentic sincere approach, thereby creating a comfortable setting that enveloped the audience in a warm arena of sensations. Secondly, the audience apparently found the mixture of jazz, rock, and classical idioms novel as well as cerebrally stimulating and emotionally gratifying. Lastly, and perhaps of greatest importance, the planning of the artists' order of appearance was tastefully handled, each group conscientiously holding its performance to no longer than forty minutes. The transition of equipment and instruments between sets was also carried out in an expeditious manner. Whoever coordinated the concert is to be lauded for this clockwork-like precision, as well as the aesthetically pleasing placement of acts. One sensed that everyone (musicians and those behind the scenes) was working together in an unselfish direction toward the common goal of collective communication; a genuine celebration and exposition of the neo-classic tradition.

Art Lande's Rubisa Patrol opened the first show wearing identical masks, playing an authentic rendition of the dixieland standard *Jada*. The masks were soon discarded, and the free inventive music that followed was a pretty good indication of what the festival would be all about—uncompromising music free of commercial cliches and concessions. While this opening musical skit may have been interpreted by some as a mockery of traditional music, this kind of deduction seems a bit defensive in nature. By dropping their masks, Lande's group was simply revealing its true identity, as if to say, "This is what we're really here for; this is what we're all about." No malice was intended toward traditionalists.

On *Perelandra* (a tune inspired by the writings of C. S. Lewis) Lande laid down a repetitive four measures of seven and one of three, over which Mark Isham's muted trumpet weaved a lush cerebral texture of comforting nuances. Bill Douglas doubled nicely on bass and flute. *Escaping By Canoes Down A Muddy River* was a flexible sketch that found Lande exploring the percussive possibilities of the keyboard. This energetic music sounded unlike anything Lande has recorded for ECM. The group concluded its succinct set with *Livres In The Sky*, a pretty 4/4 ballad spotlighting the plaintive sounds of Isham's fluegelhorn. This tune brought to mind the subtle nuances traditionally associated with Lande's European recordings.

Terje Rypdal's quartet followed with an unannounced lengthy jam, a bit too electric and eclectic for my taste, but an interesting exercise in supernatural sounds none the less. Smaller than his regular recording unit, Rypdal's aggregation included the unusual combination of two bassists, Palle Danielsson on upright and Sveinung Hovensjo on a six-string electric Fender bass. The acoustic bass' sound was never marred by its electronic counterpart. While Hovensjo's electric work was simplistic in comparison to the pizzicato virtuosity displayed by Danielsson, this hybrid of acoustic and electronic instrumentation worked beautifully. Rypdal broke a string early in the set, which gave this unique rhythm section an opportunity to lay some fertile groundwork before Terje returned with a startling barrage of space-age sounds.

It is most encouraging to find a rock-oriented group whose music is kept at a moderate decibel level. Although they got off to a rather rough start, the group's approach solidified as the set progressed, ending with an explosion of compatible electric energies.

Danielsson and Christensen returned after intermission to join guitarist John Abercrombie in backing Enrico Rava, the casually attired, intensely energetic Italian trumpeter.

Rava's trumpet voice is one of awesome power and considerable beauty. His music is similar to McCoy Tyner's in that it demands total attention to fully appreciate all that's going on. He seemed willing to take the chance of losing the attention of those who are unable to give totally of themselves as active listeners.

Rava's improvisatory technique is forceful and direct. Throughout the set, Enrico proved that he is capable of sustaining high levels of energy and commitment without even having to venture into the upper register. While an appreciative Rava looked on, Danielsson made full use of both hands on upright in a fine display of dexterity. Rava returned with a surging statement, then suddenly affected a change in both tempo and mood, acting as a creative catalyst and setting the pace as the group quickly followed suit.

Rava and Abercrombie have an extremely compatible relationship. Their improvised statements intertwined through much of the set, complementing and genuinely feeling one another. This kind of communion is surely the result of their having played together more than a few times. Enrico Rava's group was clearly the luminous furnace of the entire festival.

Following the fiery Rava, a cooling of mood was in order. The Gary Burton Quartet, augmented by the talents of Eberhard Weber on bass, provided gentle, soothing dream music, a perfectly paced finale to the volcanic energies of both Rava and Rypdal. On Weber's *Yellow Fields*, Burton carried the melody that Charlie Mariano plays on Eberhard's album of the same name. Burton seemed much more entertaining playing within the context of this dynamic group than on his unaugmented vibraphone solo. On bassist Steve Swallow's *Falling Grace*, Gary remained his melodic, lyrical self. He employed the use of four mallets throughout the evening, pleasing the crowd with familiar tunes penned by Carla

Bley, Jarrett, and Corea.

Pat Metheny's flawless, flowing guitar work was well suited to the subtle ambiance that we've come to expect of Burton's work. I couldn't help drawing a parallel between Metheny's relationship with Burton and Abercrombie's with Rava—they read each other so well. This was a well rehearsed band of serious artists. In fact, Burton's group displayed a collective unity unmatched by any other in the festival, and the audience showed its appreciation by requesting an encore.

Steve Kuhn's group kicked off the second concert with an exposition of refreshing new material. On both *A Change Of Face* and *Deep Tango*, young Slagel surprised with a mature, full-bodied tone on alto. The rhythm section was also of a high calibre, Smith supporting well and proving he's more than a keeper of time. Kuhn then played *Silver*, an unaccompanied piano solo. While there was no real lack of melodic invention in Kuhn's long romantic lines, his playing lacked the comfortable, emotionally uplifting qualities that had been displayed by Lande on the previous evening.

Ralph Towner and John Abercrombie followed with a series of duets that ranged in texture from Ralph's sensitive, delicate acoustic

passages to John's soaring electronic endeavors. Abercrombie's versatile technique seemed as well suited to accompanying Towner's most gentle lyrical states as it was to exploring the possibilities of his own natural melodic lines. Both men are solid technicians, capable of playing with great speed, but never at the expense of clarity in execution. This was a marriage of classical and jazz idioms that the crowd responded to with a standing ovation.

All members of Eberhard Weber's Colours performed from a sedentary position, including soprano saxophonist Charlie Mariano, who introduced eastern elements into the group's already rich multi-ethnic sound by employing an Indian horn that resembles an oboe. While Mariano's delivery sounded a bit forced and non-flowing, his speedy phrasing and technique were a rare joy to witness. Weber's unit sounds like a perfectly balanced machine on record, but seemed to need a little lubrication on this occasion. Rainer Bruninghaus made judicious, sensible use of the electronic keyboard but collectively things just didn't jell—maybe just an off night.

The concert culminated with Jack DeJohnette's Directions, sounding a bit directionless in the rendering of two lengthy pieces from their most recent album. Ron McClure, an old colleague from Jack's days with Charles Lloyd, doubled on upright and electric bass, playing a bit too loud and thereby partially obscuring Alex Foster's soothing Shorter-like sonority on soprano. Although the crowd had thinned considerably by the time DeJohnette's group began its final number, those who remained were treated to an unbelievable drum solo that found Jack everywhere at once, fully utilizing six cymbals and two bass drums. Jack's every appendage is its own separate musical and rhythmic entity. His facial expressions indicated that he feels every note.

Even though the aura of the second evening didn't quite match up to the first, both concerts were, for the most part, thoroughly refreshing experiences. One could sense that the ECM family of artists is exactly that—a creative family whose members care about each other and are working together to pave fresh artistic avenues. *—gary g. vercelli*

ALVIN AILEY DANCE COMPANY/ DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA

New York State Theater, New York City

Personnel: James Buddy Bolden, Barry Lee Hall, Willie Singleton, Lew Soloff, trumpets; Art Barron, Chuck Connors, Ray Harris, Malcolm Taylor, trombones; Bobby Eldridge, Percy Marion, Harold Minerve, Vincent York, Dave Young, reeds; Edward Ellington II, guitar; Lloyd Meyers, Lawrence Wolf, piano; Rocky White, drums; Gerald Wiggins, Jr., bass; Anita Moore, Carline Ray, Lee Hooper, vocals; Mercer Ellington, Joyce Brown, conductors; Alvin Ailey Dance Company and Repertory Workshop.

When is ballet not ballet? When it's modern dance, of course. But in the hands of a master like Ailey, it doesn't much matter if the performers are running about doing handsprings, rump-rocking exercises, or perfectly classic *pas de deux*. Ailey personally choreographed some of the offerings, but those that he allowed others to stage were so obviously affected by his energy that it didn't much matter—all the performances had the Ailey stamp and that is a fine imprimatur indeed.

The season ran two weeks. The first week was completely devoted to Ellington compositions, including the first New York ballet performance of *Three Black Kings*. During the second week, the repertory company intermingled its regular pieces with Ellingtonia that were more familiar to Ailey audiences of seasons past.

The company, on the whole, was a mixed bag. To paraphrase that little girl with the curl, when they were good they were very good, but when they were bad, they were just mediocre. Uneven would be the kindest way to explain it. The fault, I found, was not with the regulars. Judith Jamison, Donna Wood, Lonne Morrelton, Clive Thompson, Dudley Williams, Estelle Spurlock, Sarita Allen and the others were their usual superb selves. The Workshop performances, however, often left something to be desired—they were somewhat stiff and awkward.

The Ellington band was in rare form. As one can tell from the personnel listing, it was an expanded orchestra. Soloff does not play with the band regularly, nor does Wolf, whose pianistic style was sometimes so much like Ellington's that one would swear it was a recording. Vocalists Ray and Hooper were on for *The Mooche*, Carline doing *The 23rd Psalm*

section and Lee *Creole Love Call.*

Speaking of *The Mooche,* let's give credit immediately to the finest bit of staging of the Ellington Festival. The setting was a nightclub; a gigantic neon sign flashed "MOOCHE" as six dances made up Ellington tributes. The dancers (Spurlock, Jamison, Allen, Enid Britton and Beth Shorter) handled their roles well. Shorter and Allen did the role of Marie Bryant on two different occasions and, as the part usually falls to Allen, hers was the smoother, better tempered of the two.

The much touted New York City premiere of *Three Black Kings* was amazingly close to the annotations made by the composer prior to his death. The composition was written to be performed as a ballet and, while the concert version has some intricate solo space (particularly for tenor saxophones), the dance tends to overshadow the instruments.

Elbert Watson (as King Balthazar), Clive Thompson (King Solomon), and Dudley Williams (Martin Luther King, Jr.) were excellent in their roles. I find it hard to believe that every movement in a ballet of this sort is choreographed—there must be room for improvisation on the part of the performer. Watson's Balthazar, performed with an all-male ensemble, was near perfection both times I saw it. Thompson's Solomon was equally well-performed with an all-female ensemble. But it was Williams' King that stood out. The music, with its down home feel, allows the body to take its course and Dudley really let all the muscles hang out. He was lithe and limber, letting the juices flow. He followed the music perfectly, which was no mean task considering the dramatic effects and tempo changes. The company had its finest hour here.

Williams was on the boards the following day with *Reflections In D,* a day after I had seen Thompson perform the same piece. While Clive's performance had an unusual stuttering quality—often anticipating the beat, sometimes falling behind it—Dudley's was fluid and marvelous.

Where *Reflections* was meant to be interpretive, *Forty* left this writer in a quandry. It appeared to be a series of challenge rounds by some dancers at a rehearsal. Preceding each segment were some music-less steps. The music itself was some rarely heard Ellington: *Tap Dancer's Blues, Fat Mess, Never Stop Remembering Bill* and *Don Juan. Juan* had some catchy syncopatic half-steps which brightened up the finale.

The five dances of *Liberian Suite* were joys to behold. Now here was a true political statement, but it was one of independence celebration. Anita Moore sang the opening *I Like The Sunrise,* and the company took it from there. Dance number three, featuring Tina Yuan, Elbert Watson, and the company, was a superb blend of dancers and band. Number four was a folk-oriented performance with the dancers' arms raised and their feet doing tribal steps that have transcended the continents and the ages.

Another fun piece was *Caravan.* This herky-jerky item had no obvious connecting theme. In fact, the musical arrangements of the eleven most popular tunes from the Ellington/Strayhorn book (by Michael Kamen) will pass into rock and roll repertoires as quickly as the dancers sped across the stage. The electrifying Ms. Jamison led Wood, Yuan and the others through the happy meaninglessness. Mr. Williams did a dance with clogs that had the audience forgetting that they were at a dance performance and made them think they were on Broadway. The company donned clogs and paraded behind a screen that showed their feet only. It was choreographer Louis Falco at his lightest. Duke would have liked this as it showed reflections of an era he missed—rock and ballet, an extension of life and music that he stood for.

Missing from *Caravan* was the romanticism of the *pas de deux* in *The Road Of The Phoebe Snow.* This entire production ran hot and cold. The *West Side Story* theme worked only intermittently; the fact that we became involved with the plot rather than the dancing and/or the music was a distraction. It took a second and third viewing to find that the Ellington themes (from *A Drum Is A Woman, Anatomy Of A Murder,* and *Such Sweet Thunder*) fit perfectly with the staging.

Some closing words on the viability of an Ailey/Ellington festival: there seemed to have been some pressure to preface the "new" works with some words by celebrities. But why were the highly descriptive musings of Stanley Dance read, or rather butchered, by Patti Labelle and Ashford and Simpson? Why couldn't they have been done with the consistency and eloquent simplicity of Coretta Scott King, who read the introductory material to *Three Black Kings?*

The other side of the festival's coin was the presence of Mercer and the band who performed two separate medleys with integrity and freshness, as well as capable pit work.

—arnold jay smith

impressively in the saxophone section is Art Pepper, perennial West Coast alto saxophone star. "He is really remarkable," says Ellis. "*Everything* he plays is musical, the notes make sense, and there's so much feeling. Art's not one of those fast note players—he never has been—but he'll give you more music in two quarter notes than some guys will give you in a whole chorus full of 30 seconds."

The string section includes no less than two musicians—violinist Bobby Bruce and violist Jimbo Ross—who play effective jazz solos, and the list of Ellis regulars includes trombonist Glenn Ferris, saxophonist Sam Falzone, pianist Milcho Leviev, drummer Dave Crigger, bassist John Williams and lead trumpeter Glenn Stuart. It is an impressive group of musicians, and they seem to have picked up traces of Ellis' steady rider focus on the essentials of music making. It's no wonder. Ellis' drive—his absolute *belief* in what he is doing—is so strong that it is an almost tangible presence in the air around him.

Like so many jazzmen of his generation, Ellis has had to struggle to maintain his personal vision in the face of persistent inroads from rock music. And, more than many, Ellis *has* maintained that vision. The body of work he has built over the ten years of the Ellis orchestra's existence has been broad enough to find room for everything from ragas, complex meters and electronic instruments to pure, down-home blues. But it has never been so broad that it lost the Ellis touch—which is perhaps best described as a constant tension between the head and the heart, a battle between Ellis' rampantly curious musical mind and his gut-wrenching need to feel the swing.

It's ironic that his music probably has found more common cause with rock than almost any I can think of, even though a new Ellis recording hasn't been available for more than a year, and then not on a major label. Much of the material that has been played by the Ellis orchestra would be turning heads around if it were noticeably available on recordings. Unfortunately it arrived, in the sad, familiar phrase, before its time, and today much of it languishes in obscurity on shelves in Columbia Records warehouses. Given the highly volatile quality of today's jazz-rock market, one has to assume that such a curious situation will not persist, and that Ellis' new music—which is at least as remarkable as his *old* music—will soon be available on recordings. (A&r men may be cautious, but they're not stupid.)

"I don't know," says Ellis, wise in the ways of the music business. "There doesn't seem to be a lot of interest in creativity for its own sake. Jazz musicians have discovered that they can be *stars*, and you can't blame them for grabbing what they can when they can. But creativity? That's something else. I keep thinking about guys like Jaki Byard. I went to hear him when I was in New York recently. He's fantastic, maybe even better than he has ever been, playing some of the most creative piano I've ever heard in my life. But who's listening—I don't even think he's recording for anyone. Sure, he says that he's had his shot and the time has come for the younger guys to get theirs, but the fact remains that he plays infinitely better than almost anybody I can think of—and certainly better than most of the guys who are making the big bucks.

"You don't see the little groups—like Ornette Coleman's before he hit New York—doing things, experimenting, trying stuff out. And that wouldn't be so bad except for the fact that now even the creative stuff that was happening—Mahavishnu's group, for example—seems to have dried out. It's like everybody pulled back. The funny thing is that I don't think I would have had any real awareness of it if I hadn't had some time off and then come back and revived the band. The fact is that it's been a long time since I've done any stretching, too."

Maybe so, but Ellis is stretching once again. Many of the new charts reflect his current interest in finding ways to superimpose complex rhythms *over* a basic 4/4 meter. The results can be as disconcerting as they are fascinating. In one superficially simple piece Ellis hangs a 7/4 based melody above a blues-based 4/4 rhythm pattern. Suddenly the familiar 4/4 we know and love so well is transformed into a now-exotic, now-accessible rhythm that shifts in and out of awareness like a phaser on a rock guitar. I ask Ellis about it. "It's weird, isn't it?" he answers. "You know, the funny thing is that, simple as that melody is, some of the musicians *still* have a hard time playing it. And the time signature is 4/4!!"

He says it with a smile and a shake of the head—like a man who has begun to amaze himself again. As he has. No doubt about it, Don Ellis is alive and well. "Yeah, I'm back—I'm back, I'm ready and I'm moving," he says, "and I expect to be doing even more than I did before—in my own way, of course." For anyone who cares about the state of jazz, Ellis' new lease on life—call it a second chance—has to be very good news indeed. **db**

announced a program of Louis Armstrong. This was my chance, I thought. I heard this name so often. Now I could actually hear him. What I heard was absolute magic. It was like a big, fat beautiful piece of orange coming through the speaker. I knew it was completely different from anything else I'd ever heard.

"But I really didn't understand why it was great until later. I tried to imitate what I heard. Louis would turn a phrase or run a chord that sounded just right. And I'd try it. When you try to imitate another person's creative process, that's when you begin to understand the dimensions of real talent and genius. With Louis, I'd try, but it was hopeless. Even if I played the notes he played, the rubato would be off. Nothing sounds as right as the way he does it. His quarter notes are the longest, fattest quarter notes in the world. Try to imitate them, and you sound out of time. Louis is a forever study."

Many years later, Ruby and Louis were teamed on one of those Timex jazz shows mentioned earlier. They were to trade fours on *Jeepers Creepers*. Was Ruby pleased at the prospect? Hardly. "I was appalled and horrified to play with him," he recalled. "Horrified to play with a person like that. Nobody should. He's too good to have some idiot like me taking up time when he could be playing. It's bad enough that the guys in his band had to play. He had horrible bands most of the time. But it didn't make any difference. He'd tune them out, unless it was someone like Hines, Teagarden or Catlett." (I remember watching the Timex show on April 30, 1958, and taping it. But a few days after Braff mentioned this, I ran across an LP containing the very performance from the very show he was talking about, along with other excerpts from Timex TV shows. It's worth getting, not only for Braff's very brief turn with his idol Louis but for the finest *Mahogany Hall Stomp* ever recorded: Kings Of Jazz Records, KLJ 20026.)

Other early trumpet models included Bobby Hackett and Frankie Newton. After taking up the trumpet at eight, he started picking up money for playing before he was out of grammar school. At 14 and 15 he was subbing in local clubs around Boston. It's interesting to note that although he has no formal training, he insists that his basic trumpet technique was up to present speed by the time he was 12 or 13.

"But technique has nothing to do with music," he adds. "The question is what do you do with it. I may have been able to do anything I wanted on the trumpet by high school, but that doesn't mean it was any good. I feel I've only really matured as an artist within the last couple of years. I don't think all those '50s records have that much depth to them, really. I much prefer my present work to what I was doing 15 years ago. When I made those first sessions for Vanguard, I was long past the point where I was imitating anybody. But my mind wasn't at all clear enough to make subtle distinctions and discriminations. I suppose I was into my own bag. But the older you get, the fuller it gets."

An artist views his work from a different perspective than his audience. Yet, Braff's remarks are at least a little surprising. A survey of his work from the first Vanguards through today reveals a remarkably stable and consistent style. In fact, the richness and diversity of his Vanguard period is such that he could easily rest his reputation on it. Which is not to say that his current work has any less stand-

ing. But when he says to throw away all his old records, he's being too hard.

Probably no young musician that developed during the '50s was embraced more unanimously by critics than Braff. It began with an engaging session under Vic Dickenson's name that also included Edmond Hall. Except for Les Erskine's monochromatic drumming, it was a most auspicious debut. There were other LPs that stand today as some of the brightest music of the decade. One with Buck Clayton (Vanguard 8008), Ellis Larkins (VRS 8019, 8020, 8507) and a striking trio session with Mel Powell and Bobby Donaldson called *Thigamagig* which caught Braff at his most sophisticated (VRS 8502). The first LP under his own name, *The Ruby Braff Special* (VRS 8504) was captivating not only for Braff at his most lyrical (*When You Wish Upon A Star, Ghost Of A Chance*) but for the rhythm section of Jo Jones and Walter Page. It also featured Dickenson and Braff's boyhood chum from Boston, Sam Margolis, playing a wonderful light-toned tenor.

Being a player of almost classic timelessness, Braff was soon sought after by many and became the star of the New York jazz establishment. His first big band date was as soloist (Ruby was not nor is he today a good sight reader, thus his absence from most written section work) with Benny Goodman's band on the famous *B. G. In Hi-Fi* date (Capitol W 565). He also worked and recorded with Goodman at Basin Street in 1955, a stand that produced a superior 3-LP Goodman set on Book of the Month Club Records (SRL 7673). 1954 and 1955 also saw Braff in league with Buck Clayton on the famous Columbia jam session series (CL 557, 701, 882), the one from Carnegie Hall being especially spirited and the closest Braff ever came to an out and out blowing session.

One of his best came in 1957, *Hi-Fi Salute To Bunny* (RCA Victor LPM 1501), in which he recorded with his working band that included Benny Morton, Pee Wee Russell, Dick Hafer, Nat Pierce, Steve Jordan, Walter Page and Buzzy Drootin. It got 4½ stars from **down beat** along with the sort of words Ruby had grown used to: "Braff remains one of the most tasteful trumpet men on the scene today.... Don't pass this one by...." He turns up on Epic (LN 3377) about the same time in another collection of standards. Sessions under Braff's creative control come out well organized, concise and polished. Rarely does any one track go over five or six minutes, and there is also an orchestral feeling even though the groups are small. The same restraint and class mark his more recent efforts such as *International Jazz Quartet Plus Three* (Chiaroscuro CR 115). There were also numerous sessions with George Wein and various Newport Festival groups.

Although there were many records and good reviews, steady work was remarkably sparse. Leonard Feather attributed it to the fact that he was a young musician not marching to the same trends as others of his generation—meaning he didn't play modern jazz. Braff agrees, and blames Joe Glaser as well. In any case, Braff records became increasingly scarce after about 1960. In fact, nothing came out under his own name until a series of Chiaroscuros broke the silence around 1973. (There had been several sessions released in Europe under his own name, but none stateside.) The Chiaroscuros included a reunion with Larkins (CR 117) and two with George Barnes, one taken from a Newport in New York concert in 1973.

Search as you might, it's not likely that you'll find a bad Braff record. Sympathetic production (John Hammond, George Wein Shorty Rogers, et. al.) is one reason. Braff's unwillingness to concede to fashion is the main one. His repertoire is broad but highly selective. He says he plays music written by "doctors of music," meaning Ellington, Gershwin, Arlen and others. Not music by other musicians. "Why should I play *Donna Lee* when I can play *Indiana*," he asks. "When Parker plays Parker, it's brilliant. I don't play Armstrong's stuff either. When I play I think in terms of other instruments and performers. I try to get the delicious feeling I get when I hear a beautiful melody played or sung. I try to translate the feeling I get about the melody into my own playing. I never thought in terms of any specific elements of my playing—tone, attack or whatever."

Today, Ruby's recording again. Work is more steady. One reason, he suggests, is that there are fewer musicians playing in a mainstream style today. Many older musicians have died or retired, leaving a more open field. He also feels he's playing better.

When you look at the music, the Braff portrait mellows considerably from the assertive, tough-talking fellow I introduced some paragraphs back. But there's really no conflict. He may shout and pound and emphasize, but it's really just another form of the same passion one finds and admires in his music. For a musician in his 50th year, there is no higher compliment that can be paid. db

HOW TO ease the ABC's—Part One

by Dr. William L. Fowler

Leery of theory, yet anxious to get on past axe-plus-intuition? Rather blow a horn than study a text, yet eager to lay a foundation for concept-sophistication? Want a nutshell overview—shortcuts and all—of theory fundamentals?

A 100% *yes* score on this mini-quiz indicates the reader should read on . . . (We beg a bit of forebearance from those already skilled in theory and thank them for compassion toward those less literate than they.)

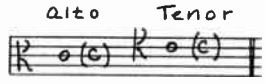
* * *

Pitch Indicators

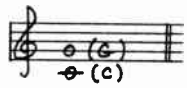
The staff, a collection of five parallel lines containing four spaces between them, provides a visual background for locating the alphabet letter-names (A through G) which designate pitches. A clef sign at the beginning of a staff shows just which line or space represents just which letter name. The C clefs (alto and tenor) pinpoint middle C. (Ex. I)

The G clef (treble) indicates the G located five lines and spaces (inclusive) above middle C. (Ex. II)

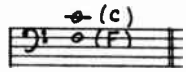
The F clef (bass) indicates the F located five lines and spaces below middle C. (Ex. III)



Ex. I

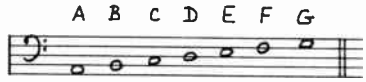


Ex. II

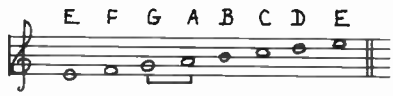


Ex. III

As the alphabet moves forward (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) its letter names move up the staff. (Ex. IV) Whenever the alphabet runs out, it starts over. (Ex. V)

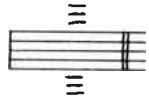


Ex. IV

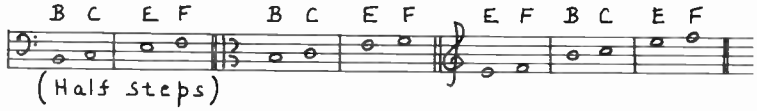


Ex. V

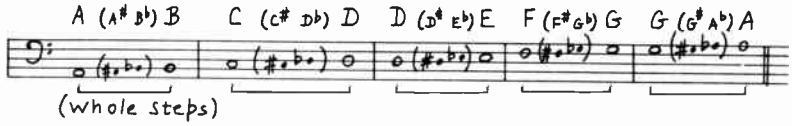
And every staff can be extended by adding leger lines above or below it:



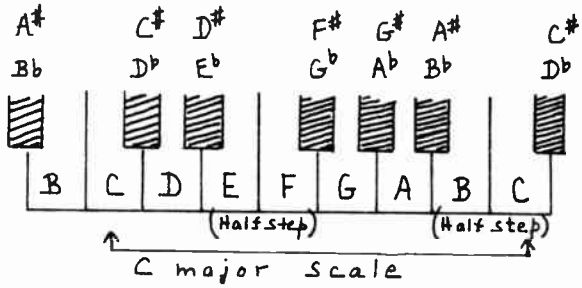
Although neighboring letter names on a staff look equidistant, they're not. To both eye and ear, B and C really do touch each other—there's nothing between them. And so do E and F:



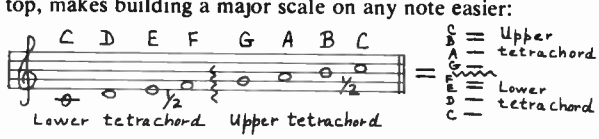
But all the other staff neighbors contain an unseen note between them, a sharped lower letter or a flatted upper letter:



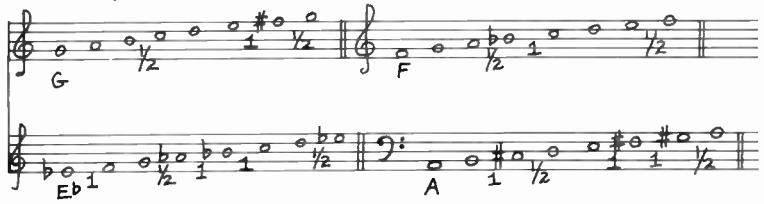
Keyboards follow the schematic of the staff, the white keys sounding the natural letter names and the black keys sounding the sharps or flats in between. No black keys separate adjacent B-C and E-F pairs, but they do separate all the others: A-B, C-D, D-E, F-G, and G-A. Consequently, both the natural letter names on the staff and the white keys on the piano form the same pattern of half steps and whole steps, a pattern which identifies the scale of C major to eye and ear alike:



Visualizing the major scale pattern as two separate four-note units (tetrachords), each with its half step at the top, makes building a major scale on any note easier:

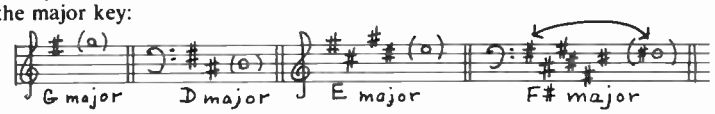


By expanding half steps and contracting whole steps, flats or sharps adjust the succession of whole and half steps over various notes to concur with the major scale pattern:

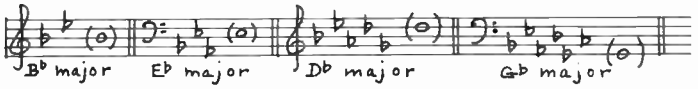


Key Signatures

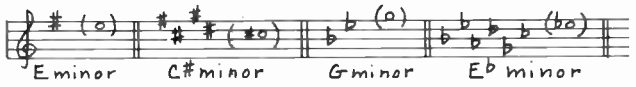
One or more sharps or flats placed next to the clef sign on any staff notify players which letter names must be sharped, flatted or left natural in setting up scale patterns over given notes. Because the consecutive addition of sharps to key signatures forms its own pattern, there's a shortcut for identifying sharp keys: The note directly above the last sharp to be added is itself the name of the major key:



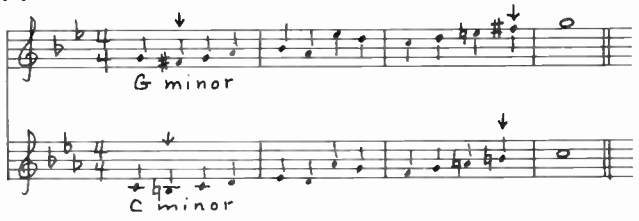
And the pattern for adding flats contains its own shortcut: The next-to-last flat itself names the major key:



The same signatures also indicate minor keys, whose names invariably lie three notes down from the major keynote. This relationship puts minor key names one step under the last sharp or two steps above the last flat:

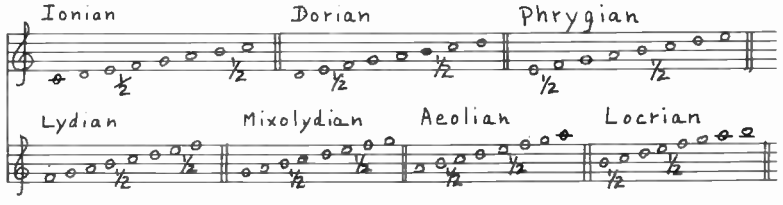


For the ear to recognize the minor version of any key signature, accidentals must constantly raise the note directly underneath the minor keynote. A quick eye-check for such raised notes throughout any piece of music reveals whether or not the key signature means minor:

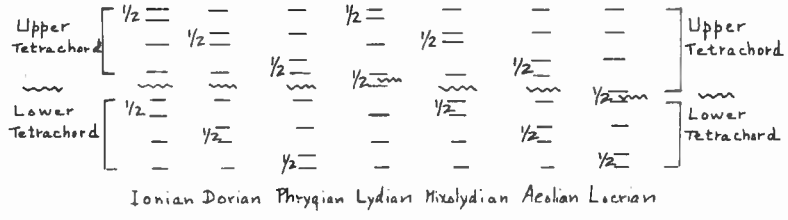


Modes

Since each sharp or flat in a key signature indicates the alteration of some letter name throughout the entire pitch range, each key signature pattern repeats itself every eight notes (octave) as the pitch range extends. And since each key signature contains seven letter names (sharped, flatted or left natural), seven different octave segments can occur within its extension. They're the seven standard modes—Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian, notated as follows in the C major scale extension—no sharps, no flats:



While the half steps remain fixed by the key signature, they occur at different distances from the starting notes of the various modes. For this reason, each mode has its own particular arrangement of whole and half steps and consequently its own tonal flavor. Ladder-type graphs of the modes show their individual differences:



Part Two of this article will continue into minor scales, intervals, chord nomenclature, time signatures, and that most handy musical tool, the cycle of fifths. To be continued in the next issue of **down beat** (Feb 10, 1977).

BASS

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the opportunity to write more I intend to write for my instrument as it pertains to arco. Earlier, that side of the bass was not heard as much as today. Where it might go is infinite in that regard.

Electric bass was created for, let us say, another color in music, more of a commercial value. There are so many things on upright that have not been done yet . . . that I can't even begin to think of any other kind. Look at what Ornette Coleman has done with his bassists: Charlie Haden, Scott LaFaro, David Izenzon, all turned things around using arco.

The fingering technique has changed so that it is a more independent fingering related to the flamenco guitar. There's more facility, more speed. . . . People have been conditioned to listening to strings in a certain kind of environment and the bass is among them. Man, it's frustrating enough trying to deal with the instrument, but to deal with a question like you ask in such a short time. . . .

As far as the future is concerned, I'm too wrapped up in the present to go into that. The bass will be greater than it is now due to the individuals playing it. There are so many different concepts, different means of expression, people "breaking laws." The electric bass is an alteration, a substitute . . . but it's a force, it's easier to carry, easier to play. Then I look back at Jimmy Garrison and I see what can be done with acoustic bass—the clarity, the pureness of one interval double stop. You could hear that gut. I bring that up to date and realize that that period was some of the most spiritual music on the planet, natural music from natural instruments. That music needs to be passed on.

MONK MONTGOMERY: First, there's a misconception here. I was *not* the first electric bassist. I was *one* of the first. Lionel Hampton wanted that sound in his band in 1951 so I played it. The reaction all over the world was the same. It was a bastard instrument (Fender bass); in fact, audiences could not find the bass. They heard the sound, but all they could see was two guitarists. It attracted a lot of attention and that's probably what Lionel was after, you know, the commercial value, the novelty. I made up my mind that I was going to play well even though I detested the thing. I was in love with my upright and this (electric) was artificial. I felt like a freak playing an instrument that wasn't an instrument. Besides the mental adjustment, there was a physical adjustment. It didn't feel right.

The musicians in the band really dug it because it was a strong, solid sound. They had the same feeling they had with the upright. I made a switch back in about '65 or '66 and it was hard. The reverse is not so; it's not as difficult. Going from electric to upright is more difficult because I was not as flexible. I couldn't do on the upright what I was doing on electric. Later, when I rejoined my brothers, Wes and Buddy, I lugged around this big amplifier to bring my upright out front. Finally, I gave it up and went back to electric and haven't veered from it since.

Like electronics, the electric bass will always be in the music business. So will acoustic bass. You can't do without classical piano even though you have all those electric keyboards. You can't escape the timbre of a big acoustic instrument. It's our roots. Electronics has opened up more avenues. Ray Brown said something to me after my last album, *Reality*. He couldn't understand why I didn't follow that album up with another. He said, "Do you know what it means for a bass player to get recognition?" So (now) I would say that if I had been playing the upright bass I never would have made it. It puts me in a different category; it's more melodic and it does the same thing in my mind.

STAFFORD JAMES: Harmonically and melodically, bass players continually play different things and they have been for the longest time. So liberation has come gradually. However, I still feel that the bass will have a supportive role. The period I refer to began in about 1939 with Blanton, through Pettiford, Mingus, Brown, LaFaro, Chambers, I could keep naming them. I think, as well, that there will be further liberation in terms of more major soloists, but I also feel that music needs the bottom that the bass affords. Ron Carter uses a second bassist, and one is supportive.

The pickup has helped make the bass audible . . . a lot of people can't hear the bass in its natural acoustical context. Techniques will develop around the touch of the instrument and even around the accessories.

With the amplification, the acoustical quality of the instrument has been lost and while you can still bend the notes, it's up to the individual to utilize what he's got. I played bass guitar extensively up until three years ago. I switched back because I feel that there is more to be developed on acoustic. My individual voice is more comfortable with acoustic bass. I can't actually *feel*, physically feel, the same way towards electric.

More than likely, there will be new devices to get closer to acoustic sound. That's where the marketing will go.

RAY BROWN: Let me say this. It's a strange situation you put me in. Take a guy like myself who is 50 years old, who's been playing the bass since he was 14. I have seen this instrument go from a slapped, two-beat instrument into complete freedom with people like Stanley Clarke, not necessarily freedom from my own angle, but freedom is in the eyes of the beholder, the player. I have been cast in situations where the guy says, "You're free." I said, "Wait a minute. I don't know if I want to be free." It's like a guy who's spent 40 years in jail and they put him out and ten minutes later he's back asking to stay.

I've talked to kids who don't know anything but freedom. They don't know what it's like to play time and enjoy it. You can't simplify it all, the way you ask. Don't pigeonhole it either. It's who you are talking to.

I like what's happening to the bass. Some of the young people I have heard playing the bass like a guitar and it's fantastic. I like to see it and hear it, but I also still enjoy going someplace seeing somebody playing time with a good sound that will never be replaced. It's like a heartbeat.

So they both have a definite function. The liberation is good if you want it liberated. I think it's gotta be whether you need it or not. It's who you are playing with and what you are trying to do.

RICK PETRONE: I feel that the bass has taken a dominant role in the rhythm section, in big bands as well as small groups. That's because everybody has realized that the bass is actually an *instrument*. In high schools and colleges, students are no longer just reading charts. They are trying to create ideas, improvise. When students come to me they ask me not only how to play the instrument, but how to play jazz, how to make a statement. From

my own frames of reference, it's probably been due to bass players like Scott LaFaro, Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke, those who are making some sort of sense improvising. Jaco Pastorius, although new, is making some noise. Eddie Gomez has been there for a long time making wonderful statements on the instrument and people are finally believing it and giving the bass player a chance to play.

It took me until I got to college to play electric when the music took a turn in that direction. I mean, you had to double or you didn't get the gigs. In the students I have, those that make the switch make it a lot easier from acoustic to electric than vice versa. The facility, the coordination, the dedication is that much greater in terms of what you have to put into acoustic. Electric bass has its place. I play one almost exclusively these days. It is a percussive instrument, monotone, you can't get more than one basic tone out of it unless you use the pedals. The harmonic series is lessened, while on acoustic you have the whole instrument, the overtone series, harmonics, bowing, more intimate sounds.

I look for more bass leadership because I think it's time that the bass player *and* the drummer are looked upon as more than timekeepers.

LARRY RIDLEY: You have to identify the fact that there are two separate categories related to what's happening with the bass today. The electric bass guitar is a separate instrument. Its approach is different; the technique is very different. It's true, the tonality, the notes are the same and they relate and get basically the same pitch. But when you are talking about the electric bass guitar as opposed to the acoustic bass they are two separate entities. You have to think of the acoustic bass in terms of the kinds of articulation one gets out of that instrument.

The pickups that have been devised are essentially microphones. Originally, they were crystal mikes that came through the body of the bass at the end pin. The quality was not really that great. You plugged into the existing system of the hall you were working.

We have come full circle with the better contact microphones like the Barcus-Berry and the Polytone so that certain people can't come up to me and tell me, facetiously, that I am playing electric bass. It varies with the individual. The quality of the speaker in your system has a good deal to do with the truth of the reproduction; the volume at which you keep your amp can help or hurt as far as true acoustic sound is concerned; bass or treble on the amp, also make a difference.

There isn't going to be a down-the-middle answer to your questions. People are going to come up with new ideas as to where they want to go with the music: the "now" sound, purists, projecting the future. You're in a transitional period right here.

GEORGE MRAZ: Mainly, the bass is going to remain supportive due to the size, the tone range and the limitations in those areas. The electric bass can go more places both physically and musically, but it still will remain supportive.

I got a bass made by somebody in Holland. It has strings on a fingerboard with a very small body. It looks like a canoe, so I call it that. It's much more portable; you can use it with a bow, since the fingerboard and neck are curved, and you can use your choice of strings on it. The only thing it does is amplify the sound as though it had a full body on it. It actually picks up that sound in the small body and amplifies it. I don't use it often but it does travel easier due to its size. I don't find it better than the regular bass, but that depends on the group I am playing with.

There is another kind of bass, the Ampeg, which is an upright baby bass. The canoe and the regular bass have a bigger sound than the Ampeg. The Ampegs don't have an acoustic sound, although they do have the curved finger board and the feel of a regular bass.

I don't think either electric or acoustic will have full control in the future. Certain areas will be in the control of electric basses. I don't feel that that will mean the end of acoustic music. On the contrary, I think it might even come back more.

MIROSLAV VITOUS: There is a basic role for the bass in the whole music spectrum. When you have a band you need bottom as well as harmony and melody. There are a few people that have turned the bass into a melodic instrument. I, personally, run into a problem when I do change to a lead instrument with a bow, say. There is a bottom missing. As a result, I am getting another bass player to play the bottom for me, the basic bass. I will continue to play acoustic bass, electric bass, guitar, keyboards, but I will have a full rhythm section behind me, including bass.

All of this depends entirely on the player, what his capabilities are. I am going to extend acoustic bass to a lead instrument. The future may even hold a front line for the (my) electric while I have that other bass player keeping the bottom. Perhaps I may tune my electric bass differently and make it really another melody instrument for new harmonies.

CHRIS WHITE: The bass became liberated before the development of the electric bass. That's a historical thing and I don't want to get into that here, but suffice it to say that the days of Blanton were the dawning of the day for the bass.

In terms of the traditional role, bass players have such a tradition of virtuosi to draw upon. To pick up the acoustic bass today, there is no way that you can get around hearing people like Ray Brown, Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke, Scott LaFaro, Charlie Haden and Sirone. When I started playing I had been playing ten years before I heard those pieces with Blanton and Ellington. There's so much better distribution of records now. A person wanting to make a living in this area has this tremendous wellspring of melodic material to draw from.

At this point you cannot relegate it to a supportive function. It ceased to be a supportive instrument with Paul Chambers because, although he was very supportive in Miles' late '50s-early '60s band, what was important was that Paul, like everybody in that band, was his own section. Even though Paul played time, the kind of time, the choice of notes, the intonation, and the placement made it obvious that this man was doing the work of not only the bass but of a trombone section and the left hand of the piano player. It was a translation of all of those things that went into the rhythmic pulse of the band. It freed the piano player to do something else. *That* was liberation.

Look around—you have Ron Carter leading a group, Miroslav Vitous leading a group—on acoustic, mind you. And Ron even has a bass player behind *him*. There's a trend to watch out for.

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BASS

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On the other hand, there are people like Sirone who have really stretched some of the outer limits exploring the possibilities and capabilities of the instrument. Then there's the other side of the coin like Stafford James, who comes right out of the Paul Chambers tradition: rock-like time with that speed and agility, facile thoughts and concepts that you would associate with a horn player.

Rhythmically, the electric bass has changed the course and face of popular music. This is due to the short overtone series and consequent better ability to identify the center of pitch without some of the overtones associated with the acoustic. Because of its incredible clarity and definition it can imply time without necessarily having to play it. In this regard it is more closely linked to the tuba. It can be both melodic and rhythmic at the same time. There are those that are doing things with that instrument. Pastorius and Clarke jump to mind. It's good and I'm glad it's happening. It may be the eleventh hour in terms of awareness: "Sent for ya yesterday and here y'all come today." Dig?

Students come to me with extraordinary amounts of affinity for the electric bass. A lot of those people are interesting in pursuing the acoustic bass. That is definitely a trend. All were electric bass players before and all are studying acoustic. What I notice happening is that the acoustic bass opens up some tonal areas that they had not explored before.

Music is a folk art again, and the nature of the electric bass makes it more accessible. I find more students coming to me with that background, but wanting acoustic lessons.

JACO PASTORIUS: It really depends on the player. The future bass players will probably be expected to know more about music in general. They will have to supply more support. The instrument I play is an acoustic instrument in that you need a little more sophistication to hear it. You can hear it if you put your ear to it. I call it a bass guitar because it is that. A synthesizer is electric; a Fender Rhodes piano sounds the same if you put your ear up close. It doesn't matter that you can bow a double bass if so few can do it properly.

Most people assume I play an acoustic bass on records, but I don't want to sound like an acoustic or a bass guitar. I want to sound like Jaco. Most bass guitarists are either people who have chickened out of playing the big bass or who are frustrated guitar players. I don't feel that the bass guitar is being played today.

Acoustic bass will have a role in the future, but a symphonic role, in the string section, because that's where it's most natural. I don't think it's natural to play the big bass. I've tried and it's hard to play with a drummer. You have to amplify it and then there's always a feedback factor. You have to hype it up too much to play over the drummer, just the right volume so you can communicate. I play as loud as the drummer. The volume I play with Weather Report is the same as I play with Nancy Wilson, Ira Sullivan. I approach it as an acoustic instrument. I think all bass guitarists have a lot to learn; they have to learn the instrument.

The bass guitar is a very valid instrument even when I get the sarcasm of, "Oh you *have* played acoustic, haven't you?" You've got to supply the foundation; that's the function of the bass. If you can do more than that, that's nice. db

PASTORIUS

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—but then, in about a week, he called me up, and within two months I was in New York. I went in with Bobby to see the big brass at Epic, just me and my bass, and I played solo for them. And they said, 'OK. You got it.'"

While at work on the material for his own album, a rousing success that nonetheless only skims the surface of Jaco's diverse approach to modern music, he again came across Joe Zawinul, who was at work on the new Weather Report album *(Black Market)*. Zawinul was in the midst of recording *Cannonball*, his tribute to the late Julian Adderley who, like Jaco, was an emigrant from Florida. "Joe said he wanted that Florida sound," says Jaco. "So I recorded that tune, and one other, strictly as a sideman. Alphonso Johnson had already left the band, and even though I didn't realize it, Joe was auditioning bass players." They hit it off and, on April 1, 1976, Jaco joined Weather Report.

Since then, he has consistently been a focal point of the band's performances, no easy matter in a group boasting Zawinul and Wayne Shorter. His album, which enlisted the talents of Herbie Hancock, Don Alias, Michael Gibbs, Shorter and Hubert Laws, almost immediately became an underground sensation and an aboveground debut of unusual success. At work on a second album, as well as touring with Weather Report, Jaco's major problem at this point is time—time to spend with his family at his quiet home in Ft. Lauderdale. There he listens to no music, does little if any playing, and keeps in touch with his personal founts of youth and inspiration: his wife, his children, and the mysterious rhythms of the Caribbean. db

CITY SCENE

NEW YORK

Harley Street: *Jimmy Rowles* (Wed.-Sun.).

Michael's Pub: *Dick Hyman* (opens 1/11).

P.S. 77: *Bucky Pizzarelli* (Mon., Thurs.-Sat.).

Hotel Carlyle: *Marian McPartland* (Bemelman's Bar); *Bobby Short* (Cafe Carlyle).

Bar None: *Dardanelle* at the piano.

Stryker's: *David Matthews Big Band* (Mon.); *Eddie Daniels* (Tues.); *Lee Konitz Nonet* (Wed. & Thurs.); call club for others.

Gregory's: *Warren Chiasson Trio* w/*Chuck Wayne* and *Wilbur Little* (Mon.-Tues.); *Brooks Kerr* w/*Sonny Greer, Russell Procope* (Wed.-Sun.).

Crawdaddy: *Sammy Price.*

Studio Rivbea: Concerts (Wed.-Sat.).

Environ: Concerts (Wed.-Sun.).

West End Cafe: *Franc Williams Swing Four* (Mon.-Tues.); *Jo Jones and Friends* (Wed.); *Swing to Bop Quintet* (Thurs. & Fri.); *The Count Basie Alumni Band* (Sat. & Sun.).

Mikell's: Call club for schedule.

Fearn's Harness Shop: (Roslyn, L.I.): *Jeff Cohen, Bill Miller* (Thurs.).

Brooklyn College: *Mel Torme* w/ *Warren Covington and his Orchestra* and the *Pied Pipers* (1/15).

Damian's Jazz Club: (Bronx): Open jam session nightly; *Mary Connelly Quintet* (Mon.-Tues.); *Harry Shields and the Bones of Contention* (Wed.); *Peter Ponzol and Pyramid* (Thurs.); *Lou Romano Trio* (Fri.-Sat.); *Kenny Kirkwood Trio* (Sun.).

Arthur's: *Mabel Godwin,* piano.

Storyville: Jazz Today (Tues.); American Song (Wed.); Jazz Classics (Thurs.); Group sessions (Fri. and Sat.).

All's Alley: *Frank Foster and the Loud Minority w/ Charlie Persip* and *Earl May* (Mon.); call club for balance of week.

Beefsteak Charlie's: Jazz (Wed.-Sun.).

Boomer's: Jazz all week.

Jazzmania Society: *Jazzmania All Stars* (Wed., Fri., & Sat.).

Jim Smith's Village Corner: *Lance Hayward* (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Sat., & Sun.); *Armen Donelian* (Wed.).

Jimmy Ryan's: *Roy Eldridge* (Mon.-Sat.); *Max Kaminsky* (Sun.).

Village Vanguard: Name jazz regularly; call club for schedule.

Patch's Inn: *Patti Wicks* (Mon. & Tues.); *Don Elliot Quartet* (Wed.).

Village Gate: Name jazz regularly; call club for schedule.

Kings Palace (Brooklyn): Bi-weekly tribute to artists by *Harold Ousley.*

Eddie Condon's: *Red Balaban & Cats* (Mon.-Sat.); guest artist (Tues.); jazz luncheon (Fri.); half-note nights. (Sun.).

Carnegie Hall: *Bob Greene's* World of Jelly Roll Morton (1/15).

Central Synagogue (celebrating as St. Peter's Church): Jazz vespers (Sun. 5 PM).

Three Sisters: (West Paterson, N.J.): Jazz all week.

The Brook: Call for concert schedule.

Ladies Fort: Weekend loft jazz.

Bradley's: Pianists and duos all week.

Memorial West Presbyterian Church (Newark, N.J.): Jazz vespers (Sun. 5:30 PM).

Muggs: *Alan Palanker,* piano.

The Kitchen: Jazz regularly; call for schedule.

Brooklyn Academy Of Music: Brooklyn Philharmonic conducted by *David Amram;* jazz ensemble w/ *Ray Montilla, Richard Davis* and members of symphony (1/10-14).

Latin Casino (Cherry Hill, N.J.): *Liza Minnelli* (1/17).

Ethical Humanist Society (Garden City, L.I.): International Art of Jazz presents *Charles McPherson Quintet* (1/16).

Cookery: *Joe Turner.*

Surf Maid: *JoAnne Brackeen.*

Creative Studio (Woodstock, N.Y.): Winter session through Mar. 12.

Sonny's Place (Seaford, L.I.): *Chasey Dean* (1/14-15); *Bob Kindred* (1/21-22).

Sweet Basil: *Hal Galper w/ Randy* and *Mike Brecker, Billy Hart, Wayne Dockery* (Sun. 3-7 PM).

Gregory's: *Al Haig w/ Jamil Nasser* and *Earl May* (Mon. and Tues.); *Gene Rowland* (Mon.-Sat. 6-9); *Warren Chissason* (Sun. 5:30-9:30).

Caracalle: *Benny Aranov* (Fri. & Sat.).

Jazzline: 212-421-3592.

LOS ANGELES

Concerts By The Sea: *Ahmad Jamal* (1/11-23); *Esther Phillips* (1/25-29); *Woody Herman* (1/31); *Yusef Lateef* (2/1-13); *Nat Adderley, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Franklin Ayjay* (2/15-20); *Hank Crawford* (2/22-3/6).

Lighthouse: *Joe Pass* (1/18-23); *Mose Allison* (1/25-2/6).

U. C. L. A.(Royce Hall): *Woody Herman Orchestra* (1/29); *U.C.L.A. Jazz Ensemble* (2/23).

Donte's: Jazz all week; call 769-1566 for details.

Roxy: Occasional jazz; call 878-2222 for details.

Hop Singh's (Marina Del Rey): Top name jazz, pop and blues.

Little Big Horn (Pasadena): *John Carter Ensemble* (Sun. 4-6 PM); *Bobby Bradford Extet* (Thurs. 8-10 PM).

Sand Dance (Long Beach): Jazz Thurs.-Sat.; *Al Williams Group* often; call 438-2026 for details.

Parisian Room: Top name jazz artists all week; call 936-0678 for details.

Baked Potato: *Seawind* (Mon.); *Lee Ritenour Group w/Harvey Mason, Dave Grusin, Ernie Watts, Steve Foreman, Charles Meeks* (Tues.); *Don Randi* (Wed.-Sat.); *Harry "Sweets" Edison* (Sun.).

Hungry Joe's (Huntington Beach): *Orange County Rhythm Machine* (Mon.).

Sneeky Pete's: *Dave Mackay Trio.*

Troubadour: Occasional jazz; call 276-6168 for details.

King Arthur's Restaurant: Big bands every Fri. and Sat.; call 347-3338 for details.

Studio Cafe (Balboa): Jazz all week; Sunday jams (12-6 PM).

Memory Lane: *O. C. Smith.*

Eagle Rock High School: Jazz concerts (2nd Sun. of month).

Jimmy Smith's Supper Club: *Jimmy Smith Trio* plus special guests (Thurs.-Sat.); jam session (Mon.).

Total Experience: Top soul groups; call 296-3457 for details.

CHICAGO

Jazz Showcase: Name jazz Wed.-Sun.; call 337-1000 for details.

Ivanhoe Theatre: Name jazz and contemporary music nightly; *Atlanta Rhythm Section* (1/14-15); *Earl Scruggs Review* (1/28-29); call 549-3410 for details.

Ratso's: Name jazz and contemporary music

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Amazingrace: Name jazz and contemporary music regularly; call 328-2489 for details.

Orphan's: *Ears* (Tues.); *Joe Daley* (Wed.); *Memphis Nighthawks* (Sun.).

Transitions East: Contemporary music regularly; call 723-9373.

Wise Fools Pub: *Roger Pemberton Big Band* (Mon.).

Ron's Pub: *Tommy Ponce and the Charlie Parker Revival Band* (Sun.); *Yikes Quintet* (Mon.); *Jeanne Larnbert* (Wed.).

Quiet Knight: Folk, blues, occasional jazz; call 348-7100 for details.

Harry Hope's (Cary): Jazz and contemporary music regularly; call 639-2636 for details.

Northside Auditorium Bar: *Bobby Christian Big Band* (Thurs.); *B. J. B.* (Sun.).

SAN FRANCISCO

Keystone Korner: *Mongo Santamaria* (1/13-16); *Bobby Hutcherson Quintet featuring George Cables and Hadley Caliman* (1/17-19); *Ahmad Jamal* (1/20-23); *Solar Plexus* (1/24); *Lonnie Liston Smith and the Cosmic Echoes* (1/25-1/30); *Mary Lou Williams* (2/1-6); *Dee Dee Bridgewater, Nat Adderley and Franklin Ajaye* (2/8-13).

Great American Music Hall: Top name jazz, rock and blues; call 885-0775.

Old Waldorf: *Taj Mahal* (1/21-22).

The Reunion: *Barney Kessel* (1/13-15); *Salsa de Berkeley* (1/20-21); *Shelly Manne* (1/28-29).

The Boarding House: *Henny Youngman* (1/18-23); *Martin Mull* (1/25-30) *Long John Baldry* (2/3-6).

Fairmont Hotel: *Jack Jones* (1/6-19); *Mills Brothers* (1/20-2/2); *Peggy Lee* (2/3-16).

The City: *Maxine Weldon* (1/18-23); *Vicki Sue Robinson* (1/26-29); *Morgana King* tent. (2/3-5).

Cesar's Latin Club: *Latin/Jazz Allstars* featuring *Armando Peraza, Francisco Aguabella, Carmella Garcia, Jorge Santana, Hadley Caliman and Roger Glenn* (Thurs.-Sun.).

Earthquake McGoon's: *Turk Murphy Jazz Band,* also *Judith Durham* (Tues.-Sat.).

Pier 23: Dixieland jazz with the *Pier 23 Jazz Cats* (Fri. and Sat.); jam session Sunday afternoons.

Blue Dolphin: *Jim Pepper's Pow Wow* (1/27); Experimental jazz most evenings, call 824-3822 for information.

The Scene: *The Third Act* (Thurs.-Sun.); *Tommy Smith 18 Piece Big Band* (Sun. afternoons 5:00-8:00).

Green Earth Cafe: Jazz and blues nightly; details 861-0060.

Pangaea: Experimental music weekends; call 824-6131 for information.

O'Greenbergs: Jazz (Wed.-Sat.).

Oakland Paramount: *Grover Washington Jr.* (1/14).

Zellerbach Auditorium (Berkeley): *Oscar Peterson,* solo piano (1/23).

Circle Star Theater (San Carlos): *The Dramatics* and *The Manhattans* (1/21-26); *Four Tops* and *Bo Diddley* (1/28-29); *Natalie Cole* (2/11-12).

Inn of the Beginning (Cotati): *Nightflyte* (1/24); Jazz Monday nights.

Sweetwater (Mill Valley): *Jules Broussard* (Wed.-Sat.).

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society (Half Moon Bay): *Barney Kessel* (1/16); *Art Pepper Quartet* (1/23); *Shelly Manne* (1/30).

Sleeping Lady Cafe (Fairfax): Occasional jazz; details 456-2044.

Gatsby's (Sausalito): Jazz and blues seven nights; details 332-4500.

The Point (Point Richmond): *Dick Oxtot's Golden Age Jazz Band* with *Pamela Polland* (Sat.); details 233-4295.

West Dakota (Berkeley): Rock, jazz, salsa and reggae seven nights; details 526-0950.

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL

Longhorn Eating Emporium and Saloon (Minneapolis): *This Oneness* (Sun.); *Mike Elliott Trio* or *Bobby Peterson Group* (Mon.); *Paul Lagos and the Minnesota Space Bop Orchestra* (Wed.); *Natural Life* (Thurs.-Sat.); big names monthly; call 333-0346 for details.

Off-Night Music Hall (Minneapolis): Name pop, rock, jazz groups weekly (Mon.-Tues.); call 332-4474.

The Whole Coffeehouse (University of Minnesota): Pop, rock, jazz, local and national groups, weekends; call 373-7600.

Rainbow Gallery (Minneapolis): Local jazz (Thurs.-Sun.); occasional big names; call 339-6509.

The Haberdashery (St. Paul): *Irv Williams Trio* (Fri.-Sat.); call 222-7855.

Emporium of Jazz (Mendota): *Hall Bros. Band* (Fri.-Sat.); frequent name traditional and Dixieland groups; call 452-9922.

Orion Room (Minneapolis): *Manfredo Fest Trio* (Mon.-Sat.); call 372-3772.

Registry Hotel (Bloomington): Local jazz groups and discussions (Sat. 1-4 PM); call 854-2244.

Williams Pub (Minneapolis): *Eddie Berger All-Stars* (Mon.); call 823-6271.

Riverside Cafe (Minneapolis): Local jazz (Thurs.).

Guild of Performing Arts (Minneapolis): Local jazz; call 333-8269.

Guthrie 2 (Minneapolis): Local jazz occasionally; call 339-5031.

Peacock Alley (Minneapolis): Occasional local jazz; call 332-9269.

The Cozy Bar (Minneapolis): Occasional jazz; call 522-9996.

PHOENIX

Boojum Tree: *Mose Allison* (1/16-18); *Charlie Byrd* (tent. in Feb.); *Joel Robin Trio* regularly.

Celebrity Theatre: *John Stewart* (1/7); *Billy Joel* (2/21).

Marvin Gardens: *Monopoly w/ Francine Reed* (Thurs.-Sun.).

Scottsdale Center: *Laurindo Almeida* (1/22).

Mabel Murphy's: *Charles Lewis Quintet* (Sun.-Wed.).

Coliseum: *Steve Miller Band* (2/7).

Arizona Western College (Yuma): Fourth Annual Jazz Festival w/ *Woody Herman* (1/28).

Saguaro High School: *Woody Herman* (1/27).

Graziano's: *Indabana Bluz Band* (Wed.-Sun.).

Big Apple (Tucson): *Al Kooper* (1/3).

Page Four: *Armen Boatman Trio* (thru 2/17).

B.B. Singers: *Mike McFadden.*

Valley Ho: *Keith Greko Trio.*

Crazy Ed's: Dixieland band (Tues.-Sun.).

Jed Nolan's: *Music Hall Madness* (Tues.-Sun.).

PITTSBURGH

Heinz Hall For The Performing Arts: Call 281-8185 for schedule.

Archives Of Creative Art: *Archives Quintet* regularly w/ *J. C. Moses, Vince Genova, Dave LaRoca, Chuck Lynn,* and *Frank Vanik.*

Crawford Grill And Concert Hall: Name jazz regularly, call 471-1565 for details.

Encore I (Shadyside): *Harold Betters Quartet* (Tues.-Sat.).

Sonny Dayes' Stage Door: Jazz regularly; jam every Tues.

Crazy Quilt: Name jazz frequently.

Christopher's: *Frank Cunimondo Trio* (Tues.-Sat.).

Ernie's Esquire Lounge (McMurray): *Al Dowe Quintet* with featured vocalist *Etta Cox* (Thurs.-Sat.).

Zebra Room (Homewood): *Carl Arter Trio w/ Tiny Irwin* (Fri.-Sat.).

LAS VEGAS

Sahara: *Ella Fitzgerald* (12/27-2/2); *Tony Bennett* (2/17-3/2).

The Attic: *John Palmer Sextet* (regulars); Las Vegas Jazz Society concerts (monthly, Sunday afternoon).

KLAV-FM: *Monk Montgomery's Reality* (Sun., 6-8 PM).

Musicians Union: Jazz jam (Wed.).

Tender Trap: *Jimmy Cook Quartet.*

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