

FEBRUARY 13, 1975 50c

the contemporary
music magazine

down beat

JACK De JOHNETTE
BARRY ALTSCHUL
SAM RIVERS



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the first chorus

By Charles Suber

Several of the musicians featured in this issue have formulated ways and means to solve a common dilemma: how to create and play what you will vs. eating.

Jack DeJohnette has found it "necessary to try and do as much of the business end of it ourselves; in other words, to fully create our own environment." He refers to the Creative Music Foundation (and agency) organized several months ago by himself, Lee Konitz, Sam Rivers, Karl Berger, The Revolutionary Ensemble, and Dave Liebman's Lookout Farm. Their co-op agency deals with colleges and jazz societies for clinics and concerts while allowing individual members to record on their own or participate in the foundation's own recording output.

Les DeMerle, a former drum student of Alan Dawson and a player with Lionel Hampton and Joe Farrell, restates the theme: "I wanted to work with students and I wanted to find a place that I could use as home base . . . I wanted most of all to play—not just one gig either." His home base is the Cellar Theater in Los Angeles which is, simultaneously, a rehearsal hall, a theater, and a showcase for DeMerle's Transfusion group. The group members take care of business themselves—tending the mailing lists, booking the dates—all in all, setting their own pace, creating their own atmosphere. DeMerle is happy to export the formula. Write him for an independence kit.

Barry Altschul, currently drumming with Sam Rivers and formerly with Chick Corea, Anthony Braxton, and seven seminal years with Paul Bley also speaks of independence. "I sat in with anybody that I could. I asked everybody. I forced my way up . . . I let absolutely nothing and nobody get in the way of playing music. My students turn me on a lot, I learn a great deal from them; and I make enough bread so I can afford to only play the music in which I can involve my full self."

Charlie Persip once gave a student of his, Barry Altschul, a lesson that all musicians would do well to learn: "let your concept stimulate your technique." Persip, too often thought of as only a (fine) big band drummer, still teaches while working (in tuxedo and bare feet!) with Archie Shepp and the Collective Black Arts Ensemble.

Sam Rivers, reed player and composer, has played with all the drummers featured in this issue. His base of operations is Studio Rivbea in New York City where he works and teaches with his trio and big band. He also serves as Composer in Residence with the Harlem Opera Society. His long time experience makes his observations especially valuable . . . "I do listen to a lot of young musicians and I'm kind of disturbed to tell you the truth. Some of them have come through the '60s without listening to other things. Certainly there are precedents for screaming on the horn—Illinois Jacquet was doing it some years ago—but many of the screamers don't have a solid academic background. On the other hand, you have the musicians who are coming out of the schools. They solo a la Bird or Coltrane. They're technically together, but their sounds are all the same, as if they'd come off an assembly line. The musicians who impress me are the guys who have the best of both." **db**

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Poll Backlash

If there is a doubt in anyone's mind that the jazz scene is a reflection of the dismal state of the world as a whole, may I refer them to the db Readers Poll, in which pop star Eric Clapton outpointed both Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel in the guitar category.

How sad . . .
Steve Schenkel St. Louis, Mo.

It has been reported that the average age of db's readership is between 18 and 22 years. The logical assumption would be that this majority is primarily made up of students with an interest in "contemporary" music. However, the results of the latest Readers Poll show that these students are more interested in the jazz/rock/electronics category than much else.

I find the victory of Weather Report as jazz group is representative of just how much these people are learning about jazz in school. The Columbia Weather Report promotion states that the band has mastered electronics and rock, not jazz. Students should be learning about the true contemporary innovators such as Anthony Braxton, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Cecil Taylor, etc. . . . Sorry, but I *do* make the distinction between art music and folk music. Jazz is an art form and rock is not. I feel that it is just a noisy form of the popular song combined with some super ego trips. With true innovators like the aforementioned still with us, groups such as Mahavishnu, Eleventh House, and Weather Report do *not* deserve to be heard.
Jeff Keith Bellingham, Wash.

In This Corner . . .

In Supersax: The Genius Of Bird X Five (db, Nov. 21), Ray Townley comments: "Most other (sax) sections are modeled on the pre-Bird vibrato of Johnny Hodges. Med Flory responds: "Well, take the reed sections before Parker, like the ones in Lunceford's band and Duke's. They would spread out the voicings and go for that big sound . . . That gives you more of a full sound than a real jazz sound."

So, according to Flory, the sax sections of the Ellington and Lunceford bands lacked a "real jazz sound." That ought to come as a big surprise to their fans. In fact, since most jazz sax sections today have a "full sound," I guess they don't have a "real jazz sound" either.

After mentioning that he never was "much of a Johnny Hodges fan," he declares that "you can't sound like Bird playing like Johnny Hodges or Marshall Royal or any of those guys. They come from an entirely different school." Well, the lead altoist in Gillespie's band of the '40s was Howard Johnson, who was strongly influenced by Hodges. Dizzy's sax section had a "full sound," yet it managed to play some excellent Bird-like passages.

And if Flory thinks Supersax "sounds like Bird," he's mistaken. Supersax sounds like a poor imitation of the "Four Brothers" sound of Woody Herman's Second Herd. To put it another way, Supersax sounds as if all of its sax players are veterans of the West Coast "cool jazz" scene of the early '50s who haven't changed their styles at all in the past 20 years.

Bruce P. Adams Hillsdale, N.J.

Dear Bruce,

When the tape is rolling, you're in trouble as soon as you stop playing music and start talking about it. I was shocked as you were at how cold some of my remarks looked in print. But if I sounded irreverent, remember we were discussing Bird and his peers, all great players whom I revere. Still, we were discussing them strictly in the context of a sax section playing Bird choruses, vibrato, attack, etc., and just because you can't add apples and oranges doesn't mean they both don't taste good.

Speaking of context, you might have included the question that preceded Ray's comment—"what makes your section so different from most of the other reed sections in existence?" How else could I explain the absence of Hodges' influence in this group? Should I apologize for being more impressed by Carter in my youth? Show me any Hodges influence in Bird.

I should have explained that I was talking about the "full sound" and "jazz sound" only in terms of Bird lines and how to voice them. Spread harmony doesn't work on a line that flows over the whole range of the horn. We tried it.

As to your Four Brothers comparison, gee, I wish instead you'd mentioned Woody's *I've Got News For You*, which started me harmonizing Bird in the first place. And that reference to the West Coast school? Bruce, all I can tell you is, it's time you shopped around for a new set of ears. Oh yeah, funny thing. During the period you mentioned, we were all scuffling in the Apple. What were you doing, you old rascal?

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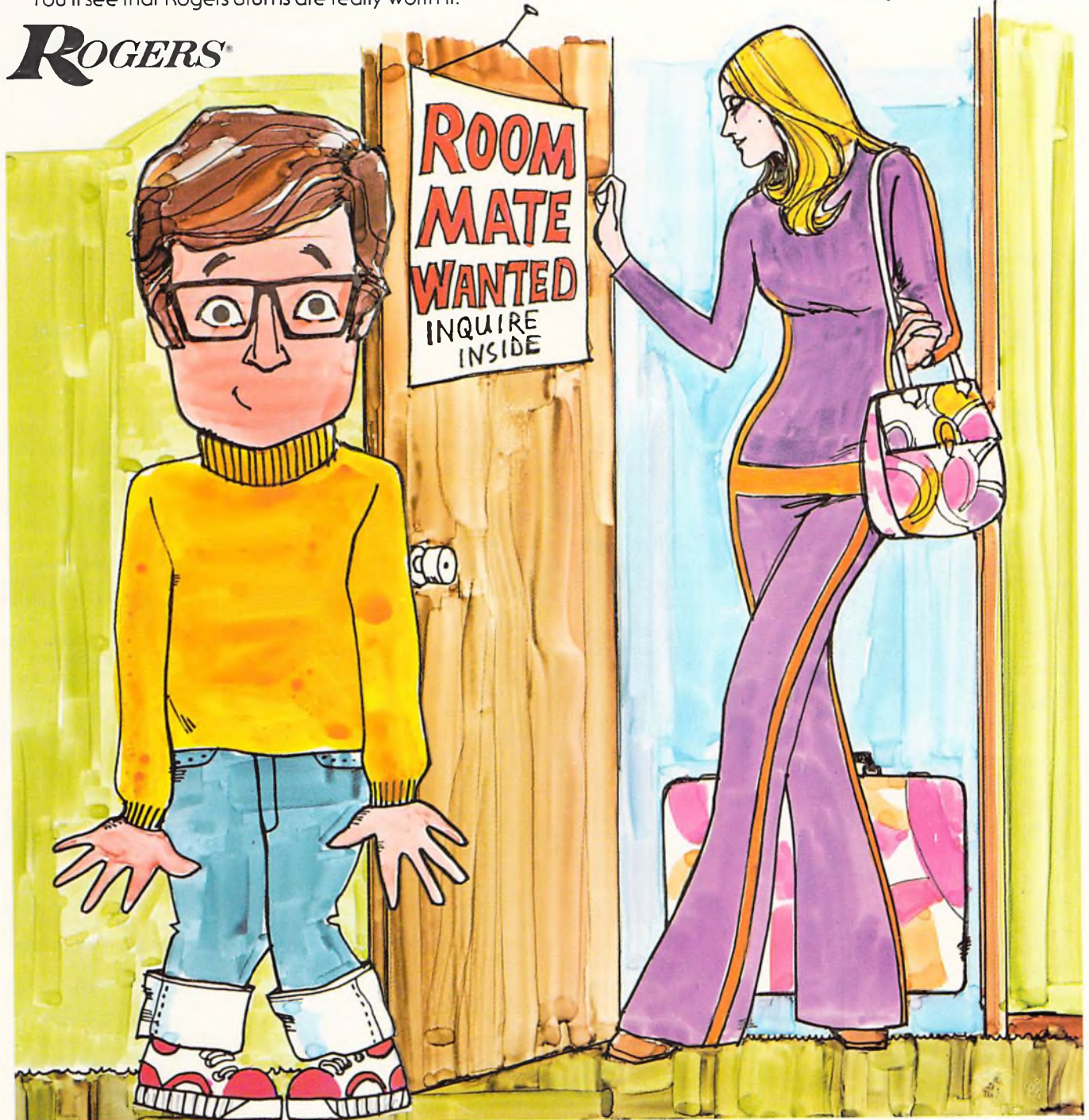
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PHOTOS: MICHAEL J. MASON



db reader Michael Mason has sent us some prints of a wooden drummer who decorated the California landscape for a while last year. Mason explains that "these photographs were taken . . . at the side of an Oakland freeway, and, unfortunately, the 10 foot tall wooden figure of the drummer no longer exists due to the

high winds of our latest rain-storm. The sculptor remains anonymous as it is highly illegal to beautify California highways."

Many thanks to the mysterious percussophile who spent the time and skirted the law in dedication to his art, and to Mike Mason who captured the short-lived structures on film.

Album Jackets Imperiled?

Oliver Berliner, president of Telaudio Center in Burbank, Cal., thinks that the selling of advertising on record jackets may be a coming thing in the industry.

Berliner claims that a label selling 20 million LPs could net about \$1.6 million annually by selling ad messages on its record sleeves. When asked whether he thought that artists might object to such practices,

Berliner replied that he imagines that the performer would be substantially compensated, even though "from a legal standpoint an artist is not entitled to a share of this additional revenue."

Berliner says his firm is moving into this field and that they have high expectations for a big score in the upcoming future. Anybody want to start a non-profit record company???

Song Fest Strikes Again



Why is this man laughing?

The First Annual American Song Festival has been a center of heated controversy ever since the competition finals were held in Sarasota Springs, N.Y. last Aug 30-Sept. 2.

Noted critic Leonard Feather, himself a member of the nine-man, two-woman panel of jurors, dubbed the events a "festival of futility" in his Sept. 15 article in the *L.A. Times*. He lambasted the proceedings as being a "money-grabbing attempt to capitalize on every American's dream of writing a hit." He felt that because business interests completely outweighed aesthetic interests, none of the winning songs were even remotely comparable to the high musical standards of such song writers as Duke Ellington, Johnny Mercer, or Richard Rodgers.

Another disgruntled individual, one of many, wrote to **down beat** (Jan. 16, 1975) complaining that the Festival was "a sham," and that the winning songs were "safe, simplistic garbage," having all of the complexity and humanity of "a Juicy Fruit jingle."

In response to these and other, more specific, criticisms, Malcolm Klein, President of The American Song Festival, discussed things at length.

Klein is fully aware of the subjectivity involved, "but we tried to be as absolutely fair as possible by reducing the subjective to the objective. We numbered the tapes to assure anonymity; we graded numerically; and we screened the entries on several different levels.

"But still the subjective has to come in, because we're dealing with a creative force. There were perhaps as many good songs that didn't win as those that did. If another group of people were to have listened, it's quite possible that a good percentage of other songs would have surfaced as winners."

The 11 members of the finals jury were all older and, accord-

ing to Klein, represented every aspect of the music field—creator, critic, and executive. "They were the best names that we could find who were available," Klein says. "Every juror had established a long track record of qualifications in one or more aspects of the industry."

There were six categories—Rock, Country, Folk, Popular, Jazz/R & B/Soul, and Gospel/Religious—which categories "provide the *only* means by which you can judge one song against another." At the finals level, each of the songs of each category was performed by three established professional artists to insure as much as possible that every song got equal representation.

From start to finish, the evaluation of the songs was based on the premise that "the person who enters a song into the song competition does so for the rewards that are consistent with the contemporary music industry. He wants a hit record, and he wants to make money. He wants to have his song heard, published, recorded, played on the air, and purchased.

"The fact that a song can make money does not exclude the possibility that it might also be a good song by some artistic measurement. By the same token, a song might be a hit record and have no other redeeming quality whatsoever.

"The ideal winner is a song that is relevant to the time, has originality of concept, and has good copyrights so that many people can record them. As much as possible, we are looking for popular and enduring songs."

Klein clearly states that money considerations are important, that the criticisms levied against the Festival are as valid as those levied against television, and that although the Festival does not exclude the possibility of high-quality, enduring and innovative winners, "we are nevertheless in the mass-medium business. Popular music is mass music. It's a monied thing."

As for accusations of financial ripoff, Klein says, "The Festival put out some \$1,270,000 and took in some \$800,000, a loss of \$470,000."

This year, several changes have been made.

(1) Each song will be judged from beginning to end on the basis of the entered cassette, rather than on the basis of somebody else's performing it in the finals. The winning songs of each category will then be pre-

New Releases

New imports due from the German ECM label include an album by **Jan Garbarek**, backed by a string orchestra arranged by **Keith Jarrett**; *Ring*, featuring **The Gary Burton Quintet** with **Eberhard Weber**; *Whenever I Seem To Be Far Away*, by **Terje Rypdal**; and a **Ralph Towner** solo guitar album, *Diary*.

Concord Jazz has released a pair of albums recorded live at last year's **Concord Summer Festival**, the discs tagged *Great Guitars* (featuring **Charlie Byrd**, **Barney Kessel**, and **Herb Ellis**) and *The Ruby Braff/George Barnes Quartet Plays Gershwin*.

Groove Merchant has issued *The Main Squeeze* by **Jimmy McGriff** and *Transition*, highlighting **Buddy Rich**, **Lionel Hampton**, **Teddy Wilson**, **Zoot Sims** and **George Duvivier**.

Other recent imports include: *Anthony Braxton/Derek Bailey Duo*, a two-record set from England's **Emanem Records** and *Straight Ahead*, with pianist **Masahiko Sato** and **Toshiyuki**

Miyama and his New Herd on the **Nippon Columbia** label.

A historical reunion occurred November 24 at **Carnegie Hall** when **Chet Baker**, **Gerry Mulligan**, and **Stan Getz** recorded a session for **CTI Records** and producer **Creed Taylor**. The concert marked the first time in 15 years that **Baker** and **Mulligan**, two major figures in the "cool" jazz movement, played together. The session also marked the first time that both shared a billing with **Getz**. The musicians were backed by **Bob James** on piano, **Ron Carter** on bass, and **Harvey Mason** on drums. A new CTI double-record set captures the occasion.

Ray Manzarek, former organist with the **Doors**, has issued his second album for **Phonogram Records**. Called *The Whole Thing Started With Rock & Roll*, *Now It's Out Of Control*, Ray is accompanied on the album by saxophonist **John Klemmer**, guitarists **Joe Walsh** and **Michael Fennelly**, and receives vocal backup from **Dr. John**. db

NEWS
down beat

Jazz In Upstate NY

New York City, being the Apple, does not have a monopoly on the jazz scene in New York State. The Statler Hilton in Buffalo has embarked on a jazz policy that includes a new room in the place, the Downtown. Ruby Braff/George Barnes opened the club and had the town applauding. "The emphasis in this room is easy listening," says Gabriel J. Milanese, entertainment director for the Hotel. "It has proven quite successful and we plan to continue the format with the likes of Jackie and Roy and other groups in that genre."

Big Bands appear in the Golden Ballroom, "an elegant room with a seating capacity of 900 for dinner."

Noontime Showcases happen once or twice a week with local groups showing their talents. They are culled from high schools and colleges in the area.

Owner Mr. William D. Hassett, Jr. has the determination to see this thing through. "I am committed to making Buffalo, especially downtown, alive again." It helps us all when his commitment is good jazz.

Meanwhile, if you've been keeping up with City Scene, you noted that an award was presented to Thad Jones and Mel Lewis recently on their winning of **down beat's** Readers Poll during the taping of a series called *At The Top*. The show will premiere February 17 on Public Television. Yours truly will open the series with the presentation after which the orchestra will do an hour's worth. Others in the four-part series taped at The Top Of The Plaza in Rochester will highlight Buddy Greco, April 7; The Modern Jazz Quartet and Stephane Grappelli with the Dixie Disley Trio, May 5; and Maynard Ferguson and Band, June 23. The programs will definitely appear on Channel 21 (WXXI) in Rochester, and throughout the country on PBS, but a close watch for local time scheduling is advised. —arnold jay smith

concert band music—will be made to every high school in the U.S. beginning May 1.

potpourri

The Pointer Sisters have been signed by CBS-TV to be the summer replacements for Carol Burnett. Draw your own conclusions.

A new nine piece group, **Matrix**, has been formed around **John Harmon**, former director of jazz studies at Lawrence U., Appleton, Wis. The other players (total of six horns and three rhythm) are either L.U. alumni or jazz educators. On April 25, Matrix will perform with the **Milwaukee Symphony** featuring two original works for jazz ensemble and symphony by Harmon and **Fred Sturm**, lately of North Texas State U. Before and after the Milwaukee date, Matrix will be playing clubs and doing school jazz clinics in Wisconsin and Illinois.

The Third Annual University City (St. Louis, Mo.) Invitational Jazz Festival, Dr. John Kuzmich, director, will be held Feb. 1. Guest performers and clinicians include: **Jim Petercsak**, percussion; **Ron Modell**, trumpet; **Martin Benkhe**, trombone; **Stephen Terry**, trombone; **Ran Misamore**, sax; **Tom Hamilton**, piano; and **Joe Burger**, drums. Guest band: **Meramec Community College Jazz Band**, **Stephen Terry**, director.

David Baker has been commissioned to write the jazz-blues work for the **JC Penney Bicentennial Music Celebration**. Free distribution of this work—as well as recordings and arrangements of symphony, choral, and

concert band music—will be made to every high school in the U.S. beginning May 1.

Erratum: In David Baker's Spotlight Review of **Charles Ives** (db, 1/16/75), the concluding chord of *Lincoln*, *The Great Commoner* is not the augmented 6th as was printed. It is the added 6th.

Rolling Stones' guitarist **Mick Taylor** has left the group. Taylor was the only member of the group to have been added since its formation, having replaced **Brian Jones** following his death in 1970.

Organist **Larry Young** recently debuted his new group at a Max's Kansas City gig, with **Jeremy Steig** spotlighted on flute.

Make of it what you will: **The National Association of FM Broadcasters** has released its annual survey and finds that syndication is growing at a rapid rate. The survey shows that 33.6% of all FM stations now employ some form of syndicated programming in their formats. Automation is also on the rise, with 25.3% of the stations being fully automated and another 25.2 partially so.

Jim Head has been appointed Studio Director at **Jon's Just Music** in Chicago, which features one of the country's most advanced electronic music synthesizer studios. Jim is well-known as a leading authority on electronic music. db

Granz Issues Giant Tatum

Pablo Records under the auspices of owner Norman Granz has released a 13-record box set featuring the late pianist Art Tatum. Encompassing all of Tatum's former material recorded for Verve Records, the cumbersome package weighs almost five pounds and retails for 75 dollars. Granz recorded all of the sessions when he was the owner of Verve and repurchased the masters from MGM in order to release the package. 121 solo cuts are included, the majority of which were recorded in 1953-54. Tatum interprets material by Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Duke Ellington, and Vincent Youmans, among others. Employing a style which incorporated the tirades of the stride school with harmonic sensitivity and right hand single note cascades, Tatum's earthy mannerisms have remained popular throughout the 18 years since his death. A smattering of the songs featured in the collection include *I Cover The Waterfront*, *Love For Sale*, *Stardust*, *Without A Song*, and *Come Rain Or Come Shine*. And when you break it all down, each selection averages out to only 62 cents apiece.

FINAL BAR



YANNICK BRUYNOGHE

HUGUES PANASSIÉ, the pioneer jazz critic, died December 8 of a heart attack at his home in Montauban, France.

Panassié was born in Paris on February 27, 1912. While studying at the college of Villefranche de Rouergue in 1928, he was stricken with polio, which resulted in the paralysis of one leg and the termination of a promising athletic career. He founded the Hot Club de France in 1932 to further the cause of jazz, immediately naming his idol, Louis Armstrong, honorary president of the association. His first book, *Hot Jazz*, was published in 1934 and caused a sensation in Europe, as it did in this country two years later.

Of many other books he subsequently wrote on the subject, perhaps the best known were *The Real Jazz* (1946), in which he emphasized the importance of the New Orleans idiom; *The Guide to Jazz* (1956), written in collaboration with Madeleine Gautier; *Discographie Critique* (1958), a formidable introduction to the best jazz records with all soloists thereon identified; and *Louis Armstrong* (1969). From 1950 until his death, he edited and wrote most of the *Bulletin du Hot Club de France*, a monthly publication that was influential out of all proportion to its size in Europe. Besides writing constantly about jazz, he broadcast regularly, conducted educational courses, organized tours by American musicians, supervised many record sessions in the U.S. and in Paris, and was largely responsible for the world's first international jazz festival at Nice in 1948. After his first visit to the U.S. in 1938, he lived in Montauban in the south of France. Isolated by the events of World War II, he was appalled at the war's conclusion by the nature of the bop revolution, which he never ceased to regard as an unmitigated disaster.

A devout Catholic and a man of fierce loyalties (as in the case of Mezz Mezzrow), Panassié was never a politician. He did not know the meaning of compromise, and the frank expression of strongly held opinions earned him the enmity and scorn of several well-known writers, but the respect in which he was held by musicians like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Willie "The Lion" Smith, and Lionel Hampton was undoubtedly reward enough for him. Although sometimes accused of narrowmindedness because of his opposition to bop and its by-products, it is significant that his appreciation of a wide area of jazz was supplemented by a more extensive knowledge of blues and blues artists than that possessed by any other practicing jazz critic. He had an unerring ear and his grasp of values within his chosen field was unrivaled.

—stanley dance

SAM RIVERS:

An Artist

On An Empty Stage

by bob palmer



VALERIE WILMER

Originality in music is an elusive quality and according to Sam Rivers, a widely misunderstood one. Many musicians seem to feel that one must be "born with" originality, but Rivers knows where his came from: "I worked out my own chord substitutions, wrote my own exercises to practice. I listened to everyone I could hear to make sure I didn't sound like them. I wasn't taking any chances; I wanted to be *sure* I didn't sound like anyone else. I've gone to great lengths not to, so I'm slightly offended when people compare me to this player or that one. That means they aren't really listening to me. A person doesn't *have* to sound like Charlie Parker or John Coltrane. It takes more work, but it can be done."

Rivers, a saxophonist, flutist, composer, and big band leader, has played the blues with Jimmy Witherspoon and T-Bone Walker, toured Japan with Miles Davis, performed for five years with the Cecil Taylor Unit, and worked for varying periods of time with a lengthy and diverse list of leaders, including Billie Holiday, Herb Pomeroy, Jerry Butler, McCoy Tyner, and Andrew Hill. Musicians have been talking about his playing and composing for almost two

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decades, but exposure to a wider audience has come only recently, with his trio and big band albums for ABC/Impulse and a continuing series of concert performances at his own Studio Rivbea in New York City. Why the delay, an unusually long one even in a field known for its extended dues-paying periods?

The jazz audience, that amorphous, much-maligned entity, can hardly be blamed for failing to appreciate a musician who has recorded infrequently, nor can the profit-oriented record business be blamed for favoring more derivative, hence more familiar music, and more colorful personalities. Rivers feels that the press, and **down beat** in particular, have been remiss in failing to chronicle his activities, but he admits that he has been deliberate regarding the development and exposure of his work: "I don't jump into anything." The audience he has won is likely to be a durable one because it has been drawn not by posturing, press agents, or effects, but by the seriousness and fire of the music itself. It is a music which communicates its essence directly, unadorned by electronics or showmanship or window-dressing of any kind. "I've always been impressed by playwrights who use an empty stage," Rivers says by way of analogy. "When there are no props, it's up to the playwright and the actors to do their thing. If they can move you, they're into it."

Studio Rivbea is a refurbished street-level loft on Bond Street in Soho, and a basement outfitted for the presentation of music. Since its opening in 1970, it has become the most dependable and consistent showcase for new black music in New York City. Rivers himself appears there with groups ranging from trios to sextets to 35-piece bands, and players like Dewey Redman, Billy Harper, Frank Lowe, Clifford Jordan, and Charles Tyler, to name a few saxophonists of varying persuasions, have found it a congenial place to work. Sam and Beatrice Rivers, his wife of 27 years, run the place in a characteristically light but firm manner. They have now been taking strangers into their home for nearly five years without major hassles of any kind.

On a weekday afternoon the street level portion of the Studio is simply a spotlessly clean living loft and Sam is voluble. Asked about his family background, he produces a worn volume titled *A Collection of Revival Hymns and Plantation Melodies*, written and published by his grandfather, Marshall W. Taylor (Cincinnati: Marshall W. Taylor and W. C. Echols Publishers, 1882). "He heard people singing some of these songs and notated them," Rivers explains. "Others he wrote himself. He was a minister and a musician, his two sisters were musicians, and both my parents were musicians and teachers. Everyone in the family plays, all my aunts, uncles, and cousins. Some are doctors and lawyers, as well. So when I said I wanted to be a musician, they said, 'That's okay, but what do you want to do with yourself?'"

"My father graduated from Fisk University and sang with the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Silvertone Quartet. My mother graduated from Howard University. It was something for everybody in a black family in the '30s to be college graduates; when I look back on it now, it was quite an achievement. At any rate, my mother and father were presenting concerts of spirituals, and I was born on the road, so to speak, while they were performing in El Reno, Oklahoma. That was September 25, 1930. My father died in 1937 and my mother took a job at Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas, so I more or less came up on the campus there. I had begun studying violin and piano in Chicago, when I was four or five, and singing in church. We were all aware of Cab Calloway and Count Basie. That wasn't really the family's kind of music, but I do remember going to hear them with my father."

Rivers took up the trombone at age 11. Two years later he switched to tenor saxophone after picking one up and finding it more responsive than the sliphorn. He found his calling as a jazz musician around the same time: "One hard fact about the black community at that time was that only a few people were recognized as being ethnically genuine. That would be the Baptist ministers and the jazz musicians. These were totally black originals. I could be a doctor, but a white doctor would probably be better because he had better training. The Baptist ministers and jazz musicians didn't really have white counterparts, and since I was already fascinated with the music, I gravitated to it. Other things were going on. There was always a lot of classical music around our house; I remember hearing Stravinsky when I was very young and being taken out by it. And there was social and political involvement; I remember walking around City Hall in Little Rock with my mother in the '30s, protesting the poll tax. It was freezing and I was seven and in the picket line with her. And I remember standing outside clubs listening to music. I remember hearing Lester Young and Don Byas and Buddy Tate with Basie at various times, I remember Earl Hines' big band, and Louis Jordan and Andy Kirk. And of course Coleman Hawkins." Hawkins and Young became Rivers' primary influences.

"I don't need a piano to compose. I work more or less from clusters of sounds I want to hear at the time, and all I need really is silence and some paper."

He went to college in Little Rock and in Texas and then joined the Navy. He was stationed in Vallejo, California and played his first professional job during his hitch, with up-and-coming blues shouter Jimmy Witherspoon. He also became a Dizzy Gillespie fan through recordings by the Billy Eckstine band, and was introduced to the artistry of Charlie Parker. He returned to Little Rock for a short time. In 1947 he went north with his brother, bassist Martin Rivers. Martin went to the New England Conservatory, Sam went to the Boston Conservatory, and both began working with local bands. Boston was to be Sam's home for almost 20 years because, he explains, "I was always working, seven nights a week."

Quincy Jones, Dick Twardzik, Charlie Mariano, Gigi Gryce, Joe Gordon, and Jaki Byard were among Rivers' school acquaintances. The saxophonist remembers Twardzik, whose few recordings predict elements which later appeared in the work of both Bill Evans and Cecil Taylor, as playing music that was "very complicated. I was one of the few horn players that could play with him. But Jaki Byard was very advanced, too. He was always into it as a composer and player." Rivers continued his studies, playing viola in a string quartet by day, working jazz jobs with the likes of Nat Pierce, Serge Chaloff, and Alan Dawson at night. One of his fondest memories of this period is of a big band organized by Jimmy Martin and featuring arrangements by Byard, Hampton Reese, Joe Gordon, the leader, and one—*All Too Soon*—by Rivers. "That started my linear style of writing," he says. "We mostly played things like *Billie's Bounce*, doing all the solos from the record in unison and then going into our own thing. We would do 12 bars with everyone soloing collectively, or hit 'wrong' notes at the end of tunes. We were doing a lot of those things because it was shocking as hell to the older musicians."

Rivers dropped out of school in 1952 and a succession of engagements followed. There were lounge jobs with a trio, playing standards, big band dates backing floor shows, rhythm and blues, modern jazz. "I was never out of work," he emphasizes again, "and I used that time, to study and practice. I didn't drink, I didn't smoke, I was just into the music. Around 1955 I went to Florida for a couple of years. (Tenor saxophonist) Don Wilkerson and I had a group there, and I did a short tour with Billie Holiday just before she died. I came back to Boston in 1958 and joined Herb Pomeroy's big band. I also had a quartet gig at a coffee shop on Harvard Square." One night in 1959 a 13-year-old drummer sat in and impressed everyone. He was Tony Williams, and soon he was working with Rivers, pianist Hal Galper, and bassist Phil Morrison. "That's when I first got into the style I'm playing today," Rivers recalls, "as a player and a writer. I did some compositions which were based on each instrument having a different solo part, all of which were harmonically together. I took part of one to Herb Pomeroy to hear how it sounded. He just laughed and said, Yeah! And gave it back to me. I was doing a lot of free playing in small groups. And then I was music director for a big band which backed up visiting artists, people like Wilson Pickett, Maxine Brown, Jerry Butler. T-Bone Walker took me out on the road.

"T-Bone and all the other blues artists who hired me just wanted me to play the blues to the best of my ability. They didn't hire me to compromise and they didn't hire me to dance. I remember playing at a rhythm-and-blues club in Queens much later, during the late '60s, and Pharoah Sanders and Clifford Jordan would come by and play.

I'd go along with the dancing now and then because that's part of it. If I had a blues or rock band now, I'd be putting on a show, because that just goes with it. But it doesn't mean you aren't supposed to play."

Rivers was fashioning his own approach, as is evident from his first LP as a leader, *Fuschia Swing Song* (1965). The fruits of his self-penned exercise books, his years playing standards and bebop, and his blues roots bred a penchant for asymmetrical phrases, full of five- and seven-note groupings, tricky little punctuations, and unexpected denouements: vocal inflections and various growl and overtone effects which coexisted comfortably with a leaner version of the classic Hawkins/Byas sound; and an improvisational command of both chordal and "free" compositional structures. Notably lacking on the date were the kind of modal tunes Miles Davis had introduced on *Kind Of Blue*, the kind John Coltrane was popularizing. "I was never particularly into that," the saxophonist explains. "In most cases so-called modal jazz wasn't really modal at all. People were playing free over the top of the modes or, more often, just staying in one key. Now really playing in a mode would be limiting yourself to the eight or so notes in that mode, period. That's the way I teach modes. I guess I'm a kind of purist in that I don't believe you should say you're doing one thing when you're doing something else."

In 1964, when Rivers was touring the Southwest with Walker, he had received a telegram: "Come to New York. George split. Miles wants you to join his group." Tony Williams, who had moved to New York, worked briefly with Jackie McLean, and joined Miles Davis, had played tapes of the Rivers quartet for the trumpeter when saxophonist George Coleman left the group. For six months, Rivers became a member of the Davis quintet, which included Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Williams. "Miles was still doing things that were . . . pretty straight," he remembers. "I was there, but I was somewhere else too. I guess it sounds funny, but I was already ahead of that. I kept stretching out and playing really long solos, and that's probably why I didn't last. We recorded an album in Japan and then when we got back to New York, Miles got Wayne Shorter." In August, 1965, Williams put Rivers and Shorter together for his *Spring* LP. The contrast between the two is fascinating. On *Love Song*, Rivers plays a floating, light-toned statement, which he varies with overblown harmonics and low-register punctuations. Shorter is harder-toned, more predictable, and perhaps more cogent on *Tee*.

After the experience with Davis, Rivers worked on the West Coast with pianist Andrew Hill. He then spent five years with the Cecil Taylor Unit, including a period when the group were Artists in Residence at the Foundation Maeght, St. Paul de Vence, France. Rivers, Jimmy Lyons, and Andrew Cyrille are featured on Taylor's *Nuits De La Fondation Maeght*, on Shandar. Having accomplished his move to New York during his period with Miles, Rivers continued to compose and score works for big band while living on the Lower East Side and in Harlem, and while travelling with Taylor. "I don't need a piano to compose," he says. "I work more or less from clusters of sounds I want to hear at the time, and all I need really is silence and some paper. It's been ten years since I've been involved in writing

and playing chord changes; certainly by the late '50s all the harmonies had been done that are being done today in the average jazz band. I would like to mention, in this regard, that I've never under-

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SELECTED RIVERS DISCOGRAPHY

Featured

FUSCHIA SWING SONG—Blue Note 4184
 CONTOURS—Blue Note 4206
 STREAMS—Impulse AS 9251
 NO ENERGY CRISIS—Impulse AS 9267-2 (Includes 11-minute tenor sax improvisation from Rivers' *Suite For Molde*.)
 IMPULSE ARTISTS ON TOUR—Impulse AS 9264 (Includes 16-minute soprano sax improvisation from Rivers' *Hues Of Melanin*.)
 CRYSTALS—Impulse ASD 9286
 HUES—Impulse ASD 9302

with Anthony Williams
 LIFE—Blue Note 4180
 SPRING—Blue Note 4216

with Larry Young
 INTO SOMETHIN'—Blue Note 4187

with Bobby Hutcherson
 DIALOGUE—Blue Note 4198

with Dave Holland
 CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS—ECM 1027



PHOTOS: LEE TANNER

BARRY ALTSCHUL



PHOTOS: RAYMOND ROSS

TRAPS IN THE SOUTH BRONX

by Peter Keepnews

*A quick glance at the discography on the facing page reveals that percussionist Barry Altschul has been on the scene for a while, and that he has spent that time in the pursuit of serious, progressive music. This is his first interview in the pages of **down beat**, but we trust it will not be his last. Aside from his regular work with the Sam Rivers group, Altschul currently is studying ear-training, keyboard theory and harmony, and composition with saxophonist Lee Konitz, preparing for his first featured album.*

Barry Altschul's skill and imagination as a percussionist are evident to anyone who has ever heard him—with Sam Rivers, in whose trio he has been the regular drummer for about a year; with Paul Bley, with whom he worked off and on for close to a decade; with the unique and remarkable collective band known as Circle, where he played alongside Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Anthony Braxton; or on a number of recent albums, including Holland's beautiful *Conference of the Birds* (ECM) with Braxton and Rivers. He is, simply, one of the outstandingly creative drummers working in what is often called (for want of a better label) "the new music." He is also a listener always eager to be turned

on by something new (or old), and a player thoroughly grounded in the basics of bebop.

His name is only now becoming known to a substantial number of American listeners. But in Europe, where they tend to be hipper about these things, he is both well-known and well-respected. (He spent the summer of '73 touring Europe with Holland, Braxton and Rivers, performing in different groups led by each.)

And musicians know him. There are some, in fact, who have known him since he was a teenager in the Bronx, where he grew up in an atmosphere unusually conducive to the development of musical talent.

"I always heard music. My parents were musicians, my sister's a Julliard graduate. The superintendent of the building that I lived in was a blues singer, and all his kids were into singing and dancing. Then down the block there was the Latin contingent of conga players and timbale players out in the street. There was always lots of street music. Jailhouse musicians, very knowledgeable cats, talking to you about music.

"I grew up in the South Bronx, where it was mostly black and Puerto Rican, but I never felt any racial tension until I got to high school. By that time most of my friends were black, so *that* was no problem, I just hung out

with my friends. There were some undertones from the teachers, and the kids reflected some of it. I was singing in the hallways, or playing music somewhere. That wasn't really encouraged, so my parents were always being brought to school and told, 'He isn't doing any work, he's only playing music with black people.'

"I first started picking up drum sticks and banging on tin cans and things like that when I was 11. I got a snare drum and a hi-hat when I was 13. Then when I was 17 I acquired a bass drum, and that was it. I started to get into it. I moved out of my house and I started practicing with musicians from my neighborhood, playing together and dissecting records.

"Jerry Jemott was one at the time, he's now a studio bass player. Frank Mitchell, a tenor player who used to work with Art Blakey and Lee Morgan, he's since passed away. There was a bowling alley where we used to have jam sessions, and a lot of people were there. Junior Cook was around that neighborhood, Charles Tolliver. At the time, Donald Byrd was living in the Bronx, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Cobb, Philly Joe Jones, Monk, tenor saxophonist Tina Brooks, Jackie McLean, all those cats were around.

"That was when the sitting-in period was still happening. I sat in with anybody that I could. I asked everybody. I forced my way up. Lots of times I was stopped and kicked off the bandstand and told to go home and practice, but that was good. That's just what I needed, I had to be kicked in my ass, to go home and practice, work. It was either that or not play anymore.

"I had made my decision about what I wanted to do when I was in my last year of high school, and after that it was easy, because my decision was made and I let absolutely nothing and nobody get in the way of playing music."

At first, Barry's parents had encouraged his drumming "because it was keeping me off the streets, and anything to keep you off the streets is cool." As he got more serious, their resistance grew until, after graduating high school, he moved in with a friend. ("I didn't storm out and say, I'll never see you again. I just told them. This is what I have to do and I'm splitting.")

He also got a job at a recording studio as a "janitor, office boy, messenger, whatever it was." He would work a few hours a day, come home and practice, and play somewhere at night. ("I remember all the cats used to come over to my house and we used to carry my drums for miles.") He also played with a rehearsal big-band that recorded once a week in the studio.

ALTSCHUL STARTED taking drum lessons for the first time. "When I moved out of my house I got in touch with Charlie Persip. I knew him from Dizzy's band and I had heard he was teaching, and at the time his name was out where I was hearing it. So I guess it was an ego thing and a prestige thing as well: here's a cat I heard of, I think I'll study with him. So I called him and it happened. I studied with him about nine months.

"He stimulated in me the desire to find a conception. He outlined the *conceptual* approach to playing; instead of the technical approach. When I got hung up technically because of my conception—if I was hearing something that I couldn't play—then he laid some technical shit on me, and said, Okay,

this is what you need. Which is beautiful. Concept before technique. Let your concept stimulate your technique.

"I mean, to sit in front of drum books for ten years, and really get it down, and then put yourself behind a set of drums—a lot of people just don't know what to play. Not only don't they know what to play, they don't know how to play it, I mean, emotionally. I don't want to mention names, but I hear that in some people's playing. For myself, I heard things conceptually that I couldn't play, so I sat down and tried to figure out how to play them. From that, I developed a technique, but it wasn't technique for technique's sake. It was just a tool, so I could use the vocabulary."

Eventually Altschul began the transition from amateur to professional. "I don't know when I started playing professionally. It just sort of happened. One day you get five dollars for a gig, a bar lays it on you for a tip or something, and the next time you ask them for 25 for the group. And it's the same bread, so what's the difference?" He remembers a series of gigs in 1962 with a pianist named Valdo Williams as his first work as a drummer outside the Bronx. (He had actually made his professional musical debut a few years earlier, when he briefly sang and recorded with a rock and roll group.)

At about the same time, he first met Paul Bley at the studio where he was working. "He came in to do a record date with Paul Motian, Gary Peacock and John Gilmore. At the time the music was very fresh to me. I thought, What is that! I was strictly into the hard-boppers until I heard this thing. I had never heard anything like it before except for Coltrane. I had followed Trane through his whole career, so his thing made more sense to me. This was abrupt.

"Paul and I started talking. I gave him my phone number, and one day out of the blue he called me up for a gig. He had never heard me play before. He was hung up for a drummer, I'm sure, and he figured here's some kid, I'll call him up and see what happens.

"It was a Sunday afternoon gig at Slugs, which at the time was a sawdust-on-the-floor beer-drinking place, just starting to experiment with a music policy. It was Paul, Dave Izenson and myself. So I went down, and Paul said, 'Do you want to play some *time* music, or do you want to play something else?' And I was a cocky kid, I said, 'Play anything you want to play.' He must have heard something, because I was his drummer from then (1964) until 1970 when Circle happened, and we still play together every so



"When the sitting-in period was still happening, I sat in with anybody that I could. I forced my way up. Lots of times I was stopped and kicked off the bandstand and told to go home and practice. That's just what I needed. I had to be kicked in my ass, to go home and practice. It was either that or not play anymore . . ."

often.

"When I first heard Paul's music it stimulated my imagination. The music technically eliminated bar lines. It was waves and figures, it wasn't just rhythm patterns."

BARRY BECAME heavily involved with Bley's music and with the Jazz Composers' Guild, the forerunner of the Jazz Composers' Orchestra Association.

"There was this whole new kind of music being dealt with, which I was very interested in, and I was thrown in the middle of it as a very young kid. Archie Shepp was there. Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Don Cherry—all those people were involved with the Guild at the time. I was involved with that for a period from '64 to '68.

"Then in '68, I felt a certain non-freedom in my playing. I wanted to play freer music, to be spontaneously improvising as much of the time as possible. I felt that in order for me to be freer, I needed more of a vocabulary. If I only could play this one area of music, then I

was not really free. I was locked in that one bag. I decided I really needed a better understanding of bebop, which had been the beginning of my playing.

"I went to Europe to freelance with the beboppers that were living over there. I couldn't work here 'cause I couldn't really play bebop that well. My time wasn't very good. But I figured it was good enough to go over there and play.

"I really wanted to get that part of it together, so I went for ten months and I played with Carmell Jones and Leo Wright and Johnny Griffin, all those cats. It was a ball! I worked every day. I was living in Belgium, Holland, Germany, wherever the gigs would take me.

"You're treated as an artist when you go to Europe, especially if your music is good, because they're very aware of the people who are jiving and those who are playing what they believe. A wider percentage of the people appreciate the art form coming out of America—jazz music—whereas Americans

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ALTSCHUL DISCOGRAPHY

with The Jazz Communications Organization
COMMUNICATIONS—Fontana 881011 ZY

with Paul Bley
CLOSER—ESP 1021
RAMBLIN'—BYG/Actuel 529313
HAARLEM—Polydor International 623358
BLOOD—Fontana 883911 JCY
TOUCHING—Debut 147
BALLADS—ECM 1010
CANADA—Radio Canada International 305

with Alan Silva
SKILLFULNESS—ESP 1091

with Buddy Guy
HOLD THAT TRAIN—Vanguard VSD 79323

with Peter Warren
THE BASS IS—Inja 2018

with Chick Corea
SONG OF SINGING—Blue Note BSP 84353
ARC—ECM 1009

with Circle
GERMAN CONCERT—CBS/Sony (Japan) SOPL 19-XJ
GATHERING—CBS/Sony (Japan) SOPL 20-XJ
PARIS CONCERT—ECM 1018/19

with Anthony Braxton
THE COMPLETE BRAXTON—Freedom
40112/113

with Dave Holland
CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS—ECM 1027

with Annette Peacock
I'M THE ONE—RCA LSP 4578

with Paul Winter
ICARUS—Epic KE-31643

with Sam Rivers
NO ENERGY CRISIS—Impulse AS 9267-2
IMPULSE ARTISTS ON TOUR—Impulse AS 9264
HUES—Impulse ASD-9302

with Dave Liebman
DRUM ODE—ECM 1046

with Roswell Rudd
THE FLEXIBLE FLYER—Freedom AL-1006

DeJOHNETTE ON DeJOHNETTE



GIUSEPPE PINO



JAN PERSSON

Jack DeJohnette is the kind of percussionist who might appear on any given night behind a major artist and, by so doing, raise the level of group interplay about seven notches. Such was the case at Newport '74 when he showed up quite unexpectedly behind Freddie Hubbard at Carnegie Hall. All of a sudden a formerly ho-hum rhythm section was transformed into one of high excitement, distinctive originality, and exquisite empathy.

But Jack DeJohnette is far more than just a drummer who sits in someone else's band, or even someone who is a regular member of another's group, performing another's music and following another's directions. Besides being a talented composer and group leader in his own right, he is also a frustrated pianist—piano was his first instrument. (DeJohnette is beginning to work this problem out as he gets more of an opportunity to sit at the keyboards rather than merely behind the traps.)

Throughout his musical career, DeJohnette has demonstrated unusual melodic sensitivity for a drummer. Perhaps this has to do with his keyboard training. Perhaps it is the result of his experiences with Muhal Richard Abrams' Experimental Band of the early '60s, a wildly free big band in which he played an initial role. Whatever the reason, DeJohnette has been able to capture this melodic empathy on record. His Milestone recordings of the turn of the decade are strong examples of a young musical mind in the process of development. His interplay with reedist Maupin foreshadows his incredibly telepathic duet sessions with bassist Dave Holland (*Time And Space*) and pianist Keith Jarrett (*Ruta And Daitya*).

DeJohnette has never been willing to sit still long enough to be categorized. The result has been an eclectic series of musical rest stops—a stint with Miles during his *Bitches Brew* and post-*Bitches Brew* phases; an unfortunately brief experiment with the collective *Compost*, a jazz-rock amalgamation that was ahead of its time. Today, Jack DeJohnette is again creating music that is literally ahead of its time (if that is at all possible). The following, you could say, is an updating, part two, of an article he wrote for *down beat* in 1971, entitled "Introducing his new group, *Compost*." The discomfiting and often bitter experiences that he has weathered since then are here sifted and analyzed, with the hope that his new-found awareness can lead to a more positive future.

—Ed.

After years of playing and listening to every sort of music and having put out my own albums, I find myself suddenly faced with making a big decision over my future, musically and otherwise. In the past, I have put out albums with not much thought to their selling potential, as well as albums specifically designed to sell, all the time feeling very honest about myself and the music. I have *never* put out albums of my own that I did not enjoy doing. But no matter what direction I took, the end results were always the same—none of the albums sold particularly well. This was all very confusing to me. I could play commercial music as well, if not better, than most of the commercial stuff that *is* selling—my music was good; the feeling on the albums was beautiful; we all had a lot of fun recording them. We didn't play *at* the music, we *played* it. After a while, it finally dawned on me what was wrong and it had nothing to do with the music: it was BUSINESS. Outside of the music, none of us were able to fit the role required to go along with that whole image—the looks, saying the right things at the right times, the socializing required, etc., etc.

It put me through a whole lot of changes. I had always fought labels and categories. I realized my image was one of an "individual," but the question was an "individual what!" So I put together some of what I felt to be my finest music and went around the jazz record companies, because "jazz" to me had always meant individuality. I went to companies that had been after me for a long time, but after hearing my music and my stipulations of complete musical independence (my own production, etc.), they gave me the cold shoulder, and I mean *cold!*

So much for individuality. I finally found a label that after some hassling and compromise on both sides decided to take a chance on me. Just released on Prestige, my new album is called *Sorcery*, and all I can say is that the music speaks for itself. (And in the Record Review Section of this issue, Assistant Editor Charles Mitchell speaks for the music in a **** review.)

My next step was to see what was being done with the album—what stations are playing it, what record stores carrying it, what

continued on page 32

SELECTED DEJOHNETTE DISCOGRAPHY

Featured

- COMPLEX—Milestone 9022
- HAVE YOU HEARD?—Milestone 9029
- TIME AND SPACE—Trio Electronics (Japan) PA 7062
(duet with Dave Holland)
- JACK KEYBOARD—Trio Electronics (Japan) PA 7086
- RUTA AND DAITYA—ECM 1027
(duet with Keith Jarrett)
- SORCERY—Prestige 10081

Compost

- TAKE OFF YOUR BODY—Columbia KC-31176
- LIFE IS ROUND—Columbia KC-32031

with Charles Lloyd

- DREAM WEAVER—Atlantic S-1459
- AT MONTEREY—Atlantic S-1473
- BEST—Atlantic S-1556
- FLOWERING OF THE ORIGINAL—Atlantic S-1586

with Miles Davis

- BITCHES BREW—Columbia 2-GP 26
- AT FILLMORE—Columbia G 30038

- ON THE CORNER—Columbia KC 31906
- BIG FUN—Columbia PG 32866

with Bill Evans

- LIVE AT MONTREUX—Verve 68762

with Joe Henderson

- POWER TO THE PEOPLE—Milestone 9024
- TETRAGON—Milestone 9017

with Bobby Timmons

- DO YOU KNOW THE WAY?—Milestone 9020

with Joe Farrell

- THE JOE FARRELL QUARTET—CTI 6003
- MOON GERMS—CTI 6023

with Miroslav Vitous

- MOUNTAIN IN THE CLOUDS—Atlantic 1622

with Freddie Hubbard

- FIRST LIGHT—CTI 6013
- IN CONCERT VOLS. I & II—CTI 6044/6049

with Hubert Laws

- RITE OF SPRING—CTI 6012

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RECORD REVIEWS

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CARLA BLEY

TROPIC APPETITES—Watt (New Music Distribution) 1: *What Will Be Left Between Us And The Moon Tonight?*; *In India*; *Enormous Tots*; *Caucasian Bird Riffles*; *Funnybird Song*; *Indonesian Dock Sucking Supreme*; *Song Of The Jungle Stream*; *Nothing*.

Personnel: Bley, voice, recorders, piano, electric piano, clavinet, organ, marimba, celeste, percussion; Unidentified Cat (Gato Barbieri), tenor saxophone, percussion; Howard Johnson, voice, clarinet, bass clarinet, soprano saxophone, baritone saxophone, bass saxophone, tubas; David Holland, cello, acoustic bass, bass guitar; Michael Mantler, trumpet, valve trombone; Toni Marcus, violine, viola; Paul Motian, drums, percussion; Julie Tippet, vocals; Paul Haines, lyrics.

MICHAEL MANTLER

NO ANSWER—Watt (New Music Distribution) 2: *Number Six* (in four parts); *Number Twelve* (in four parts).

Personnel: Music by Mantler, lyrics by Samuel Beckett; Carla Bley, piano, clavinet, organ; Jack Bruce, voices, bass guitar; Don Cherry, trumpet.

"Watt is the label of Carla Bley and Michael Mantler, exclusively devoted to the presentation of their own music." Good for them! Behind the straightforward, tasteful graphics of these two album covers, lie recordings of uncompromising honesty. With matters in their own hands, Bley and Mantler can be sure that full control is retained.

This isn't to say that the first two Watt releases are perfect, but it's certainly nicer to be confronted with the product of self-determination, especially when that product is put out with subtle good taste and a lack of hype that respects the intelligence of both musician and listener. It's all damned refreshing, right down to the clean recorded sound, so rarely heard in ventures of this type.

Bley's *Tropic Appetites* lacks the dramatic coherence and tension implicit in the construction of her earlier work (especially *A Genuine Tong Funeral* and *Escalator Over The Hill*), but the pungent, dry humor of both works and the stylistic diversity of the latter are certainly present, perhaps even stronger than before. All instrumental voices are at top form, and the human pipes of Julie (Driscoll) Tippet are certainly welcome, having been heard too little on American vinyl since the late '60's (now may we have a solo album?).

As befits the title, here's as exotic a stew as you're likely to sample for some time. Bley's ingredients are culled from all over the world: Spanish/minor vamps to set the rolling improvisations of Gato; Indian and Far Eastern Oriental colors and melodies (woven most intelligently in *Jungle Stream*); and Bley's now-customary Weillian interjections. It's all held together by an occasional slow dirge and the lyrics of Paul Haines, who co-authored *Escalator* and returns here with more of his temporarily oblique yet ultimate-

ly engaging and unique poetic lyrics. Perhaps there's a lighter touch here than on *Escalator*, but the mordant, not-quite-black sense of humor that Haines brings to his compositions complements the Bley musical perspective.

Listen especially to the virtuoso bass and cello work of Holland, some of the most creative ensemble and (on *Indonesian Dock Sucking Supreme* and *Jungle Stream*) solo work you'll ever hear. Innovative. Barbieri's two solos are efficient, but unextraordinary. The rest of the musicians play with verve in the ensemble context. Mention, of course, must be made of Howard Johnson. *Tropic Appetites* is something of a minor *tour de force* for him: he plays everything—and well.

If *Tropic Appetites* spreads itself too thin in too many directions, that's probably dictated by the looser format Bley has chosen for herself this time. The album is much more a collection of pieces and songs than previous works. Carla's identity as a unique and distinctive composer is strong enough to render this a minor quibble, and certainly formidable enough to insist that her album become part of your collection at once.

Less need be said about Michael Mantler's setting of a couple of passages from Samuel Beckett's *How It Is*, though it's no less of an album. *No Answer* offers instrumentally simple yet melodically and harmonically difficult music, appropriately and dissonantly bleak in sound, considering the lyric inspiration for the material. (Perhaps the most representative quote: "the mud and the dark are true yes/nothing to regret there no.")

Instrumentation is sparse and somber, occasionally heavy on Bley's organ drone. Cherry's presence is comparatively brief, but he's his usual compelling, challenging self, the most distinctive trumpet voice around. Bley and Bruce carry the weight with virtuoso performances.

I can't imagine anyone listening to *No Answer* as often as *Tropic Appetites*; Mantler's album is too unrelentingly pessimistic and static in mood. But the fact remains that it is music of great strength, created by a master composer who needs to be heard. Like Bley's, Mantler's music demands the support of open, intelligent ears everywhere.—mitchell

BOBBY HUTCHERSON

CIRRUS—Blue Note (U.A.) BN-LA257-G; *Rosewood*; *Even Later*; *Wrong or Right*; *Zuri Dance*; *Cirrus*.

Personnel: Hutcherson, vibes, marimba; Bill Henderson, piano; Fender Rhodes piano; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Harold Land, Emanuel Boyd, tenor sax, alto flute; Kenneth Nash, percussion; Ray Drummond, bass; Larry Hancock, drums.

The personnel listing on the record jacket says that Bobby Hutcherson plays "vibes." True, but that's as misleading as saying Rahsaan plays tenor: it's correct, but there is so much more. The first track, *Rosewood* (written and arranged by Shaw), lets you know right away that Hutcherson didn't leave the marimba behind. Indeed, it is that instrument that he continues to emphasize. So much for omissions.

Hutcherson, of course, works masterfully with both instruments. On *Cirrus* he often favors the marimba for improvised solos and the vibraphone in the ensemble passages like a second piano. The album itself is one of strong rhythmic melodies laced with a variety of colors. All the music, except for *Rosewood*, was written and arranged by Hutcherson, and it runs an emotional scale from the tender ballad *Even Later*, with its rich flute-trumpet harmonies and blend of acoustic piano and

vibes, to the tense and dramatic *Zuri Dance*. Of the two longer tracks, *Dance* is the most exhilarating. It is built on a continuous three-note rhythmic vamp over which the freely improvised marimba builds momentum. With the full rhythm section embellishing underneath, the piece feels as if it must unwind or shatter. Ultimately, it reaches a release with the saxes and muted-trumpet entering to pick up the melody line. *Dance* relaxes and goes out quietly.

The rhythm section throughout *Cirrus* is consistently excellent and tight. The arrangements give Nash, Henderson, Hancock, and Drummond room to work imaginatively within the framework of each piece, thereby providing depth and diversity. Shaw, Land and Boyd are equally fine. Both Harold Land, a long-time musical associate of Hutcherson's, and Shaw are featured on the title tune, with Shaw's trumpet solo blistering and fierce.

Simply put, *Cirrus* is a musically exciting and emotionally satisfying album. —nolan

JACK DEJOHNETTE

SORCERY—Prestige (Fantasy) P10081; *Sorcery #1*; *The Right Time*; *The Rock Thing*; *The Reverend King Suite*; *Four Levels of Joy*; *Epilog*.

Personnel: DeJohnette, drums, keyboards, C-melody sax, voice; Bennie Maupin, bass clarinet, voice; Dave Holland, bass, voice; John Abercrombie, electric guitar, voice; Mick Goodrick, electric guitar, voice; Michael Fellerman, metaphone 1, trombone, voice.

Mark this one down—in my book, at any rate—as the most offbeat and unusual LP of the year. Always an imaginative, honest musician, DeJohnette returns to the solo recording scene with a collection of ideas that strikes with roughhewn, experimental directness and bold good humor.

In both of these respects, *Sorcery* is apt to remind the listener of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, to whose parent organization, the AACM, DeJohnette also has ties. Some of the spare ensemble textures created by Jack's group here are definitely similar in overall mood to those of the Art Ensemble. One also grasps a sense of shared rhythmic perspective (the restless, jagged drum music on the *King Suite*), and like attitudes toward the possibilities of spoken-chanted vocal ensembles (*The Right Thing*).

Essentially, however, DeJohnette works from a much more electronically-oriented context. *Sorcery #1* recalls embryo San Francisco rock, something like an early Quick-silver might have developed. It's a moody jam, with Holland establishing a bass vamp to underpin a rather tentative, undirected Abercrombie and a frenzied, fluid Maupin. Holland then unravels the hypnotic figure for his own fine solo before a cloudy, mysterious storm of a theme swirls the long piece to its finish. The recording quality here limits the sound to a disappointing one-dimensionality that thins out Maupin's sound, in particular, to an especially lackluster tone that's only partially redeemed by Bennie's ferocious attack.

Sorcery #1 and the rest of the first side were recorded at Jack's home in Willow, New York. It's clear that the informal spontaneity of the three cuts is the important factor, rather than any kind of technical polish. *The Right Time* and *The Rock Thing* don't fare much better in the recorded sound department than the title tune. The former is a fascinating spoken vocal improvisation of remarkable intensity and imagination; but again, the recording quality eliminates any

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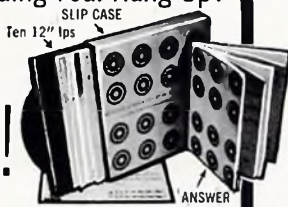
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20 down beat

resonance the voices could have carried in a larger studio. *The Rock Thing* takes another bass figure by Holland as its thematic source point, but this time it's much too high in the mix; underneath, a frankly muddy collective improvisation cooks along, eventually giving birth to a solo by Goodrick, which is one of the piece's two saving graces. The other is its great sense of humor.

The 14-minute *King Suite* is the album's masterpiece, a disturbing, evocative portrait in sound. DeJohnette's organ work smacks somewhat of both Khalid Yasin and Alice Coltrane, but it's far more funkily earth-bound. Holland, always a challenging player who works especially well with Jack, is at his most impressive here, guiding the ensemble from serenity to turmoil to eventual peace. It's a very free selection, but each player is strong and versatile enough to meet the responsibilities of that freedom.

Four Levels Of Joy is a simple, childlike, repetitive melody that turns around and around almost long enough to become sweetly annoying, but not quite. *Epilog* rocks steadily but gently, Jack's keyboards stuttering and sailing jauntily over yet another bass vamp. More space was needed here to develop an already effective piece into something of more substance.

With the exception of *King Suite*, I look for Jack DeJohnette to further develop all of these imaginative (dare I say, innovative?) forays into music of more compositional polish and diversity. For now, Maupin's solo on *Sorcery #1* and the entire *King Suite* are mature, completely realized statements. The rest of the selections may be the most creatively fashioned seeds planted in the soil of fusion music for some time. Jack deserves the chance to tend his garden.

JOE CHAMBERS

THE ALMORAVID—Muse 5035: *The Almoravid; Early Minor; Gazelle Suite; Catta; Medina; Jihad.*

Personnel: Chambers, drums. On tracks 1 & 4: Cedar Walton, piano, electric piano; Richard Davis, electric bass; Omar Clay, Ray Mantilla, Davis Friedman, percussion. On tracks 2 & 5: Woody Shaw, trumpet; Garnett Brown, trombone; Harold Vick, flute, tenor sax; George Cables, electric piano; Cecil McBee, bass. On tracks 3 & 6: Walter Booker, electric bass; Omar Clay, Ray Mantilla, Doug Hawthorne, percussion.

This is the right time for *The Almoravid*. I associate Joe Chambers with some Blue Note sessions of eight or ten years back, frankly adventurous dates, with young musicians like Freddie Hubbard, McCoy Tyner, and Bobby Hutcherson collaborating on skilled and honest musical statements rather than commercial products. Despite the different personnel, this album is in the same unpretentious vein, with an added timeliness. Ten years ago, Chambers was just one color in a spectrum of percussionists that ranged from Art Blakey to Sunny Murray and beyond. Today, when a dominant percussion style (Cobham/Mouzon/Hart *et al*) has gained ascendancy, Joe Chambers is a refreshing reminder that the drum set can be a fount of shade and subtlety as well as a source of raw power.

This set offers glimpses of quite a few facets of Joe Chambers. The tracks with horns (which date from 1971) are reminiscent of Miles' *Filles De Kilimanjaro* set: long, languid lines, generally reflective soloing, and a gradual realization that the drummer, crisp and cryptic, is at the center of things, the smoldering foil to all that sublime coolness. *Catta*, by contrast, finds Chambers in the driver's

seat of a rather Caribbean juggernaut, directing the rhythmic energy with a calm, casual, half-time cymbal line. Only on the last track does the leader really step out front, erupting from a rock beat to speak his piece on the fragmentary *Gazelle Suite*, then careening ominously around the foreboding landscape of the enigmatic *Jihad*.

A final word: Chambers, the ensemble drummer *par excellence*, surrounds himself with other percussionists on most of the tracks. I found the more conventional lineup of the 1971 date most accessible (*Medina* is a standout, due in large part to Woody Shaw). But the percussion-only tracks, while more difficult, are worth repeated listenings. Sensibly condensed versions of longer works for percussion ensemble, they give Joe Chambers a chance to open your ears to a decidedly different drummer.

DUKE PEARSON

IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN WITH YOU—Blue Note (U.A.) LA317G: *Gira, Girou; Hermeto; Lost In The Stars; It Could Only Happen With You; Stormy; Emily; Book's Bossa.*

Personnel: Pearson, acoustic & electric piano; Flora Purim, vocals; Jerry Dodgeon, flute (*Emily* only); Al Gibbons, alto flute & alto sax; Hermeto Pascoal, flute, guitar, bass; Theo, guitar; Burt Collins, Joe Shepley, trumpets; Kenny Rupp, trombone; Bob Cranshaw, electric & acoustic bass; Mike Roker, drums.

Bringing together a breathy female Brazilian singer, a couple Brazilian musicians and six veteran jazz musicians to do a mostly bossa nova album might seem at least slightly anachronistic. Here we have the very veteran Duke Pearson teaming up with a latter day Astrud Gilberto on an album that could easily have been a trite *déjà vu*. But it isn't that at all. This instead, is a skillful and tasteful record which is mildly creative in a context that many had given up for dead.

Unlike the leader in this genre, the Getz-Gilberto matchings, this is not a showcase for two popular and stylized soloists. Purim, granted, is the main solo feature, but the other musicians are just as important to the total work as she is.

Purim's timbre is reminiscent of Astrud Gilberto and obviously so are the bossa nova and her nationality. But there, I think, the parallel ends. Purim's tonality is better, her articulation clearer and her musical sense is wider. She's outstanding throughout this album. Pearson doesn't take much solo space but that wasn't his purpose here. The solos he does take are lithe and cliché-free. His arrangements, more importantly, are excellent. They are both full and colorful. He gets the group to sound twice its size in some parts (*Stormy*) and light and fanciful in others (*Gira*).

All the soloists play better than what could be expected from this format, especially Pascoal on flute. Even on that "impersonal" instrument he has a distinctive sound of his own.

SHORT SHOTS

WILLIS JACKSON

WEST AFRICA—Muse 5036: *West Africa; A House Is Not A Home; Fungii Mama; Don't Misunderstand; The Head Tune; I Love You, Yes I Do.*

Personnel: Jackson, tenor sax; Mickey Tucker, organ, electric piano; Ted Dunbar, guitar; Bob Cranshaw, Fender bass; Freddie Waits, drums; Richard Landrum, congas, percussion; Sonny Morgan, percussion.

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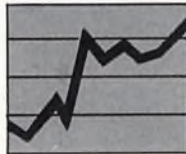


Aug. 3: Rudy and the Rockets

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full-toned tenor sound, who has spent considerable time locked into the r&b circuit. But he is a musician whose history dates back to the Cootie Williams band of the 1940s, and whose musical heritage and influences are linked closely with people like Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Gene Ammons, and Lester Young. It is a kind of playing that isn't heard too much these days.

On *West Africa*, Jackson almost seems to be exploring this tradition in the way one might sift through some old but not forgotten love letters. There are strong references to Webster, Hawkins, Jug, and Sonny Rollins. One also detects the presence of Sam "The Man" Taylor.

Both the title tune and *Fungii* are similar pieces using West Indian rhythms, and Jackson sounds a lot like Rollins on some of the calypso things he is fond of doing. Three of the six tracks are ballads which Jackson treats with sensual respect. The accompanying musicians are some of the best and most versatile around, and they contribute solid support.

This is another of Muse's superb, well annotated recordings dedicated to the best of straight ahead, and timeless, music. —nolan

OSCAR BROWN JR.

FRESH—Atlantic SD 18106: *Rilly?; Sally B. White; Hazel's Hips; Chicken Heads; Don't Mess With Bessie; Ghetto Scene; Granny; But I Was Cool; Let's Get Drunk (And Be Somebody); Bull "Bleep."*

What has always been distinctive about Oscar Brown is what he says and how he says it. He is an actor, poet, an observer of people, a chronicler of the street, a dramatist of the mundane, and a satirist who strips the flashy sequins from handmade egos.

On *Fresh*, the songs he sings (five are his own) are about hustlers, jive artists, and a collection of grand and interesting ladies. There's the hardnosed Bessie who you'd better not mess with, the guy who thinks he's cool no matter how bad things are (a new version of an earlier Brown song), and a tune about expletives deleted (*Bull "Bleep"*). Brown sings about the black experience, encompassing everyday characters and situations, with his own stylized sense of the ironic and the tragic.

The Jerry Butler production and the Richard Evans arrangements are excellent. And Oscar Brown is at his best telling us about ourselves. —nolan

PAUL JEFFREY

PAUL JEFFREY—Mainstream 406: *Soul Revival; Ben; Hip Soul Sister; Bondage; Jacoba's Song; Acrema.*

Personnel: Jeffrey, tenor sax; Chuck Rainey, electric bass; David Walker, George Walker, George Wright, Darrell Clayborn, guitars; Joe Sample, piano; Blue Mitchell, trumpet; Bill Green, Jay Migliori, baritone saxes; King Errisson, Chino Valdes, congas; Robert Zimmitti, Emil Radocchia, percussion; Ray Pound, drums; Charles Kynard, organ.

The first cut, *Soul Revival*, speaks for the whole album in title and content. It is a record with the spirit of a revival and the dimensions of a free wheeling, cooking session.

Jeffrey is a saxophonist whose playing is gutsy, imaginative and always on the verge of going outside the confines of his material. And the other musicians on the date like Blue Mitchell, Chuck Rainey, David Walker, Joe Sample and Charles Kynard are masters at keeping things swinging and funky. Except for *Ben*, a moving Jeffrey ballad, the music is up tempo and spirited.

This is the kind of album to turn up loud, dance to, and party with. If you're feeling good, Paul Jeffrey & Co. will make you feel even better. —nolan

JOHNNY HAMMOND

GAMBLER'S LIFE—Salvation (CTI) SAI. 702
SI: *Gambler's Life; Rhodesian Throughfare; This Year's Dream; Star Borne; Back To The Projects; Yesterday Was Cool; Virgo Lady; Call On Me.*

★ ★ 1/2

So where's the gamble? I've encountered few records that take fewer risks.

Hammond, known as an organist, debuts here on electric piano and synthesizer. However, since much of his piano work is obscured by a standard, slick background of sterile funk rhythms (three guitar players are listed on the album's jacket), it's difficult to assess his playing.

With the exception of *Virgo Lady*, the tunes are monotonously similar: standard studio production line funk. On *Lady*, however, some interesting things happen. A jazz 3/4 moves into 4/4 rock, backed by some forceful horn scoring. Then there's a double-time section in which the piano can actually be heard, and Hammond cooks a bit. A shift to a bouncy 4/4 makes things even more interesting. This track, regrettably, is atypical.

For the body of this record, deal me out. —balleras

BARRY MANILOW

BARRY MANILOW II—Bell 1314: *I Want To Be Somebody's Baby; Early Morning Strangers; Mandy; The Two Of Us; Something's Comin' Up; It's A Miracle; Avenue C; My Baby Loves Me; Sandra; Home Again.*

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Pleasant, above average pop music. Manilow, who has worked as Bette Midler's arranger, conductor, pianist and utility background vocalist, is featured here as a vocalist and background pianist, with the aid of various studio groupings (rhythm sections, mostly). He performs eight of his own tunes, done in collaboration with such writers as Marty Panzer, Hal David, and Enoch Anderson.

Manilow's talents are strongest as a composer and arranger; his singing and playing are undistinguished. Outstanding pop tunes include *I Want To Be Somebody's Baby* and *It's A Miracle*. Both are driving rockers, and the latter is strong Top 40 material. More impressive, though, is *Sandra*, a poignant Dory Previn-like song about a non-liberated housewife who, caught in cosmic despair she doesn't understand, tries to escape through alcohol and suicide. More cheerful is a bright rendition of the Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross reworking of the Basie band's *Avenue C*, which continues the fad of reworking vocal versions of jazz standards (*In The Mood, Salt Peanuts*). This is easily the album's high point; Manilow has overdubbed 32 vocal parts here. If only the rest of this album had been as ambitious! —balleras

ROBERT MASON

STARDRIVE—Columbia KC 33047: *Funkascensions; Ballad I; Jupiterjump; Pulsar; Ballad II; Air Sauce; Ballad III; Journey.*

★ ★ ★

Mason's second album represents his continued effort to wring the primitive stomp of rock and liberating freedom of jazz from the sophisticated technology of a self-invented electronic synthesizer. Having wired his instrument with the necessary connections to

allow keyboard dexterity and chording ability, he leads a tight rhythm section through some dense arrangements which highlight psychedelic/circus/church organ/string section effects. Mason's utilization of the machine's endless ostinato boogie possibilities and overwhelming power do not allow any one else very much space. And since Mason is evidently a more interesting synthesist than pianist, his full voiced, floating ballads and experiments with "pure" sound, mixing, and less formal structures are the more interesting aural moments on the LP. Still, the tricky performance and composing oddities of his Pandora's box are well handled, and though it's hard to get emotional over the metallic instrumentals, they keep the beat and mix their modes unlike work by any other contemporary practitioner of the art. —mandel

GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS

I FEEL A SONG—Buddah BDS 5612: *I Feel A Song (In My Heart)*; *Love Finds Its Own Way*; *Seconds*; *The Goings Up And The Coming Downs*; *The Way We Were*; *Better You Go Your Way*; *Don't Burn Down The Bridge*; *The Need To Be*; *Tenderness Is His Way*.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Gladys' enormous talent is becoming increasingly recognized since her departure from Motown Records—she is a diamond and they treated her like glass—and parts of *I Feel A Song*, her second testament from Buddah, demonstrate that she is, along with Esther Phillips and Aretha Franklin, pre-eminent among women r&b vocalists.

The rating refers to the three fine, fast, and funky tunes that make this a disc for dancers. The title cut is Gladys as impassioned as she gets, singing a song of liberation/celebration. She and Bill Withers rub up against each other on his tune *Better* and the resultant fire is more than warming. Likewise, *Bridge* cooks solid straight through.

I'm waiting for the day when Gladys sends composer Jim Weatherly and his soggy sagas back on the midnight train to Georgia or some damn place and decides simply to burn. That record'll melt in your mind if not in your hands. —adler

THE ELECTRIC FLAG

THE BAND KEPT PLAYING—Atlantic SD 18112: *Sweet Soul Music*; *Every Now And Then*; *Sudden Change*; *Earthquake Country*; *Doctor Oh Doctor (Massive Infusion)*; *Lonely Song*; *Make Your Move*; *Inside Information*; *Talkin' Won't Get It*; *The Band Kept Playing*

★ ★ ★

The offensively super-hyped press release received with this LP would have one believe, among other things, that the re-assembling of the Electric Flag is not unlike a reunion of the original Titans at the summit of Mount Olympus. But the fact is that Michael Bloomfield, Buddy Miles, Nicky Gravenites, and Barry Goldberg (the nucleus of the original band) are all uneven musicians who probably played and sang at the top level of their careers when the Flag first got together in '67. *The Band Kept Playing* finds them all in better form than they have been in some time, but the earthy soul-rock presented is merely one facet of the music the Flag explored in their first incarnation. The essentials are all here: fine musicianship, strong vocals (especially from a startlingly improved Miles), decent tunes. But the spark of innovative diversity that all too briefly marked the Flag as a band to watch with the release of their first Columbia album seven years ago is nowhere present

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now. The revived Flag's music is satisfying to a point, but eventually disappointing.

—mitchell

MARIA MULDAUR

WAITRESS IN A DONUT SHOP—Warner Bros. MS 2194: *Squeeze Me, Gringo En Mexico, Cool River, I'm A Woman, Sweetheart, Honey Babe Blues, If You Haven't Any Hay, It Ain't The Meat It's The Motion, Brickyard Blues, Travelin' Shoes, Oh Papa.*

More than one popular singer has tripped up attempting to choose just the right tunes for himself when faced with the mind-boggling breadth and depth of recorded music. It's not every singer who has the talent, for example, to jump idioms with the ease and grace of a Ray Charles. Dig Barbra Streisand's recent black-faced version of Bill Withers' *Grandma's Hands* and you'll understand what I mean. Similarly, although you've got to give Bette Midler credit for her good taste, a listen to her hysterical renderings and you might wish she'd simply given us a list of her favorite tunes. But Maria Muldaur is one artist who manages to combine lusty eclecticism with mostly creditable performances.

Waitress is a smorgasboard. We're treated to Benny Carter's big band arrangements of *Squeeze Me* and *Meat*, both of which serve Maria's hungry, Bessie Smith sexiness quite well. In this context, the presence of *River*, an old-timey Protestant hymn, is as much a testament to Maria's sense of humor as to her versatility. *Gringo* reproduces (inadvertently?) the mariachi honk of Jay and the Americans' lost South-of-the-border forays but makes the mistake of teaming up thin-voiced Maria with vibrant Linda Ronstadt on harmony. She makes more judicious use of some other friends, including Paul Butterfield, who contributes a relaxed harmonica solo on *I'm A Woman*, Maria's revamped version of Peggy Lee's old anthem; and Doc and Merle Watson, who authenticate the traditional country feel of *Honey Babe Blues*.

Maria's occasional sin is one of excess—overproduction makes throwaways of *Brickyard Blues* and *Hay*. Mostly though, this is, as was said earlier, a tasteful album and should well serve those folks who are content with surveys. In addition, people who get the feeling that the eclectic sometimes borders on the schizophrenic can use *Waitress* as a revolving door straight back to the solid roots of numerous American musics. —adler

RUSTY BRYANT

UNTIL IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO—Prestige (Fantasy) P-10085: *The Hump Bump, Troubles, The Red Eye Special, Draggin' The Line, Until It's Time For You To Go, Ga Gang Gang Goong.*

Rusty Bryant, who began his career in 1944, has really done it on this new Prestige release.

Side one contains three pieces, *The Hump Bump, Troubles* and *Red Eye Special*, and it is extremely difficult to decide which is the best. The first has a big band sound with a nice funky guitar by David Spinoza, followed by interesting saxophone riffs by Bryant. *Troubles* features a heartfelt romantic saxophone carrying the tune throughout while Ernie Hayes maintains an interesting organ background. Although he will never equal Shirley Scott's keyboard mastery, he is truly inspiring. *Red Eye Special* is a bluesy tune with a wailing guitar and heavy drums, predictable breaks and tempo changes, all the while maintaining a walkin' bass bottom.

Side two isn't as strong as side one yet its weaknesses do not deter. *Draggin' The Line*

could have contained a great deal more improvisation; this is one instance where predictability doesn't pay off, as it did on *Red Eye Special*. Its a nice number but not as well executed as others on the album, for example the next, *Until Its Time For You To Go*. This tune begins with a pretty flute solo leading into a breathy, throaty sax. Finally, there is *Gu Gang Gang Goong*, making a throaty entrance and ending all too soon. As a matter of fact, that is the overall impression of the album, that it ends all too soon. —antalin

BUCKY PIZZARELLI QUINTET

PLAYING BEIDERBECKE/CHALLIS AND KRESS—Monmouth-Evergreen MES 7066: *Davenport Blues, Candlelights, Flashes, In The Dark, In A Mist, Stage Fright, Danzon, After Thoughts, Paris 1, 2, 3, Sutton Mutton, Peg Leg Shuffle, Love Song.*

When Pizzarelli was with George Barnes, it was a very swinging, complementary team—they turned in some really fine and exciting guitar music. At times there is nice interplay in the eight tracks with Mary Pizzarelli and Dad, but it's more a similar cuteness than the diverse dynamics Bucky found with Barnes: Mary frankly lacks a jazz depth and feel. However technically proficient he may be, he's not a daring improviser, and this record is far from his best work in any case. In the five guitar pieces, the technique and intellectualism often borders on Les Paul-Mary Ford. The compositions and arrangements are the thing here, and they bore me—seldom have so many guitars worked so hard, and said and moved so little. —rusch

ILLINOIS JACQUET / ARNETT COBB

JAZZ AT TOWN HALL—J.R.C. 11433: *On A Clear Day, Marlow's Louisiana Blues, Hamp's Boogie Woogie, Smooth Sailing, Flying Home.*

Personnel: Jacquet (tracks 1-3, 5), Cobb (tracks 4-5), tenor saxophones: Milt Buckner, organ: Panama Francis, drums.

Mainly good-time party music, despite the presence of Milt and his monster (he swings like the Petrified Forest). Jacquet plays some nice things in *Blues* and Cobb in *Flying*; the rest is pretty ordinary music for these guys. The cover says "Volume I" in small letters, lending hope of more to come: there's far too little Cobb on LP. —litweiler

IPI 'N TOMBIA

THE WARRIOR—Stax STS-5516: *The Warrior, Misunderstood, Imyeni, Mama Tembu's Wedding, They Took Her Away From The Land, Ipi 'N Tombia, Soweto By Night, Mother Mary, Zimbaba, The Digger.*

Personnel: Margaret Singana, lead vocals; others unidentified.

Ipi 'N Tombia is an African group that blends together elements of American soul and pop with traditional forms of African song. The resulting hybrid mix is sort of an African Reggae—a strong rhythmic basis backing up a repetitious, but intriguing, song format.

The album was recorded in Johannesburg and accordingly it has a slight pro-Western slant although the group itself is unquestionably black African. The title tune, for example, is a dramatic description of the Battle of Blood River between 10,000 Zulu warriors and a small group of white Boer settlers. In this account, the Boers defeat the Zulus with convincing supremacy. Another song, *Mother Mary*, is about the conflict between tribal re-

ligion and Christianity. Here again the African symbol, the witch doctor, loses out to Mother Mary.

These rather petty political observations aside, *The Warrior* is an interesting and potentially dynamic entry on the music scene. With the growing influence of Reggae, South American, and Indian music upon our own jazz and popular music, the vocal style of Ipi 'N Tombia may find rapid acceptance here.

—kriss

SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

Michael Cuscuna is familiar to readers of down beat for his frequent and insightful features. He is also a columnist for Record World and a former inhouse a&r man for Atlantic Records who is now producing independently. In this comprehensive review, Cuscuna tackles the colorful world of George Russell and his personal record label, Concept.

GEORGE RUSSELL

THE OTHELLO BALLET SUITE FOR BIG BAND—Concept/Sonet 1409.

THE ESSENCE OF GEORGE RUSSELL (two-records)—Concept/Sonet 1411/1412.

ELECTRONIC SONATA FOR SOULS LOVED BY NATURE (for Sextet and Electronic Tape)—Flying Dutchman FDS 124.

LISTEN TO THE SILENCE—Concept CR 002.

George Russell has been an active, creative force in contemporary music for 30 years. His Lydian concept of writing and improvising on music was one of the several significant thrusts to break the then stagnating spell of post-bop in the '50s. His best known and most lasting compositions include *Ezz-thetic*, *Stratuspunk*, *Blues In Orbit* and *The Ballad of Hix Blewitt*. His book *The Lydian Chromatic Concept Of Tonal Organization* (Concept Publishing), endorsed by many of the leading musicians in jazz, has become a widely used teaching tool for students and professionals alike.

Russell's impact on the American scene fell during the mid- and late- '60s when he directed most of his performing energies toward Europe, particularly Scandinavia, where his music was more widely received and opportunities were more plentiful. One of those opportunities that would not have been possible in the United States was the recording of a number of major compositions requiring large orchestras and electronic techniques.

With these tapes, Russell has been able to launch his own Concept Records, out of which have come four excellent albums with one more in the can. By retaining ownership of the records and leasing them to commercial record companies for manufacture, the composer is ensuring the longevity and control of his work. Almost all of his previous works for established labels are collectors' items, long out of print.

George Russell's studies and theories on the Lydian mode (which is most simply described as the scale of F to F on the white keys of the piano as opposed to C to C in conventional tonal organization) are far too lengthy and complex to even attempt to describe in this article. But through historical and aural research, Russell has determined the Lydian mode to be the most natural and strongest—with a sense of vertical flow that eliminates our old thinking about resolution

within the horizontally flowing system to which we are accustomed.

With these Concept recordings, Russell not only works his system of Lydian and chromatic total organization into what we call "jazz," but also uses *musique concrete* and introduces into the genre the compositional technique of aleatory music. Aleatoric music has been widely used in contemporary classical circles by such composers as Berio and Penderecki, but rarely or never in jazz, that is, until this time. The technique involves a process by which the temporal duration and value, the pitch, the possible transpositions and dynamics of the composition are left to the chance determination of each performing musician in the ensemble. It is, in a sense, orchestral improvisatory variations on written motifs. So it is rather ironic that the process has been so rarely used in jazz, a music in

which improvisation is considered the creative thrust.

Tenor saxophonist Jan Garbarek studied with Russell in the late '60s. Russell told me that he found the young Norwegian to be "a pure musician. It's rare. He's the type that could play before he even touched a musical instrument." Garbarek and his quartet of the period with guitarist Terje Rypdal, bassist Arild Anderson and drummer Jon Christensen served as the core for most of these Scandinavian recordings. One album, as yet unreleased, features Russell and this group playing several George Russell originals plus an Ornette Coleman tune.

One disc offers the *Othello Ballet Suite* and the *Electronic Organ Sonata No. 2*. The sonata is an amazing study in textures and contrasts, basically improvised by the composer on a

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grand organ. A *musique concrete* tape was added during assembly of the piece in an electronic music studio. The ballet suite, originally commissioned to accompany a new ballet version of the Shakespearian play on Norwegian television, is performed by the Swedish Radio Orchestra with the addition of various Swedish jazz musicians such as trumpeter Rolf Eriksson and alto saxophonist Arne Domnerus as well as Garbarek and Christensen.

The piece begins with the unmistakable sound of Russell's orchestration using chimes and piano in a tonal and rhythmic pattern with the theme statement dominated by trombone. Garbarek is the principal soloist, and he has his work cut out for him as the composition moves through an incredible array of tonal colors and rhythmic moods, employing stylistic elements of many types and eras of music. The movements or events follow each other smoothly, and are constantly changing, but still hold the listener's interest throughout. To describe each event would be a futile exercise that would hardly do justice to the music.

Electronic Sonata For Souls Loved By Nature runs more than 50 minutes, filling an entire album. The sextet consists of Russell, Garbarek, Rypdal, Christensen, bassist Red Mitchell and German trumpeter Manfred Schoof, plus an electronically treated tape with fragments of different styles of music. The performance, recorded live in concert, is masterful. Russell's compositional genius shines through the freedom of the performers and the catalytic inclusion of the pre-recorded tape. Schoof, who seems unfamiliar with the music and the concept, falls short of his brilliant capabilities here, but acquires himself sensitively and handsomely nonetheless.

Three sides of the double album, *The Essence Of George Russell*, are filled with the big band version of this sonata. Russell is especially pleased with this particular chronicle of his work, pointing out that it is the first recording of a big band playing aleatory music with electronic tape. It is a breathtaking performance by an unusually empathetic 21-piece orchestra that includes the Garbarek quartet. Side four offers *Concerto For Self-Accompanied Guitar* performed by Rune Gustafsson and an incredibly exciting, quickly paced piece entitled *Now And Then*, recorded live with a 17-piece ensemble. In 14 minutes, the composition rises and falls with humor and a rapid pace, using a variety of styles including Latin and swing.

All of these works were recorded between 1966 and 1968. The final album on Concept, which introduces the choral element into Russell's music, was recorded in Norway in June 1971. It was the premiere performance of *Listen To The Silence* with a nine-piece ensemble composed of the Garbarek quartet, Russell, Bobo Stenson and two excellent Boston musicians, organist Webster Lewis and trumpeter Stanton Davis. The chorus of the Musik Konservatoriet of Oslo, Norway, was supplemented by eight voices from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston (where, incidentally, Russell has been teaching). The piece is arresting, both in its text and musical content. One minor criticism might be that the chorus and instrumental ensemble are not as thoroughly integrated as one might like.

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—cuscuna

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Gabor Szabo



VERYL C. OAKLAND

by Leonard Feather

A few weeks before he dropped by for this Blindfold Test, Gabor Szabo had returned from a two and a half month visit to Hungary—his first time back in his native land since, as a Freedom Fighter, he escaped in the 1956 uprising and tortuously found his way to the Berklee College of Music.

"Five or six years ago," he says, "they gave amnesty to all those who left in '56. Before that, I could have gone back, but they wouldn't have let me leave. Now, coming in as an American citizen, I could do anything I wanted to."

The socio-political air was a lot freer, he found, and jazz of course is no longer taboo. Though he went there primarily to see members of his family, Szabo soon found himself in professional demand. "They did a 45-minute TV special in Budapest built around me. It was very elaborate, and the first program of its kind ever done on Hungarian television. They made it in two versions, English and Hungarian. It was strange: the title of the Hungarian version was *Gabor Szabo (USA) Jazz Podium*.

Gabor's previous Blindfold Test appeared in *db* 1/7/71. He was given no information about the records played.

blindfold

test

1. GEORGE BENSON. *Summer of '42* (from *White Rabbit*, CTI). Benson, guitar; Don Sebesky, arranger; Creed Taylor, producer.

I think you've got me; but I'm going to make some guesses. First of all, I do like this kind of music very much; it's very warm, beautifully arranged. I particularly enjoyed the guitar player's control when it came to technique, as well as the emotional message.

In a strange way, it sometimes reminded me of myself; sometimes it reminded me of Wes Montgomery and, at the same time, the person had his own style, which means that I should know who it is.

The production sounds like my present landlord, Creed Taylor... the arrangement and neatness of the whole thing. So, through elimination, I'm going to try and make a guess. I would say Gene Bertocini or some guitar player like that, since whoever it was was playing classical guitar. I don't think it's any of the obvious players such as Charlie Byrd or Laurindo Almeida. I say Gene because he plays both kinds of guitar; there was a definite jazz feel to it, and the person who handled the instrument obviously plays jazz guitar quite well.

The arrangement could have been by Don Sebesky, which again would lead back to Creed. I would give this four stars. It didn't make me jump off the seat, but I enjoyed it very much. It was very sensuous music.

2. GEORGE BARNES-BUCKY PIZZARELLI. *Honeysuckle Rose* (from *Guitars Pure And Honest*, A & R Records).

The style on this sounds like it would be someone from the earlier days; but it's probably two

quite contemporary players—or, anyway, people who are playing today. They just play in this particular style, which is representative of the swing era.

I'm going to make a guess—I think this was two guitar players, unless it was overdubbed. I'm going to say Herb Ellis, and if my nose is right, from certain passages it seemed like the other guitar player would have been Joe Pass.

The spirit was marvelous, especially one player—I don't know which, and wouldn't even make a guess. He had a chord passage there playing with some very fast and moving things... it could have been Joe Pass. I would definitely give this, from a professional standpoint, five stars. Both players really played very excitingly and with control of their instrument and the situation.

3. CHUCK WAYNE. *Greensleeves* (from *Tapestry*, Focus). Wayne, banjo.

From the first bar, I ran out of banjo players... so I'm not going to even try to guess. It's obviously a guitar player who plays banjo—unless, knowing you, it's J.J. Johnson or Ray Brown playing banjo!

I was trying to figure out all the way through whether he tuned the banjo differently, because his runs were quite reminiscent to that of a guitar, which is not easy to do when you play a banjo that is tuned up the regular banjo way.

Oddly enough, playing the banjo this way reminded me somewhat of a sitar in spots. I didn't care too much for the musicality of it. It was a bit shallow as far as the usage of chords and colors, obviously it was somebody who picked up the banjo to use it as an effect, wanted to do something a little bit different. I think he only suc-

ceeded by the fact that he played the banjo, but I don't think the results were really worth the bother.

I've heard this tune being played so many times better by so many artists. I would rate it one star.

4. ALICE COLTRANE-CARLOS SANTANA. *Illuminations* (from *Illuminations*, Columbia). Coltrane, harp; Santana, composer, guitar.

I really enjoyed that. I did like the feeling of the whole orchestration. Although I heard guitar sounds in there—there was very little being played—if it's the guitar player's date, then he's overdoing being economical... I think from the style of the music that John McLaughlin had something to do with it. It could have been his date, or he could have appeared on it.

As far as the orchestration... obviously that was the basic thing on this whole album. Alice Coltrane on harp. I have very mixed emotions about this, because probably if one listens to the whole album, it has a very important emotional lead up to this tune. But all by itself I had a feeling that it was like program music.

I would rate it three, because emotionally it was effective, but I don't think it stands up on its own as a piece.

5. PAT MARTINO. *Strings* (from *Strings*, Prestige).

This is somebody who plays with the feel—at least on the surface—of Wes Montgomery. I don't know for positive who it is, but I do know for positive it is *not* Wes Montgomery. Even in the ensemble, the way Wes would double up on some rhythmic thing... it was the son of Wes Montgomery...!

For a minute I thought it could have been Joe Pass because of the technique. But the way the chords were broken up was more of a surface imitation. I found it a little bit cheapie when it came to musical ideas. Everything was milked—from the sound of Herbie Mann and *Memphis Underground*, to Wes Montgomery and Willie Bobo's rhythm. All those successful ingredients seemed to be in there. I hate to say it, but it came out like a Hungarian goulash made out of leftovers.

I really cannot guess... I don't want to insult any of the people I have respect for, and I cannot think of any of the lesser known guitar players at the moment. One star.

6. BARNEY KESSEL. *Two Note Samba* (from *Feelin' Easy*, Contemporary). Kessel, guitar; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Chuck Domanico, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

Yes... from the first bar I knew that was Barney. When it's the real person, you immediately know it. That's what so great about people who have an identifiable sound. It took me a while to realize what the tune was, because Barney has such a different approach. But it was *One Note Samba*.

What I enjoyed about it was that instead of attempting to be authentic about it, he made it sound like Barney Kessel. And I think it was Vic Feldman on vibes; but I don't know who else was playing. The overall performance I enjoyed. Barney is a delight, as always, and it was very nice to hear something real and original. I would rate it four stars.

7. MUNDELL LOWE. *Famous Door Blues* (from *California Guitars*, Famous Door Records). Lowe, Irving Ashby, guitars; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Donald Bailey, drums.

I found the feeling quite genuine; it was blues. For a minute I thought it might have been Grant Green, but I don't think it was. In a funny way it reminded me of when Bags picks up the guitar and plays blues—Milt Jackson. The reason I say that is that in some spots his technique was a bit scratchy, but the feeling was very good, and, as you know, Milt can play the blues on just about any instrument.

As far as rating—it was the same old story, but told very well; the blues. So I would rate it about three stars.

db

Profile

CHARLIE PERSIP

by john b. litweiler

When I told a leading jazz critic I was going to meet Charlie Persip, he said, "Aha, the last of the great big band drummers!" He's stone right, of course—has anyone else contributed as strongly and individualistically to modern big band drumming as Persip? But don't say that to Charlie: "I don't like to be categorized," he'll tell you, "but people seem to relate to my playing with big bands. That's one reason why I'm really very thrilled to work with Archie Shepp 'Cause people say they really kind of like what I'm doing, and I figure I perhaps can dispel the myth about me being a big band drummer."

The truth is that Persip is an extraordinarily exciting musician whatever the context. He's been that way for over 20 years, including five with the large and small bands of Dizzy Gillespie, two with Gil Evans, eight with Billy Eckstine, and on innumerable recordings. There are those very rare drummers who can express fire just by keeping time on a cymbal: Persip is one. But his sense of interplay with a group is so wholly spontaneous, yet so *right*, that a listener can't help being moved by his ingenuity.

"You know what's so beautiful about the band. Naturally, we're in the era of free expression, free improvisation, avant-garde, all of that. As much as I love free experimental playing, I still like to hear some rhythm. Now I can see that rhythm gets boring, too much of anything gets boring, and that's why I like to get away for a time. But I still like to come back every now and then and hit it and pat my foot and swat on the beat. With Archie, you get it all—you can hear the roots as well as the free expression. Archie has a way of handling the band which is really super-hip, it's too beautiful, because he leaves everything up to everybody's expression. We try to hear it all. Now we may not sit down and bang out the time all night. But the roots of what has happened before our time and during our time, the essence of all that has gone on before us still has to get into the music.

"I never played with my bare feet before—the first time I did it was a few months ago, when I played with Archie for the first time. I'm trying to get completely ambidextrous, because I want all the drums to be one instrument. You know, all musicians except drummers play with their skin touching their instrument. But to a drummer, the feet are as important as the hands. I do it in the hope that I might get more of a feeling of wholeness (*laughs*). Just before we came here I played with Nancy Wilson, and my wife said, 'You're sure going to look funny on the stage of the Apollo Theater in your tuxedo and bare feet.' But I want to try it with a big band. I hope it doesn't become a gimmick—I'm not trying to be weird or different, I just want to be a better drummer, and I'll try anything.

"I almost did damage to my ears as a very young child. I had a tin drum that my aunt gave me, and I used to sit with my ear up against the speaker of the radio. I would turn the radio way up so I could hear the drummer while I was banging away. For a long time, I couldn't hear out of one ear as well as the other. I remember even as a child, my father took me to parades, and I used to sit on his shoulders, and when the drums came by I would get a feeling that was almost sensual: just to hear that drum would rattle my insides. We were far too poor to have a drum set when I was a kid, but my people, god bless them, they struggled and scuffled to get me something: I had a drum, a good drum. So I made the rest of the set myself—I just made boxes and hung up my mother's pot tops for cymbals, and got it on.

28 □ down beat



LAWRENCE N. SHUSTAK

"My dad took me to hear Cab Calloway when I was eight-years-old. Cozy Cole was the drummer—it was the most beautiful experience. We were buying popcorn when the band started playing, and I ran upstairs—the beautiful band, the beautiful black women dancing. The theater was my university: I played hookey to go to the Apollo. I liked Lionel Hampton for the heavy rhythm. I copied other drummers, and got into big band arrangements as a result. Shadow Wilson's *music* grabbed me, and so did Buddy Rich's *technique*. But Shadow Wilson was the big man for me.

"When I was young, Dizzy was my James Brown. When I got the chance to go with Dizzy I was completely floored. It was a hell of an experience, a hell of a school, and that was the turning point in my career. Dizzy's really a big band man, that's really his thing. I hate to say that, because people say that about me. Dizzy gave me a lot of freedom, but the reason was because I dug him so much that I was giving him what he wanted naturally. But that was eventually why I left him, because after awhile I started hearing things I knew he wasn't going to relate to too well.

"I don't want to sound corny, but I don't want to sell my soul for luxuries. I've had a couple of jobs that paid really well, but the music was horrendous. Like the first time I worked Las Vegas, with Harry James, the band stunk. It was a horrible musical experience, but I had never seen all the glitter and glamour and everything, so I stayed with the band six weeks. But after that I needed to go to a psychiatrist.

"You can never foretell the future. Prior to that Harry James thing, I was with Dizzy, I worked at Birdland, and I started recording for Blue Note. Benny Golson and Art Farmer got the Jazztet together down at the old Five Spot, and I was their first drummer. It would have been interesting to see if I had stayed with the Jazztet, if my career would have taken a whole other turn.

"My own quintet, The Jazz Statesmen, was a

LES DeMERLE

by lee underwood

"I'm always *hungry* to play," says drummer Les DeMerle. "Hungry to play music the way I feel music should be played."

The 5'8", 28-year-old percussionist leads his own octet, Transfusion, composes most of its music, conducts music and drum clinics across the country, is presently negotiating with ECM Records for a long-term recording contract, is on the road six months of the year, gives regular private drum lessons, and operates his own theater and musical showcase, the Cellar Theatre.

Born in Brooklyn in 1946, Les DeMerle began studying drums with Bob Livingston when he was nine-years-old. He sat in with Lionel Hampton at the Metropole when he was only 12, began cutting school to haunt the music libraries, and started hanging around Birdland every night. At 15 he joined the union, and at 16 left school to go on the road with Hampton's band.

He met Joe Farrell at Barbara Kelly's Hat and Cane Club on 46th Street when he was 17. "Joe was my first modern musical influence. He was playing high-energy music, and brought to me my first awareness of mental playing, of forgetting about technique while concentrating more on involvement and interplay between the melodic instruments and the drums. I began listening more to Elvin Jones, Philly Jo Jones, Edgar Bateman, and Walter Perkins."

With Hampton, Les had experienced big band roots. With Joe Farrell, he had experienced the future. "I decided I wanted to go in a freer direction, so I started studying composition and theory at the Berklee School of Music."

From 1967 through 1969 he led his first group, Sound 67, featuring Randy Brecker, trumpet; Arnie Lawrence, alto; Bill Tackus, Fender bass; Norman Simmons and Danny Sandage on piano.

He collaborated with Norman Simmons to produce his first album, *Spectrum* (United Artists, UAS 6734), and with the Spectrum group played

good band, with Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, and Roland Alexander, who's a very good tenor player. Actually, at that time my head was into leading a band. But I've gotten to the point where I don't really dig bandleaders. Most of them are really very tyrannical. Everybody wants to tell the drummer how to play, and it can be so frustrating to the young kids, especially nowadays, with such marvelous geniuses as Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. The younger cats have shown how free and colorful drums can be—and you still get leaders who want to say, 'Well, don't play that, man! That's a little busy. Can't hear it,' and so on.

"I don't have to deal with that too much because, thank God, I have a little stature. But to younger guys who probably have just as much or more talent than I do, who go onstage and honestly play what they feel and what they hear, it can be crushing. I know some very talented drummers, and because they've gone through this at a crucial time in their coming up, they're not playing as much as they could play.

"I think our music would be healthier if all the groups were co-operative. I think music could progress much better if every time you got on the bandstand, everybody was happy, and totally spiritually involved in the music. There'd be no time for ego trips, bandleaders, sidemen. We know certain people can organize better than others, but in a co-operative effort everybody would contribute, and I think it would be a much healthier thing all around.

"The Collective Black Arts Ensemble (see down beat, Feb. 28, 1974) is my main thing now. It's the best band in New York. The object is to *make our music healthier* (*laughs*). If my wife knew I was having this interview, I would have more trouble—she's always saying, 'Charles, don't get on your soapbox.'"

But Charlie Persip, a thoroughly invigorating musician, is an energetic, marvelously interesting individual, too; we *had* to have the interview. **db**

the Bitter End in New York on Monday nights for four weeks, featuring jazzmen Joe Beck, Marvin Stamm, Frank Foster, Garnett Brown, Pepper Adams, Bill Tackus, Norman Simmons, and Charles Sullivan. "That group was out of the Mingus mold—the music was both written and free, and everyone was an outstanding soloist."

When he decided to make the leap to California, he had already become involved with teaching and had written two drum books, *Jazz/Rock Fusion*, Vol. I and Vol. II, both presently available.

"When I came out of New York in 1970, I knew what I had to do. I knew it would be less hectic here, that I would need less money, that I wanted to work with students, and that I wanted to find a place that I could use as a home base. That's what the Cellar is—a home, a rehearsal hall, a theater, and a showcase."

The first thing he did in L.A. was land a gig with George Rhodes' band at the Coconut Grove playing with Harry "Sweets" Edison, trumpet; J. J. Johnson, trombone; and Barney Kessel, guitar. That led to a steady gig with Harry James, which Les still holds while continuing to build and extend his own octet, Transfusion.

While gigging with Rhodes, DeMerle discovered the Cellar Theater and immediately leased it. "The Cellar is an ideal home base," Les explains. "It has a stage, is already wired for recording, seats 90 people, has a light booth, an office, several rooms, and plenty of storage space. On Monday nights we give jazz concerts, showcasing Transfusion and other new groups."

"I'm building towards having the Cellar become a cultural center for the entire West Coast. It's a situation that brings all the arts together around the energy of Transfusion's music. It's a safe place that is not commercial, where cats can come on down to rehearse and showcase their music, their theater, and their paintings. It's a relaxed place where producers, record people and the public can all come to listen, look, and enjoy."

"Our mailing list in California is up to 1,000 people. We also put out a monthly flier, and take care of all the Cellar business ourselves. We encourage anybody who would like to find out more about us in reference to concert bookings, getting

put on the mailing list, where to study, rehearsal space, or just about our activities in general, to write to 102 S. Vermont, Hollywood, or call us on our 24 hour answering service at (213) 487-0419."

Transfusion is one of the most volcanically explosive bands to ever hit the West Coast. Emmett Chapman, with his ten-string Electric Stick, is the featured soloist. Milcho Leviev, a Bulgarian pianist, plays and also composes for the group; Charlie Owens and Charlie Black handle the reeds; Domanic Genova is on bass, Miles Tiana on trombone, Oscar Brocher on trumpet.

"This band almost literally gives people a transfusion. We used to think of it as new blood, new fire, exploring new life by exploring new music. We play to a lot of different audiences at festivals and concerts. Not just the hard-core jazz audiences, but for people who have never even heard improvised music before."

"The music is constructed first from primitive rhythms, then polyrhythms over them, and then melodies developed to fit the rhythms—a total of three or four layers of rhythmic complexities which communicate on the guttural level of time."

"With Transfusion, I think more in terms of the cooperative efforts of Weather Report. The solos are wide open, and we know from our experience and empathy where everything is going to go."

DeMerle's major influences are "mostly the high-energy players who are playing the new music—Keith Jarrett, Mahavishnu, Chick Corea, Billy Cobham (to whom I dedicated my *Spectrum* album), Milcho Leviev, my pianist, whom I'm honored to have in my group, Bennie Maupin, Tony Williams, and McCoy Tyner."

"I also listen hard to Sidnet Bechet, Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Duke Ellington, and Sid Catlett, who did nothing but play time. He played time so softly, however, and in just such a way, that he could create an intensity that would make you hold your ears. An incredible presence."

"Of the modern classicists, I listen to Edgar Varese, John Cage, and Terry Riley."

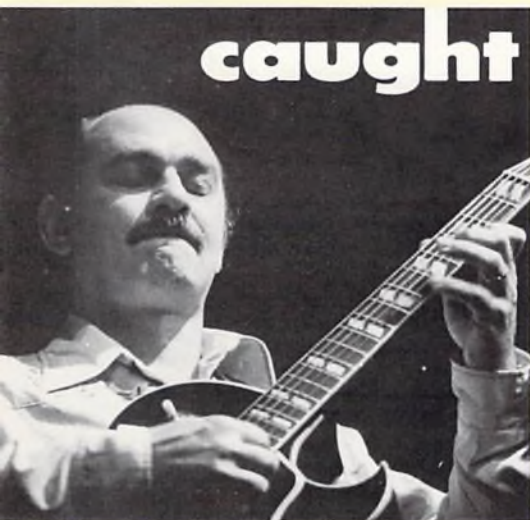
When Les is on the road he demonstrates his new music in the daytime. "For the past two years, I've been assigned as a clinician for Pearl Drums. They get my itineraries as soon as I do and



line up drum clinics in the various towns I'll be in.

"And here in L.A., through the clinics, symposiums and harmony/theory workshops we've been doing at colleges and music stores, we've also been able to convey the musical concepts of Transfusion to other people—the new directions, the odd times, the conception of flow and response with each other, communicating the breakdowns of time signatures, the roles of each of the instruments in the group. We explain it, play it, and then perform it."

Les has recently developed a percussion ensemble of six drummers, playing everything from miniature Harry Partch scores to spontaneous improvisation. All of the players are Les's students, and all read the scores he writes for separate snares, separate cymbals, and separate bass drums, "just seeing how the time can lock with the concept of six players, without anybody's having all four limbs into the time, having the time be in their heads, and having it transformed between the sets with cross sections of three duets or two trios. I sometimes add a bass player, and sometimes I even merge Transfusion and the Ensemble—six drummers with all the musicians of Transfusion—it's a huge sound!" db



JOE PASS

Great American Music Hall, San Francisco

Personnel: Joe Pass, guitar; Mario Suraci, string and electric bass; Glenn Cronkhite, drums.

There's no question that Joe Pass's playing was beautiful during his one-night-stand in San Francisco. But describing his playing in more precise terms is far more difficult than evaluating it. It's something like trying to describe a snowflake. Of course, a snowflake is beautiful, but what else can you say? It's

cool, pretty (which isn't the same as beautiful), intricate, unique, symmetrical, and gives the impression of having floated down to earth from heaven.

If only Joe Pass played piano (and he would probably play it like Oscar Peterson), the task would be easier because there is a convenient term which describes music perfectly suited to that instrument: *pianistic*. Unfortunately, there is no comparable word for guitar playing, so, for the special case of Joe Pass, one ought to be coined. *Luthistic* isn't an unreasonable choice, since guitar makers are called luthiers.

During Pass's three sets at the Music Hall, every chord, every voicing, every melodic line he played was perfectly suited to the sound of the amplified guitar (a Gibson 175). Or maybe, fortuitously, the guitar just happens to be suited perfectly to all of Joe Pass's musical ideas. In either case, since we are a society exposed to guitar playing almost every day of our lives, it is a pleasant shock, if not a revelation, to hear the instrument played as it should be.

The afternoon before his Saturday night performance, Pass held a two-and-a-half hour "guitar seminar" for at least 100 aficionados of the instrument. The informal lecture included tips on substitutions, positions, voicings, soloing and accompaniment. Pass is authoritative and wry, a likeable "wise guy" on stage. He answered questions freely and had his audience, many of them with guitar in hand, hanging on every word. For the last half hour, he played duo with anyone who had the courage to get up on stage with him and then commented on the players' strengths

and weaknesses.

Then at night, Pass showed that his only weakness was for dazzling his audience. In fact, on *Secret Love* he dazzled Suraci and Cronkhite, too. They watched helplessly for 32 bars, as if they were wondering whether Pass really expected them to play at the speed-of-light tempo he had set. He did. Suraci and Cronkhite, incidentally, had never met Pass before they played together. They had been called for the gig by Tom Bradshaw, owner of the Music Hall, when he learned that Joe would not be able to bring his own accompaniment up from Los Angeles. The arrangement, however impromptu, was successful.

Pass's first set began with four unaccompanied pieces: *Darn That Dream*, *What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life*, *Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me*, and *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life*. It was no-tricks guitar, no special effects, guitar (you could say) with no strings attached. It was luthistic.

Then the trio joined in to complete a first set of over an hour. They did *Watch What Happens*, *I Can't Get Started*, *Stompin' at the Savoy* (with Pass playing some heavy licks straight out of bebop which got some of the audience literally stompin'), *Secret Love*, and a blues which somehow became *Soft Winds* before it was over. If there is any truth to the adage that cleanliness is next to Godliness, there is something divine about Pass's playing. You can't find two notes of any run without a little daylight between them.

The Music Hall was only two-thirds full at best, which was indeed unfortunate for the people who weren't there. —len Lyons

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET

Avery Fisher Hall, New York City

Personnel: John Lewis, piano; Milt Jackson, vibes; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

"We owe it to New York to finish here"—so spake John Lewis, pianist, composer and musical director of longest-lived small group in the history of jazz. The MJQ had previously paid quiet farewells in Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and "final" bows in Australia. Long-time MJQ producer Harold Leventhal felt that their formation in New York 22 years ago, after collectively leaving the Dizzy Gillespie band, warranted their last-concert-ever here.

Perfection was the order of their existence, and of this, their finale. *Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise*, from an early Prestige recording session, opened the concert, swung in a light four; *In Memoriam*, from their latest release, closed it. Lewis' beard is now gray; Heath's bass has remained acoustic, with not even a hint of a bridge pickup so commonplace today. Bags looked bored at the start, while Lewis smiled and hummed counter-riffs and melodies as he soloed, enjoying every minute: the ever-present Lewis warmth.

Summertime shows off the group's tightness. First Milt takes the chords apart and feeds John; then John sends the same chords back to Milt, intra-phrase comping, as it were, a favorite technique of the quartet. *True Blues*, one of the few times I've ever heard John Lewis funky, was followed by *What's New?* After a languid opening chorus, Jackson changed tempo and mood to double-time. A trio of bebop favorites were sandwiched between baroque-based items: Jackson, in Monk's *Round Midnight*, merely appeared to run the changes in a stream of dynamic hammering, though *Night in Tunisia* turned him on with an energy-laden solo that ended abruptly with Lewis' extended *cap-pella* cadenza before the piano solo. It is my firm belief that John Lewis was the first man in history to play electric piano lines on an acoustic box, he's that economical with his left hand—Parker's *Confirmation* was an excellent demonstration.

Blues In A Minor presented Heath's first long solo of the evening. The base of *Tears From The Children* is tuned camel bells shak-



PHOTOS: TROMBERT THIERRY, VERYL OAKLAND, RON HOWARD



en by Kay while Jackson sparingly strikes single notes to set the chord structure for Lewis and Heath. The effect is constantly exciting, and about as simply inventive as a Thelonious Monk line.

Musicianship is what it's all about. *The Golden Striker* is a familiar example: the tinkle of Kay's triangle and the melodic inventiveness of Jackson and Lewis were to be expected. Change, though, is the essence of jazz, and Percy's picking up counter-melodies was constantly changing; he utilized the sevenths, and augmented ninths as well as the simple chordal triads, and built on them. *Bags Groove* has also been well-recorded, but it was Heath's fantastic chorus after chorus that brought us to applause time and again, until Lewis, more than jocularly, indicated the place was going to close down around us.

Concert hall jazz is commonplace by now in the United States. But it wasn't until the MJQ that Europe accepted that kind of presentation in their revered halls where previously only the finest orchestras performed. *In Memoriam* is the type of work that gained this group acceptance in the '50s. It's a lengthy piece with changing tempi and colors, opening with a pretty theme that's nonetheless tight and lacking in freedom. Connie broke

silence with a stiff-sticking effect that led directly to Percy's solo, accompanied by the other three, whose rhythmic hand-clapping was in turn picked up by the audience. John took his spot in a down-home Ray Charles-ish chorus, which was in turn followed by the up-tempo segment and out.

Though the MJQ is gone, the world will still hear from these musical masters, with each to appear in various solo formats. Lewis will conduct classes at New York City University. Heath will continue as a busy sideman, and will also join tenorist Jimmy and drummer Albert to form a new Heath Brothers Band. Kay has always been busy recording, most prominently with Paul Desmond (aside from his MJQ work), while Jackson, ever a breakaway voice on his instrument, will form a permanent group and tour under the aegis of CTI Records.

Duke Ellington's passing came among a series of losses that included Paul Gonsalves, Tyree Glenn and Harry Carney. As if that weren't enough, this foursome has now broken up. The parallel is clearly drawn—they, like Duke, have left us a legacy in both recorded effort and musical accomplishment that must remain no matter how deep the cultural lobotomy becomes. —arnold jay smith



PHILIP GLASS ENSEMBLE

Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal

We entered the darkened gallery to find the six musicians seated in a circle in the center of the room, surrounded by a sea of spectators. Around the spectators immense loudspeakers were set. As the audience concentrated on the musicians, the music came rolling in over their heads from the walls of the gallery, to break in a sort of sonic surf in the middle. The performers, the audience, and the loudspeakers all formed concentric circles. The music held us all mesmerized.

The Philip Glass Ensemble consists of the composer on electric organ and five other instrumentalists—another electric organ, electric piano and voice, alto and tenor sax, and two flutes and soprano sax. They played parts 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 of Glass's composition *Music In Twelve Parts*. It is rich, full-bodied music. What differentiates it from most other music heard today is the apparent simplicity of the repeated short phrases, with a bagpipe-like drone running through it while the flutes or

saxes make little interpolations. One's first reaction to the repetition of one phrase is a mixture of irritation and dismay. But there is a cumulative hypnotic effect—you are no longer listening to the music but altering your breathing pattern to coincide with it, letting it take over your nervous system, using it as a mandala for meditation. I found it impossible to remain aloof.

There was a break between parts 3 and 7, allowing us to tank up with beer. Thus in the second half we were more relaxed and succumbed more readily to the spell. Parts 7, 8, and 9 had a more flowing, pulsating pattern, and our heart-beats accelerated with the music. When Glass suddenly cut off the music, apparently in mid-chorus, the silence was even more intense than the music that had preceded it.

As with Charles Mingus, this music is only properly performed by Glass' own group, people who understand what he is saying and who benefit from his presence and authority. Glass says that he likes playing to jazz audiences, and, as part of that audience, I found his music an unforgettable experience.

—ron sweetman

tend to not even recognize it because I feel they don't want to admit there's an art form that sprung up from black culture.

"But for me, New York is where it's at. For inspiration, for stimulation, for keeping yourself musically sharp—not only musically sharp but keeping *yourself sharp*. In a sense, if you go to Europe or someplace else, you're liable to relax and neglect your own potential, although the musicians there were sounding beautiful."

After returning to the States, there was a period of renewed study. "For about nine months I studied with Sam Ulano who just gave me book after book. I just came in there and read all this, and read it at all different speeds. I did that every day for six hours and it really helped my chops."

Circle had its genesis shortly thereafter. Although it was to be a totally acoustic band, Barry's first contact with Chick Corea came about largely because Corea, who was playing electric piano with Miles Davis at the time, was interested in checking out a synthesizer, and Bley had just recently bought one. After a session at Bley's house, with Chick on synthesizer, Barry, Chick and Dave Holland played a gig opposite Freddie Hubbard at the Village Vanguard. "The first set was okay. We sat down after the set and talked a little bit, and on the next set everything clicked. We recorded an album *The Song of Singing* (Blue Note), four days later."

The three decided to get together on a permanent basis: the next time they played at the Vanguard, they acquired a fourth member, saxophonist Braxton.

"A lot of musicians were there opening night, and for our last set we invited anyone who wanted to come up and play. Anthony sat in with us that set, and he and Chick somehow got into talking about chess. Chick invited Anthony over to his house to play chess and discuss music, and we got involved with Anthony that way. We were going to California, and we decided to ask him to join us. He was so radical; he posed so many interesting musical problems that it was a gas. He was a Gemini and Chick was a Gemini, and they were always at opposite extremes. It was very stimulating.

"We all wanted to get away from electronics, but electronics had an influence on us, soundwise. I started adding percussion instruments. Chick started to do little different things with the piano. And Anthony came in with *his* array of instruments, and what we had was a real electronics. It was coming from the air, instead of plugging into a wall. All the sounds, but spontaneous, without having to turn a dial first.

"We got good reactions, especially from college audiences. If we worked in a club, the first night, the people who didn't dig the music left. The people who dug the music stayed and came back and were very enthusiastic. For a period, we were able to play this music, and learn from it as well. Then the musical and philosophical direction started to change in the band, so eventually we split up." Barry won't elaborate further on the reasons for Circle's demise, except to say, "It happens to every band. Eventually bands break up, and that's what happened to us." The group's extraordinary chemistry can be felt strongly on the ECM album, *Paris Concert*.

freelancing, and then Barry got into teaching. "It allows me to be choosy, both with gigs and with my students. My students turn me on a lot, I learn a great deal from them, and I make enough bread so I can afford to only play the music in which I can involve my full self."

That has included *Conference of the Birds* and some concerts with Braxton and the others on the record, culminating in his current stint with Rivers.

"We started practicing together and he asked me to join his band. I guess we're very stimulating to each other musically; he certainly stimulates me.

"The music is 100% improvised, which is fantastic. Instead of relying on a chart or a form of music, we rely on each other. Sam is drawing on all the experience he's had in the

business, so to speak, which I think is 35 years, from Dixieland all the way up to Cecil Taylor. He uses all that vocabulary in the music, at any given moment, at any time.

"Sam is a youngster, but in Planet Earth time he's not a youngster any more. He's been through most of the shit that people growing up go through. He's just playing pure music at this point. It's very recognizable to anybody who comes in contact with it, so there's really nothing anybody can say. They can say I understand it or I don't understand it, but they can't say it's good or it's bad, because it's got that thing to it. The music is happening. There's a part of it that relates to everybody. It's very free, very chaotic at times; there's very swinging things at times, there's very pretty things at times. It just all flows from one motion to the next. Whatever there is out

continued on next page

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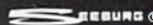
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ALTSCHUL continued from previous page

there in the world is hopefully what's being put through the music."

Altschul's contribution to the music is broad, not just because of the playing dues he has paid but also all the listening he has done, especially in a recent trip around the world.

"I had to expand my vocabulary so that whatever I hear at the moment musically, whatever impression I get, I can draw on any kind of music to play it. So I started studying African music, Indian music, Brazilian music a little bit, music of the Caribbean. I took a trip around the world to trace the history of drums and it was very instructive.

"There was a period before that when I got into playing the sounds of the street. I started digging the sounds of every day, street noises—trucks and rain and trains and crashes and sirens and horns. I started listening to the ocean, too. I started to hear these sounds as music, and they began to have a place in my music.

"Now I feel I'm really starting to learn how to play. A certain maturity is starting to happen more in my playing, a certain consistency. It's nice. I'm progressing, but at the same time I'm starting to see how much more there is to be done. I'm learning to have more patience and just be aware of the things that I have to get together. I'm not in a rush. It'll happen when it happens. But I do feel it's gonna happen.

"Another 50 years and maybe I'll have it down." db

DeJOHNETTE

continued from page 16

magazines reviewing it, and so on. After all, music is my livelihood, and in my situation if you want something done, you have to do it yourself. The big shock for me was in finding out that this so-called jazz revival that everyone is talking about is in essence smothering any real music that is happening and has produced a sort of commercial sound somewhere between rock and jazz. To be honest, I find it hard to distinguish one band from another. This trend has changed the whole image of the jazz industry. I'm not necessarily putting it down, I want to make money too, but I find myself intimidated by the fact that "my sort of music" is just being put to one side, forced to be "underground," classified "unsalable." Somehow, all this has been pre-determined by certain elements of the music industry before my music is given a chance to prove itself in the marketplace.

There is an audience out there for this music, and it is being denied! Wherever I work with my own group, people ask me where they can hear more and where they can get the albums. They don't even know about most of the albums out because the radio won't play them and the shops don't carry them. I've appeared on radio shows where people have called in to say "how refreshing it was to hear something different" and "let's have more." The deejays answer by quoting ratings and sponsors and the like. I know these things are important for them to be able to keep going, but I also feel it's greedy. They should be able to set aside a certain amount of time, space, and energy to help promote this music. I had a jock once tell me that if John Coltrane were to walk into his studio today with his latest album, he wouldn't be

why people refer to John Coltrane's *Giant Steps* as the apex of playing chords. *Conception* and *Con Alma* are much more difficult to play."

Rivers worked briefly alongside Woody Shaw in the front line of McCoy Tyner's quintet before acquiring the place which has become Studio Rivbea. He had been rehearsing big bands sporadically since his last years in Boston, and during the late '60s the tempo of his activities had picked up with the establishment of a more or less permanent organization, the Harlem Ensemble, and with his appointment as Composer in Residence with the Harlem Opera Society. Rehearsal space is ample at Rivbea, and it is there that most of his big band work now takes place. He still appears occasionally as a sideman: in 1972 he turned in one of his most memorable recorded performances in the company of Anthony Braxton, Barry Altschul, and David Holland on Holland's *Conference of the Birds*. But mostly he appears with his trio or his big band. Robin Kenyatta, Marvin Peterson, Clifford Thornton, Grachan Moncur III, Norman Connors, Reggie Workman, Cecil McBee, and Andrew Cyrille have played with him at one time or another, and his bands have become one of the most talked-about ongoing musical events in the city. When, early in 1973, Impulse records' Ed Michel and Steve Backer were empowered by parent company ABC to sign new artists, Rivers' name was near the top of their lists.

Streams, recorded live at the Montreux Jazz Festival, documents an unstructured playing situation. "Trio performances are the only thing I like to leave completely free," the saxophonist says. "That's really my style of playing, and I've been doing it long enough to be very conscious of developing forms. I start to build into some kind of form and set it up so that there's a rise and fall throughout. I didn't really feel that *Streams* was one of my best trio performances. I flew over to make the gig in Montreux, and it was kind of hectic. The selections which they put on *No Energy Crisis* and *Impulse Artists on Tour* were better performances—they showed more emotion than *Streams*. So before I do another big band date, I want to put out another trio

able to play it.

Under the circumstances, myself and some others I'm connected with have found it necessary to try and do as much of the business end of it ourselves; in other words, to fully create our own environment. My wife, Lydia, and her partner, Lee Norman, plus Stu Martin and myself have started a music agency called The Creative Music Agency. We work out of Woodstock, N.Y. Our aim is to have a non-profit organization run by musicians for musicians in order to bring music to people who really want to hear it in a totally conducive environment. We deal mainly with colleges and jazz societies, and at present are in the process of applying for agency/management grants so that we won't have to charge fees for the work we do. Some of the groups we handle outside of myself and Stu Martin are Lee Konitz, Sam Rivers, Karl Berger, The Revolutionary Ensemble, Dave Liebman's Lookout Farm, and others.

For those that do want to hear something different, it is there. It's harder to find, but it's still there. You have to take the extra effort to look for it and you also have to let people know you want to hear it. Call the radio stations, write the music magazines and record labels, start jazz societies, get colleges to promote the music. We'll help you, too. I find I usually get a lot of response—some of it positive, some not—but every step in the right direction helps open new doors.

I am now working with my own group, which consists of Alex Foster on saxophones and clarinet, and Peter Warren on bass. We plan to be on the road for the next three months or so. If anyone is interested in finding out about the agency or wants to help start jazz societies, they can get all the information they need from Lee Norman at (914)246-9222. db

album."

Crystals, the big band album, is the most immediately gripping of Rivers' recordings, perhaps because the stage is not quite so bare. The compositions, some of which were first sketched as early as 1959, are layered so as to reveal further intricacies with each listening. *Tranquility* is particularly appealing. On first hearing, it sounds like a relatively simple affair consisting of an ostinato vamp for tuba and string bass with more or less freely voiced horn parts overlaid out of tempo. In fact, the horn parts are through-composed and the apparent tonal center is illusory. It is the tuba and string bass parts, and Rivers' lyrical flute lines, which are improvised. *Bursts* includes a phrase permutation which is momentarily reminiscent of Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, but the phrase is voiced for brass and reeds in several different keys simultaneously and juxtaposed against written and improvised statements by other instruments, resulting in a dense, strikingly ordered texture. The weight of the sound is reminiscent of the big band "free jazz" of Sun Ra, but the composer's control is tight throughout. The music is certainly modern, but it would be highly inaccurate to call it "free." It is implacably logical and rigorously structured.

Rivers calls on an enormous floating pool of musicians to realize his works. "I never have trouble getting players," he maintains. "I call them up and they're right here, because they know it's going to be something they can play and express themselves on, that they aren't just going to be playing backgrounds for somebody's solos. Working in this way, I do listen to a lot of young musicians, and I'm kind of disturbed, to tell you the truth. Some of them have come through the '60s without listening to other things. Certainly there are precedents for screaming on the horn—Illinois Jacquet was doing it some years ago—but many of the screamers don't have a solid academic background. On the other hand, you have the musicians who are coming out of the schools. They solo a la Bird or Coltrane. They're technically together, but their sounds are all the same, as if they'd come off an assembly line. The musicians who impress me are the guys who have the best of both." Rivers himself has the schooling and the individuality to take his music wherever his imagination leads. db



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HOW TO master mallets

from Ruth Underwood via Dr. William L. Fowler

On stage with Zappa's Mothers of Invention, surrounded by the many accoutrements of the modern percussionist, Ruth Underwood doesn't just double: she *dozens!* And included in her array of both standard and exotic percussion equipment are the mallet instruments: vibraphone, bells, xylophone, and her personal favorite, the marimba, all with transducers set into their bars for direct electronic transmission. (Ruth points out that these pickups in no way affect the normal acoustical sound of the bars.)

Since Ruth's playing of even the most complex Zappa passages always comes out clean, clear, and musical, I asked her for her own views on mallet techniques for **down beat** readers.

"Although I own about a hundred different sets of mallets, giving me about a hundred different tone qualities from about a hundred different striking head densities, weights, and materials (hard rubber, wood, cord, yarn or whatever), I consistently use only eight or ten. These favorite mallets feel to me like extensions of my own hands: their stems are of flexible rattan, pleasant to my touch, and all the mallets in each set are exactly the same weight, the same length, the same flexibility.

"I particularly like some mallets made for me by Bill Marimba (*Good Vibes Malletworks, Inc.*, 407 Dover Road, Rockville, Maryland 20850) because of their balance, smooth feel, and tone production. But every mallet player should try every make and model he can find to build his collection. "Because I always want complete control of each mallet, I never use more than two in each hand. And I point them forward as my basic holding position, as if I am extending a finger.

"But I don't always use mallets. Sometimes I play with my thumbs, index fingers and middle fingers, striking the bars with that part of my finger where the knuckle-bend line shows, just behind my fingertip pad. The sound is very soft, but very beautiful.

"To get the most resonant tone and to keep my tone quality the same for each note, I always play in the middle of the bar. And to get maximum speed and smoothness of execution, I keep my mallets as close to the playing surface of my instrument as possible. Raising the mallets high between strikes adds distance to the mallet path, unnecessarily slowing technique. I find, too, that smoothness of phrasing in any melodic line will be enhanced by playing as many notes of that line as possible with the same hand: alternation of mallets makes for slight differences in volume, tone quality, and accent between successive notes.

"The main difference between metal bars and wooden bars is in their relative sustaining properties. Vibes, with their metal bars, hold the sound a long time. The player, then, must develop his techniques of muffling with his hand as well as with the mallet head. Vibe players should listen to the muffling techniques of David Friedman on the many records he's made.

"But xylophones and marimbas, with their wooden bars, need mallet rolls to sustain their sound on long notes. I use a slow roll on low notes to avoid choking the sound of the longer, more slow-speaking bars. And I try to humanize my phrasing by giving individual notes varied roll speeds. Here's an exercise to develop roll-control: I alternate mallets very slowly, slow enough to keep identical in each hand the height of mallet rebound, the strength of mallet impact on the bar, and the tension of my grip on the mallet stem. Then I very gradually increase the speed of my roll. And when I begin to lose complete control of rebound or impact I stop the roll, relax my mind and body, then begin the roll again slowly.

"I developed the independence and equality of both my hands by practicing melodic lines first with my right hand, then with my left. Then I practiced comping with one hand against a melodic line in the other, again reversing the procedure. And to further establish independence of my hands, I studied the Bach two and three-part inventions, which exercise also developed my general musicianship.

"I find many other Bach compositions, like the solo string instrument sonatas, the preludes, and the fugues, adaptable for mallet instruments, as is most guitar music and quite a number of piano works. My years of piano study acquainted me with dozens of those keyboard works good for mallet transcriptions. But more valuable to me than knowledge of the literature was the visual concept of the bar layout of the mallet instruments I gained through piano playing. Actually, I consider piano training as an indispensable portion of the development of mallet instrument skills.

"Also indispensable, I feel, are two instruction books: *Modern School For Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone*, by Morris Goldenberg and *Mental And Manual Calisthenics For The Modern Mallet Player*, by Elden "Buster" Bailey (of the N.Y. Philharmonic). Together, these books form an encyclopedia of mallet techniques and orchestral use of the mallet instruments. The Goldenberg book contains a section of mallet parts from the symphonic literature.

"One more item: When I comp behind a soloist I generally use three-note chords. They're full enough, but not too cloying."

RUTH UNDERWOOD

From Long Island, New York.

A piano major at Ithaca in the 1960s. Heard a marimba soloist, began to self-teach herself, then switched to percussion as a major.

Percussion major at Juilliard from 1966 to 1969.

Recorded as drummer with Hamilton Face Band.

Married Ian Underwood, then moved to Los Angeles.

Played drum set for Frank Zappa in the film, 200 Motels.

Joined the Mothers of Invention in 1969 as percussionist and mallet instrumentalist.

Ruth views the marimba as an independent concert instrument with its own special qualities and tonal possibilities, not as just another member of the percussion family.

Her latest work can be heard on Zappa/Mothers, Roxy & Elsewhere.

I holding 2 sticks : 2 situations where hand to hand sticking to play 1 line (alternate sticking) is not desirable.

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"Uncle Head" continued... AL L RR L L R R R L R L L R L R L R R L R L R L

II holding 2 sticks - total independence of each other (to play 2 lines) J.S. Bach

"Prelude" Suite #2 for Lute

III holding 3 sticks - partial independence required in this case Igor Stravinsky

"Allegro" from "The Five Fingers" continued

IV holding 4 sticks : 3 situations

① no real independence required of mallets: Ian Underwood

from all chords "Chorale" etc. Ian Underwood

② partial independence required Alan Hovhannes

"Chorale" Alan Hovhannes

③ total independence required J.S. Bach

"Fuga" Suite #1 for unaccompanied violin (4 sticks required later)

MARIMBA

A SONG FEST

continued from page 10

mented by established artists after the judging in a gala awards ceremony.

(2) There will be more judges who are directly involved in the writing and performing of songs themselves.

(3) Whereas last year the 60,000 entries were initially listened to by only 44 screeners, this year the number of screeners will be determined by the number of entries, thus eliminating overload and distributing the

listening more evenly.

(4) Last year, writers could enter their songs in several categories, but they had to choose the category. This year, the writer can indicate that he would like the *listener* to place the entry in whatever category he thinks it's best suited for.

(5) The screening process will be longer.

(6) Entrants this year do not have to wait for the Festival to do anything regarding mailing and handling. The competitors send in their entry form, their recorded cassette, and their entry fee all at *one* time.

(7) This year there will be 287 winners. There will also be 250 honorable mentions, each of whom will receive \$100.

(8) One change, which will undoubtedly offend certain people, is the elimination of the Jazz category. "Jazz is primarily an idiom of improvisation," Klein explains. "Any song can be done in the jazz idiom. But this is a song competition, not a measure of improvisational performance. Also," he continues, "if we have a jazz category, then why not a classical category? or marching songs? or children's songs? We're still in the evolutionary

stage, and it's too soon yet to take on the whole world as a complete package."

(9) Another change, not yet definite, will permit the finalists to perform their own songs before a gathering of music industry people. "Although both the public and the industry will not be invited, the orientation will not be geared to the selling of concert tickets. It will be a great opportunity for the finalists to be heard directly and live by the industry people who actually make the decisions of who to sign for recording contracts."

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6. Private School Of The Arts, Pensacola, Fla.
8. Municipal Auditorium, Mobile, Ala.
10-11. Sheraton Towers, Orlando, Fla.

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Feb. 13-15. High Chaparral, Chicago, Ill.

THAD JONES-MEL LEWIS
Feb. 11-12. La Bastille, Houston, Tex.

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK
Feb. 4-9. Montreal, Can.

LYNYRD SKYNYRD
Jan. 31. Academy Of Music, New York, N. Y.
Feb. 1. New Century Theatre, Buffalo, N. Y.
2. Convocation Hall, U. of Toronto, Toronto, Can.

SONNY ROLLINS
Feb. 4-9. Village Vanguard, New York, N. Y.

STANLEY TURRENTINE
Jan. 31-
Feb. 8. Pioneer Banque Restaurant, Seattle, Wash.

MICHAL URBANIAK'S FUSION
Feb. 2. Hanna's, Milwaukee, Wis.
7-8. Iowa State U., Ames, Iowa
10. National NEC Showcase, Washington, D. C.
13. Jazz Adventures, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MUDDY WATERS
Feb. 11-16. Shelby's, Detroit, Mich.

TIM WEISBERG
Feb. 11-12. Amazingrace, Evanston, Ill.
14-15. Chase Park Plaza Hotel, St. Louis, Mo.

JOE WILLIAMS
Feb. 7-15. Playboy Club, Baltimore, Md.

WISHBONE ASH
Jan. 31. Arena, Seattle, Wash.
Feb. 1. Agradome, Vancouver, Can.
2. West Washington State College, Bellingham, Wash.

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Feb. 7. Canisius College, Buffalo, N. Y.

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Bill Watrous' Manhattan Wildlife Refuge makes a rare concert appearance at **Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights In Jazz"** at NYU's Loeb Student Center on February 10. . . . The Academy of Music Theatre has **Lynrd Skynrd** (no vowels, diggit) and **The Charlie Daniels Band** January 31; **Joe Walsh** and **Barnstorm** February 1. . . . **Bobby Hackett** and **Friends** are penned in for **Michael's Pub** thru February. . . . February also has **Ellis Larkins** and **Helen Humes** at the **Cookery**. . . . **Mikell's** has **Gordon Edwards** Sundays thru Tuesdays with **Cornell Dupree** and **Richard Tee**. . . . Studio Rivbea looked like this for January: **Sam Rivers** with **Barry Altschul** for the holidays; **Frank Lowe**, **Dave Liebman**, **Joe Chambers**, and **Sonny Murray** the rest of the month. Watch for **Clifford Jordan** January 31 thru February 1. . . . **Led Zepelin** at Madison Square Garden February 3, 7 and 12; and at Nassau Coliseum February 13

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& 14 . . . **Focus II** Community Center had **Willie Mack** and a quartet mid-January with **Spaces** on January 27. . . . In the what-ever-happened-to department we see **Tony Cabot** coordinator of talent for **The Rainbow Grill** atop **Rockefeller Center**. **Connie Haines** was last seen with the **World's Greatest Jazz Band** there before entering the **Convent** where she hopes to take her vows. Meanwhile, the **WGJB** has changed personnel. **Al Klink** replaced **Bud Freeman** who remained behind in Europe. **Red Richards** is at the piano with **Benny Morton**, trombone, **Bobby Rosengarden**, drums, and the stalwarts **Yank Lawson**, **Bob Haggart** and **Bob Wilber** remaining. . . . **Toni Brabham**, program coordinator for the **Billie Holiday Theatre** in **Bed-Stuy**, Brooklyn, brings it to the kids with the likes of the **Jackson Five**, and other local groups. . . . **Sonny's Place**, **Seaford, L.I.**, lines up **Mike McGovern** January 31-February 2; **Carrie Smith** February 7 & 8. . . . Look for fine duos at **Sweet Basil**, **Seventh Avenue South**, **Greenwich Village**. . . . **The Top Of The Gate** has jazz every weekend with a **WRVR**-sponsored concert on alternating Mondays. The concerts are aired on the station from 8PM with **Les Davis** hosting. . . . Check out **Brew's** on **East 34th Street** for jazz trad. . . . Weekends on **Long Island** have seen fine sets at **Sir James'**

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CHICAGO

The London House, which would have celebrated its 20th anniversary this September, has terminated its long-standing policy of booking jazz entertainment. The downtown supper club has featured a veritable gallery of jazz luminaries during its history, **Oscar Peterson**, **Marian McPartland**, **George Shearing**, **Erroll Garner**, **Teddy Wilson**, **Bobby Bland**, and **Peter Nero** being only a few of the many. Owner Paul Wimmer decided to forego renewing his lease and is instead searching for a new location somewhere in the suburbs. The curtain came down January 12, when keyboardist **Ramsey Lewis** ended his two-week engagement. **Woody Herman** and **Lionel Hampton**, who had already been booked, were forced to cancel. Wimmer also runs **Mister Kelly's** and it will be to there that several of the major acts are rerouted. Kelly's has switched to a six-night (instead of seven) entertainment week, obviously a reflection of the shaky economy . . . Meanwhile, **Ratso's** on North Lincoln is still going strong. The lineup for February includes: **Oscar Brown, Jr.** on Mondays; **Wilderness Road**, Tuesdays, as well as the first two weekends of the month; the **Dave Remington Trad Band** on Thursdays; **Ben Sidran**, the latter two weekends; and **Judy Roberts**, every Sunday . . . The Backroom on Rush Street heads **Monty Alexander**, February 15-28 . . . Concert dates include **Frampton's Camel** and **Gentle Giant** on the 17th at the Auditorium; **Rod Stewart** at the Ampitheatre on the 18th; **Roxy Music** at the Amp on the 23rd; and **Humble Pie** at the Amp on the 24th . . . The Jazz Showcase has returned to its original Rush Street location, although it is retaining the name of its prior occupant, the Jazz Medium. Veteran jazzophile Joe Segal is handling all bookings. February will bring in **Stan Getz** through the 2nd, accompanied by **Billy Hart**, **Al Dailey**, and **George Mraz**; **George Benson** is slated for sometime during the month; **Clark Terry's Big Band** is tentatively scheduled for the 22-23; and **Johnny Hammond** drops in for a week, beginning on the 26th.

BOSTON

Zamcheck is a jazz sextet with Boston roots that is getting around the Northeast plenty. Between gigs at Richard's Lounge at Lakewood, New Jersey and one-nighters at Somerville's Zircon, they played Harpo's (Newport, Rhode Island), fronted by **Billy Cobham** at Bates College (Maine), and for **Gary Burton** at Utica College (New York). Featured in the group are two Berklee guys:

Mark Zamcheck, keyboards, and **Mike Levine**, electrified fiddle . . . Moving back into a solid jazz policy is Estelle's Lounge, 888 Tremont, Roxbury, one of Boston's more spacious and relaxed clubs. Recently hosting **Roy Haynes' Hip Ensemble** and **Grant Green**, owner Frank Williams plans big name jazz attractions for Tuesdays thru Saturdays and local presentations by the **Boston Jazz Society** on Sundays and Mondays . . . **Gato Barbieri** rolls in with his legions to Paul's Mall from February 13-16 . . . **Mose Allison** soothes the folks once more at the Jazz Workshop, February 17-23 . . . **Sandy Berman** is taking a sabbatical from club-owning to check out the national club scene and bring back acts alive to his Beverly base . . . **Scotch'n'Sirloin** has moved its Sunday jams back from 5 to 9 to the usual 4 to 8 as we go off Sunday Football Standard Time after the Super Bowl. The **Drootin Brothers Quartet** (Wed.-Thur.-Sat.) expands to a trad sextet on Friday and Sunday (bring your axe) . . . Sunday jams also at Ken's Pub, Central Square, Cambridge, with drummer **Bunny Smith**.

SOUTHWEST

PHOENIX: What'll it be on Feb. 1, **Thad Jones/Mel Lewis** at Gammage or **Dave Brubeck** at Civic Plaza (the latter date tentative)? Whatever your decision, a couple after concert stops may be in order: The **Boojum Tree** had **Mose Allison** scheduled thru the 1st, to be followed by the **Jim Bastin Trio**, then **Don Ellis**, and The Century Sky Room is featuring guitarist **Jerry Byrd**, with **Prince Shell** on keyboards and **John Flores** on drums . . . the Celebrity Theater presents **Herb Alpert, Engelbert Humperdinck, the Mills Bros.**, and **Jerry Jeff Walker**. **Frank Zappa's** gig fell through . . . the Northern Arizona University Jazz Fest will take place Feb. 8 in Flagstaff with **John Carrico** and **Herb Wong** acting as judges. Among the bands will be **Mesa C.C.'s** fine jazz ensemble directed by **Grant Wolf**, and they will play in Prescott Feb. 6 en route to Flagstaff. The following week, **Wolf** is planning to bring in **Pat Williams** for a concert and workshop . . . **Grant Wolf's Night Band** plays the Varsity Inn on 2/10 . . . **KXTC (92.3 FM)** is initiating a series of free jazz concerts in conjunction with the Maricopa County College District and City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation. The first event was with the **Arizona State U. Jazz Ensemble** on January 26 at Encanto Park, and the next one is February 16 at Maryvale Park at 3 pm. **Dr. Lee Baxter** will direct the **Glendale C.C. Jazz Ensemble**.

LAS VEGAS: **B.B.King**, **Checkmates LTD**, and **Slappy White** are at the Hilton . . . **Little Anthony & The Imperials** are at the Sahara with **Judy Bell** . . . the **Charlie Schaffer Trio** is at the Landmark . . . **Dave Barry & The Jive Sisters** are at the Sands, with **Bob Simms Trio** in the lounge . . . **Dionne Warwick** is at the Riviera 2/6-19, followed by the **Stylistics** and **Petula Clark**.

SAN DIEGO: **Elvin Jones** continues at Concerts By The Sea in Redondo Beach . . . **Earl's** is continuing to promote pop-rock over jazz . . . Sunday afternoon jam sessions continue to enliven La Jolla. The place is the Aspen Public House at 916 Pearl St., and regulars include **Joe Marillo** on tenor, **Jeff Rewbass**, **Tony Marillo**, drums, and **Butch Lacy**, piano. Each week the group is joined by one or more famous guests from the L.A. area. **db**

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Lokfast's patented design creates more resistance than a single-point thumbscrew. A turn of a lever locks more friction area in place, so shafts just can't slide. *The single and double holders are interchangeable so maybe you'll buy both.*

The Premier Rockshaft mounting stay, for use with the double holder, protects your bass drum shell and you get more ruggedness than you've had with any other holder. Rockshaft holds your set-up right where you want it — and keeps it there.

A single or double Premier Lokfast Tom-Tom holder will survive the toughest of playing conditions. Try it.

And if it slips, call us . . . we seldom get to see the impossible.

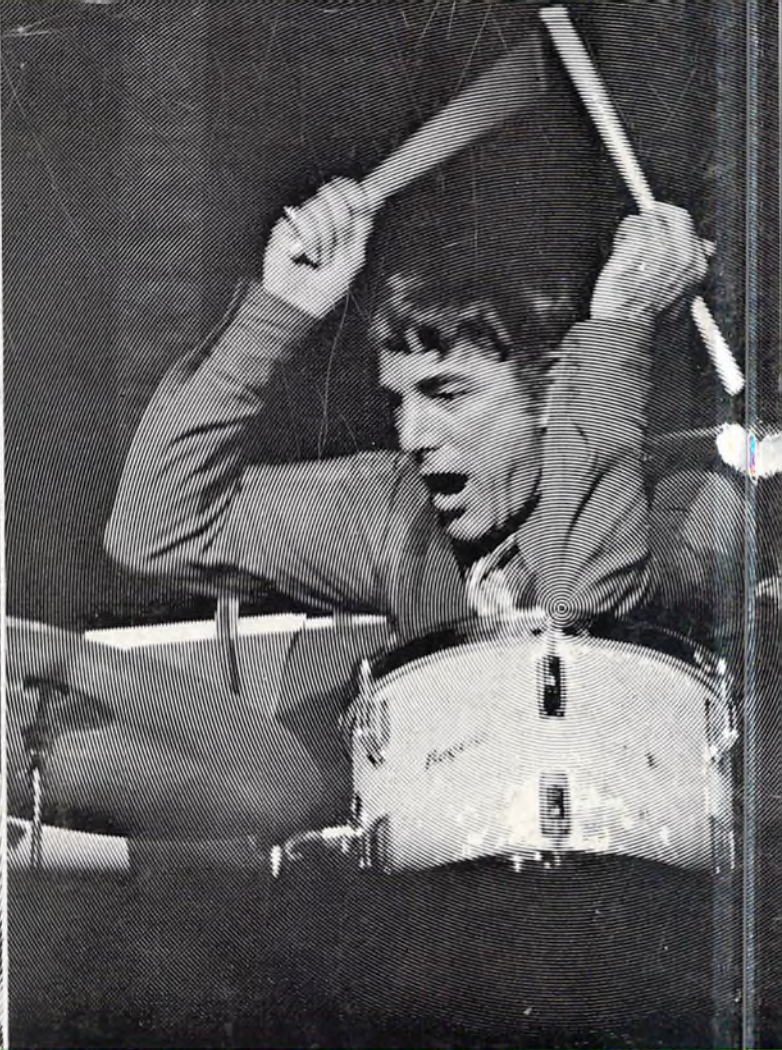


BOX 310, ELKHART, INDIANA 46514

Suggested List Price

- PD 391 — Single Tom-Tom holder — \$37.50
- PD 392 — Double Tom-Tom holder — \$55.00
- PD 318N — Double Tom-Tom holder on Lokfast flush-base stand — \$65.00
- PD 399 — Rockshaft mounting stay — \$12.50





Different strokes for different folks.

Every cymbal perfectionist has his own bag.

BUDDY'S SET-UP



LOUIS' SET-UP



...and ONE bag they have in common is

AVEDIS ZILDJIAN

First with the finest in Cymbal sounds since 1623.

