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September 12, 1974

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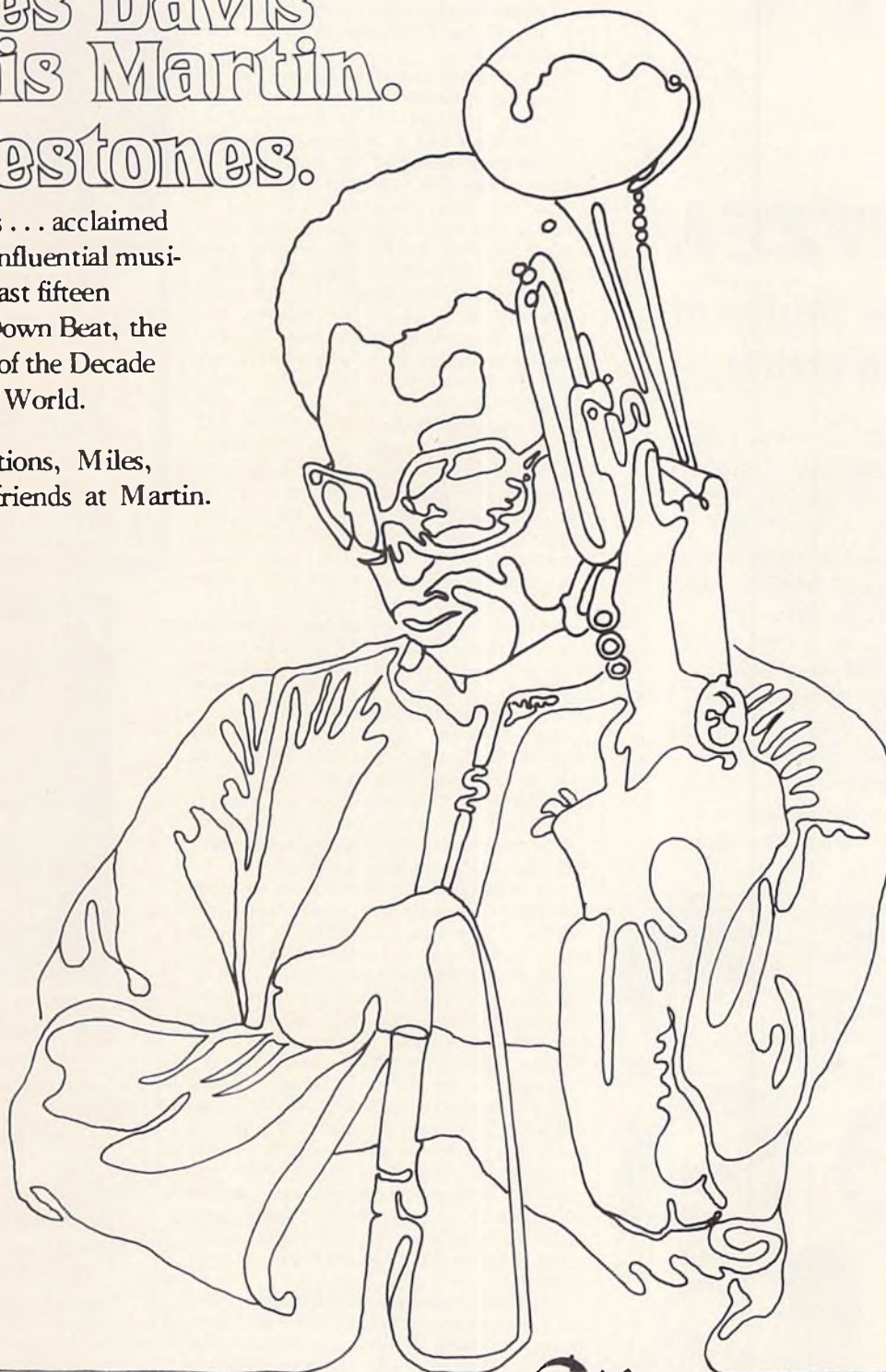
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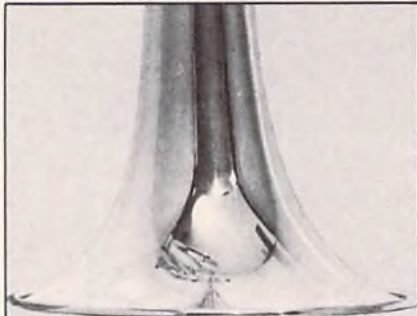


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By Charles Suber

Indignation and impatience with "them," marked readers' reactions to our column (June 20 db) calling attention to the sad fact that no one has yet been commissioned to write a jazz-blues work for this nation's bicentennial in 1976. We also heard from some of "them"—the commissioners.

First to respond was a spokesperson for the National Endowment for the Arts: "Careful and sympathetic attention will be given to grant applicants who wish to compose in the jazz idiom for the bicentennial. But please tell your readers to hurry. The applications must be filed by this Sept. 10 for any grants that would be disbursed next March." So, the address again is: Music Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 806 St. N.W., Washington, DC 20506.

It has not yet been determined how much money will be available for National Endowment music grants for next year. The total amount granted for the fiscal year 1973 was \$7,739,402, of which \$222,239 was for "jazz/folk/ethnic" grants. For the fiscal year 1974 (awarded last Spring), the total was \$11,348,677, of which \$461,555 was for "jazz/folk/ethnic."

A VP of BMI—Broadcast Music, Inc., the performing licensing society and a haven for most jazz writers—also called. "I am sure that something can be worked out within our annual composition awards. There's also a good chance that we can do something special for '76. Let me know when you want to get into this in detail." So, while we are getting details together, you are urged to register for the 1975 BMI awards. Write to Oliver Daniel, BMI Awards to Student Composers, c/o BMI, 40 W. 57, New York, NY 10019. Applications will be due Feb. 15.

Also responding was the producer of the Wichita Jazz Festival. "The WJF will grant in 1975 at least one commission (and several scholarships) for a jazz work to be performed at the '76 festival." Make preliminary application to Mrs. Maxene Adams, Wichita Jazz Festival, P.O. Box 18371, Wichita, KS 67218.

The most significant response (in its long-term effect on American music) was coincidental in its timing. The College of Music of the U. of Colorado at Denver announced the acquisition of Bill Fowler from Salt Lake City (see news item, page 9), and the approval-in-principle of the formation of the Youth Concert Orchestra of America. Plans call for Pat Williams, the eminent West Coast arranger/composer, to be the (commuting) resident composer/conductor of the YCOA, a 102-piece ensemble. The student musicians will be chosen by national auditions with several key chairs reserved for players with panidiomatic capability (Dost thou know the cadenzas and the changes?). This all-American music group should be in full swing in '76 to commemorate both Colorado's centennial and the U.S.A.'s bicentennial.

There is one particular project in the mill—the American Music Hall of Fame—that shows promise of being a genuine, non-commercial salute to past and living American musicians and a catalyst for immediate recognition of contemporary music in education. The current timetable calls for agreements to be made among the various concerned institutions by the end of October with details to be released shortly thereafter. We'll keep you informed.

(Use the ballot on page 36 to vote for the best of today's American music players.) db



sticks that last

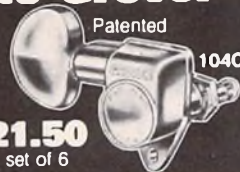
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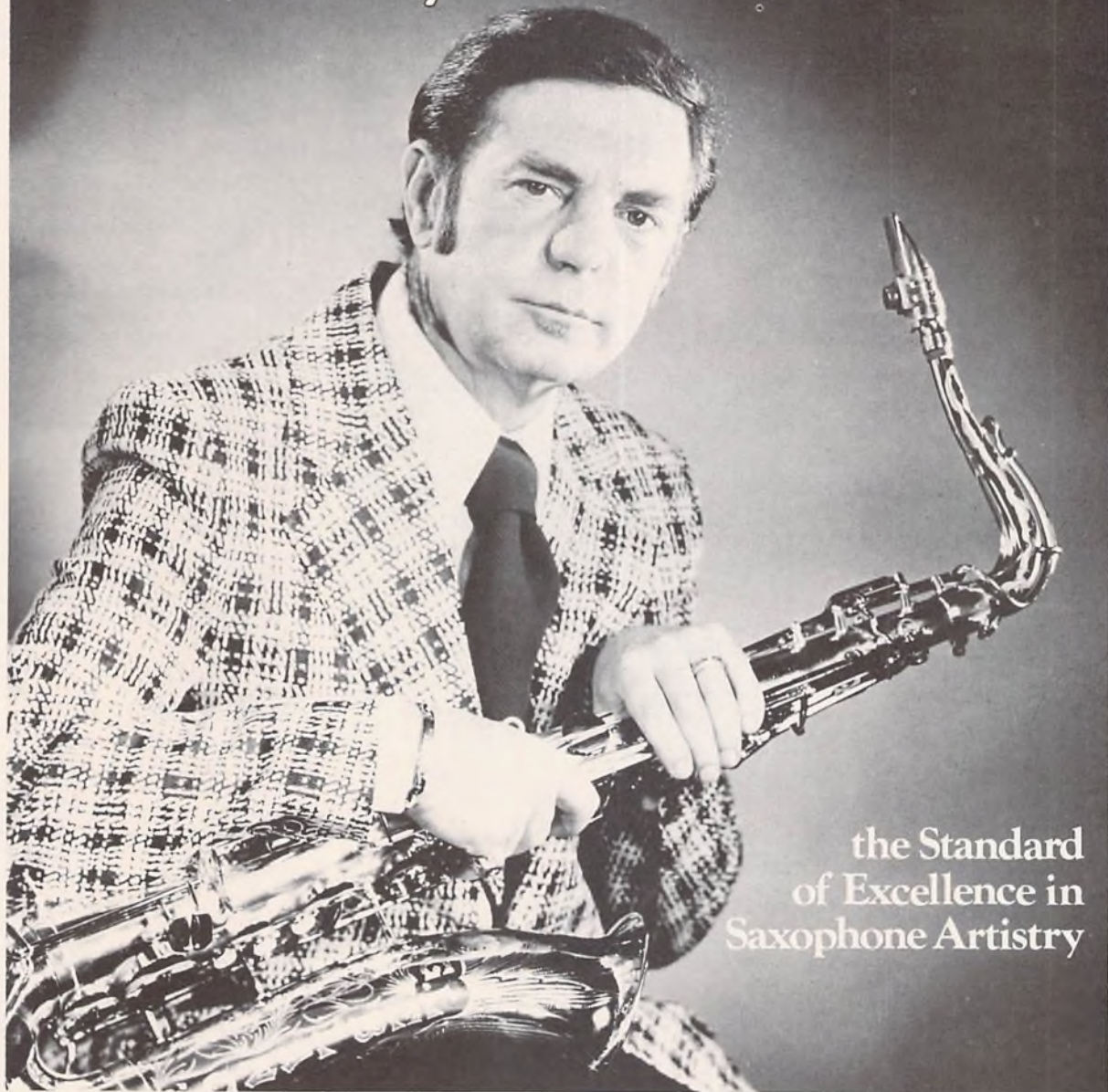
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Miles Mania

Thanks for the Miles Davis interview, with no expletives deleted. Miles is enigmatic, a man of contradictions: shy and brash, humble and arrogant, honest and facetious.

But what's so new about the free music his group is playing these days? Miles may not be a millionaire, but he's a lot richer than those musicians who've been playing free for the past ten years!

Having observed Miles in the studio, I can vouch for the respect and compassion he has for others. He's a real humanitarian.
Doug Pomeroy New York City
Columbia Recording Studios

This is just a note to express my personal feeling about Gregg Hall's really impressive piece on Miles Davis. Many of the subjects broached by Davis and Hall were things that observers of Miles, the personality and musician, have wondered about for a long time. Miles proved candid, and, what's more important, Hall's questions were completely to the point.

It seems to me that Hall should be assigned further pieces on controversial personalities in the music business. He really seems to be able to find out what makes them tick.
Peter Levinson New York City

I've been tempted to write before to comment on statements made by some great musicians in the pages of *db*. This time I'm writing because

it's Miles, a man I've idolized for more than 25 years, and who has helped to shape so many musicians' directions (including mine).

First of all, it's disappointing to find out that Freddie Hubbard really can't play. That means that Clifford Brown and Fats Navarro couldn't play, either. Secondly, Miles seems to suffer from another disease common to us blacks (in fact, our Number One disease): Mother-fuckermania. Can you dig it?

P.S. I love Miles.
Bill Young Buffalo, New York

For The Record

In his recent review (June 6 *db*) of the Red Rodney album *Bird Lives*, Joe Klee really errs. I must demur with his concern over the suitability of the rhythm section.

That Charles McPherson is, in Klee's words, "an example of an alto saxophonist who has built his own original statements on Bird" certainly should not be disputed. But can't the same be said of Barry Harris on piano? Barry's affinity for Bud Powell has long been known, and wasn't Bud among the first to adapt Bird concepts to the keyboard? Harris has frequently been identified with bebop and post-bebop, and would appear a logical choice for this record date.

Harris, drummer Roy Brooks and bassist Sam Jones form precisely the same rhythm section that provided the foundation for Sonny Stitt's excellent *Constellation* LP two years ago. And we all know where Sonny comes from!

Small wonder that "amazingly, they all come together here."
Bill Benjamin Chicago, Ill.

Take Five

I would simply like to compliment and herald the sensitivities of such a writer as Peter Keepnews. Peter has the ability to listen and absorb the "unspoken expression" of an artist, partly because he has a deep feeling for the music, and a parallel understanding of the soul of the music and musician he is interviewing. Give him five stars!

Billy Harper New York City

Credibility Gap?

In a recent *Perspective* column (July 18 *db*), associate editor Ray Townley opened up a rather wide credibility gap as to his competence as a record reviewer.

Mr. Townley is apparently unaware of saxophonist King Curtis' unfortunate death about two years ago. Although he acknowledged the late Eric Dolphy ("while he was alive"), Mr. Townley failed to refer to the late King Curtis in a like manner.

The purpose of Mr. Townley's article, it seems, was to delineate the functions of a record reviewer. In this case, the reviewer may encounter considerable difficulty in relating to the reader how King Curtis may "be judged in the light of his past albums."

Thus, I find it hard to believe that some reviewers are qualified to "let the reader know when the artist has succeeded or failed."
Chicago, Ill. Bill Benjamin

Ray Townley's Perspective column set up a hypothetical situation in order to express a critical point. The reason for mentioning Dolphy as deceased was because of the radically different critical acceptance of his music after his death. On the other hand, King Curtis was as well accepted while he was alive as after he died.—Ed.

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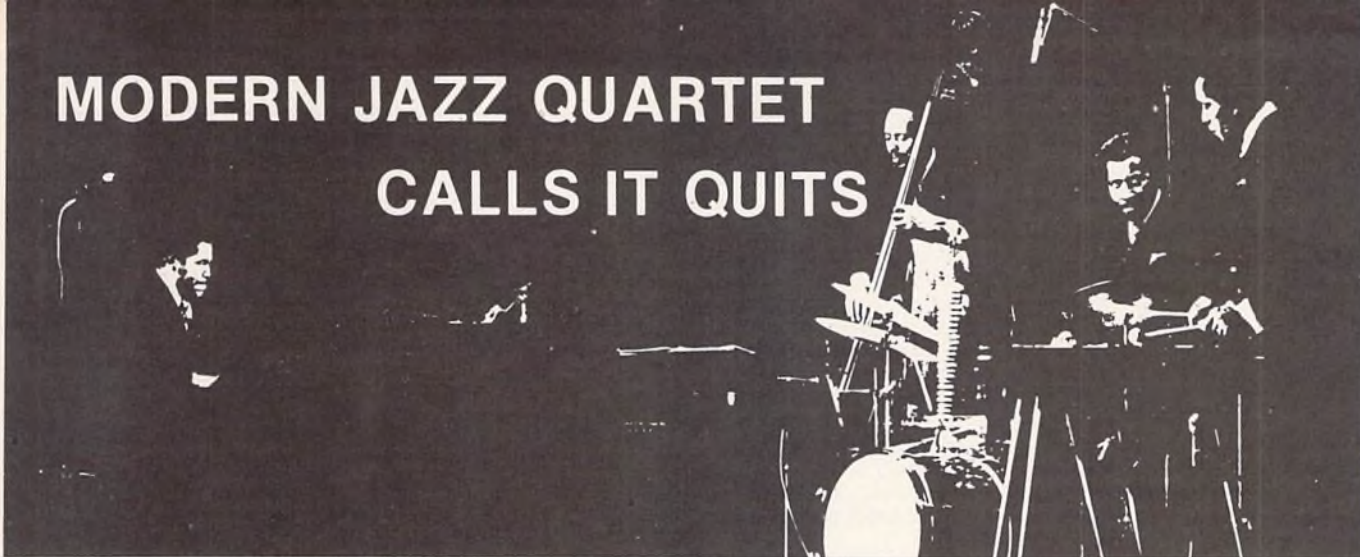
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MODERN JAZZ QUARTET CALLS IT QUILTS



JAN PERSSON

It was an event which modern jazz fans may liken to the abrupt disintegration of Mount Rushmore: following a two-week Australian tour, the Modern Jazz Quartet—Milt Jackson, John Lewis, Percy Heath, and Connie Kay—disbanded after 23 years.

The end came as vibraphonist Jackson announced his intention to leave the group in order to devote more time to solo recording projects and ultimately form another group under his personal leadership. In a vehement statement during a newscast in Los Angeles, Jackson contended that he has little to show for his 23 years with the quartet. He decried "overnight rock and roll millionaires," and *db* contributing editor Leonard Feather reported in the *Los Angeles Times* that Jackson "implied that he was going out to make some big bread."

At press time, none of the other members of the MJQ had announced their future plans, though John Lewis has announced that one of his projects will be to write a new piece for the Julliard String Quartet. During an interview with Feather about the band's demise, Lewis made it clear that he failed to agree with Jackson's reasons for leaving. "I think we've made quite a remarkable living over the years. As for the rock stars who earn the kind of money Milt is talking about, they are people in show business, entertainers. We are musicians. The comparison is unfair."



On the road as a band leader again after putting together a successful commercial as part of an MGM film production business almost 10 years ago, drummer Chico Hamilton brought his new band through Chicago for five-nights at the Quiet Knight.

The club date, however, wasn't the only thing Hamilton had going for him. The afternoon following opening night, the drummer and his quintet (Arnie Lawrence and Alex Foster, alto and soprano saxophones; Jerry Riley, guitar; and Steve Torres, bass and trombone) slipped into Universal Recordings Studios and put together a three-minute blues featuring Chico on a gritty, overdubbed vocal. The resulting tape was

shipped the same day to the West Coast for consideration as part of an MGM film project.

Meanwhile, Chico Hamilton's second album for Stax-Enterprise was readied for release. Half the LP was recorded at last year's Montreux Jazz Festival; the remaining five tracks were done at a three-hour studio session. It follows by about six months the release of *Chico: The Master*, Chico's first LP in more than three years. Although the drummer said he's not hustling his commercial business as much these days, it is apparent he's working to get his name before the public again.

—herb nolan

Jackson's side of the disagreement seems to be borne out by the most recent Billboard jazz chart: his recent CTI solo disc with Hubert Laws, *Goodbye*, appears on the list, while the MJQ's brilliant *Blues On Bach*, which received overwhelming critical reception, has failed to make the chart.

down beat readers need no summary of the MJQ's illustrious history; suffice to say that the combo was best known for its impressionistic, lyrical fusions of European classical forms with the more wide open, improvisational spaces of Afro-American music. Through an unflinching, uncanny talent for mixing cool, dignified restraint with uninhibited, joyful swing, Lewis, Jackson, Heath, and Kay achieved a classic sound which remained challenging and undiminished in its quiet power for almost a quarter-century.

Having pioneered the Third Stream experiments in classical-jazz fusion during the Fifties, the MJQ later managed to make some tasteful, though essentially unsuccessful concessions in the electronic direction during their two-album stint with Apple Records, just as jazz began to look in rock's direction at the turn of this decade. But this year's *Blues On Bach* found the group triumphantly turning again to their purest state, an almost heartbreakingly beautiful marriage of forms.

A final LP, *In Memoriam: The Modern Jazz Quartet And Symphony Orchestra*, will be released by Atlantic's Little David label shortly.

—charles mitchell

Atlantic/Elektra, CTI/Motown Form Alliances

In one of the recording industry's more dramatic recent developments, two companies in the Warner Communications conglomerate announced their merger. The labels are Ahmet Ertegun's Atlantic Records and the Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch combine of David Geffen. The new company, appropriately enough, is called Atlantic/Elektra/Asylum Records, and will be headed by Geffen and Ertegun as co-chairmen. Jerry Wexler, former Atlantic VP, will serve as vice chairman.

In a joint statement released by Geffen and Ertegun, it was explained that the merger had been planned for some time, "In order to achieve more efficient operations for both companies. The merger includes all services, as well as plant, financial, and sales operations. Promotion and a&r will remain separate."

The merger climaxes the impressive rise of David Geffen, who at age 30 has risen from the mailroom of the William Morris Agency to the co-leadership of one of the most impressive artist rosters in the industry.

In another important move in the vinyl jungle, Motown Records took over distribution of the CTI/Kudu label, marking Motown's first real foray into the jazz market. It's the first label affiliation for the four-year-old CTI company, which under the terms of the agreement will retain its corporate and artistic identity, as well as autonomous control over its product.

down beat NEWS

"SOUNDSTAGE" ROCKS AHEAD

In case you haven't noticed, televised rock and pop concerts are happening. Currently in network release or syndication are *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert*, *In Concert*, *Speakeasy*, *Midnight Special*, *In Session*, plus dozens of specials planned for the upcoming fall season. Now, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (PBS) is readying for release on Nov. 12 what promises to be one of the most creatively produced of the rock concert shows—*Soundstage*.

The show is a national spinoff of *Made In Chicago*, a program produced locally for PBS in the Windy City for two seasons. This year, the national brass picked up the show for wider circulation on the 240-affiliate network, changing the name but keeping things in the control of executive producer Ken Ehrlich.



A recent taping at the WTTW studios featured a tremendous, all-star *Chicago Blues Summit* with Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Koko Taylor, Junior Wells, Michael Bloomfield, Barry Goldberg, Nick Gravenites, Johnny Winter, and Dr. John. The taping lasted 2-1/2 hours, and will be previewed by *db* contributing editor Charles Mitchell in the Oct. 10 issue.

Soundstage will continue to be produced in Chicago, taped primarily at the studios of local PBS affiliate WTTW (Channel 11). Ehrlich and his staff will make occasional trips to both coasts in order to film talent unable to come into Chicago.

Soundstage plans to cling fairly close to the soft-pop end of the musical spectrum, featuring such artists as Harry Chapin, Randy Newman, Arlo Guthrie, and the Pointer Sisters. Heavy-metal hard rock will be avoided, primarily due to the fact that TV sound reproduction invariably plays havoc with even the best hard rock sounds. (Although *Soundstage* will have an FM stereo simulcast in Chicago and certain other cities, it's up to each PBS affiliate to decide whether or not they want a radio hook-up). According to associate producer Eliot Wald, the show also plans to feature a couple of jazz programs in the series, though they remain currently in the concept stage.

One final plus on the side of *Soundstage* (and all of the excellent PBS programming) is the total lack of commercial clutter. *Soundstage* will offer 60 minutes of pure music each week, and that's saying something. Check your local television listings for time and channel in your area.

Big Apple Airwaves

New York contemporary music listeners are advised to check out WNYU-FM's series called *Jazz Expansions Concert* heard every Wednesday night on the station (89.1 on the dial). The show will feature live sessions taking place at several city clubs as well as sessions recorded live in the station's studios. WNYU also plans to run recordings of the Montreux Jazz Festival, courtesy of Swiss Radio and the French Television Network.

Already recorded for the

series: the Lex Humphries Ensemble; the Gato Barbieri Ensemble; the Donald Byrd/Nathan Davis Tentet; the Alphonse Mouzon Quartet; Percussionette, featuring Doug Hammond, Roger Blank, Jerome Cooper, and Michael Carty; and the Melodic Art-Tet, with Charles Brackeen, Akmed Abdullah, John Ore, Hakim Jami, and Roger Blank. WNYU will also be recording extensively at reedman Sam Rivers' Studio Rivbea in Manhattan.

potpourri

The Cultural Affairs Committee of the University of Maryland has just announced that the school's new auditorium has been named after the Ella Fitzgerald Center For The Performing Arts. Opening day ceremonies are scheduled for October 27, 1974, and Ms. Fitzgerald will be on hand to personally dedicate the center named in her honor.

Swiss pianist George Gruntz, who happens to be artistic director of the Berlin Jazz Festival, is branching out into film scoring. He recently completed 80 minutes of music for the Paramount adaptation of Herman Hesse's classic novel *Steppenwolf*. Gruntz's multi-keyboard band, the Piano Conclave, provided backing for the "Magic Theater" sequence; and the rest of the score features a wide variety of musicians ranging from British avant-gardists Derek Bailey on guitar and Paul Rutherford on drums, to Americans-in-Europe Charlie Mariano and Mark Murphy.

Phil Wilson, trombonist / arranger / composer, has accepted a position as head of jazz studies within the Afro-American Music program of the New England Conservatory. Wilson, formerly associated with Berklee College of Music, will continue his peripatetic activities as clinician, guest conductor, and symphonic and jazz band composer. His associates at NEC include Carl Atkins, Ran Blake, Jaki Byard, George Russell, and, of course, Gunther Schuller who initiated the Afro-American course of study in 1969 upon becoming president.

Records by the Steve Lacy Quintet, the Bobby Bradford Quartet taped at Paris's Chat Qui Peche, and the Spontaneous Music Ensemble are some of the albums to be released by a small, new English label, Emanem. Founded by collectors Martin and Madeleine Davidson, the label presents as its first release Steve Lacy Solo, featuring the soprano saxophonist in live recordings taken from two concerts at the Avignon Festival. And look for an album the Davidsons just recorded at the Wigmore Hall, London, by the duo of Anthony Braxton and Derek Bailey.

News flash: Word has just reached our office that the Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival, sponsored by the Rainbow People's Party on the weekend after Labor Day for the past two years, will not happen this year . . . in Ann Arbor, at any rate. Difficulty in securing a site has forced the Party to look outside of Ann Arbor. At press time, the chances looked good for a festival to be held over the weekend of Sept. 6-8 at a site near the Canadian border. For up-to-date information on this unstable situation call the Rainbow Party at (313) 769-5850.

The cause of their problems stems from the Republican dominated City Council, which rejected their request to use the Otis Spann Memorial Field, site of the first two events. The council's reasoning was that the event "tarnished the city's image," and "brought undesirables from all over the country" to fair Ann Arbor. Ain't that a stinker?



Dr. William Fowler, progenitor of the jazz programs at the University of Utah and Westminster College, has been appointed to the faculty of the University of Colorado's Music and Media division. Fowler will also establish a guitar major as part of his new duties. Associate Dean Dr. David

Baskerville (pictured above with Fowler and UCD's Chancellor Harold Haak) in making the announcement to *db*, stressed the fact that Fowler's appointment was an important part of a long range development plan to make the UCD total music program a major force in American music. *db*

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The Wein-ing of Newport

By Ray Townley

The keynote of this year's Newport Jazz Festival in New York was *relaxed*.

Sure, one often took in over ten hours of music a day—besides the nightly Carnegie and Avery Fisher concerts, the aurally addicted could catch free afternoon shows at the Manhattan branch of Fordham University, the ubiquitous roving Jazzmobile under the direction of Billy Taylor, and jazz sets at any number of fine, and all too often outrageously expensive, clubs around town. On the nights when midnight jams were on tap at Radio City Music Hall, the whole event took on the usual marathon proportions.

But even with all of this, one could come to grips with this year's festival in a way not possible last year, when the ten-day fete took on the awesome, and finally dehumanizing, dimensions of New York City itself.

An immediately positive effect of this year's more modest, and ultimately more aesthetically pleasing, festival was to permit the audience a chance to absorb a significant portion of the music at hand, while still having time to eat and sleep like normal human beings. Most importantly, it allowed impresario George Wein to reap a financial profit for the first time since he relocated Newport in the Big Apple.

down beat, of course, had its legions of experts in full attendance, both analyzing and *enjoying* the concerts. The general consensus was that the Sarah Vaughan and Count Basie shows were highlights, as were the acoustic solo efforts of Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, and guitarist Ralph Towner. Particular low ebbs were offered by a hastily regrouped "Salute to Cafe Society," the electronic tinkering of Herbie Hancock during his solo keyboard shot, and a decidedly boring performance by the Bill Evans Trio. Mixed opinion greeted Diana Ross' festival finale, the majority praising her interpretation of Lady Day material, then finding her shift to former Motown hits embarrassing.

On the concluding day of the festival, after all tallies had come in, and George Wein was grinning like a giant panda, I managed to corner the mastermind behind Newport for *his* perspective on the proceedings.

Townley: What is your personal view of the festival in New York?

Wein: Well, it's much clearer than before because I know now that we have a definite public for the Newport Jazz Festival. Concerts that I never dreamed would sell out did so, strictly because they were part of the Newport Jazz Festival. For example, I don't believe the late-night concerts with Sarah and Basie would have done nearly as well if they weren't part of Newport. So we know that people are focusing on the festival and that we can count on that public in the future.

And all the other concerts—McCoy Tyner and Freddie Hubbard, Gato Barbieri and Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock and Donald Byrd—all of a sudden we've found a young, festival audience in addition to the older people coming to the nostalgia events. Now we're definitely hitting a young, pure jazz audience. When I say *pure* jazz, I mean they relate to the young jazz performers of their age. This audience has been

building for the past two years. It comes from that small percentage of the rock era that had the curiosity to get into more music.

Townley: Did you overestimate the possibilities of the festival last year?

Wein: No, it wasn't that. I overestimated the *responsibility* of the festival. I felt that we had a tremendous responsibility to the unknown New York musicians. I still do to a degree, but I've had to modify that feeling just from getting slapped in the face financially. Unfortunately, no one wants to see unknown musicians, even if it's for free. And that's a shame. The Newport Festival is not in the position financially, aesthetically, or artistically, to foster those musicians; that has to be done in other areas.

We're going to try to feature some unknown groups each year by putting them in where we can fit them programmatically, like we did with the Platina Jazz Group from Israel and the Wild Magnolias. Then, at least, we'll have a stage for them and an audience. But, of course, that takes away from the headliners that the people want to have play longer.

Townley: What about the constant complaint that acts didn't get to play long enough?

Wein: The biggest problem we have with the festival is scheduling. The younger crowd from the rock era is used to something like a Grateful Dead concert that'll last for five hours. Most of our name artists had between 50 and 55 minutes to play. Some of the audience felt this wasn't enough; and some of the artists felt that they wanted to play longer, too.

The Crusaders did a fantastic set for 55 minutes. Man, the audience could have sat and listened to them for another hour, but I couldn't let them go beyond 2:30. The hall would've shot me. On those late shows, they want to get the people out of there and get the halls closed down. They have to open for business the next day. If I could stay open for another half-hour



PETER TRAVERS

or hour, I wouldn't care; but it was a matter of the halls telling us that we'd go into triple time for every hour over 2:30. We were already paying double time.

Townley: I found some of the more pleasing shows those that only featured two artists.

Wein: We're going to be doing more of that in the future, where each act has more time to stretch out. We're also going to get further into the one-artist formula. Not just with his (or her) current group, but if the artist is one like Stan Getz, who's been around for a long time, he can do things related to his early career, in the first half, and in the second half he can get into what he's doing now. So it's his program, see. I want to do that with Sonny Rollins in particular next year. I want to honor Sonny Rollins. He's played the festival many times, and he's been a star; but he's never had his own evening. So we're going to get into more of that. I think Herbie (Hancock) has achieved that stature if he wants to do more than just what he's doing now. I mean if he wants to come up with a retrospective on his own career.

I'm going to try to eliminate, except in rare instances, the lot-of-artists-on-one-show format, like we had for the Hammond organ this year. I don't know how the guitar thing is gonna work out. Some of those artists are so wonderful, like

Laurindo Almeida and Charlie Byrd. They could be on as half of one program if I have another half that relates to them. It probably would be better than throwing all the guitarists together. And I have to give some serious thought to the blues situation because the blues may be going downhill a little bit with the kids. I definitely do not want to eliminate it from the festival, but the question is what to do with it. While we did reasonably well with the first house, we had a very poor house for the second show. Last year, that show would have sold out two houses.

Townley: After three festivals in New York, how do you feel?

Wein: I've always felt that if I stayed in any town long enough, no matter how much money I lost the first year—I don't care if it's Oshkosh, Wisconsin—we could make a successful festival out of it. It took me five years to find a successful formula in New Orleans, but we made money in New Orleans this year. So I've had a lot of experience in losing money, which is a great opportunity because you learn more by losing money than by making it. All too often when you make money, it's a shot of luck. But when you've lost money and *then* you make money, it's not luck. It's that you've had the opportunity to analyze and eliminate your mistakes.

We now will make money every year in New York if we stick to what we've learned and don't go crazy like we did last year. We now know, for example, that we don't have to put four groups in a concert; we can put just two. Not only does that make people happier, but it cuts our budget. We also found out we don't have to put concerts everywhere. I may eliminate all double concerts next year. I may do more concerts at Radio City Music Hall if the concerts are big enough to draw 5,000 people instead of 2,500. **Townley:** More specifically, how do you feel about the events that transpired at Newport three years ago? Are you glad now, looking back on things, that you were forced to make the move to New York?

Wein: I feel that if Newport had not blown up, we would still have a successful festival. Newport would still be a lot of fun. I do not feel that we would be the influence on the jazz world that we are now. I now consider what happened at Newport—even though it put me in the hole for three years and I'm just coming out of it—as a blessing in disguise. The possibilities of the festival are unlimited in New York. In Newport, for three days, we never did that much business. Economically, we had a very severe problem. The only really big crowds we had were at the Saturday night shows. They had to pay for the whole festival, and we also were limited to the number of people who could attend. In Newport, our entire budget was \$200,000. In New York, we spent \$500,000 on expenses and talent alone. So that means we have a broader scope of what we can do with artists and the number of concerts we can present.

Townley: What are your ideas for next year?

Wein: Every year I have ideas for the next year before the festival is over, but this year, other than a few things that I *won't* do in the future, my mind is a total blank. It's been a very emotional year for me, having lost so much money last year and then having saved the festival this year. Frankly, if we didn't make it this time around, the festival would have gone down the drain. We would have had to think of other possibilities. I wouldn't have let Newport die *per se*, but I would have had to think of a whole new format. Now it's easy. At this moment, I'm wiped out. I really don't have any ideas. I just know that so many positive things have happened out of this festival, that it will be fun planning and putting on next year's. **db**

Boy Wonder Grows Up



13-year-old harpist

By Lee Underwood

At age 24, Stevie Wonder has reached a height of popular and critical success that few recording artists attain in an entire lifetime.

At his recent birthday party held at L.A.'s Speakeasy Club, Motown's president, Ewart Abner, presented him with a gold pendant and still another gold single. *Higher Ground* brings the complete total to 13 gold singles, two gold albums (*Innervisions*, *Music Of My Mind*), and two platinum records (*Talking Book* and *Superstition*).

At this year's Grammys, Stevie won four awards, including Best Album of the Year for *Innervisions*, Best Male Pop Vocal Performance for *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life*, and Best R & B Vocal for *Superstition*.

In *down beat's* 38th Annual Readers Poll (Dec. 20, '73), Stevie Wonder placed in no less than five categories. He won the Pop Musician of the Year honor, had two albums in the Pop Album of the Year section (*Talking Book* and *Innervisions*), placed third in the Best Male Singer slot, and was also recognized for both his Wonderlove back-up group and his talents as a composer. Most recently, Stevie tied for first place in the *db* International Critics Poll in the TDWR Male Vocalist category.

Sitting behind his desk at Motown Records, Stevie Wonder, blind since birth, danced his fingertips across the control board of the massive Sony TC 850 tape recorder. He punched the rewind buttons, and the old tape spun down.

Stevie removed it, took a new ten-inch reel out of a box and threaded it up. We were about to listen to his new album, *Fulfillingness' First Finale*, the final mix completed only the night before. This was the first hearing outside of the studio.

"It's very important that you concentrate on the lyrics," he said. "I feel very peaceful inside for the first time."

He leaned forward and smiled. The scars from his car accident a year ago were smooth. Only a bump remained above his right eyebrow, with a few smaller scars on his right cheek.

"Things change when you meet someone that is very positive and gives you peace and understanding far better than any relationship in the past."

Finale burst from the speakers and swirled throughout the room with joy, anger, compassion, new love, new dreams, new hope, and a lot of downright *filthy* funk.

Earlier, Stevie's friend, confidant and publicist, Ira Tucker, said, "*Fulfillingness' First Finale* is almost an anthology of *Music Of My Mind*, *Talking Book*, and *Innervisions*. But the new material since the accident takes you to that *other level* no one thinks he can reach after *Innervisions*. But he has. You can feel the difference. That's his genius."

The accident, before and after. The pivot point, the reference point, an inescapable landmark in the life of Stevie Wonder.

August 6, 1973: while traveling north from Greenville, South Carolina to Raleigh on a two-lane road, driver John Harris, Stevie's cousin, tried to pass the logging truck that was weaving from lane to lane in front of them. The trucker suddenly slammed his brakes and stopped right in front of John. The logs from the truck fell off and crashed through the windshield on Stevie's side of the car.

Stevie was in a coma for three days, a semi-coma for seven more.

"My outlook on life has gotten a little deeper—closer to me," Stevie said, his voice almost a whisper. "I learned who loved me—like Abner, president of Motown, stuck with me all the way. And I learned about those who just said, 'Is he gonna be able to work again?'"

"I also see that God was telling me to slow down, to take it easy. I still feel I'm here to do something for Him, to please people, to turn my world into music for Him, to make it possible for people to communicate with each other better. And that's what I'll do. If you go by your feelings, your first impressions, they'll almost never lead you wrong. That's what I didn't do before."

Born May 13, 1950, in Saginaw, Michigan, he is the third of six children. Stevie's uncle gave him a four-hole key-chain harmonica at age five, and Stevie was off and running. He began piano lessons at six and started playing the drums at eight. He was just about ready.

When Ronnie White of the Miracles introduced him to Brian Holland of the Holland-Dozier-Holland Motown writing team, Holland took him to Berry Gordy Jr., top gun at Motown. Gordy signed him, changed his name to Wonder, and a superstar was born.

Because he was a 10-year-old minor, Stevie could not have a writer's contract. He had an artist's contract in which Jobete Publishing (Motown's main house) got 100% of the royalties. This condition changed dramatically when Stevie re-negotiated at age 21.

Stevie praises the excellent job Motown did in setting up his legal guardian, a Detroit lawyer, and establishing his trust fund. When he turned 21, he went through the courts and the judges, and was completely satisfied with the accuracy and honesty with which that trust fund was handled.

There were no alterations or bendings of the Michigan statutes regarding minors performing in public places. "The laws protected him," Tucker explained. "First of all, he did not play clubs. He played large halls. That's where his first hit, *Fingertips, Part 2*, was recorded. When he turned 18, he could play some places where alcohol was served—New York, Detroit, etc.

"And by law, Stevie had to have a teacher—not a tutor, but a teacher. He had to put in a certain number of hours every day with that teacher, even if he was traveling and working, like with the Motortown Review (a Detroit-based show). He would do one or two shows at night and then have to go to school on the bus or the airplane afterwards. But he went to school."

When Stevie was 13, Motown suggested he attend the Michigan School For The Blind in Lansing, from which he graduated. "They taught me all the usual things," Stevie says, "but what I liked was the swimming pool and the wrestling team. They had a music department, too, and that exposed me to all those classical dudes, like Bach and Chopin. You can hear some of that on *They Won't Go When I Go* on the new album.

When Stevie turned 21, he battled for months with that patriarchal giant, Motown Records: the formula sound, the iron-fist controller of royalties, publications, production, publicity and direction.

Stevie slashed loose and established an unprecedented Motown deal. He emerged with his own publishing company, Black Bull Music; his own production company, Taurus Productions; 50% of the royalties; the right to record whenever and however he chooses; and, just recently, the power to decide which album cuts will be released as singles.

"He had enough insight to see what he needed to sustain Stevie Wonder as an individual, not just as a product of a record company," Ira explains. "It's kind of awesome. I tend to think he had it all figured out from the time he was 14. Basically, God manages Stevie, and Stevie manages himself."

"That's right," Stevie says, toying with the gold pendant Abner gave him. "*Uptight* was the first thing I wrote, along with Silvia Moy and Henry Cosby, but the first thing I recorded was *Mother Thank You*, originally called, *You Made A Vow*. Nothin' really happened, though, until *Fingertips*. I was 13," he said, leaning across the desk, smiling slyly. "I was 13, but they said I was jus' 12. Ha!

"And the first released thing I produced was *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*. My mother helped me write it. So did Lee Garrett, another blind cat. He's recording for Warner Brothers now.

"I also produced the Spinners' *It's A Shame*, and the follow-up, *We'll Have It Made*. I did an unreleased thing with Martha, *Hey, Look At Me*, and a David Ruffin piece, *Lovin' You's Been So Wonderful*. Oh, lots of people. Now my ex-wife Syreeta's second album just came out. I produced both of her albums, too, and wrote a lot of the stuff."

How long were you married?

A year and a half.

Was one problem a clash of artistic wills?

No, man. We're just better as friends. We still write things together.

Were you runnin' around, Stevie?

(Laughs) I wasn't runnin' around. (Laughs again) No, she's a Leo, and I'm a Taurus. They're two fixed signs, and I'm awful stubborn.

What are your sleeping dreams like?

My dreams are my life. It's the same feeling. I've been blind since birth, so there's no dif-

"Cause what is/is gonna stay/ till the heart of time/decides to change"

ference in my dreams. You're used to seeing things and hearing things. But do you ever experience smell in dreams? I do. And touch and sound—everything except sight, and for me that's everything.

When you were 17, there was a lull between *Where I'm Comin' From* and *Music Of My Mind*. How come?

I just needed some time away from recording. But I was working—playing, writing, playing, writing all the time.

Even though you're only 24, you've been a pro for 14 years. That's a long time. You ever worry about burning out?

Well, it's something I think about. You have to always keep putting wood in the fire, you know. *Fulfillingness' First Finale* was going to be a double album, but instead we're going to release it in two parts, and I might wait a long time, maybe more than a year after the second record, before I release another album. The title indicates that this is the last of this kind of stuff that I'll be doing—different songs and essentially the same instrumentation. I think my next thing might be a large orchestral thing. A long piece.

In *Bird Of Beauty*, on *Finale*, you speak of resting and of letting your mind find the answers to things you always wanted to know, of taking a furlough, of recreation, having fun, of mind excursions and traveling. Are you finally going to take that trip to Africa you've been talking about for so long?

Yeah, in September. There's gonna be a festival for the Ali-Foreman fight in Zaire,

Africa. I'm going to do one show there. Through Taurus Productions, I'm also contracting other acts for the festival, and we're going to film it all for a TV special. We're gonna donate all the money to the African drought areas.

Sounds like work to me. Fun work, but work.

Well, yeah. But after that, we're going to tour—Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, all over. It's not only that. I was to start a foundation to find a way to restore the eyes of people blinded by a

fungus carried by flies that goes to the cornea of the eye at eats it away. Some 40% of the people in Ethiopia are blind because of that fly.

What kind of fly?

I don't know the exact name of it.

What do people think of your going to Africa?

It hurts me that a lot of American blacks think I'm turning my back on this country. It's not that I dislike America. It's that I want to experience Africa and help out as much as I can.

Do you feel your roots are there?

As a culture, as a motherland, I've always hoped to go there. And the culture of America has also given a lot. But in Africa there's not really a conception of time. Things are slowed down, and you have a chance to let your mind grow. To just think and to observe . . . the outdoors, insects, living off the land. "Feeding off the love of the land," like in a song I wrote.

Someplace you said you wanted to go to Africa to feel the oppression and the pain, and to bring it into your music.

Well, I think that there has been a great deal of oppression in this country, but definitely not as much as has been, and is being, experienced in Africa.

The SLA might take issue with that, not to mention the thousands of less radical militants. There's so much oppression here to experience, how could you want to go anywhere else?

African people feel we're living a great deal better. The massacres there are just not happening here. The oppression a junkie feels here is only artificial and superficial—it's not real. He's lost, and his mind is not working properly.

And after Africa?

I learn off of life—knowledge is my firewood, you know? So I'll read, travel, listen to the music of different cultures and different people from far away and near.

In *Bird Of Beauty*, I say life is gonna be what it is. "Cause what is/is gonna stay/till the heart of time/decides to change." And I really believe that. You have to do something with the time Father is giving you.

Sometimes I feel when I write lyrics that the Supreme Being is speaking to me. And I'd like to feel He is speaking through me. It's a very special thing to me to write a word, to express how I feel.

In many of your songs you tell people to live up to the best in themselves—that's a hard demand, almost a cruel demand to make, isn't it?

If you're angry inside, why not turn it around the other way, do things to make it go away? I can't control what you do, but I can control what I do.

Turn negative energy into positive energy?

"Let God's love shine within to save our evil souls."

When you were a little kid, a junior deacon in the Whitestone Baptist Church, why did they throw you out, man?

'Cause I was singin' rock 'n' roll! (Laughs) You've been influenced by a lot of white musicians, haven't you?

I like a lot of people. I've liked Bacharach since Chuck Jackson's recording of *I Wake Up Crying*. Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, Crosby,



RAYMOND ROSS

24-year-old Arpist

Makin' It In Macon

Story and Photos by Ray Townley

What is it that makes white kids down South think the blues belong to them?

Ask William Faulkner, or ask Christmas, Faulkner's anti-hero in *The Light In August*. Or, better yet, ask any of the regular bar patrons along Broadway street in downtown Macon, Georgia, where nightly stabbings of blacks and whites go unreported simply because no one gives a damn.

As an outsider, a Yankee, I can only vaguely sense the ponderous, contradictory heritage of pride and suffering that has gone into the building of the South, a heritage felt, in a very Jungian way, by every local citizen regardless of race or economic class. It's almost as if Southerners are cursed with their own particularly dark shade of universal unconscious. By the same token, I can only partially share their moments of acute joy and serenity. Southern hospitality, it seems, is only fully extended to another Southerner.

A lot if it has to do with man's relationship to his environment. The South has only recently, begrudgingly, come to terms with the technological world of the '70s. Most people grew up next to the land. And the land—often muddy, often brittle and caked, rarely fertile—is the great leveler of human aspirations and mechanizations.

But, accepted as it is, the land can also inspire. There's a brief elevation near the railroad tracks in back of Rose Hill Cemetery in Macon. Here, in the late-'60s, a bunch of long-haired freaks spent many a night cooling off by the occasional breeze that broke through the listless air, listening to the crickets in the bushes, and eating of the "sacred mushroom plant." Two of them are now buried on this plot, fated to forever relive those nights. Another has immortalized the spot by writing a love song about an affair that took place on the cold surface of a nearby tombstone.

By a process of osmosis, almost Zen in its non-aggression and ultimate completeness, the Allman Brothers sat there and absorbed their surroundings, culturally as well as musically. As we all know by now, they eventually emerged from their backwoods retreat to take the entire country by storm with a near-perfect synthesis of southern sounds: country, country blues, rhythm and blues, jazz, gospel, rockabilly, and rock.

Of course, their story as a band—as well as their individual histories—began long before they arrived in Macon via Phil Walden, former personal manager of Otis Redding and now President of Capricorn Records. The unusual musical sensitivity and breadth possessed by Duane and Gregg Allman can just as easily be traced back to their boyhood fascination with radio station WLAC, the big r&b station out of Nashville. It also can be traced back to summer visits with their grandmother, who lived in Nashville in a housing project, like any other indigent.

In fact, it was on one of these summer excursions up from Daytona Beach, where they grew up, that the Allmans were first exposed personally to music. "I used to spend the summers up there, just to get away from Florida for a while, you know," Duane has said. "I'd go visit my grandma. And this kid named John Banion lived across the street and he had an old Silvertone guitar. John taught me a couple of chords on it and stuff, and I got kinda interested in it, and my brother Gregg did, too. In fact, Gregg learned to play first, and I kinda lost interest in it, man."

The irony in Duane Allman's early disinterest in the guitar is amusing. For he later was to become the undisputed master of the slide-guitar, surpassed only by those black originators like Robert Johnson and Blind Willie Johnson in whose footsteps he followed. (It should be noted that even though Duane played in the more modern electric style, his conception and phrasing were closer to his southern country roots than to the urban style forged by Elmore James. Duane's style was also shaped by harmonica players like Little Walter and Junior Wells.)

But what about this seemingly new music unleashed by the Allman Brothers? Southern blues—played by white kids, to boot.

Little known to the rest of the world, there's a tough and exacting circuit in the South that bands like the Allmans have been trekking for a number of years. It spreads from the Carolinas to Florida, over to the eastern parts of Texas. The Allmans, along with another group—the Black Pleague—were the first and, so far, the finest southern blues groups to jump this circuit and gain national prominence. Duane recalled the Plague: "We'd see their name on posters and the chicks that'd been laying with them would tell us, 'You gotta hear those freaky looking cats!'" The Plague was a brother team too, Johnny and Edgar Winter.

The former Atlantic Records' manager for the United Kingdom,

16 down beat

Frank Frank Fenter, is now Executive Vice-President of Capricorn Records, the Allman Brothers' label based in Macon. His British brogue is out of place in Georgia, where the drawl is thick enough to be cut with a knife. He spoke about the southern music scene.

"There are hundreds of these little bands in the South. If you just stop and look around—my god! How many years have they been here? Nobody has ever bothered to look down here. The South has always been either rhythm and blues or country. Most of the white musicians around here listened to rhythm and blues or country radio stations. Nobody listened to Top 40. Duane Allman never listened to Top 40 stations. He listened to black stations. They lived that way; they also played that way.

"What happens is that a lot of people split from here, like Stephen Stills is a southern guy. He went to the Coast. Take all those great Alabama musicians, the ones who aren't at Muscle Shoals. They split individually. But as a band, these little southern groups could never really afford to get into a truck, go to L.A., go to San Francisco, or go to New York and get an audition with a big company. Many of them went to Nashville and Nashville is country, so they played this to a guy in Nashville and he flips out. (Ed. note—the Allmans once did go to a Nashville record producer with a demo tape. He told them to quit playing and get day jobs. Today, he's attempting to sell that demo back to Capricorn.) So the band goes back to Spartenville or Mobile or wherever it comes from and it goes back to the same club gig. That's basically why southern bands didn't happen."

Chuck Leavell, the pianist who joined the group in October of '72, a few weeks before the death of bassist Berry Oakley, found the Allman Brothers a liberating influence long before he dared think of joining them. "It was only a while back that soul was the only thing happening in the South. Like I said, r&b and commercial music. And then when the Allman Brothers came around, it was like finally someone opened the door to a southern band that played their own style of music that improvised a lot on top of it. Before, everybody just kind of laughed at it and shit. Nobody would have much to do with it.

"When they first started out, they played 365 one nighters a year. The Brothers were definitely a great influence and opened a lot of doors to a lot of bands. We were trying to do that shit back in Tuscaloosa, playing to fraternity houses, but nobody would have us. They'd want to hear *My Girl*, and all that shit. They didn't want to hear no improvisation at all.

"When I was young, Duane used to play Fort Brandom Armory in Tuscaloosa with the Allman Joys. This had to be somewhere around '66. I never knew Duane, but seeing him perform on stage, I knew he just was not afraid to stretch out and try anything. It was amazing seeing this cat and all the members of the band, and knowing they were all from the South. Local cats had never played this kind of music in the South before and made a living off of it. It was such a pleasure and so unique. I said to myself, Goddamn, I believe I'll go out and do it, too."

The way Duane expressed that early sound was: "That's what I loved man, to hear that backbeat popping, that damn bass plonking down man. Jesus God!"

So today, it has become chic to be a blues-based rock band out of the South. While not long ago, every music critic had to listen at least once to every new English rock album, now they have to listen to every new album out of the South. And the groups and the albums are proliferating at a fast clip: Wet Willie, Marshall Tucker, Grinderswitch, Cowboy (all on the Capricorn label), Z.Z. Top (London Records), Mose Jones and Lynyrd Skynyrd (both brought to the fore by Al Kooper's short-lived Sounds of the South custom label and now on MCA itself), Charlie Daniels (Buddah), etc., etc., etc.

But the almost insurmountable obstacles are still vivid in the minds of the Allman Brothers and their people. Johnny Sandlin was the drummer for the ill-fated Hourglass, as well as session man on Duane's early solo



effort at Muscle Shoals (from which a B.B. King medley found its way onto the *Duane Allman/An Anthology* LP). Today, he's Vice-President in charge of a&r for Capricorn. Among his credits: the *Brothers And Sisters* album, Gregg Allman's *Laid Back* solo LP, Dickie Betts' soon to be released solo shot, and Elvin Bishop's first effort for Capricorn. But Johnny Sandlin still remembers those dues paying days.

"The Hourglass existed from '67 through about the end of '68. We headed out to L.A. with stars painted in our eyes. This guy we had met from St. Louis had talked us into going out there, but it seemed awfully strange. Things seemed to be happening then which, I guess, were hip things to be happening, but they scared me to death. I didn't like them. And then we didn't fit in too well musically. All our roots had been in r&b music. Through Duane, and especially Gregg, we got into the Yardbirds, Eric Clapton, John Mayall, the English blues-oriented music."

"When we got out there, we ended up doing the whole Hollywood trip—the clothes, everything. Most of us felt awfully alienated. We were signed with Liberty. At first, they weren't too interested. Gregg had some songs that were considered, but most of them were rejected by our producer. He gave us a bunch of demos and said, 'Pick the songs you like and do them.' It was something completely out of our control. We recorded a couple of mediocre albums, which, it seems, have been re-released recently.

"The Allman Joys, Hourglass and something on Bold. That damn thing makes me so mad because I think three of the cuts on it are from when we were rehearsing for our second (Hourglass) album. We rented a rehearsal studio for \$10.00 an hour. It was a four track. You could either record or rehearse, whichever you wanted. So we wanted to record to see how we were coming with it. Somehow the tape got to people in Miami and they ended up putting it on an album."

When asked to talk about the Brothers' musical influences, Sandlin came up with some unusual insights. "They've been so varied, you could just about say every form of music that they've ever been exposed to. Of course, there's blues, folk blues, rhythm and blues, gospel—Ray Charles and Bobby Bland. There are Eastern influences. Duane had a lot of that at one time. They got into Ravi Shankar. Jazz, of course, when you talk about early Coltrane, Miles Davis. That's what they used to listen to all the time, which is sort of surprising because they play blues. But their music always had nice melodies instead of holding one note.

"Duane and Dickie both, their solos were always so interesting and there were always these melodies that you can remember. A lot of blues things, I guess, are blues licks. The Allmans always seemed to have a beginning and an end, with a long phrase or series of phrases that really made sense in the middle.

"Right now, the music is settled, sort of, from the things that went down, Duane dying, Berry dying, hiring Chuck, hiring Lamar (Williams). Chuck and Dickie's playing together, complementing one another, right now, is at a much higher place than it was before this latest tour. A lot of this is due to the recent sessions here. It seems that the songs have a form to them. There are melodies and then it's free for a while. Chuck and Dickie are really listening to each other as well as playing themselves. It's amazing to me, the lines they'll play in harmony. It's not rehearsed that way. It happens and it happens right and it'll go on for a long time. Some time it scares me to death that they can do it that long."

The band is getting more used to the newly completed 24 track Capricorn Sound Studio, too. "Gregg has always been interested in the studio. He understood the difference between doing something live and doing it in the studio. And he compensated for it. Recently, Dickie's been really getting involved in it; he's developed a lot of techniques. For example, he's been into raising the strings of his guitar. Before he was overloading his pre-amp. He'd run it right into a Marshall head, into a JBL. The Marshall pre-amp is so sensitive and the Les Paul is so hot that

you get into clipping no matter where the volume is at. So you get the strings away from it a bit, actually you send less signal to it, and it's a cleaner studio sound. He gets the same sound on stage because you don't hear the distortion 100 feet away or even 20."

I asked Sandlin about the recording of *Brothers And Sisters*. Were any of Betts' guitar solos overdubbed? "No. One thing we did—I think he was using a Marshall head—we ran an extension speaker down to the basement here, which looks like an antique dungeon and set a cabinet down there with a microphone. It's just an echo-chamber type thing. We did it to get more reverb and more of a live sound. There were a couple of harmony lines that he doubled, but never a lead or solo. All leads, both Dickie's and Chuck's, were done live. Gregg's vocals were dubbed in later. Sometimes Chuck would overdub an electric piano harmony in addition to what he had put down with the acoustic piano."

As I talked with Chuck Leavell, I began to understand the close ties that have been built—even ossified—between band members. To be in the Allman Brothers' Band requires a period of proving one's worthiness. "Gregg was the one who first brought up the idea of my joining the Allmans. He kind of wanted another keyboard player in the band. Everybody else was neutral about it. They didn't know. Well, of course Jaimo (Johanson), Lamar, and I played together when I first joined up. But since I've joined, I've only had one rehearsal with the entire band.

"When I first joined, I'd be sitting next to Dickie on an airplane and I'd say, 'Good morning,' and that's about as far as it went. It took a while to get to know the cat. Of course, I played on Gregg's record, which kind of brought us closer. But, for a long time, between Dickie and me, it was 'Hello, Good-bye,' and get up there and play and learn the songs. But working with him on his record really brought us a lot closer."



Lamar Williams



Richard Betts

A lot of people say that you've added a broader musical base to the band.

Well, it had to change somewhat because the whole thing about the Allmans when they first started out was two guitars doing harmony, then the two drummers, and then Gregg's vocals. Having two keyboards had to change it a whole lot. We still do harmonies between guitar and keyboard, but it has got to be different.

You can trade off. You can pair with the guitar, go with the organ, or go with the rhythm section.

The rhythm section of the band more or less supplies the backbone for the whole thing. Gregg and Dickie are more out front. They sing the songs and write them mostly.

Did you think an acoustic piano would fit in when it was first presented?

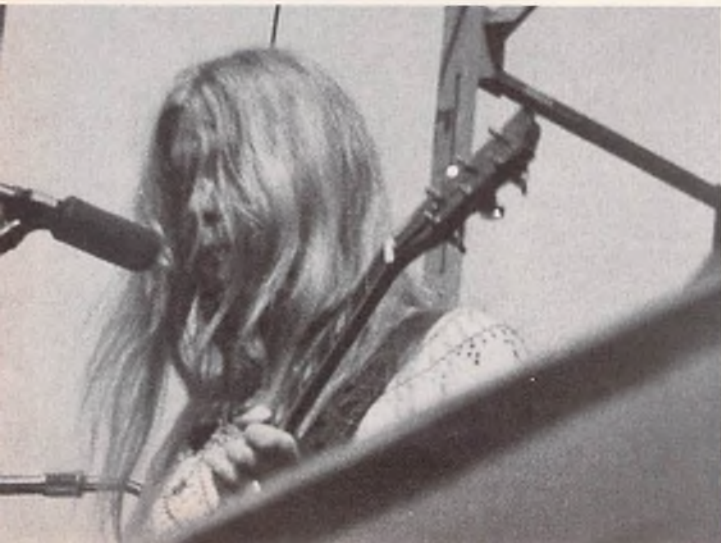
I'll tell you what I used to do. I used to play with Alex Taylor and Dr. John. We used to open the act for the Allman Brothers. When they came on they'd roll the piano that I had used to the back of the stage. And they'd be playing and I'd sit down and play their tunes backstage. It started me thinking, "Wow, I wonder if I'd ever join the band!"

In the last couple of years, rock bands have re-incorporated acoustic piano for texture and color, like the way Mott the Hoople uses acoustic piano. It breaks through, the acoustic sound comes right through the electric wall.

The invention of the Countryman was really a good number. Before, it was so hard to play in a loud rock band if you played an acoustic piano. You could mike the damn thing all you wanted to, but it just wasn't gonna come out sounding right. That Countryman pickup recreates the sound better than anything else I've heard live. I got hip to it right when I joined the Brothers. The Grateful Dead's piano player, Keith Godchaux, uses one. When I was with Alex Taylor and Dr. John, we went through microphone after microphone and a million pickups.

At the end of one of the dual drum jams, I heard something for a split second that sounded like it could have been a segue on Miles Davis Big Fun album. Lamar came in on bass, then you joined on piano. A couple of angular chords of yours and then a brief second of silence. It was something else.

"Lamar probably told you that he, I, and Jaimo are trying to do a



Bobby Bland: Blue in Name Only

By Ray Townley

Bobby Bland, the man with "Blue" as his middle name, has entered the '70s. The konked pompadour and flashy zoot suits that only a few years ago were part and parcel of his image are no longer. In their place are tasteful cotton outfits and a modest natural. Gone also are the subtle doo-wop arrangements that have kept his music eternally dated. In their place are tight, driving jump-band sounds that make his 10-piece group, the Mellow Fellows under the leadership of Melvin Jackson, one of the most exciting big-bands to crisscross this land.

And, most importantly, after 20 years of near-diet status in the black community, he finally has been discovered by the white pop audience. Perhaps his acceptance was tentative, at first. After all, what were white folk to think of this 40ish-year-old black crooner whose style was as close to Mel Torme as it was to Howlin' Wolf? But, like a glass of quality whiskey, Bland is an acquired taste. So, with each savored swallow, his audience has become more and more enthusiastic. And with the release of two near-perfect albums for ABC/Dunhill, *The California Album* and *Dreamer*, he should catapult to the top.

We're backstage between sets at Chicago's High Chaparral, where Bland—sweaty, short of breath and swathed in a silk robe—is relaxing.

The Chaparral, the city's main black-circuit nightclub, is an air-hangar-huge room, seating upwards of 2,000. Like the other high-brow chitlin clubs that dot the important black urban centers—Indianapolis, Houston, Memphis, Birmingham, etc.—the Chaparral has been a staple of Bland's past. But in his future lie more integrated, hence lucrative, halls and festivals.

Bland is an old smoothie. His voice exudes a supple warmth of familiarity; his short, choppy speech patterns mirror his singing style. As we talk, Bland is conscious of the photographer in the corner and pulls continually at his robe to cover his sagging breasts.

I ease into the conversation. *You have to catch your breath.*

"Well, you know, that's part of this scene. There are no two days the same nowhere," he confides as he wipes his brow with a towel. "You get sick; I do, too. You feel bad; I do too sometimes. But I wasn't pleased with my performance so far this evening. I know when I've done a pretty fair show, but it's just one of those nights, man, when I wasn't really feeling up to it."

One gets the impression Bland is rarely satisfied with his performances.

First, I ask the obligatory historical opener. *When you look back on the Beale Streeters* (a group that at different times included Roscoe Gordon, Johnny Ace, Junior Parker, and Bland) *and the old days in Memphis during the late '40s and early '50s, how do you feel about them?*

"How do I feel about them? Lovely, glorious days. If you can look at it like it really was and face it. At the time we were maybe thinking, what is the worth of this, not feeling we were qualified at what we were doing. But after you get to a position, you can look back and see that it was very beautiful, and it's very helpful to an artist to understand how he arrived at this

particular point."

But why are some artists able to survive over the years while others have a hit or two and fade away?

"I don't know. I myself would never give it up because I love it too much. Not that I don't know anything else to do. This is the way I'm most happy. And I think you have to be really dedicated to put in the training, especially when you first start out and want to make a career of it. There certainly are a lot of disappointments along the way.

"And I'm really off into this. In fact, ever since I was, oh, the age of five or six, I've been into music. The church was the only thing I knew anything about because I had to be there every Sunday. And then on Thursday nights we had prayer meetings. My mother's such a beautiful singer, shit, she can sing rings around me. She never had any formal training. Neither have I."

Those were the early days in Rosemark, Tennessee, 60 miles as the crow flies from Memphis, Bland's style retains much of the gospel feeling that was his first influence, lending his music an instant contemporary ring. He himself credits Ira Tucker of the Dixie Hummingbirds as a significant influence.

I read somewhere that you were influenced in your phrasing by a lot of pop vocalists.

"Tony Bennett, Perry Como, Nat King Cole, those were the people who inspired me as far as diction was concerned."

I wouldn't think Perry Como would be an inspiration.

"Maybe you don't hear what I heard."

But his greatest and most lasting mentor was to be a young disk jockey and club performer in Memphis known as Blues Boy King. Tradition holds that the reason why Bland is now known as Bobby Blue (his real name is Robert Calvin) is because of B.B. "That was Don Robey's doing," Bland will tell you, trying to shuttle the obvious comparison. "It kind of puts you in a certain category. They tried to change it a number of times, but I think I'm labeled with it. People say, 'Who is it? Let's see, Bobby Bland, Bobby Bland, oh, Bobby Blue Bland!' It's just one of those things. Robey hung it on me after I got with his company (Duke-Peacock) in '54. And I've been stuck with it ever since."

Of all your hits—Call Me, That's The Way Love Is, I Pity The Fool—do you have any personal favorites?

"No, not really. I try to put everything into what I'm doing. There are things on some of my records that I don't agree with. But basically I try to put into a performance whatever is needed, from what I've learned from Joe Scott (former a&r Director at Duke-Peacock), and from what I've watched and listened to. You know, you never get through learning; regardless of how big you get, there will always be things that you don't know, but should. So I just listen a lot and watch a lot. And I like most of the things I've done . . . but not all of them.

How did you develop that phrasing technique where you . . . it's sort of like a hoarse growl and you sing out of the side of your mouth?

"I developed that myself. 'Cause I used to

sing real high, a falsetto, you know, like Al Green does. B. was the inspiration for it. I loved him so much and then copied him in the way I sang. He was my idol at the time. Then I had my tonsils taken out and that lowered my voice. I was around 17."

So that changed your voice?

"It didn't right away. In the early years, like *I Smell Trouble*, I still had it. Then I started to feel the lose of my falsetto. I tried to sing a high note one night. I did one of B.'s tunes that I had been working on for a long time and when I stretched for a note I usually could get, it wasn't there. So after that I started to really concentrate on different, I guess you would call them, gimmicks. That's what falsetto is, a trick voice or whatever. So I just hollered one day and I started working on that. My first attempt at the new style was *Little Boy Blue*. Then I started listening to Glen Franklin because he had a growl that I liked."

At this point in the interview, a long-haired white dude, apparently a backstage valet, came in to hang up a musician's coat. Immediately the incongruity of such a person working in an all-black club hit me in the face. Then I remembered Bland's own tutelage as B.B.'s personal valet and chauffeur. What was first incongruity became, on second thought, perfect sense—and sensibility. We have all paid our dues in one way or another to be next to the music that we love.

Do you consciously program your stage shows to get a certain response?

"No, it just happens. If the audience makes it happen, then it happens. I don't plan anything because I don't think this is a good policy. Because it may not work out that way. If the spirit hits you, then let it go."



continued on page 41

LINDA WING



JUDGE FOR YOURSELF

Andy Bey's premier album for Atlantic Records, "EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT," aptly titles the carefully chosen material, the refined methodology, finesse, and precise workmanship that has been lavished on the record. On the gospel, old-fashioned spirituals, and particularly jazz selections, Bey veers from the more typical approach favoring the less travelled and more adventuresome directions.



SD 1654

On Atlantic Records and Tapes



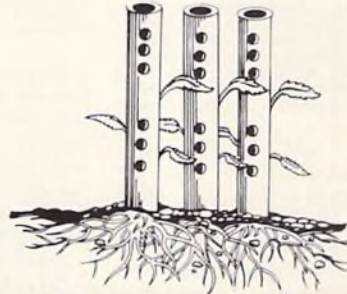
FOOT STOMPER

"Stompin' at the Savoy" is part jazz, part reggae, part r&b and all funk. Robin Kenyatta's musical collage is assembled by a masterful artist and embellished by the help of fine talents like Eumir Deodato, Dr. John and Bernard Purdie.



SD 1656

On Atlantic Records and Tapes



TAKING ROOT

Getting into the heart of "real" jazz and producing the purest of sounds is saxophonist/flautist Harold Alexander's main concern on his first Atlantic album, "Raw Root." To this effect, his album contains written notes explaining the inner meaning and intent of each particular cut. Explanation almost unnecessary, however, for the validity of the music speaks eloquently for itself.



SD 1657

On Atlantic Records and Tapes

Atlantic  Atco  Records & Tapes

RECORD REVIEWS

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

HUBERT LAWS

IN THE BEGINNING—CTI P1098: *In The Beginning; Restoration; Gymnopedie #1; Come Ye Disconsolate; Airegin; Moment's Notice; Reconciliation; Mean Lane.*

Personnel: Laws, flute; Dave Friedman, vibes; Gene Bertoni, guitar; Ronnie Laws, tenor sax; David Nadien, violin; Emanuel Vardi, viola; George Ricci, cello; Bob James, acoustic and electric piano; Steve Gadd, drums; Airo, percussion.

On track 1, Clare Fischer replaces James; on track 8, Rodgers Grant replaces James. On track 4, add Richard Tee, organ.

*****½

Some really good records are not meant for the uninitiated. The work of Paul Bley, Cecil Taylor, Gil Evans, and the like probably would only frighten off those who haven't acquired a taste for their exploits. The amazing thing about Hubert Laws' music is that it can appeal to a broad range of musical tastes without making any sort of commercial concessions. This in itself is a remarkable achievement.

How has Laws accomplished this? First, he's gathered together a crack rhythm section as tight and well balanced as any I've heard. Ron Carter's time and gigantic tone probably need little description, but the playing of drummer Steve Gadd might. I first encountered him on Chuck Mangione's *Alive* album a while back; he now gets my vote for the best all-around underrated drummer. His accents uncannily anticipate and complement Carter's bass lines; his bass drum patterns are incredible (check the cooker *Airegin*); he seems comfortable in everything from free music to sanctified 12/8; and if this isn't enough, he's a master of the declining art of brush playing (note *Reconciliation*). Bob James, who does most of the keyboard work on this album, is another musician to watch for. He contributes several cohesive, facile and well-structured solos.

Laws himself is in little danger of being upstaged by his sidemen. He's become a master improviser who can weave logical musical statements while never sounding mathematical or premeditated. At times, especially during his extended duet with Gadd on Sonny Rollins' *Airegin*, Laws comes close to matching Rollins' own virtuosity.

A further virtue of this album is its intelligent programming. There's a gospel piece; two difficult jazz standards (*Airegin* and John Coltrane's *Moment's Notice*); an adaptation of a piece by Eric Satie (*Gymnopedie*); and a fairly abstract piece by Clare Fischer, *In The Beginning*. A decade ago this latter piece probably would have been called *Third Stream*; it moves through a maze of constantly shifting tonal centers, textures and rhythms. Yet it's a totally controlled performance, and its dissonances and colorings are worthy of a Mingus or an Ellington.

Why all these accolades and not five full stars? Length. Each side of this two-record set averages around 16-minutes worth of music, and therefore, while this is high quality music, I feel obligated to warn that it's minute-for-minute rather expensive. Aside from this, I can have nothing but praise for the concept and

execution of this album, which for me exemplifies everything that is good about the current state of music. —balleras

QUINCY JONES

BODY HEAT—A & M SP3617: *Body Heat; Soul Saga (Ballad Of The Buffalo Soldier); Everything Must Change; Boogie Joe (The Grinder); Everything Must Change-Reprisal; One Track Mind; Just A Man; Along Came Betty; If I Ever Lose This Heaven.*

Personnel: Quincy, producer-conductor-arranger, background vocals; Herbie Hancock, Rhodes Fender Piano, Arp Odyssey; Richard Tee, Bob Jamerson, electric piano; Billy Preston, Arp soloist and organ; Mike Melbain, synthesizer; Robert Margoueff and Malcolm Cecil, Arp synthesizer programming; Dennis Coffey, Arthur Adams, Phil Upchurch, Eric Gale, Wah Wah Wetern, and David T. Walker, guitars; James Galdrin, Paul Humphrey, Bernard Purdie, and Grady Tate, drums; Chuck Rainey, Melvin Dunlap, Max Bennet, bass; Bobby Hall, percussion, conga, cow bells, rhythm logs, B. and D. 1962 Buick break drums; Tom Morgan, harmonica; Hubert Laws, flute, horns; Jerome Richardson, Chuck Finley, Frank Rosallo, Clifford Solomon, Pete Christlieb, horns; Leon Ware, Minnie Riperton, lead and background vocals; Tommy Bahler, Joe Greene, Jesse Kirkland, Jim Gilstrap, Carolyn Willits, Myrna Mathews, background vocals.

It's possible that I like *Body Heat* much more than the rating indicates, but I've long felt that pure subjective reaction can't be the sole criterion for judging an album. My enjoyment stems primarily from my personal affection for the new electric r&b/jazz/funk of the Hancock-Sly-Wonder axis, not because the album's very distinguished.

Certainly, *Body Heat* is an attractive album; in fact, Quincy's most popular to date. The production is sophisticated, the sound crystal-clear. The arrangements are done in Quincy's usual creative good taste (here, he's helped out by Tommy Bahler and Dave Blumberg). The real rub lies in *what* is being arranged; and it's the point of composition that's the sore spot for most of the LP.

The new soul is still a more basic music than modern jazz, no matter how sophisticated its instrumental trappings. The commercial hooks remain an earthy, danceable *beat* (as opposed to *rhythm*) in the up-tempo numbers; and a lush, nearly melodramatic texture in the ballads. These elements remain unchanged, even though instrumental forms and even melodic structure have expanded and mutated recently. Thus, *Body Heat* represents a simplification of basic form for Quincy, from his big-band recording dates such as the influential *Walking In Space* (the original "CTI sound" belonged just as much to Jones) further along the lines of his last LP, *You've Got It Bad Girl*, which was more of a jazz-pop collection. The beat is funkier now, its bass foundations more rock solid and, at times, absolutely repetitious.

This repetitive quality is underscored by the fact that on *Body Heat*, Quincy eschews instrumental solos for a series of vocals which fail to contribute needed variety. While it's true that the vocals add to the tightness of the sound, they add nothing more, only reinforcing already too-strongly established patterns in each selection. As for the lyrics, the less said, the better.

Two cuts stand out: *One Track Mind* cooks along in a tense, jumpy groove, punctuated well by the vocal ensemble. It's a nervous number, sustained beautifully, leaving the listener hot for more. *If I Ever Lose This Heaven* is the best tune on the LP, sung competently here by Minnie Riperton, but which would really take off in the hands of a more distinctive artist, such as Dionne Warwick or Diana Ross.

With all of this critical carping, how can I still claim to like this album? Well, I happen to enjoy stylish, attractive music, and *Body Heat* presents nothing if not that. But this taste of mine also doesn't stop me from realizing that the disc is aptly titled, generating much more heat than light. Since the classics of this relatively new genre, Hancock's *Headhunters* and Stevie Wonder's *Innervisions*, managed to

generate both in considerable quantities, it seems only fair to stop short of full praise for Quincy Jones until he fully masters the subtleties of what only seems to be a simpler musical form. —mitchell

GREAT RHYTHM AND BLUES OLDIES

VOLUME 1: LOUIS JORDAN—Blues Spectrum BS 101: *Choo Choo Ch' Boogie; Caldonia; Let The Good Times Roll; I Got The Walking Blues; Saturday Night Fish Fry; Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens; Beans and Cornbread; Outskirts of Town; Helping Hand; I'm A Good Thing.*

Personnel: Jordan, vocal and alto sax solos; Shuggie Otis, guitar, bass, piano, organ; Johnny Otis, drums, piano; Irv Cox, tenor sax; Bob Mitchell, trumpet.

VOLUME 2: CHARLES BROWN—BS 102: *Driftin' Blues; Trouble Blues; Rockin' Blues; Baby, Let Me Hold Your Hand; Big Legged Woman; Livin' In Misery; Black Night; Merry Christmas Baby; It's Getting To Be Evening; Let The Sunshine In My Life; Counting My Tears; I Want A G.I.R.L.*

Personnel: Brown, vocals, piano, organ; Shuggie Otis, guitar, bass; Leonard Feather, piano (*Evening*); Johnny Otis, drums, piano (*Rockin' Blues*), vibes (*Tears*).

VOLUME 3: JOHNNY OTIS—BS 103: *Willie And The Hand Jive; Barrelhouse Blues; Please Don't Leave Me; Bad Luck Shadow; Fannie Mae; The Signifyin' Monkey; A Harlem Nocturne; Stack-o-lee; Don't Start Me To Talkin'; Baby, I've Got News For You; Country Girl; Bye Bye Baby.*

Personnel: Otis, vocals, drums, piano, vibes; Shuggie Otis, guitars, bass; Delmar Evans, vocals; Jackie Kelso, sax; Big Jim Wynn, baritone sax; "Mighty Flea" Connors, trombone; Melvin Moore, trumpet; Clifford Solomon, sax; Rene Bloch, alto solo (*Harlem Nocturne*); John Ewing, trombone; Willie Webb, guitar; Jimmy Smith, Jr., bass (*Fannie Mae*); Thomas Norwood, drums (*Fannie Mae*).

Nothing has quite excited me recently as much as the six-volume set produced by Johnny Otis under the title, *Great Rhythm and Blues Oldies*, of which these are the first three records. The subsequent volumes feature, respectively, Joe Turner (whose voice appears to be losing some of its power), Pee Wee Crayton, and Joe Liggins-Little Willie Jackson and the Honeydrippers. Aside from on his own featured volume, Johnny with Shuggie Otis adds rhythm and shine on the remaining five records.

Charles Brown's musical style has changed little in the past 30 years. His singing is still immediately recognizable, except to the unfamiliar who might think it a young Ray Charles. In fact, Charles' early singing emulated Nat King Cole and, at times, Brown himself, almost to impersonation. About 10 years ago, Brown called a recording he had made for the old Mainstream label "... the most relaxing album I have ever recorded." Evidently, the intervening years have relaxed Brown even more. The first two cuts on both sides are throwbacks to his days with the Three Blazers, a period when Brown was at the height of his influence. Although Brown does manage to raise the tempo on two numbers, he remains mellow and relaxed running through 12 standard blues. The two passable blues numbers offered by Feather, *Evening* and *Counting My Tears*, are the only ones that do not pertain to women, but speak of old age.

At 65, the only thing about Louis Jordan that seems to have mellowed slightly is his voice. Still very present is Jordan's humor, bounce and reedy jump sax. As evidenced by the titles, this is mostly novelty r&b Jordan. The one contemporary note is sounded on *Helping Hand*, a pleasant up-tempo melody containing heartfelt lyrics about the poor and rejected. Here, Jordan's sound is like that of a chartmaker half Jordan's age. A joyful record of good, clean, jumping fun.

Jumpin', but not always so clean, is the Johnny Otis set, a volume of Otis at his rockin', earthy, bluesy, unpretentious best. As usual,



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Otis sounds like he's having a ball romping through tunes so closely associated with his r&b movement. On this record, as well as the others, Shuggie Otis shows us he really can play that guitar, expressing a beautiful feel for the blues. Otis is especially outstanding on *Hand Jive*, *Stack-o-lee*, and *Country Girl*.

One question, though: *Signifyin' Monkey* is credited here to Otis and Evans—didn't Oscar Brown, Jr., write it? The tune is the same, though the lyrics have a generous helping of four-letter words. For that matter, there are plenty of three-, five-, and six-letter words, too, guaranteeing little radio play. However, even with the lack of subtlety, there's a naturalness to it all.

If you like to boogie and you dig great rhythm & blues oldies, these records will do just fine until the juke joints re-open. —rusch

CHARLES EARLAND

LEAVING THIS PLANET—Prestige P-68002: *Leaving This Planet*; *Red Clay*; *Warp Factor 8*; *Brown Eyes*; *Asteroid*; *Mason's Galaxy*; *No Me Esqueca* (*Don't Forget Me*); *Tyner*; *Van Jay*; *Never Ending Melody*.

Personnel: Earland, organ, ARP and Moog synthesizers, clavinet, electric piano, double soprano sax; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet, flugelhorn; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Joe Henderson, tenor sax; Dave Hubbard, alto flute, soprano and tenor saxes; Mark Elf, Eddie Arkin, guitars; Dr. Patrick Gleeson, ARP and Moog synthesizers; Greg Crockett, guitar (track 2); Brian Brake, drums (tracks 3, 9 & 10); Harvey Mason, drums, (all other cuts); Larry Killian, percussion; Rudy Copeland, vocal (track 1).

Although there is a ton of talent assembled on this two-record set, Earland would have been wiser to dispense with that extra disc. Even though the solo work is blistering throughout, especially the trumpet yells by Freddie Hubbard and Eddie Henderson, a greater attention to conciseness would have centralized the impact of this high-voltage music.

It seems that organist Earland has been captivated by Sun Ra's celestial philosophy since many of the titles deal with planetary hobnobbing. The most innovative cut is the opener, *Leaving This Planet*, featuring a stellar vocal by Rudy Copeland. Rudy asserts control following ten seconds of sonic synthesizer engineering by Dr. Pat Gleeson and some massive swirls from Earland's organ, developing a powerful hymn to cosmic escapism that leaves us wondering why Charles neglected to employ him more often on the set.

The driving percussion duo of Larry Killian and Brian Brake propels *Warp Factor 8*, the chilling six-chord pattern providing blast-off impetus for frenetic solos from Hubbard's trumpet and Earland's clavinet. The lushly Latinesque *Brown Eyes* could scarcely be termed space music but nevertheless sports some of the more impressive licks of the session, with Gleeson's pioneering electronics supplementing the torrid solos by Freddie and Dave Hubbard and the tenor sax moan of Joe Henderson. This lengthy cut proves to be the album's most dazzling.

Several other pieces demand mention, namely *Asteroid*, highlighting guitarist Mark Elk on a riff reminiscent of the old Martha and the Vandellas' r&b hit, *Heat Wave*, and the deftly-executed samba *No Me Esqueca* [*Don't Forget Me*] laced with a luscious alto flute run from Dave Hubbard.

Leaving This Planet concretely proves that Charles Earland is about to come into his own as a composer. But although he is credited as having played both ARP and Moog, the lack of sufficient information concerning individual tracks makes it appear as if Gleeson were largely responsible for the electronic accoutrements that abound on the disc. Also, Earland is steeped in what may be a superfluity

of accomplished soloists, so much so that he is hard-pressed to sneak in his own prodigious organ chops. Perhaps his next recording will find him more self-sufficient delving with greater intensity into the terrain which is hinted at here. —hohman

BEN SIDRAN

DON'T LET GO—Blue Thumb BTS 6012: *Fat Jam*; *House Of Blue Lites*; *Ben Sidran's Midnite Tango*; *The Chicken Glide*; *Sne's Funny (That Way)*; *Monopoly*; *Don't Let Go*; *Hey Hey Baby*; *The Foolkiller*; *The Funky Elephant*; *Snatch*; *Down to the Bone*.

Personnel: Sidran, piano, vocals; James P. Cooke, guitar; Phil Upchurch, guitars, bass; Bunky Green, alto saxophone; Sonny Seals, tenor saxophone; Jerry Alexander, harmonica; Clyde Stubbs, George Brown, drums and percussion. (Unidentified strings and horns.)

On track 10, Kip Merklein, bass. On track 8, Jim Peterman, organ; Randy Fullerton, bass; Tom Piazza, drums.

It's slick, clever and shrewdly produced. Imaginative? Sure that, too. That's a positive, overall description of Ben Sidran's new record, no sarcasm intended.

Sidran is the Ph.D. from Wisconsin, who played with the Steve Miller Band among others, and managed to successfully mix music and academics. He's a strong rhythmic pianist with an easy, blues vocal style who makes no secret of the fact Mose Allison tops his list of musical heroes. The Allison influence comes through in his piano work, but most especially in his vocals. You can also hear a touch of Bob Dorough.

But Sidran's bag is more than references to other music; it is a hybrid of jazz, rock and funk, all neatly fused. For example, there's the funky *Fat Jam*, reminiscent of a Herbie Hancock tune called *Fat Mamma*, that opens side one followed by a talking blues with some undeleted expletives called *House of Blue Lites*.



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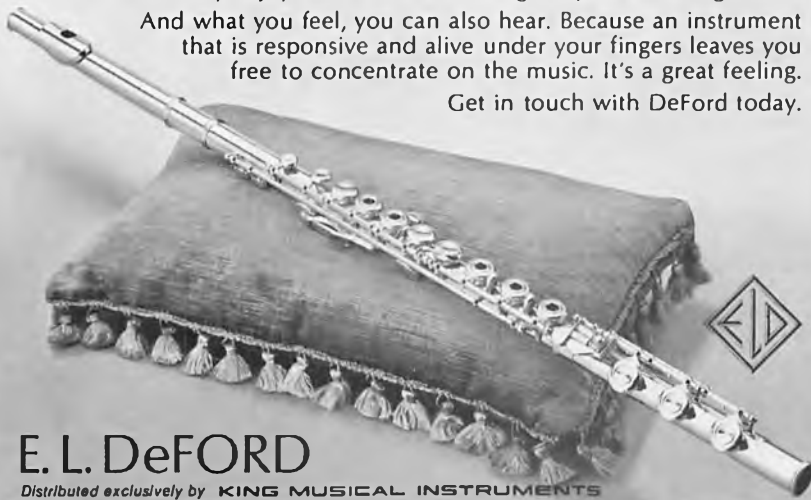
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an updated version of a '50s r&b classic—you'll never hear this one on the radio. Paying homage to another of his heroes, Sidran offers a short rendering of Bud Powell's *Monopoly*.

On *Hey Hey Baby*, Sidran overdubs his voice to produce one of those synthetic vocal harmonies being done more and more frequently; and *Midnite Tango* and *Glide* feature some fine alto playing by Green.

One frustration with the album is that all the tracks are fairly short—single-size—and occasionally, as on *Don't Let Go*, when the music starts to cook and you're waiting for the tune to take-off, it just fades away. —nolan

RAY MANZAREK

THE GOLDEN SCARAB—Mercury SRM 1-703: *He Can't Come Today*; *Solar Boat*; *Downbound Train*; *The Golden Scarab*; *The Purpose of Existence Is?*; *The Moorish Idol*; *Choose Up And Choose Off*; *Oh Thou Precious Nectar Filled Form (or) A Little Fart*.
Personnel: Manzarek, vocals, organ, piano, synthesizer; Tony Williams, drums; Jerry Schoff, bass guitar; Larry Carlton, guitar; Malillo Conea, congas, wood block, bongos; Steve Forman, tuned cowbells, whistles, guiro, tuned wood blocks; Mill Holland, pandeiro, African cow bells, cabassa, quica.

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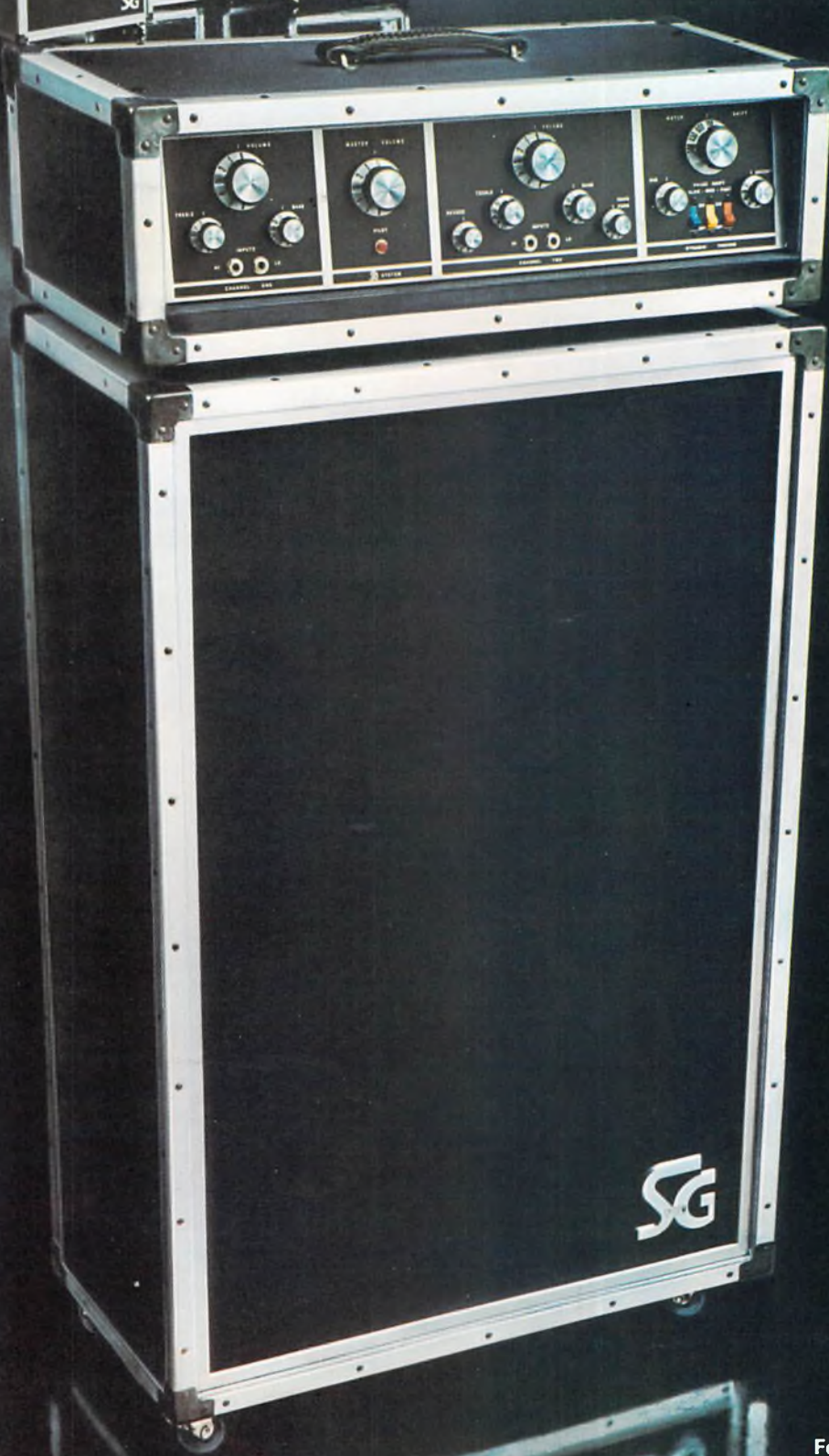
The Golden Scarab is the *Zardoz* of vinyl, an agreeably pretentious mess that proves Jim Morrison wasn't the only member of the Doors responsible for all of that group's silliness. Fortunately, this album also shows that Morrison wasn't the only member of the band with considerable talent. Manzarek is a slick, sophisticated pop musician, capable of blending hard rock, jazz, and blues into a smooth hybrid that suffers only from the heavy shadow cast by Ray's abysmal lyrics.

Subtitled "A Rhythm Myth," *Scarab* is supposedly a concept album which relates Manzarek's personal journeys through the late '60s and early '70s, the years that the Doors were part of the spearhead of the "progressive rock" scene. Thus, the songs contain a little bit of everything that was part of those days of expanding rock culture: polymorphous mysticism, pseudo-revolutionary politics, grotesque carnival imagery a la middle-Dylan, and watered-down Jungian symbolism. This mixture might have gone down a bit more easily in '68, when stomachs were stronger and eclectic idealism ran rampant. These days, however, one tends to blush at lyrics like: "*Birth and death, full circle and another incarnation/Life is so sweet and on so neat, the greatest of temptations/Is your world so empty that you want off this cosmic wheel?*" Manzarek slobbers on in this fashion for practically the entire disc, the only exception being *Moorish Idol*, a synthesizer instrumental.

Fortunately, Manzarek helped to develop a classic instrumental style while he was with the Doors. Ray's musical talents save *The Golden Scarab* from certain death, with imaginative soloing and impeccable ensemble arranging and playing. When the tunes are really attractive, as on *Solar Boat*, it's possible to actually forget the inanities spewing from Manzarek's mouth. The formidable battery of percussionists provides more rhythmic interest than one is apt to hear in rock music these days. But Tony Williams, I'm afraid, gives no indication here that he was once one of the most individually dynamic, radically original young musicians on the scene. He's good, but not striking.

Manzarek's polished, unique music redeems *Golden Scarab* to the extent that it's definitely worth a listen; but he should try to say everything he has to say through the *music* next time out. In any case, it's good to know that one of rock's more fertile minds from the '60s is on his way to making the transition to this decade. Ray Manzarek has some catching up to do, but not much. —mitchell

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SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON

VOLUME 3—Blues Classics (Arhoolie) BC 24: *My Little Baby; Up the Country Blues; Something Going On Wrong; Mattie Mae Blues; I Have Got to Go; Springtime Blues; Love Me Baby; Win the War Blues; Miss Stella Brown; Desperado Woman; Sonny Boy's Jump; Sonny Boy's Cold Chills; Alcohol Blues; The Big Boat; Wonderful Time; Little Girl.*

Personnel: Williamson, harmonica and vocals; Walter Davis, piano (tracks 1-3); Blind John Davis, piano (tracks 4-10, 12, 16); Eddie Boyd, piano (tracks 11, 13, 15); Big Maceo Merriweather, piano (track 14); Robert Lee McCoy or Henry Townsend, guitar (track 2); Big Bill Broonzy, guitar (tracks 1, 3, 4, 6, 7); Charlie McCoy, guitar (track 5); Ted Summitt, guitar (tracks 8-10); Bill Sid Cox, guitar (track 11); Willie Lacey, guitar (tracks 12, 13, 15, 16); Tampa Red, guitar (track 14); Washboard Sam, washboard (track 5); Alfred Elkins, bass (track 5); Ransom Knowling, bass (tracks 11-13, 15, 16); Armand "Jump" Jackson, drums (tracks 9-11); Charles Sanders, drums (track 14); Judge Riley, drums (tracks 13, 15, 16).

The man who, more than anyone else, shaped the course of Chicago's classic blues of the '40s and '50s and brought the harmonica into prominence as a major blues instrument was John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Junior Wells, Snooky Pryor, Dr. Ross, Big Walter, Billy Boy Arnold, the late Little Walter and many other harp players have kept Sonny Boy's masterful blues echoing through the years, and another harmonica great, Rice Miller, even adopted and preserved his name. A few of Williamson's followers surpassed their mentor in instrumental prowess, but Sonny Boy—who was murdered in Chicago 26 years ago—remains one of the giants in blues history.

Williamson was a remarkably consistent artist, and this latest Blues Classics collection is excellent—as are his two others on BC and one on RCA International. The 16 songs come from 11 different sessions, from his second studio date (1937) to his last (1947). His style changed little during his recording career, although by the mid-'40s he was employing a tighter Chicago ensemble, and his harp maneuvers on the post-1941 sides here are free of the off-phrases that occasionally slipped in earlier.

Blind John Davis provides solid piano backing on most cuts. Big Bill Broonzy serves up some lovely down-home guitar on *Love Me Baby*, electric guitarist Willie Lacey swings along on the later sides, and several other blues luminaries join in, but Sonny Boy's warm, infectious singing, shouting and harmonica trills and warbles are in front all the way. He breathes fire into his harp on the uptempo jumps and settles into a slow, mournful burn on the plaintive blues numbers. Williamson was a fine, original lyricist, and although most of his songs deal with traditional blues themes, two World War II blues offer some different thoughts. The title of the snappy *I Have Got To Go*, recorded four days after Pearl Harbor, is self-explanatory; in his notorious 1944 *Win The War Blues*, Sonny Boy declares, *I want a machine gun and I want to be hid out in the woods. I want to show old man Hitler that Sonny Boy don't mean him no good.*

Some of the LP's more familiar sounds come from *My Little Baby* (a follow-up to his famous first hit, *Good Morning, School Girl*), *Springtime* (a "Sail On" blues), *Sonny Boy's Jump* (later recorded under different titles by Johnny Young), and *Alcohol Blues* (waxed by J.B. Hutto as *20% Alcohol*). The melodies jaunt *Wonderful Time*, with its opening Judge Riley drum solo and Lacey's jazzy guitar break.

Sonny Boy spent his entire career with RCA Victor/Bluebird, but RCA hasn't deemed him worthy of an American LP. Thankfully, there are smaller but more appreciative companies like Chris Strachwitz' Blues Classics to keep the major labels' old blues treasures from rotting away in corporate vaults. —o'neal

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BU PLEASANT

MS. BU - Muse 5033: *Opus for O.P.*; *Everything's Different*; *Bells for Bu*; *Summertime*; *Melody for Bu*; *Sho Nuff Da Blues*.

Personnel: Pleasant, organ, vocals; Harold Vick, tenor sax; Altee Chapman, trombone; Ted Dunbar, guitar; Mickey Bass, bass; Freddie Waits, drums.

Bu Pleasant is an organist/vocalist who, as the liner notes explain, has been paying dues for an awfully long time without earning much recognition, in or out of the business. This is her first recording as a leader.

Jazz organ is strictly a matter of taste for most people; at times (as on the first track of this album, *Opus for O.P.*) it can be surprisingly abrasive to the ear. But when everything is working right and the style, tone, and rhythm come together, as on *Sho Nuff*, Bu can rank alongside any of the leading jazz organists. Indeed, the second side of this album works better than the first in virtually every respect.

Side one, however, does feature one bluesy ballad that's really lovely. *Everything's Different* was written by Bu's mother some years ago, and she sings it with flair and feeling, providing her own tasteful accompaniment. *Bells for Bu*, the last cut on the side, bears a striking resemblance to Horace Silver's tune *Nica's Dream*, but without that song's skillful resolutions.

Bu's vocalizing is an unusual blend of jazz a la Billie Holiday and wailing-blues, most effective on the aforementioned *Everything's Different* and on an extended vocal-instrumental of *Summertime*.

Ms. Pleasant's backup group on this album is serviceable but, like the album itself, somewhat

less than inspired. Only on the final *Sho Nuff* does it sound like a really cohesive unit that collectively caught fire.

There is enough creative spark here, however, to indicate that Bu Pleasant is an artist well worth listening to; hopefully other record dates will follow and provide an even better showcase for her talents. —*malin*

LEE MORGAN

MEMORIAL ALBUM—Blue Note LA224-G: *Speedball*; *Ceora*; *Sidewinder*; *Hocus-Pocus*; *You Go To My Head*; *Just One of Those Things*.

Personnel: Morgan, trumpet; Wayne Shorter (tracks 1-5), Hank Mobley (track 2), Joe Henderson (tracks 3-4), tenor saxophone; Pepper Adams (track 6), baritone saxophone; Harold Mabern Jr. (tracks 1-5), Herbie Hancock (track 2), Barry Harris (tracks 3-4), Bobby Timmons (track 6), piano; Bob Cranshaw (tracks 1, 3-5), Larry Ridley (track 2), Paul Chambers (track 6), bass; Billy Higgins (tracks 1-5), Philly Joe Jones (track 6), drums.

***** 1/2

Morgan was one of those very rare individuals who radiated intelligence, intensity, presence, spontaneous wit. This collection is emphatically *not* the best of Morgan, it is simply a group of producer Duke Jordan's personal favorites. It is hardly even a fair cross section of Lee's ideas; but Lee's playing is generally excellent, and there is an interesting variety of mood and style.

Stylistically, the earliest is the 1957 *Just One*, and it is fascinating to hear the teen-aged trumpeter lending a very personal edge to the Brown style on the first chorus. In the second, as emotional counterpoint, the Brown structure opens into bright, occasionally sarcastic fire, as though a cynic was explaining Brown's optimism: anti-lyrical phrases and fierce on-the-beat attacks counter the basic style's Louis Sullivan-like detail. Morgan soon evolved his own voice, of course, and the 1963 *Sidewinder*

and *Hocus* solos wind a thread of realistic embroidery through the plain hard-bop surface.

By then he had acquired a battery of trumpet effects that might have made Rex Stewart smile, for sonoric variation became crucial to him. In fact, those two '63 solos are almost entirely decorative in intent, a broad-humored Lee. The 1965 *Speedball* and *You Go* solos are less intense, less revealing, but they are the only samples here of the tremendously productive Morgan-Shorter partnership—in fact, they're among the last decisive statements of Shorter's early (and most interesting) tenor style. Finally, *Ceora* (1965) is Morgan offering nearly pure lyricism at face value, and the Morgan and Mobley solos thus reinforce each other. It's instructive to compare this to the two very different (mistitled) versions on that strange new Trip LP, for Morgan found endless variations of style and emotion in *Ceora*.

For whom is this record intended? The original *Moanin'* is possibly his most famous solo, *Cornbread* and *Our Man Higgins* are just about his best, *Search for the New Land* is his most unique conception. The years with Blakey, when he worked brilliantly with Golson, Mobley, and especially Shorter, are a high-water mark in the development of hard-bop. Rather than this sampler, the listener unacquainted with Lee Morgan is urged to turn to the *Cornbread* and *Search* LPs—or *Leeway*, or even *Sidewinder*, or Blakey's *Witch Doctor*, or the live Blakey dates with Shorter, or the Blakey *Big Sound* and *Moanin'*s, etc. etc.—you get the point. Good as it is to hear these tracks again (*Just One* is long out of print), the reissuing of readily available Morgan constitutes a waste of precious vinyl. —*litweiler*

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DB 912

BUD POWELL

THE INVISIBLE CAGE—Black Lion BL-153: *Blues For Bouffement*; *Little Willie Leaps*; *My Old Flame*; *Moose The Mooche*; *In The Mood For A Classic*; *Like Someone In Love*; *Una Noche Con Francis*; *Relaxin' At Camarillo*.
 Personnel: Powell, piano; Michel Gaudry, bass; Arthur Taylor, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Recorded in Paris in July, 1964, two years to the day before Powell's death and only several weeks before what was to be his last return from Europe to the States, this album gives us a sober picture of the artist in his declining years.

It's no secret that Powell's playing became erratic after about 1954, and Black Lion's posthumous release only confirms this. The velocity tempos, which he once handled so effortlessly, present him here with a challenge he can't quite surmount. *Little Willie Leaps*, the bop tune based on *All God's Children Got*

Rhythm, is taken at an ambitious clip but is weakened by Powell's blurred statement of its head and by his solo, which lacks the precision and control of his best playing. This point becomes even more definite on Parker's *Moose The Mooche*: the line isn't clearly articulated and Powell's touch seems uncertain, his choice of notes hesitant. These tunes contain the album's most uncomfortable moments.

Powell's languid *Blues For Bouffement* comes off better. He works here with little brittle phrases of irregular length. But when he attempts double time, his playing doesn't have the vitality, precision, and certainty of intention it once had. *My Old Flame*, a deliberate, careful ballad performance, notable for the harmonically imaginative way Powell slides into the bridge, is missing the breathless abandon of Powell's best ballad playing; it's as if, like Nick in Hemingway's *Big Two-Hearted River*, he's trying too methodically to get things right.

Some brighter spots come on the delightful *Like Someone In Love*. After a Tatumesque opening, Powell slides into a relaxed, medium groove tempo and renders a chorus in effortless, swinging Shearing-style block chords. This is easily the album's most relaxed and successful track. *Una Noche Con Francis*, named for Francis Paudras, the French commercial artist who befriended Powell and accompanied him when he returned to work at Birdland, is a bright calypso tune, which except for a few fluffed notes, is largely successful.

In short, while much recorded evidence indicates that Powell was the best and most influential of the bop pianists, not much confirmation of this is to be found here. Under the adverse circumstances of the later years of this artist's life—the tuberculosis and schizophrenia, perhaps even his uneasiness about returning to meet the test of working at Birdland—I suppose the surprising thing is that Powell fares as well as he does here. However, I resent this album's misleading liner note implication that this record contains a true representation of this artist's talents. —balleras

HOUD DOG TAYLOR

NATURAL BOOGIE—Alligator 4704: *Take Five*; *Hawaiian Boogie*; *See Me In the Evening*; *You Can't Sit Down*; *Sitting at Home Alone*; *One More Time*; *Roll Your Money Maker*; *Buster's Boogie*; *Sadle*; *Talk to My Baby*; *Goodnight Boogie*.

Personnel: Taylor, vocal, guitar; Brewer Phillips, guitar; Ted Harvey, drums.

★ ★ ★

HOMESICK JAMES

AIN'T SICK NO MORE—BluesWay 6071: *13 Highway*; *12 Year Old Boy*; *Buddy Brown*; *Fayette County Blues*; *Little Girl*; *In Love*; *My Baby's Gone*; *Little and Low*; *I Need Love*; *I Ain't Doin' No Good*; *Sugar Mama*; *Woman I Love*.

Personnel: James, vocal, guitar; Eddie Taylor, guitar; Snooky Pryor, harmonica; Dave Myers, bass; Willie Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

J.B. HUTTO

SLIDEWINDER—Delmark 636: *Slidewinder*; *Blues Do Me A Favor*; *Precious Stone*; *Young Hawks' Crawl*; *Too Late*; *Letter from My Baby*; *Shy Voice*; *Boogie Right-On*.

Personnel: Hutto, vocal, guitar; Lee Jackson, guitar; Bombay Carter, bass; Elbert Buckner, drums.

★ ★

JOHNNY LITTLEJOHN

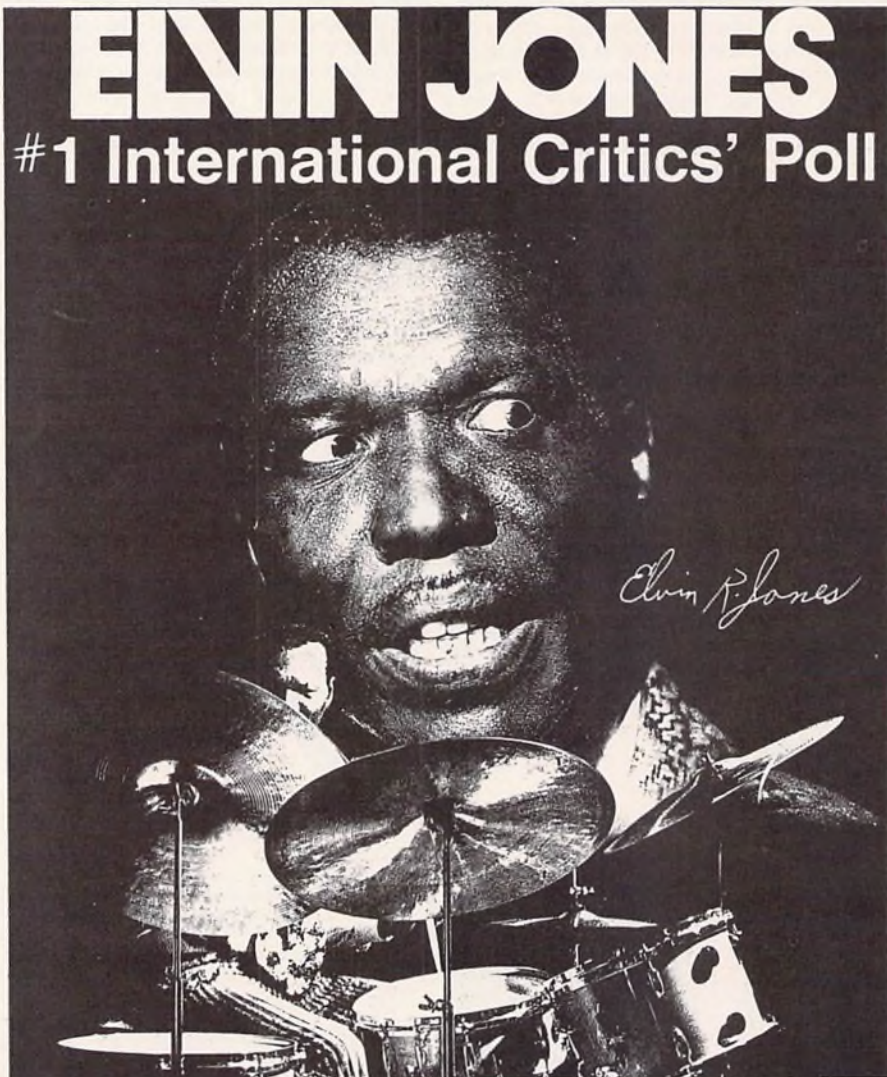
FUNKY FROM CHICAGO—BluesWay 6069: *Lost in the Jungle*; *I Met A Stranger*; *Chips Flying Everywhere*; *Guitar King*; *Keep on Running*; *Need More Baby*; *29 Ways*; *Came Home This Mornin'*; *How Long Blues*; *Worried Head*.

Personnel: John "Littlejohn" Funchess, vocal, guitar; Eddie Taylor, guitar; Dave Myers, bass; Fred Below, drums; unidentified pianist and harmonica player.

★ ★ ★

One of the things that most fascinates the serious fan of blues and black folk song is tracing the music's evolution through a study of the work of those musicians who extend and invigorate its traditions and continuities through the innovations they introduce. Like all folk expressions, blues is a fairly—but not rigidly—conservative music that undergoes change rather slowly. Its conservatism is, of course, one of its strengths; the great body of tradition—with all its familiar, commonplace forms, modes, motifs, themes and musical and verbal vocabulary—sustains equally the innovative and the conservative practitioner. The former keeps the tradition viable and functional within a dynamic culture by serving as the agent of change, without which the tradition would wither and eventually die.

Every blues innovator has his sources, his influences. For example, slide guitarist-singer Elmore James, one of the most popular and



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influential of all postwar bluesmen, can be said to have developed his musical style through a reinterpretation and extension of certain aspects of the music of Robert Johnson, the brilliant prewar Mississippi singer-guitarist. James has, in turn, inspired others to follow in his musical footsteps, four of the foremost of whom are to be heard in these recent albums. All four men currently reside in Chicago where they have been active in the city's hectic, varied and, above all, cut-throat blues performing scene. Each has concentrated on a different aspect of James' influential and immensely popular music as the basis of his own approach.

Of the four, Taylor is the least sophisticated, dispensing an infectious, strongly rhythmic dance music that uses raw, vigorous force to compensate for the narrowness of its melodic-harmonic compass. Power music pure and simple; but relentlessly, almost brutally, insistent, and very effective in small doses. Any of the set's five instrumentals might serve as the prototype of Taylor's music: thick, dark boogies that offer little in the way of subtlety or melodic development, but which virtually savage one with their ferocious drive and intensity.

Taylor's a passable singer and his vocals are probably best viewed as functional, introducing another welcome texture to what otherwise would be largely a one-dimensional sound. In a sense, all his music is instrumental, some pieces having vocal elements or interjections that approximate verses, the exceptions here being the well-known *Shake Your Moneymaker* and the album's most stunning performance, the lengthy slow vocal blues *Sadie*, which is based on Sonny Boy Williamson's *Help Me*.

In all, it's a fairly effective album in that it succeeds in capturing much of the raw, visceral power of Taylor's simplification of Elmore James. Personally, I would have liked a bit more programmatic variety; the unrelieved, trio format gets too wearing over a whole album, particularly since just about every piece is in the same key. I appreciate producer Bruce Iglauer's intentions, which were to produce a set that as much as possible duplicates Hound Dog's live performing sound, but I honestly feel a few concessions to the fact that this is a studio-made record—and not a live recording made in a club—would have resulted in much more interesting turntable fare. A few key changes, expanded instrumentation on a few cuts, and it would have made a world of difference.

The set by Homesick James is much more to my liking—not that there's anything unusual, innovative or even strikingly different about it. Quite the contrary, in fact: the program and approach (that of the *Dust My Broom* Elmore) are much like those of previous albums by the singer-guitarist. The difference is wholly in the quality of the performances, all of which are forceful, direct blues with good, strong playing by all: a marvelous ensemble sound supports admirable, convincing vocals and restrained, tastefully inventive playing by James, who's rarely sounded so good on record before. Chief reason for this is the fact that there are none of the structural irregularities which in the past marred much of James' recorded work. Here all is supple, smoothly coordinated playing coupled with a well chosen program of songs (many, incidentally, traditional pieces from James' native Tennessee).

J. B. Hutto's approach falls midway between those of Hound Dog and Homesick. At his best, Hutto is quite good indeed—strong, funky and wholly unpretentious—though one would scarcely know this if his sole exposure to J.B.'s music were through this latest Delmark album, to my mind an unmitigated disaster. The band plods unimaginatively through every selection, never once dispensing anything even vaguely

approximating swing, let alone drive. But, sadder still, severe intonation problems plague virtually every track, making it all but impossible to listen to the performances without wincing. Bassist Carter is the consistently worst offender, but the two guitarists are not entirely blameless either. A certain amount of out-of-tuneness might be overlooked in a club, where there are other compensating factors, but it's all but unforgivable in a studio-made recording where, presumably, such things can be clearly heard and remedied.

Hutto tries his best to bring some life to these performances but they never once rise beyond the level of mediocre—and seriously flawed at that—at most, barely suggesting the power and vigor of his music. For J.B. three stars, for Delmark, none.

John Littlejohn, another erstwhile Elmore student who on previous recordings has evidenced a solid grasp of the later develop-

ments of slide guitar, virtually eschews slide on his latest effort. The album has all the earmarks of a rushed production—cursory band arrangements, occasionally sloppy ensemble work and poor solos, missed changes and the like. There's a slight air of confusion about the performances, as though the participants weren't quite sure of just what was supposed to happen next, with the result that the pieces fail to jell into the strong, sure performances they might have become.

The thorough-going professionalism of the band members prevents the set's ever becoming downright poor, just as the lack of real production values prevents its rising beyond the merely routine. Not one of Littlejohn's most successful recordings, but not really bad.

The few slide pieces, *Came Home This Morning*, *How Long*, and *Worried Head*, are easily the best things on the album. —welding

MEL LEWIS:

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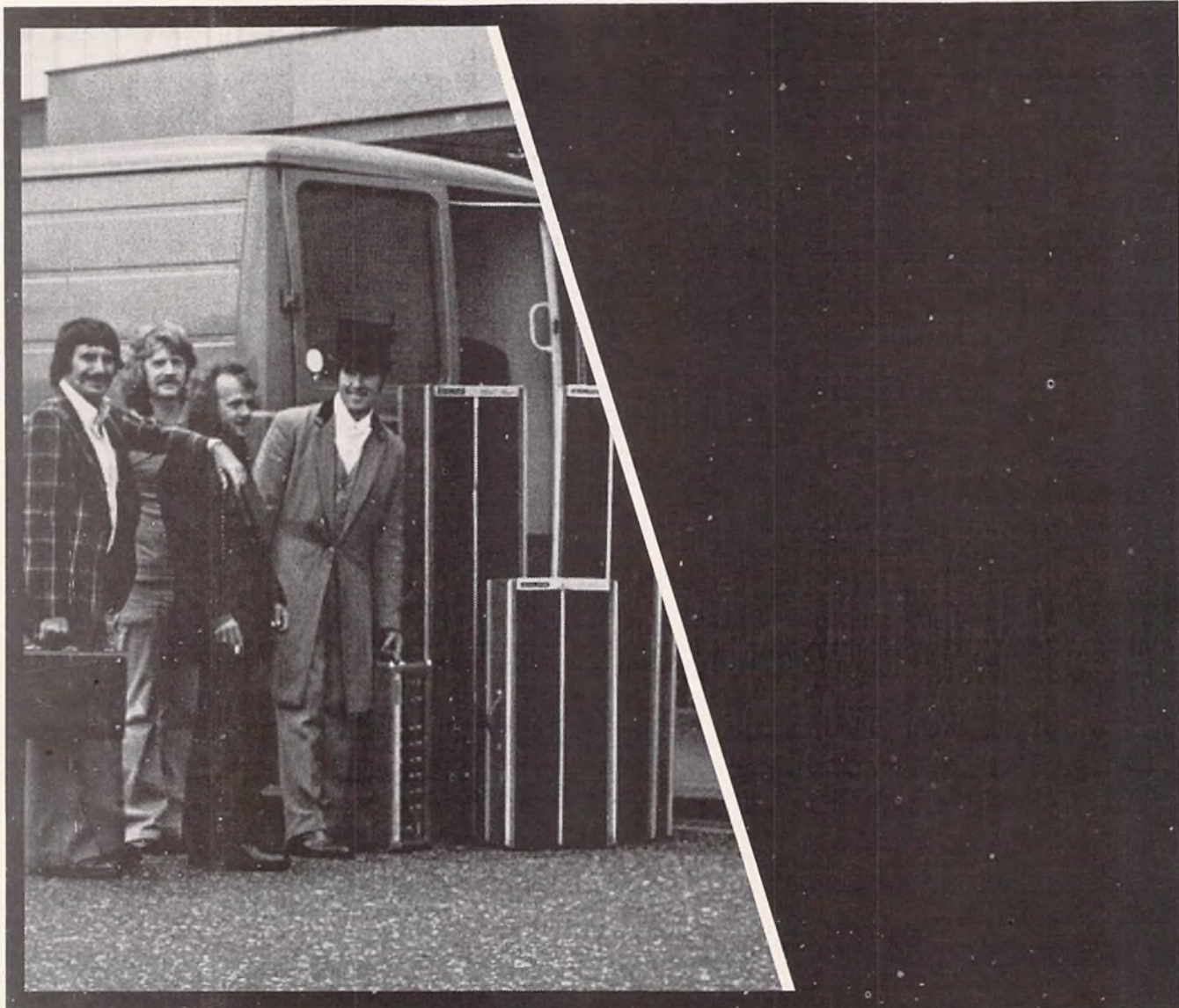
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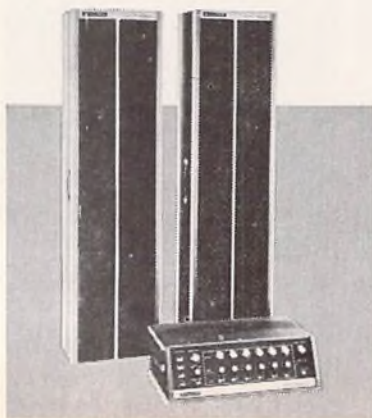
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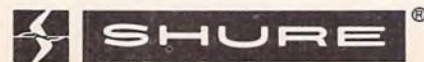
Kenny Ball with arm on shoulder of soundman Pickstock outside London Hilton.

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Michael White



by Leonard Feather

In a decade that has seen an unprecedented explosion in the quantity and quality of jazz violinists, Michael White stands out, not only as instrumentalist but as composer and human being, for the unique contributions he has made since he first came to prominence at the 1965 Monterey Jazz Festival.

Born in Houston, Tex., raised in Oakland, Cal., he began studying violin at the age of nine. Although he was inspired by Stuff Smith, Stephane Grappelli and others, he has been influenced by a wide range of creative artists from Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk to Oscar Pettiford and Sun Ra.

At Monterey, White was a member of the John Handy Quintet, with which he remained for a year or two, later playing in The Fourth Way before branching out on his own. In recent years he has been expanding as a composer, recording a series of remarkable albums for Impulse, one of which introduced his suite, *The Land of Spirit and Light*.

Though much of his music communicates an intense energy, White also can convey a sense of peace, tranquility and spirituality that is quite clearly a part of his nature. Extremely soft spoken and gentle in manner, he combines an exceptional musical background with the ability to translate his listening experiences into terms of his own esthetic values.

This was White's first Blindfold Test. He was given no information about the records played.

blindfold

test

1. PAPA JOHN CREACH. *Soul Fever* (from *Papa John Creach*, Grunt).

As far as the music is concerned, it didn't kill me . . . it's like a rock beat. The emotional content, the musical content, escapes me. I like the violin player's sound; he sounds like someone who's been playing a long time, like Stuff Smith.

The only person I know who's playing rock is Papa John Creach. I like him. I like all violinists! We have a hard way to go. Since I didn't care very much for the rest of the record, I'd give it three stars on balance.

2. STEPHANE GRAPPELLI/JEAN-LUC PONTY. *Pentup House* (from *Violin-Summit*, Saba). Grappelli, Ponty, violins; Kenny Drew, piano; Niels-Henning Orsted Pederson, bass; Alex Riehl, drums.

Yes, I liked that. It sounded like European violinists. There's a Swedish guy, Svend Asmussen . . . and it sounded like Jean-Luc Ponty . . . maybe Stephane Grappelli. I can't distinguish . . . at least I can distinguish Ponty, he plays more modern and has beautiful facility.

The sound mostly coming from the bebop thing, like Stuff Smith, who has had a tremendous influence on jazz violin; and the Europeans sound like a lot of the things Stuff

played . . . but they sound good. Since they don't have anyone but American musicians to go by, I look mostly for originality in European violinists, because they've had the opportunity, better schooling, better study, more classical facilities than cats over here have had, from a technical standpoint. So I have to look for originality more than just technical facility and sound. So I'd give it four stars. I like the bass player.

LF: A thought has occurred to me: I'd like to clarify your feelings about the use of the electric violin. I know that you use it, but you also record on regular violin. How do you feel about the electric violin?

MW: Well, dealing with realistic things, I feel that it's here and is something to be dealt with. I think it allows more freedom to do other things. We're living in a space age; it allows you to create or try to hear different sounds. It's just another tool . . . expansion. I'm trying to utilize it in various ways like the human voice . . . sounds . . . elements. . .

LF: But you still mix it up, use both?

MW: Not lately. In my latest band, we have some acoustic things, but we're mostly amplified. It's not amplified to the teeth. I've been refining that a long time, trying to have the same type of volume as the horn would be.

3. SVEND ASMUSSEN/STUFF SMITH. *Timme's Blues* (from *Violin-Summit*, Saba). Asmussen, Smith, violins; rhythm section same as #2.

That's Stuff . . . and he can play! He had socko, plus he's one of the real true innovators of not just the violin, but for conception, from the so-called bebop school. That's music to me, I love it, I love Stuff. Anything Stuff is on is five stars.

That was the Swedish violinist Svend Asmussen with him. I liked him, and I like the music, but the shining star for me was Stuff.

LF: Do you have any idea who the rhythm section might be? It's the same one that was on the previous track.

MW: Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen is probably the bass player. But Stuff was taking up so much of my attention, I really don't know who the piano and drums are.

4. DON "SUGARCANE" HARRIS. *Almost Broke* (from *Keep On Driving*, MPS). Harris, violin; John Taylor, piano; Tony Oxley, drums; Volker Kriegel, bass.

The violin player has nice facility; sounds like another European. I don't know who it is. The music didn't kill me; it sounds very light. In this day and age I think impact is an essential ingredient in the music. A lot of people can play hip, play all the licks and things, but it's the impact that counts. So while it was cool and okay, it lacked impact . . . energy level, emotional level . . . the vibrations-of-now level.

The violin player is good . . . on the strength of that, two stars.

LF: That was Sugarcane Harris . . . recorded in Europe with a European rhythm section.

MW: I like Sugarcane; I'd like to have heard him with a different rhythm section.

5. JOE VENUTI. *Doin' Things* (from . . . *The Daddy of the Violin*, MPS). Venuti-Eddie Lang, composers; Venuti, violin.

That's Joe Venuti, the man who made *The Hot Canary* famous! That sounds like the era of the hot jazz violin. He was one of the innovators of that. That sounds like an early composition. I used to listen to early, early, early compositions . . . this one sounds like the '20s.

It had impact for that day; it still sounds like music. I'd never really listened to Venuti with the degree of intensity required for really good listening. But taking everything into account, I'd rate that four.

LF: It wasn't easy, a few years ago, to find enough records to make a whole set of performances by different violinists. I'm sure you can remember the time. Do you believe that the number will increase rapidly now?

MW: Sure. It's just an attitude people had toward violin over a long period of time. It was always placed in the classical syndrome . . . always had to be played this way, thought about in a certain way . . .

Now, there's a lot of young violinists coming up who'll be heard from in the future. There's a brother named Leroy Jenkins. There's a Chinese cat in San Francisco, Ray Ching.

Our music now is something that we're trying to relate to the now of things. That means with some words, voice plus movement and musical content . . . feeling, emotional content, something to make you move and make you feel good. It's not just sitting back and being taken on an intellectual trip.

db

Profile

TERRY GIBBS

by gary burton



JAN KILBY

It is my pleasure to introduce to the readers of *down beat* Michael Gibbs, a composer/arranger from England soon to receive considerable exposure here in America. I had the good fortune to attend school with Mike when he was a foreign exchange student at Berklee College in the early '60s. In the following years, Mike wrote many songs and orchestrations for me which have been a major influence on my own music.

Mike is best known in England, of course, where he performs and records with a band of his own, but his talent is going to become widely recognized here very soon. For one thing, his orchestrations on the new Mahavishnu album, recorded with Michael Tilson Thomas and the London Symphony, are quite outstanding, and over the next few months two more albums featuring his writing will be released.

One is *In the Public Interest*, his own album recorded with a large band in New York. The other is *Seven Songs for Quartet and Chamber Orchestra*, written for my group and recorded with members of the Hamburg Symphony in Germany. The chamber music was presented at this summer's Newport-New York Jazz Festival, as well.

It's a sad fact that many talented jazz writers are lured into commercial music which dominates their work and surely limits their opportunities for musical growth. Mike is a rare exception. He's

able to devote most of his time to serious projects, and thanks to many musicians such as John McLaughlin, Stan Getz, and others (and record companies such as ECM and Polydor), he has had the opportunity to see his works performed and recorded for the jazz audience.

Of particular interest to the serious follower of jazz are Mike's innovations in writing technique. The first reaction to his writing is usually an appreciation of his orchestrations, which feature unusual combinations of instruments in unexpected settings. (*In the Public Interest* is especially notable for this.)

Mike's greatest contribution, however, is in the area of composition, especially in the employment of basic forms. To explain what Mike does, perhaps I can draw a parallel between his work and the evolution of small group jazz. Generally speaking, I have always felt that the end of the bebop era came about when the songs of that period became so complex that there was little room for their further development. The inevitable move toward simpler playing structures then took place, gradually replacing the more confining, intricately constructed, bebop tunes. The important fact is not that the new compositions were merely simple, but that they captured the essence of the composition with minimal embellishment and less rigidity, offering the improviser more freedom to play, while providing more direct communication with the inspiration in the song.

To finally get to the point, I think contemporary big band writing styles have evolved in complexity to the point where little room for new exploration is left for the writer. (I am particularly reminded of this when I attend college jazz festivals.) Mike has made noticeable progress toward a style of writing based on simpler structural forms, minimally embellished (several of the scores are, in fact, no longer than one or two pages) with the form itself as the focus of the writing.

A good example is his *So Long Gone*, an intriguing use of the blues form. Relying on the great familiarity we all have with the 12-bar blues, Mike sketched out a large-scale, two-chorus blues running as much as 15 minutes in length. At this pace, virtually a separate piece takes place on each chord of the blues, which is itself moving so slowly as to not be immediately recognizable.

As the composition progresses, however, the listener responds with his own intuitive familiarity to blues form. He senses what's coming next without knowing why. This can also be described as a form within a form. Altogether, it's a very exciting idea to make use of the listener's own instincts to create a dual meaning in the composition.

Fortunately, American audiences will now have the chance to get to know the music of Michael Gibbs, through the records and projects already mentioned, and others now in the planning stages. In addition, Mike begins a year-long stay with his family in the U.S. this September as a guest artist-in-residence at Boston's Berklee College as part of a new program of visits by foreign jazz artists at the College. db

JERRY RILEY

by herb nolan

Drummer Chico Hamilton has always had a knack for finding young talent for his bands. But he analyzes this knack differently: "They find me."

Jerry Riley is one of those who has found Chico Hamilton. Riley, a 24-year-old guitarist from St. Louis, has been making music in Hamilton's band alongside of alto saxophonists Arnie Lawrence and Alex Foster, and trombone-playing bassist Steve Torres.

Quiet, articulate, and committed to his music, Riley led his own bands in the Mississippi River town before splitting for New York City. He began learning music by studying the piano and violin.

"I just became disinterested in the violin," Riley recalled. "I liked the piano but wasn't totally happy playing it. So, about eight or nine years ago, I started playing the guitar—its flexibility appealed to me—and that was it."

"In St. Louis, all we did was rock, and rhythm and blues. I never played in any jazz groups except Chico's; his is the first. I shouldn't say I never played jazz before, but I was never in a group like this one. The bands I had played some jazz; we did Mahavishnu things and some Herbie Hancock. Basically, though, we used Top 40 tunes, played the heads, and then improvised from there. I was listening to jazz all the time, though, even before I started playing the guitar. My family was involved in that kind of music, especially my father. He had all the records and knew a lot of musicians."

"My St. Louis band used alto sax, congas, drums, bass and, of course, guitar. It was a funky band," the guitarist added with a slight smile.

"I finally left because I was bored with the whole scene. I felt I wasn't going anywhere, and I wasn't really doing anything. I was working, though; we worked five, six, sometimes seven nights a week. I played every place there was to play."

"So about a year and a half ago, I simply left for New York and began feeling my way around. I knew a couple of guys before I got there, but they weren't working much—they were just



HERB NOLAN

loose. We got together and did a few gigs, some college things and a couple of clubs in the city, like the Cafe Wha. I also did a few dates with established r&b singers, guys with groups who needed a guitar player. Other than that, I didn't do much except study on my own.

"At first, it was all very slow; but the more I got into it, the better things got. For awhile, it was as bad as St. Louis as far as places to play and money were concerned. But I had the feeling there was something else happening, so I stuck with it. Finally I met Chico.

"I first saw him at Mikells; then a couple of weeks later I found out he was looking for a guitar player. I knew the bassist in the group, who told Chico about me, and we got together. Working in his band is a whole new experience. It's very improvisational, of course, and there is a lot of room to be yourself.

"The jazz thing doesn't hang me up; I like it. It puts something else on your head, and it's more of a thinking situation. However, there is one big difference. When you play with a funky band for a long time, you get accustomed to using energy to move large amounts of people. In jazz, though, it's not always the same. It's more mental. You play what you feel, naturally, but a lot of people who are hard-core jazz listeners come to hear what you *know*, not what you feel.

"I believe when I have my own thing together, it will involve vocals because I grew up singing. I think I have a good sense for using words, but I don't know what the music underneath or on top will be. As far as heavy amplification is concerned, I'll probably play at a level where I can use feedback to a degree; but I don't want to blow anybody away.

"I am also interested in Indian music and fool around with the sitar whenever I get a chance. What turns me on—and what I'm getting more and more into—are the rhythms. Sometimes I think a lot of people in our part of the world can't count very well, and we are accustomed to hearing rhythms flowing in a certain way. That's why it's hard for some people to get into Indian music. For me, though, it's really a challenge.

"I've also learned a lot from rock, such as the use of energy and melody. Everyday, I find things that I think will get me better. I just hope I can find the right way." db



WAR/ RARE EARTH/ GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION

Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood

Personnel: WAR: Harold Brown, drums, vocals; Charles Miller, sax; Howard Scott, guitar, vocals; B.B. Dickerson, bass, vocals; Lonnie Jordan, keyboards, vocals; Papa Dee Allen, percussion; Lee Oskar, harmonica.

RARE EARTH: Ray Monette, guitar; Ed Gusman, congas; Gil Bridges, sax, flute, vocals; Mike Urso, bass; Mark Olson, keyboards, vocals; Peter Hoorelbeke, drums, vocals.

GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION: Larry Graham, bass, vocals; Patrice Banks, percussion, vocals; Willie Sparks, drums; David Vega, guitar; Robert Sam & Hershel Kennedy, keyboards.

This, the first in a summer-long series of Hollywood Bowl concerts, had L.A. decked out in its best. Boogie queens, punks, nouveau-hip, and the weekend glitter people—all ready to "get down to it."

Graham Central Station opened the evening as the sun was setting. Lots of 4/4 funk, with Larry Graham, weaned on backing Sly Stone with solid bottom, supplying the essential energy. The band displayed a great deal of competence, but it's impossible for an electric band to do justice to itself or its audience when it must perform during a sound-check.

In any case, Graham Central Station, although somewhat repetitive, showed great promise and talent. The set's highlight was *Won't You Tell Me Something*, a tune mellower, tighter and tastier than the rest of their material.

Rare Earth, a band generally obscured by the rest of the Motown roster, roused the boogie queens from their boxes for a little dancing in the aisles.

This band is one of the tightest sextets in rock. Well-rehearsed, talented, and comfortable on stage, Rare Earth even made the sound crew look good.

Big John, a relatively new tune, featured Gil Bridges on sax and Ray Manette on guitar.

Bridges has that unique ability to give his

instrument personality. The tonal quality of the sax, although not necessarily exemplary in the classical sense, is full of character. False fingering to get the horn well above its normal range and the insertion of lower octaves to offset some of the lines, served to truly excite the audience.

Percussion breaks, tasty use of effects, and generally well arranged tunes attested to Rare Earth's ability to pack concert halls across the country.

The encore, *Celebrate*, had 18,000 people shakin'. The Bowl turned into a carnival—primed for the main attraction, War.

War's music happens on several levels. The rhythmic base of the tunes is certainly the most predominant factor in the group's success. However, the 40 minutes spent being treated to Lee Oskar trading licks with sax player Charles Miller, then sharing harmonies, then soloing for eight minutes, is almost beyond description.

The Hollywood Bowl is hardly intimate, and sound problems only tend to intensify its size. But War brings you so close you want to put your hands out to touch the stage.

The group felt good. No question about it. Lots of breaks to stretch out and jam and lots of fun ripping off tunes like *Gypsy Man*, *Cisco Kid*, *Me and Baby Brother*, and *Slippin' Into Darkness*.

The band likes to play funky. They call it "ass music." And it was. The bass line naturally bends knees.

War is used to sound systems to which the state-of-the-art has passed by, so they compensated with tight ensemble playing within the dynamic restrictions of the equipment. The solos would have uplifted the folks at the Bowl if they were coming through a car radio.

As the music continued, the audience got higher and higher. High-level emotional energy, good music, and a pleasant summer evening left all exhausted and pleased.

Nevertheless, I think I'll pass on the Bowl for the rest of this summer. Music deserves a better showcase. —eric gaer

db HAPPENING AT NAMM

Houston, Texas

Personnel (Instrument brands indicate company sponsorship):

Kashmere High School Stage Band (Slingerland Drums), Conrad O. Johnson, director: 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 1 French horn, 5 reeds, 8 rhythm, 11 singers. Soloist: Rich Matteson, Getzen euphonium.

ARP NAMM JAM: Mike Brigida and Tom Piggott, ARP synthesizers; Cleve Pozar, drums.

Jazz Jam No. 1: Norlin Music Men: Bruce Bolen, Gibson guitar; Richard Evans, Gibson bass; Roger Powell, Moog synthesizers, electric piano; Louis Bellson, Pearl drums. And: Bernard Purdie, Sonor drums; Terry Gibbs, vibes (sponsored by Yamaha); Andy Hogan, Holton trumpet; Rich Matteson, Getzen valve trombone.

Solo spot No. 1: Bob Wiley, Guitar/Organ (Peavey).

Jazz Jam No. 2: John Willie Cooke, Charlie Pateron, trumpets; Matteson, valve trombone; Arnett Cobb, Doug Harris, tenor saxes; Gibbs, vibes; Jim Vaughn, Pearl drums; Tom Ross, guitar; Maurice Anderson, Gibson steel guitar; Evans, bass.

Solo spot No. 2: Mark Damon Cohen, Fender banjo.

Jazz Jam No. 3: Most of Jam No. 2 with Matteson on electric piano and Conrad Johnson, alto sax.

Per its annual custom, *down beat* hosted a music industry party, *NAMM Happening IV*, at the June convention of the National Association of Music Merchants. Per their custom, the 153 music exhibitors imported their affiliated players to demonstrate the companies' wares at the (record) 108,000 square feet of exhibit space in Houston's AstroHall. The Happening—played to an SRO crowd in the Grand Ballroom of the Shamrock Hilton hotel—featured many of the endorsee musicians plus a number of Houston's finest jazz players "sponsored" by

the Jazz Month Club, organized five years ago by drummer Bubbha Thomas.

Opening up, the Kashmere High School Stage Band set the tone for the four-and-a-half hour program: rapt attention, huzzahs, and standing ovations. The Kashmere ensemble—22 players plus 11 singers—has justifiably won every festival in sight. (Gary Beckner of Slingerland drums caught the band at the MENC meeting in Anaheim last spring and promptly signed them for a company concert at NAMM-Houston.) Faculty director Conrad Johnson has instilled in his students the ideal concept of thoroughly enjoying what they do because they do it so well—all of it: balance, blend, dynamics, improvisation, and lovely, swinging time. About mid-way through their 50-minute set, guest soloist Rich Matteson and his euphonium dazzled the audience and the Kashmere kids with an incredible *a capella* intro to *Summertime*. (Recordings of the Kashmere band are available from Conrad Johnson, 2414 Rosewood, Houston, Texas 77004.)

Following the Kashmere kaleidoscope was tough duty; but a brace of ARP synthesizer players—Mike Brigida and Tom Piggott, backed by Cleve Pozar, drums—had the place rocking with the biggest sound this side of Thunderball. (Sound assistance was courtesy of Sunn Magna mixer and speakers.)

The first jam was next, kicked off by Bruce Bolen's very tasty solo guitar, followed by a rhythm section set with Chicago bassist Richard Evans, mini-Moogist Roger Powell, and the incomparable Louis Bellson on drums. After a

HOW TO AUTHENTICATE NEW BLUES PROGRESSIONS

by Dr. William L. Fowler

In tune after tune, in chart after chart, in jam after jam, the 12-bar blues strophe permeates those styles of music from and for the people—rock, folk, country, jazz. If American music does indeed have its own ethnic tongue, the syntax of that language can stem only from the blues.

The Authentic Blues Scale C D Eb*F G A Bb* C—
 (*Approximate blue note pitch).

An Authentic 12-Bar Blues Progression:

C F7 C C7 F7 C G7 F7 C
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

----- Phrase 1 ----- Phrase 2 ----- Phrase 3 -----

In this time of complex social stress and its equally complex musical expression, the original blues might seem over-simple. Yet perhaps the purest expression of pure emotion still lies in that purest of harmonies, the overtone series itself, from which the authentic blues derives its triads and its blue notes, those seventh overtones of tonic and subdominant fundamentals.

Yes, the authentic blues progression is indeed simple, with its most basic of root motions, the perfect fourth up or down, and its balanced 4-bar phrases—simple, yes, but still as alive and vigorous as any of its more modern, more complex offspring.

Now, one can only speculate what touched off the current expansion of blues harmonic material. Maybe some guitar picker got his blue notes backwards by adding the subdominant seventh overtone, Eb, to the tonic C chord, thereby sounding both C Major and C minor triads simultaneously. Or maybe some piano player added both blue notes, Eb and Bb, to the C chord, thus erecting C aug 9. But however the expansion may have started, new blues materials have been appearing ever since, with musicians prone to devise their own favorite progressions, or to shift the blues mode from major to minor keys, or to extend the blues form to more than twelve bars.

Yet all blues progressions, no matter how complex, tend to divide into

4-bar phrases, usually with a recognizably-subdominant area chord to start the second phrase, and a dominant area chord to start the third. And whatever might happen harmonically before, between, and after those two form-delineating chords can enhance—indeed, should enhance—their own blue effect. For example, the F7 at bar 5 will sound much bluer when preceded by a series of chords with their roots tracking the cycle of fifths than when preceded only by C-rooted chords. And there's just enough space to do it!

C^Δ F#^{φ7} B7 E7 A7 D7 Gmi⁷ C7 F7
 // // | // // | // // | // // | //

Then, should this cycle of standard sevenths seem old-fashioned, some alterations can insure a more timely fit:

C⁹ F#^{φ7} B7^(9#) E7^(5b) A7^(9#) D7^(5b) G7^(9#) C7^(5b) F7^(9#)
 // // | // // | // // | // // | //

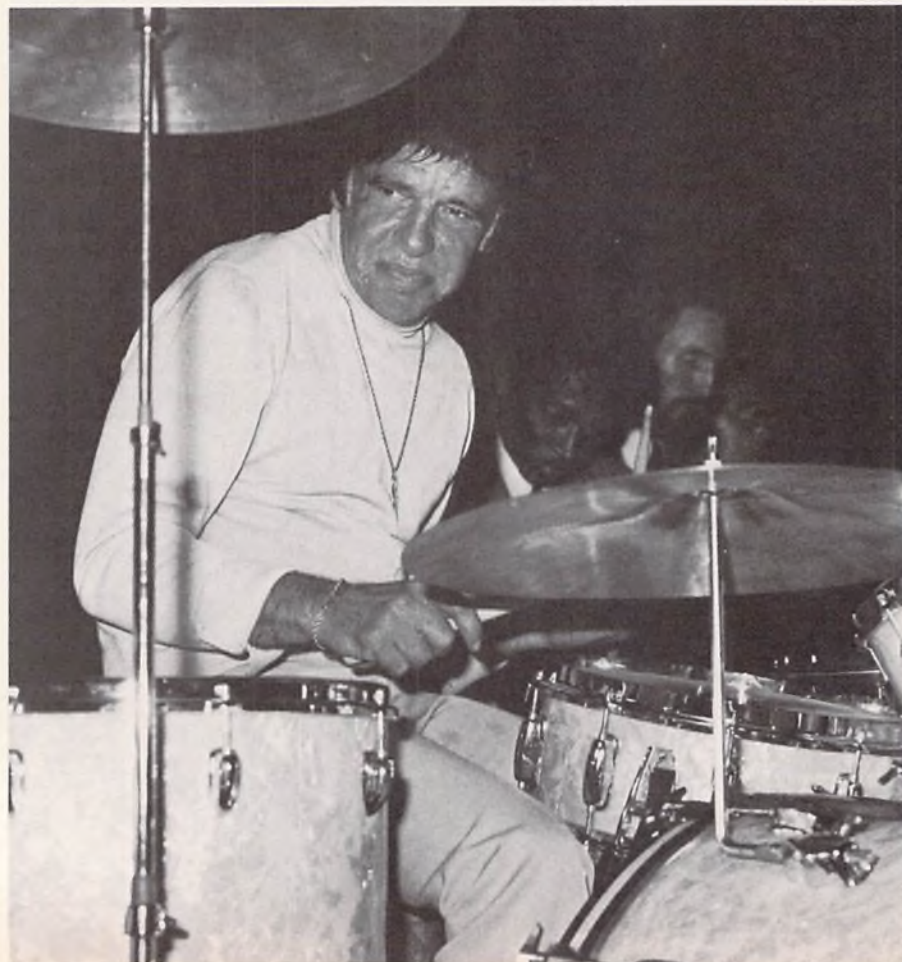
But the cycle of fifths is only one of the many ways to enhance a goal-chord. Various pickup chords add their own zest to harmonic motion. These can move up chromatically into the goal-chord:

C E7 F7 B C B7 C7 E7 F7
 // // | // // | // // | // // | //

Or they can move down chromatically:

C Gb7 F7 Db C Db7 C7 Gb7 F7
 // // | // // | // // | // // | //

Or individual pickup notes to individual chord tones can move up or down in practically any combination, especially with chromatic voice-



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Continued on page 36



PHOTOGRAPHED AT LE BORDEAUX CHICAGO

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There's nothing wrong with honky tonk piano. I played it in the pizza circuit for years. But when it's all you can play, it's like eating pizza seven days a week . . . too much of a good thing. See, I thought honky tonk was all I could play. But I found out it was all my *piano* could play. It just had a bright ring to it that made my Romeo & Juliet theme sound like Bonnie & Clyde.

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chord with a little piano for European restaurants. Then add a little honky tonk for some domestic flavoring. And no matter what setting, the Cordovox[®] always sounds great. I *play* great too because the keyboard is touch sensitive—just like a piano. It even has a real warm piano sound . . . the best I've ever heard. And that Cordovox can go anywhere. It's small, light and really strong.

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smo... by a harmonic path:

Chords, like markings of the...
 C9 Bb9 Ab9 Gb9 F9 Eb9 Db9 C9 F7 (9#)
 // // // // // // // // // //
 Or: C9 Db9 D9 Eb9 E9 F7 (9#)
 // // // // // // // // // //
 Bar: 4 3 5

And a sprinkling of upward-thrusting diminished seventh chords complements the downward pull of blue notes:

C Dim7 C dim7 C F7 F#dim7 C Dim7 C dim7 C7 F7 F#dim7 C
 //
 Bar: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Then there's chord substitution, like putting Db7(9#) in place of G7. There's component-extension, like adding tones a major seventh, an augmented fourth, or some other interesting interval, above any note already in a chord.

Now, by blending such spicy ingredients as these into his personal recipe, any musician might make his blues cook in new ways. The blues menu can and should cater to individual harmonic tastes... db

country and western, then you're going to play country and western; if you're going to play jazz, you'll adjust to that. Now, you take cats who are not blue musicians, then they're hung up in one particular bag, a lot of other things they're not hip to."

Do you have any idea what the term "southern blues" means?

Well, I can relate to "down home," you know. Musicians who come up in the South, musicians who come up on the West Coast, the East Coast, anywhere. That environment affects their heads. In most cities you have a whole bunch of other static going on. Down South, living in a small town, Macon, you have a lot of time to put into it. You have a lot of time to check out other stuff, to check out a lot of stuff in your head. The whole South is laid back, that's where atmosphere comes from. I've met cats who come down from New Jersey and New York to try to get some of that southern thing to rub off on them.

What is the special quality that the Allman Brothers Band has that makes them so popular?

To me it's a religion. For instance, I can feel just blah, but when I get on that stage, there'll be so much energy flowing from the other five cats that they just lift me in a real strong spiritual way, till I don't know how tired I am. It becomes a real strong spiritual thing to get to the point where the six cats on that stage, their job is to produce a sound, the Allman sound. But I don't think it can be put in any particular category.

continued on page 40

HERE'S YOUR BALLOT

HALL OF FAME (see rules)

JAZZMAN OF THE YEAR

POP MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

TRUMPET

TROMBONE

CLARINET

FLUTE

SOPRANO SAX

ALTO SAX

TENOR SAX

BARITONE SAX

PIANO

ORGAN

SYNTHESIZER

VIOLIN

GUITAR

ACOUSTIC BASS

ELECTRIC BASS

DRUMS

PERCUSSION

VIBES

MISC. INSTRUMENT

ARRANGER

COMPOSER

MALE SINGER

FEMALE SINGER

VOCAL GROUP

BIG JAZZ BAND

JAZZ GROUP (2 to 10 PIECES)

ROCK/POP/BLUES GROUP

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

POP ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1094

BALLOTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BEFORE MIDNIGHT, OCTOBER 20, 1974
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readers poll instructions

The 39th annual **down beat** Readers Poll is under way. For the next several months—until midnight Oct. 20—readers will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite musicians.

Cut out the ballot, fill in your choices, and mail to **down beat, 222 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL 60606**. You need not vote in every category. Make your opinion count—vote! Your favorites need your support.

VOTING RULES:

- Vote once only. Ballots must be postmarked before midnight Oct. 20.
- Use only the official ballot. Type or print names.
- Jazzman and Pop Musician of the year:** Vote for the person who, in your opinion, has contributed most to jazz or pop in 1974.
- Hall of Fame:** This is the **only** category in which persons no longer living are eligible. Vote for the artist—living or dead—who in your opinion has made the greatest contribution to **jazz**. Previous winners are not eligible. These are: Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Sidney Bechet, Bix Beiderbecke, Clifford Brown, Charlie Christian, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Eric Dolphy, Roy Eldridge, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Fletcher Henderson, Jimi Hendrix, Earl Hines, Johnny Hodges, Billie Holiday, Stan Kenton, Gene Krupa, Glenn Miller, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Wes Montgomery, Jelly Roll Morton, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Django Reinhardt, Sonny Rollins, Pee Wee Russell, Bessie Smith, Billy Strayhorn, Art Tatum, Jack Teagarden, Fats Waller, and Lester Young.
- Miscellaneous Instruments:** Instruments not having their own category, with three exceptions, valve trombone (included in trombone category), cornet and flugelhorn (included in the trumpet category).
- Jazz and Pop Albums of the Year:** Select only LPs issued during the last 12 months. Do not vote for singles. Include full album title and artist's name. If your choice is part of a series indicate volume number.
- Make only one selection in each category.

down beat 39th ANNUAL READERS POLL

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ALLMAN BROS. Continued from page 36

We play the first and second numbers, all that time we're feelin' each other out, where everybody's head is. As it goes up, everybody gets into a thing with each other. I can feel incredible vibes on that stage.

Butch Trucks got together with Dickie Betts before the final formation of the Allman Brothers Band and their move to Macon in '69. He's a horse breeder, and talking to him is the same as swapping stories. He typifies the southern approach more than the other members of the band—c-e-easy going, and slow—until he gets behind his drums, that is.

We got into detailing tales about Le Carousel, a late-night restaurant in Macon, where beer is sold under the table when all the other bars in town are shut down. "The last time I was there, I had ten dudes around me and I was so drunk—I was standing right in the middle of all of them—and I was going, 'Come on, motherfuckers, I'll take you all on.' They were ready to get me. Dickie just come walking straight through the middle of them and grabbed me around the neck and said, 'Come on, let's get out of here.'

"And he got me out in the alley. And of all places, in that alley right next to Le Carrousel. He was just calming me down from that one and this big ole stocky dude come walking by with his chick and I reached out and grabbed her by the ass and yanked her about three feet. He squared off. Dickie was in between us, tryin' to stop both of us, when those other ten dudes found out where we were. They were ready to go at it, with all their chicks cheering, 'Get 'em! Get 'em!' Dickie just grabbed me around the neck . . . The next thing I know, I woke up at 4 o'clock in the afternoon down at the studio and there was this note on the door, 'Your car is not sold, it's behind Le Carrousel.' I had called the police, city and county, and had everybody in the world looking for my car. And it was parked behind Le Carrousel. I just didn't remember driving it down there."

The Allman Brothers Band remains visually focused on the tall blonde-haired dude behind the organ, who occasionally will step forward to play a little rhythm guitar. Gregg is a mytho-producing figure: quiet, gentle, a steady presence wherever he goes. His vocal style represents the purest distillation of black blues ever heads. As Chuck Leavell remarked, "Jesus, god, that cat sings like nobody. He's got his own style and he's totally sincere. And he doesn't do bad for a white boy, does he?"

Gregg Allman takes his wife, Janice, with him on his tours. Together with the rest of the band, they now rent the Starship at something approximating \$24,000 a day. But still the affinity to their roots is there. Gregg recently explained his attitudes toward money: "The way things are going, it means a certain amount of freedom and that's about the only facet of money that I'm into. I've had two Lincolns, I've smashed one up but if you don't spend the money, Nixon's gonna pocket it.

"So it's not the money. The biggest reward of playing I realized about two years ago, while riding home from a gig. Some promoter had run off with the money. But I thought, what could be more rewarding, when you figure you've got 20,000 people out there, how many problems have you got out there? And to bring happiness into 20,000 people's ears for about two or three hours, man, there ain't no bigger pay check anywhere."

db



BLAND

Continued from page 18

plan what you're gonna do. Because it may not work out that way. If the spirit hits you, then let it go."

I read something about you in a book. The World Of Soul, by Arnold Shaw. I think you probably read it.

"Yeah, I read it. There's another book, too. What is it, *Urban Blues* (by Charles Keil.)"

Shaw contends that you have a routine where you'll come on to the audience with certain songs to demonstrate a weakness toward lovers. Do you remember that? Then you'll come on strong with a certain tune that asserts your masculinity.

"Ha, ha, ha. Okay, alright, alright."

Know what I'm talking about?

"Yeah, exactly. That's alright, you caught me this time."

What do you think about that?

"It's a certain . . . well, just coming on stage for the first house, you have to feel out the audience and that's something else. Not knowing if the public is going to accept you or what. You don't ever know."

A lot of people dig being led into something. Al Green—all the great showmen use that approach.

"I learned this in New York at the Apollo Theatre, the first time I played there, in '63. On opening day, it's all critics, every critic there is, and the theatre has this billing, 'The Storm from Texas, bla, bla, bla.' Man, I walked out . . . See, the stage at the Apollo had a setup where the mike came up from the floor, and when you first walk out, there's nothing in front of you. And I made a complete booboo. I had heard

about this; that for the first four bars you won't see anything, then, at the end of the four bars, here's this mike right up in front of you. And I didn't want to, you know, my first time in New York, bla, bla, and I wanted to make a good impression. So I had heard about the mike, but where the hell was it? Then when it did finally come up, there I was: speechless. I couldn't say a thing. It was the worst write-up I ever had in my life. But I deserved it, you know. Because I wasn't really concentrating, I let whatever it was run away with me. I wasn't really groomed at all at that time. But I learned how to work an audience from this kind of teasing approach. It's just like a pitcher. It's not good unless he feels good the first two or three innings. Then he settles down and takes care of what has to be done. So that's what you're speakin' about. My leading an audience. But I think it's very good because the first reaction you get from an audience is very important."

Yeah, right, they're waiting for you to prove yourself.

"Then, that's when you come out of it; from playing the fool, all of a sudden you rise up. So then you work your show."

How do you work out your material for an album?

"I pick only the material I can handle. Very short lines. Not any long, drawn out things because I don't sing a whole lot of words, and I like to keep it simple. My surroundings in the studio are also very important. The mood, etc. I cut my albums at night around 12. This is my hour. I feel everything is a little quieter and this is my work. I'm on stage at 12, anyway."

"That's the way I set a mood. I turn the lights real low. I'll maybe have a blue light, something a little sexy." **db**

NAMM


Continued from page 33

good bit, Bellson called for a tribute to Duke Ellington, and all hands went into *Take The A Train*. Terry Gibbs joined in on vibes as did Bernard Purdie on drums (Bellson noticed him standing by and waved him up on stage). Two horn players rounded out the section: Andy Hogan, a Cincinnati-based, straight-ahead trumpet player, and Rich Matteson, now on valve trombone.


A respite was needed for the audience and players (Gibbs says he sweated a pound of chicken fat), so Bob Wiley took over for a solo spot on the Guitar/Organ.

Back to the jam, with some changes: Jim Vaughn, Dallas drummer and clinician; Maurice Anderson, a jazz-oriented steel guitarist; and a group of local jazz players led by the legendary Arnett Cobb on tenor. Cobb came on stage on crutches—made necessary because of a serious auto injury some time ago—but he laid them down, picked up his tenor, and stood 10 feet tall! Especially good were John Willie Cooke (formerly with Ellington) and Charlie Paterson (with Cobb's band) on trumpets; Doug Harris on tenor sax; and a big, bad guitar player named Tom Ross. Matteson contributed several good choruses on valve trombone, while Richard Evans kept proving how good he is as a section and solo bassist.

The final set featured Conrad Johnson on alto, accompanied by the ubiquitous Rich Matteson on piano. Johnson's rendition of *Misty* was so hauntingly beautiful that the remaining musicians agreed that a good night of music had come to a fitting end. —charles suber



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STEVIE WONDER

Stiles, Nash and Young. I like the way the Beatles used their voices and echo on *For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite*.

Who else?
Well, I like Roberta Flack, and I've always liked Jesse Belvin. He's dead now, but he recorded for RCA. He's a very, very warm person. I like the sound of his voice. Listening to his singing, I felt if I ever met him, his character would be the same as mine. Not the lyric exactly, but the *spirit* of his music.

Did you ever do any formal vocal studying.
With an L.A. teacher, Seth Riggs, for about three months. He taught me how to sing without straining my throat.

What have you done since the accident besides the record?

Mostly cooled out. But I've also done four shows since then, three of them benefits. We did Madison Square Garden and donated the money to Mini-Sink Town House, an organization to send the children of Harlem to summer camp. We also did two shows at the Rainbow Theater in London, and a benefit for Shaw University, a black school in North Carolina.

Was the Stones tour a rough one for you?
Not as rough as everybody thinks. I mean, I used to do gigs, ride 500 or 1,000 miles in a bus, play another gig, then do it all over again. But the Stones tour was a good one because it was instrumental in exposing my music to a huge audience, and they loved it. When you write this, you let the public know I really love them back, won't you?

You just expressed it. But one of the major criticisms is that your music is rock and roll.

That's by people who hear only the singles, who never really get into the albums, and who don't really know that my music is a progression of my being. It grows the way I grow. I not only play the ARP and the Moog synthesizers, which a lot of people attack as being white, but I turn right around and put 'em in *Superstition* and just kill 'em!

And the clavinet, the string bass, the drums, the piano—everything. Is Fulfillingness' First Finale all yours?

I wrote all the lyrics except for *They Won't Go When I Go*—Yvonne Wright did those. I had the idea in my head, but she put it all together.

And the music?
Yes, the music. And I arranged all the horns and the voices and I played almost all the instruments.

Who are the other voices?
I used the Jackson 5 on *You Haven't Done Nothin'*, and the Persuasions on *Please Don't Go*.

Which songs were written before the accident?

I wrote the music for *Heaven Is Ten Zillion Light Years Away* before the accident and the words after. Did the music for *They Won't Go When I Go* before, and did all of *Boogie One Reggae Woman* before. Everything else came after. I did *Bird Of Beauty* and *You Haven't Done Nothin'* just a few weeks ago.

What about drugs?
I smoked grass once, but I don't need that. Before the accident, I drank wine and beer, but now I only have a beer once in awhile. I eat a lot of cookies! (Laughs) Really! A lot of cookies.

I notice that your blindness doesn't seem to hamper you.

I do almost everything you do. I watch TV, read, go to the airport—I even flew an airplane once, a Cessna something. I shop for clothes, use a cassette for my telephone book—I do everything except drive a car. Bein' blind ain't no big problem for me.

What about the remark Miles Davis recently made about you in down beat (July 18) regarding your old bass player, Michael Henderson?

What remark was that?
Well, Miles refused to see Mick Jagger, and when he was asked why Jagger wanted to see him in the first place, Miles said, "One of his friends was trying to impress him by saying he knew me. Stevie Wonder, now there's a sad

motherfucker. He thinks I stole Michael Henderson from him, but Michael came to me. I never did anybody like that in my life."

Oh really? Did he say that? He shouldn't have said that.

So, what happened?
Michael went and did a session with him... for Miles to say that... I think for Michael to go with him was an expansion.

So you don't think that Miles did steal him.
No. Maybe Miles did, I can't really say. But never did I feel that Miles stole my bass player... I didn't know he said that... I don't even have any reply. I think it's ignorant, really. Why would he fix his mouth to even say that?

Were you trying to impress Mick Jagger that you know Miles?

That's really... that's... I mean, I'm somewhat shocked at what he said. I've always admired Miles' music and his talent, but you can dilute your talent by having a character like that... That's really horrible, man. "A sad motherfucker." (Hurt laughter) Wow! You know? How can he even do that? Just hold the tape just one second, I have to regroup... I'll say one thing: Miles is smart enough to get young musicians, 'cause he lost it. It's cruel for him to say that. Why would I want to tell Mick Jagger I know Miles? I mean, I'm not into gossip. I prefer being alone.

You once said you didn't think you'd paid a lot of dues. You still feel that way?

I have not paid as many dues as, say, some of the musicians with Duke Ellington or Count Basie. I've been on the bus and rode for 14 hours and had to change out back somewhere and had to sing through mikes made of cardboard. But I'm very, very lucky and have to thank everyone my success has come early. I thank God and all the people who've made it possible... I... I don't see how Miles could say that, man.

Well, you answered him. You covered it. Do you listen to jazz much?

I've been listening a great deal lately to Chick Corea's *Return To Forever* album.

How about John McLaughlin?
Not that much.

What would you say is your most lasting song?

Visions will always last. I hope that will be the song I'm remembered by.

And what song do you like the least?
Hey, *Harmonica Man*. Yeah... But, hey, listen. I gotta mention this. James Jamerson. He was one of the bass players on all the early Motown records. When you mention Miles, just say this: how could he have stolen Michael from me, when actually a great deal of Michael's style was from James Jamerson? And that's the truth. Nothing belongs to me, nothing belongs to him. We just extend by adding our own. We play the same music, but we have our own call-letters, like radio stations. It will go on even after we're gone, and the best we can do is to continue to complete it.

Your soul is beautiful, Stevie... One last question: do you listen to electronic music composers, people like Berio, Subotnik, Xenakis, to help you learn more about the synthesizer?
Some. The great thing about electronic music is you can make things larger than life. You can choose colors, and you can make the sounds of an instrument that does not exist.

But I feel you have to stay on the ground, for you can go too far and you lose the people—for me, anyway.

You listen to *They Won't Go When I Go*. That'll tell you where I'm going—away from sorrow and hate, up to joy and laughter.

I feel everyone should be able to grasp what you're doing. I shouldn't be so complicated that it's beyond everyone's capabilities, nor should it be so simple that you cannot use your mind to think about it.

I would like to feel that as my albums change, my people—meaning all people—will come with me, that we will grow together. Everything that I experience is in the songs that I write. You see, my music is my way of giving back love.

CITY SCENE

New York

The Newport Jazz Festival has been here and gone. Now it's back to business for the clubs and halls in town and surroundings. The Bottom Line has **Rahsaan Roland Kirk** thru August 18. . . . The Cookery continues with the varied pianistics of **Calvin Jackson** with **Rusty Gilder**, bass. **Chuck Folds** is in on Sundays. Beginning August 29, **Ellis Larkins** and **Al Hall** take up residence after a long stay at Gregory's. **Dick Hyman** returns Sundays after Labor Day. . . . Jimmy Weston's loves **Hazel Scott** thru August. . . . The Halfnote brings in the **Monty Alexander Trio**, with brother **Ray**, and **Richard "Groove" Holmes Quintet** August 12-17; **Teri Thornton** and the **Joe Beck/Joe Farrell Quintet** August 19-24; the **George Benson Quintet** and **Lance Hayward** (he of Jacques fame) August 26-Sept. 7; **Kenny Burrell** brings in a quartet Sept. 9-14. Look for **Sonny Rollins** in coming weeks. . . . Schaeffer Beer presents its Music Festival in Central Park. August 16: the **Four Seasons** and **Jay & The Americans**; August 17: **Don McLean** and the **Persuasions**; August 19: the **Ray Charles Show '74** with the **Raelets** and **Sam & Dave**; August 21: **Billy Cobham** and **Deodato**; August 23: **Frampton's Camel** and **Montrose**; August 24:

Latin Night with **Mongo Santamaria** and **Ray Barretto**; August 26: **Roy Buchanan**, **NRBQ**, and **Forest Green**; August 28: **Mary Travers** and **Dion**; August 30: the **Pointer Sisters** and **Manhattan Transfer**; August 31: **Richie Havens** and **Hall & Oates**; Sept. 3: **John Sebastian**; Sept. 4: **Foghat** and **Lindesfarne**; Sept. 6: **Lynyrd Skynyrd**, **James Cotton Band**, and **Elvin Bishop**; Sept. 7: **Savoy Brown**. . . . The Festival On The River, called the "jazz ferry" in these parts, brings back **Thad Jones' and Mel Lewis' Orchestra** and the **New York Jazz Quartet** on August 21; **Joe Newman Septet**, **Chico Hamilton Sextet**, and **Robin Kenyatta Quintet** on August 28; **Machito Orchestra**, **Griella**, **Stella Marris** and **Newban** on Sept. 6. They leave from The Battery, boarding at 7:30 p.m. . . . Jazz Vespers, at St. Peter's 64th & Park, will have the **Reggie Moore Trio**, August 18; **Marvin Blackman** and the **New York Jazz Ensemble** August 25; **Dave Pochenet Quartet** Sept. 1; **Grace Markay Trio** Sept. 8. The time is 5 p.m. Sundays. Sneaking into the Mostly Mozart Festival at Avery Fisher Hall will be **Jon Lucien** on August 18. . . . The Nassau County Music Festival will have **George Shearing** August 18; on August 24, **Jay & The Americans** come out; and the Jazz Festival will be held August 25 starring **Dizzy Gillespie** performing with and repeating the **New York Jazz Repertory Company** triumph of this past season. Westbury's Music Fair will have **Louis Prima** and **Sam Butera & The Witnesses** thru August 18; **Steve Lawrence & Edie Gorme** August 28-Sept. 1; **Buddy Hackett** and **James Darren** Sept. 2-8.

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Playboy Club at Century City, has begun twelve weeks of major jazz artist appearances. **Jimmy Witherspoon** and **Cannonball Adderly** opened up the series, with the following acts upcoming: **Joe Williams**, Aug. 19-Sept. 1; **Stan Getz**, Sept. 3-10; **Dizzy Gillespie**, Sept. 11-19; **Dukes of Dixieland**, Sept. 20-28; **Supersax**, Sept. 30-Oct. 5; **Gerry Mulligan**, Oct. 7-12; **Earl Hines**, Oct. 14-19. Two shows on the weeknights, three on Friday and Saturday. . . . A new club on the scene, Dirty Pierre's, has all kinds of good music as L.A. session regulars and recording artists get together. **Jerome Richardson**, **Joe Pass**, **Monte Budwig**, **Victor Feldman**, **Shelly Manne**, and **Willie Bobo** have all been on hand so far, as well as the **17-Piece Magruder Machine**. It's a smokin' big band featuring **Cat Anderson**, **Art Pepper**, **Dave Wells**, **Dave Angel**, and more. . . . The Baked Potato has owner **Don Randi's Baked Potato Band** Wednesdays thru Saturdays, while Sundays it's **Sweets Edison**, Mondays the **Don Ellis Quartet**, and Tuesdays **Tom Scott** and the **L.A. Express**. . . . Donte's has a lot of talent in the house, as usual. Upcoming are the **Herb Ellis Quartet** with **Bill Berry** and **Plas Johnson**, **Blue Mitchell**, the **Joanne Grauer Trio**, the **Don Menza Quintet**, **Bill Holman's** big band, **Terry Gibbs'** big band, **Joe Pass**, and the **Art Pepper Quintet**. . . . Concert news: Concerts-By-The-Sea will feature **Freddie Hubbard** Aug. 6-18, **Cannonball Adderly** Aug. 20-Sept. 1, and **McCoy Tyner**, Sept. 3-15.

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CHICAGO

For the first time in several years, this city has two jazz clubs booking in major artists and competing head to head each week. The Jazz Medium has been opened in the downstairs room of the Happy Medium at the corner of Rush and Delaware, in the heart of the city's nightlife district. Joe Henderson brings in a group Aug. 14-18, followed by Don Ellis Aug. 21-25; Jon Hendricks Sept. 4-8, Grover Washington, Jr. Sept. 11-15, and Esther Phillips Sept. 18-22. . . . Meanwhile, Joe Segal, Chicago's premier jazz impresario, has moved his Jazz Showcase from the Jazz Medium's location, further north to 2251 N. Lincoln Avenue. Joe rounds out his first month at the new location with the wind-up of his annual Charlie Parker month-long birthday fete. Aug. 14-18, it's Roy Brooks and his Artistic Truth with Eddie Jefferson; Aug. 21-25, the

Archie Shepp Quintet (with Charlie Persip); Aug. 28-Sept. 1, the tenor battle of the century with Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, and Sonny Stitt, joined by (among others) Al Grey and Philly Joe Jones; Sept. 4-8, Sonny Rollins; Sept. 10 (one night only), Count Basie; Sept. 11-15, Stanley Turrentine; Sept. 18-22, Charles Earland; Sept. 25-29, Eddie Harris. . . . Mr. Kelly's has Moms Mabley Aug. 12-18; Rusty Warren Aug. 19-Sept. 1; Billy Eckstone Sept. 2-15. . . . Charlie Byrd opens a three-week stand at the London House Aug. 6. . . . Ratso's on Lincoln Avenue, just a block from the new Jazz Showcase, features the revamped Batucada on Mondays and the Phil Upchurch-Tennyson Stevens group (just signed to CTI) every Tuesday. Plus jazz on certain weekends, to be announced. . . . The Quiet Knight's bookings were up in the air at press time, but owner Richard Harding is looking for dates for Gato Barbieri, Jimmy Buffett, and Arlo Guthrie. . . . Finally, the

success of PBM, Chicago's new rock concert club, upstairs on the same Rush-Delaware premises as the Jazz Medium, has been so successful that the owners plan to expand operation from two to four nights with Renaissance, Aug. 19-24.

Philadelphia

Jazz on the Black Hand Side is the word from Mr. Silk's Famous Third Base at 52nd and Spruce. Hosted by Brooks Odell, the club is featuring the Richard Easley Jazz Quartet, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays. For further information call 471-9897. . . . Billy's Band Box (23rd and Lombard) has Bruce Mills' (piano) group. With Hank Mobley on tenor and Hakim Emmanuel on drums, the group has been quite successful there this summer. Trey's Lounge continues to bring in top name jazz acts like Jackie McLean and Andy Bey. Call VI 4-9900 for updated info. . . .

Just Jazz finishes off August and enters September with a bang: August 12, Milt Jackson's new group with Cedar Walton, Sam Jones and Mickey Roker; August 19, Gene Ammons-Sonny Stitt; August 26, Stanley Turrentine; September 2, Grover Washington, Jr.; September 9, Joe Williams; September 16, Eddie Harris; September 23, Jimmy Smith.

Buffalo

Buffalo happenings are highlighted by An Evening of Scott Joplin featuring Max Morath, Eubie Blake, and Edith Wilson at the Lewiston Artpark Theatre on August 23. . . . other Artpark concerts include Paul Winter on August 21; John Sebastian August 24; John Prine, August 27; Herbie Hancock, September 1; Arlo Guthrie, September 10; and Chick Corea with Weather Report on September 11. . . . Melody Fair, in North Tonawanda, has Anne Murray on August 18, followed by Gladys Knight and the Pips August 19-24; George Carlin August 25; and Paul Anka from September 2 through 7. . . . Phil deRe has been busy reforming the Buffalo Jazz Ensemble and they will be playing in the area throughout the late summer and fall. . . . Maynard Ferguson will be at Geneseo State College in early September. . . . Thermopylae is at the Library on Wednesday nights. . . . Bradley J. Cool now handles WBLK's (93.7 on FM) weekly jazz show Saturday nights from 10 to midnight.

BALTIMORE

Baltimore gets blitzed in mid-August when Peter Wolf leads the J. Geils Band's sonic assault on the Civic Center. . . . On a more subdued note, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young will play their special brand of country cum folk cum Vienna Boys Choir cum rock cum love songs in the Baltimore-Washington area at the new Largo Sports Center on August 20-21. . . . Following hot on the trail of the Left Bank Jazz Society's successful big band presentations, the City of Baltimore's Annual Fair presents the Maynard Ferguson Orchestra downtown at Hopkins Plaza on August 29. . . . A special salute to Baltimore musicians takes place in the Plaza on August 21. . . . And Sha Na Na flex their greasy, musical muscles on Sept. 13 at the U.M.B.C. gym.

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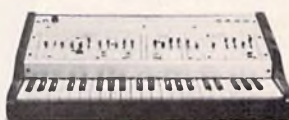
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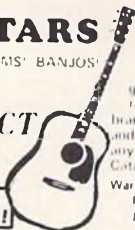
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HOUSTON

La Bastille on Market Square hosts Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers August 23 through 31 . . . War plays the Coliseum on August 17 . . . Hofheinz Pavillion has booked Rare Earth for Sept. 7 . . . The Houston Music Theatre finishes out the summer with Shecky Green and Charo August 15-18 and the Shirley MacLaine Show August 20-25 . . . Club Libra (neighbor to the Continental Showcase on Scott) has two great groups: Black Fire Mondays through Wednesdays; and George Thomas and the Family Folk Thursdays through Sundays (9:30-1:00) with George on trumpet, flugelhorn and pocket trumpet; Brenda Joyce Boyd, vocalist; James Pittman, guitar; Eugene Carrier, pianist and arranger; Ronnie Wynn, drums; and Daryl Taylor on bass . . . The August 15 Jazz Month Club has several concerts and workshops scheduled for the last half of the month: Arnett Cobb and the Mob will play at Hobart Taylor Park August 12; on the same date, Hal Tennyson and the Young Jazz Artists will play at Linkwood Park; the Summer Youth Jazz All-Stars appear on Channel 13's The Show August 17; The Jazz Bowl is scheduled for August 24; Sunday, August 25, there will be a jazz special produced by Bubbha Thomas on Channel 2 featuring Arnett Cobb and the Mob, Doug Harris Quartet, Hugh Ragin, and Bobby Henschen; and on August 27, the Summer Youth Jazz School will present a concert at 7:30 at St. James Episcopal Church . . . Pat Williams and his Quartet play Thursday nights (9:30-1:30) at Peckoes in the 5th Ward. Pat is on trumpet; Sylvester LaBlanc is on alto sax and flute; Eugene Murray is on bass; Clarence Holliman is on guitar; and Bubbha Thomas is on drums . . . Long-time club owner (Golden Fleece on Market Square) Joe Moses's new club Papa Feelgood's on Main Street is packing them in. He is alternating country-rock and rock Wednesdays through Sundays.

DALLAS

A Saturday afternoon series of back-to-school mini-concerts is taking place through August at B&S Percussion Center in the Oak Lawn area. Among the local jazz groups to be featured are the Jim Moore Septet, including drummer Jimmy Zitano and reedman Claude Johnson, vibist Fred Ralston's ensemble RAP and the Dallas all-star package appearing Sunday evenings at the Sailor. The latter group, incidentally, has managed to lure the dean of Dallas recording guitarists, Lee Robinson, into their fold for the new and well-received Sunday sessions . . . And speaking of the Sailor, the far north Dallas spot has expanded its weekend music policy further with the addition of trumpeter Tom Wirtel and young guitarist Rob Roberts; they augment the group, Patchwork (Gloria Morgan, piano/vocals, Kathy Graham, vocals, Danny Quillantan, bass, and Ron Thayer, drums), on hand six nights.

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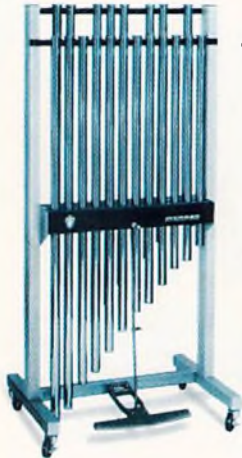
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