

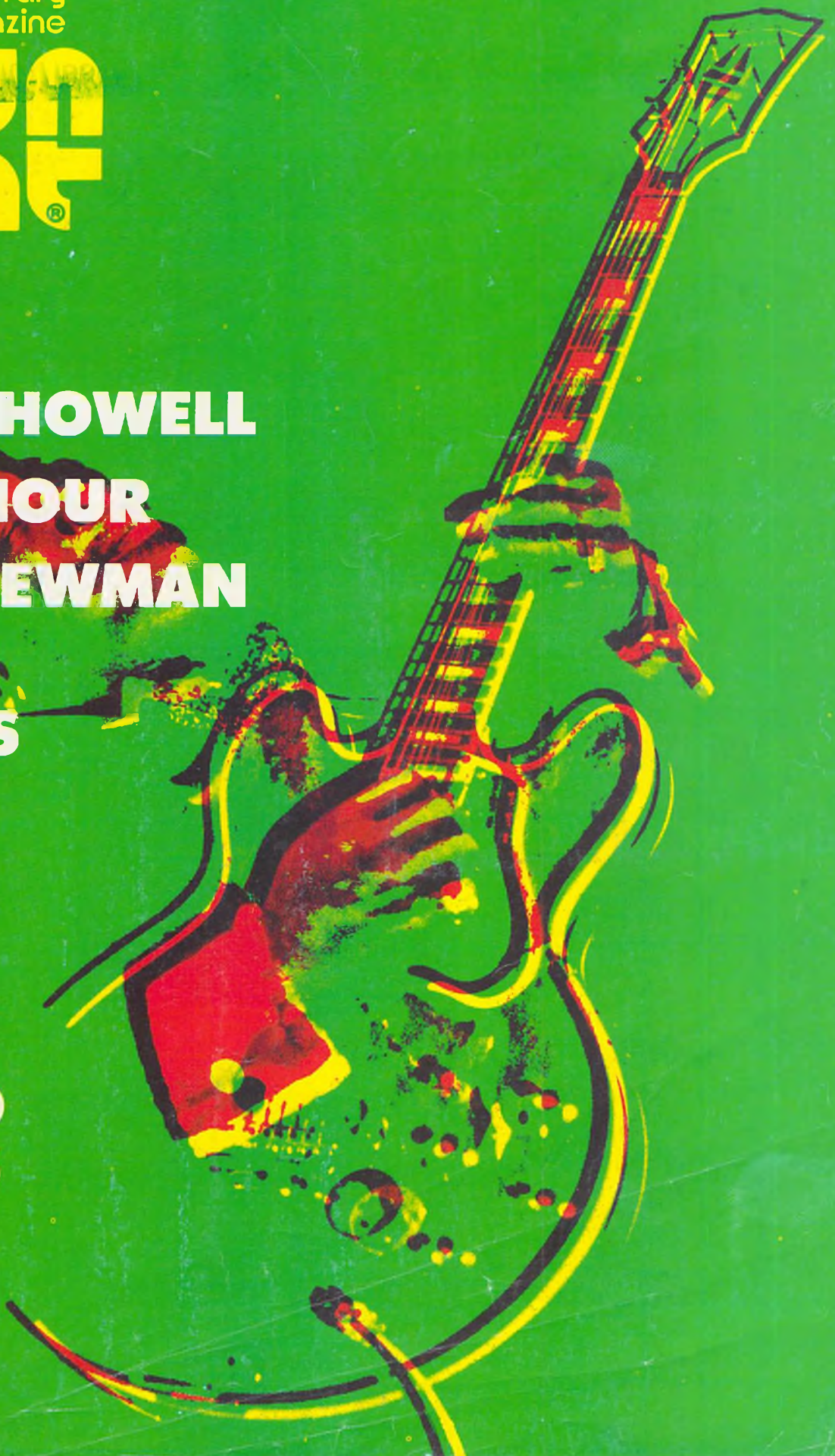
MARCH 13, 1975

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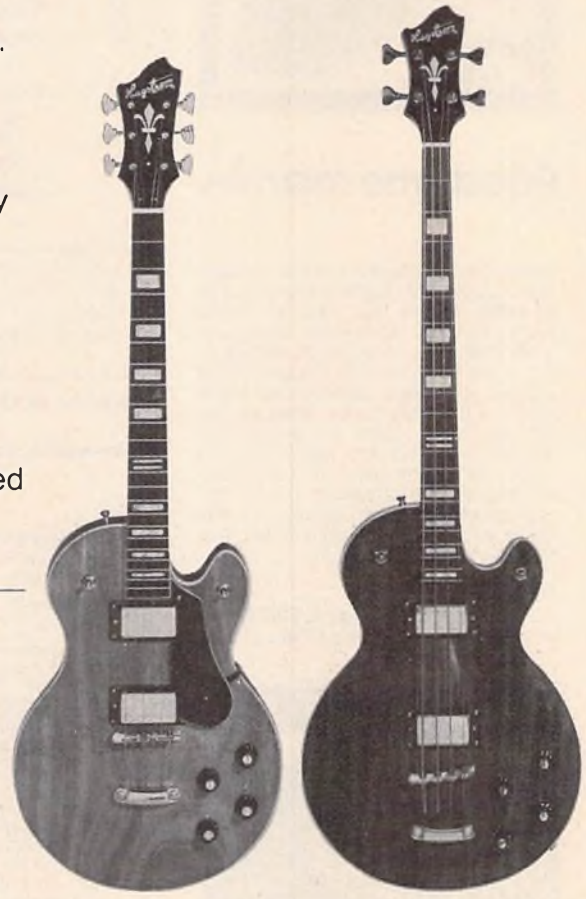
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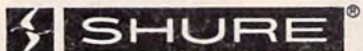




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Cover Design/Art: Kelly/Robertson

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Advertising Sales Offices: East Coast: A. J. Smith, 2714 Sylvia Dr., North Bellmore, N.Y. 11710.  
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## the first chorus

By Charles Suber

**I**t wasn't planned this way; it just happened. This issue, with its emphasis on guitar players, turns out to be a tribute to Wes Montgomery. Even the timing is right: Wes' birthday is March 6. He would be only 50.

It should not come as any surprise that when you talk with any serious guitar player, Wes Montgomery's name and talents enter the conversation . . . just as his playing pervades today's guitar sounds. That is certainly the case with the pickers featured in this issue: Joe Pass, Lee Ritenour, Michael Howell, and Ralph Towncr.

Joe Pass, who is Montgomery's junior by only four years, regards himself as a "craftsman" following the line laid down by the three biggest Innovators of modern guitar: Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and Wes Montgomery. Those among you who have heard Pass on his solo *Virtuoso* album (Pablo) might well argue that the word "craftsman" does not reflect the sheer creativity that shines through on all sides.

There is another basic similarity between Pass and Montgomery—maturity and sense of one's personal worth. Pass, talking about narcotics, which a lifetime ago threatened to do him in: "It was a great waste of time . . . I had failed to grow up. If I'm not entirely present then I can't play my best, because I'm not there." Montgomery, in a *db* interview a month before he died (June 15, '68): "I had seen a lot of it; heard a lot of guys say that those things would help me project myself. But I knew it wasn't true. My mind would function when it was clear . . . you don't need the influences, you'll learn faster, produce more, without it."

There is Pass's simple and eloquent coda: "I'm finally doing what I want to do, which is playing jazz and making a living at it. It took all this time to get to me." And so it was with Wes Montgomery.

Lee Ritenour made a deservedly big splash at the Guitar Summit ('74 Monterey Jazz Festival) with Joe Pass, Mundell Lowe, Jim Hall, and Michael Howell. Ritenour says it right out: "Wes Montgomery was the greatest influence on my playing. He was the only pure guitarist, he really played from the heart."

Michael Howell came out of the Kansas City scene, where you learned the changes by sitting around and singing Charlie Parker solos. Howell says that Wes Montgomery, aside from Parker, was his most important influence. He goes on to make two particularly valid and provocative statements: ". . . no one explained that what we were learning (in college) was a style and not the only way music should be played;" and, "The truth is that guitarists are just becoming musicians."

Howell is saying that contemporary musicians, guitarists included, are getting their whole thing together, gaining the confidence and maturity and talents to *solo*, as great musicians have always done. Evidently Pass is thinking along the same lines: ". . . playing guitarists should be able to pick up the guitar and play music on it for an hour, without a rhythm section or anything."

Wes, they're doing you proud.

Next issue spotlights bass players . . . prime features on those upright and electric musicians. Ron Carter and Stanley Clarke, who placed one-two, and vice-versa, in the bass categories in the last *db* Readers Poll.

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## Solid Profiles

Just a note to thank Jon Balleras for his Profile on John Bunch and my gratitude to Bunch for letting me know that there is at least one musician who can grant an interview without having to bring up defecation and incest in order to express himself.

I wish a few more musicians would try this. I've been reading *down beat* since 1935 and it's amazing how the articles were just as interesting without the language to match the appearance of so many present day musicians.

N. F. Coleman Sun City Center, Fla.

Your article on Morton Subotnick was

greatly appreciated. The opportunity to share in Subotnick's 20th century musical philosophy is extremely stimulating and the discography of his major works was most helpful.

Commentary dealing with contemporary "serious" music is a field largely neglected. A regular feature dealing with this many-faceted area of musical thought is greatly needed. The information would be quickly devoured, with *db* making a giant step forward.

Gerard B. Gebler Norfolk, Va.

Many thanks for the excellent Profile on Tom Coster, Santana keyboardist. I found the article personally inspiring because I,

like Tom, played jazz on the accordion for many years and was laughed at for playing it on the only instrument I knew. Now at 23, I've switched to other keyboards as Tom did. His work with Santana has meant much to me and I'll strive to attain his level of perfection as I continue to perform.

John Keene Cincinnati, Oh.

## Cobham Support

In regards to the letters about Billy Cobham being just an average drummer, I suggest that person pick up a few of the old Mahavishnu records and some of Billy's new albums before he judges. No, Cobham doesn't deserve 1200 votes, but Rich doesn't deserve as many as he received either. The unsung heroes such as Joe Morello, Alan Dawson, Ed Shaughnessy, and Carl Palmer have inspired me as much as Rich. If they had the popularity and articles were written about them, they'd be up there with Big Daddy Rich, too. But cutting up a talent like Billy Cobham isn't going to solve any problems.

Mark Ontiveras O'Fallon, Mo.

Jazz stylists must surely change or else they should step aside for others who are ready to explore and make the changes. So should letter writers such as Stanley Zuckerman (*db* 1/30/75). Buddy Rich is probably the best drummer in the business. Buddy's music is close to being mundane, with his explosive drumming providing the only spark on his recent albums. Rich has been tops for a while and somebody was bound to take his top spot away.

I think Billy Cobham's music is refreshing and his drumming is fantastic. The *down beat* readers made a wise choice this year. In regard to Stanley's challenge, I don't think Buddy would lower himself to a contest, I don't even think he'd show.

Reader Richard Harris must have had bamboo slivers jammed under his fingernails to send that letter saying that Keith Moon is much better than Cobham.

Don McNaughton Scituate, Mass.

## Hendrix Query

I am a recent subscriber to *db* and am interested in the jazz world's view of the late Jimi Hendrix. Personally, I consider him to be a guitar genius. I am not speaking of any one editor's opinion, but the opinions of other jazz world musicians.

Mark Vlad Yonkers, N.Y.

## On The King's Demise

After many years of loyal devotion, the fans of Miles Davis have finally removed him from his number one position in the Readers Poll. Freddie Hubbard has blown his way to the top.

A big letdown, right? For whom? For Miles? No, he probably couldn't care less. I wish I could afford a Lamborghini sports car. The teeny-bopper wing of the mass media has accepted him as its hero. But what about those of us in our 30s and 40s who used to gather to hear him play the musical truth?

Just because he plugs his instruments into sockets now doesn't mean we're all going to become electrified at the results. He would probably get better results if *Popular Mechanics* conducted a jazz poll.

Donald Brown Chicago, Ill.

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# GRAMMIES—TAKE 17



Grammy Bros. Wonder and Hubbard

The National Academy Of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) will present the 17th annual Grammy Awards on March 1 in New York City. The presentations will be aired over the CBS television network, with Andy Williams doing the hosting. Grammys will be awarded in 47 categories, covering the entire spectrum of recorded music.

Some of the more interesting categories and the specific nominees include: Record Of The Year—*Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me*, Elton John; *Feel Like Makin' Love*, Roberta Flack; *Help Me*, Joni Mitchell; *I Honestly Love You*, Olivia Newton-John; *Midnight At The Oasis*, Maria Muldaur.

Album Of The Year—*Back Home Again*, John Denver; *Band On The Run*, Paul McCartney and Wings; *Caribou*, Elton John; *Court And Spark*, Joni Mitchell; *Fulfillingness' First Finale*, Stevie Wonder.

Song Of The Year—*Feel Like Makin' Love*, Eugene McDaniels, songwriter; *I Honestly Love You*, by Jeff Barry and Peter Allen; *Midnight At The Oasis*, by David Nichtern; *The Way We Were*, by Marilyn and Alan Bergman and Marvin Hamlisch; *You And Me Against The World*, by Paul Williams and Ken Ascher.

Best Instrumental Arrangement—*Circumvent*, the Les Hooper Big Band; *Firebird/Birds Of Fire*, Don Sebesky; *Look What They've Done*, Les Hooper Big Band; *Night On Bald Mountain*,

Bob James; *Threshold*, Pat Williams.

Best Album Notes—*50 Years Of Film Music*, Rudy Behlmer, annotator; *For The Last Times*, Bob Willis and the Texas Playboys, Charles Townsend, annotator; *The Hawk Flies*, Coleman Hawkins, Dan Morgenstern, annotator; *The Pianist*, Duke Ellington, Ralph Gleason, annotator; *The World Is Still Waiting For The Sunrise*, Les Paul and Mary Ford, J. R. Young, annotator.

Best Jazz Performance By A soloist—*First Recordings*, Charlie Parker; *High Energy*, Freddie Hubbard; *In The Beginning*, Hubert Laws; *Naima*, McCoy Tyner; *Solo Concerts*, Keith Jarrett.

Best Jazz Performance By A Group—*High Energy*, Freddie Hubbard; *Salt Peanuts*, Super-sax; *Sama Layuca*, McCoy Tyner; *The Tokyo Concert*, Bill Evans; *The Trio*, Oscar Peterson, Joe Pass, Niels Pedersen.

Best Jazz Performance By A Big Band—*Giant Box*, Don Sebesky; *Land Of Make Believe*, Chuck Mangione and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra; *Look What They've Done*, Les Hooper Big Band; *Thundering Herd*, Woody Herman; *Threshold*, Pat Williams.

Best Pop Instrumental Performance—*Along Came Betty*, Quincy Jones; *The Entertainer*, Marvin Hamlisch; *Head Hunters*, Herbie Hancock; *Journey To The Center Of The Earth*, Rick Wakeman; *Rhapsody In White*, Love Unlimited Orchestra.

## FUSION FLASHES

Electric violinist Michal Urbaniak and his Fusion partners have been extremely busy of late. They have just completed the recording of their third album for Columbia, with the new personnel lineup including Urbaniak on violin; Urszula Dudziak, vocals and percussion; Vladak Gulgowski, keyboards; Anthony Jackson, bass; and Gerald Brown, drums. For the purposes of the new album, the quintet was joined by guest guitarists Larry Coryell and John Abercrombie.

Michal will also unveil the use of his new violin synthesizer on the disc, a device manufactured for him by Dr. Max Matthews of Bell Laboratories in New Jersey. Urbaniak is also preparing to produce another album featuring his wife Urszula. But before proceeding to that, he plans to complete a session he is producing for Atlantic Records featuring a variety of his friends. The Atlantic set is geared toward electric funk, with vocal arrangements being done by Bernard Kafka, one-time leader of the Polish vocal group the NOVI Singers.

## potpourri

The following quote unfortunately came in a little too late for inclusion in db's American Music issue: "I think the **Beach Boys** will be the group to represent America during the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. It won't be **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young**, they'll be too busy fighting with each other. We're hoping to do this world tour with **Chicago** in the summer of '75 and will probably play to 100,000 people a day. From there it will be a natural progression to 1976. We will be the group . . . when people want to know what is American music."

So saith **Beach Boy Mike Love** in a moment of deepest reflection.

According to **Blood Sweat & Tears** manager **Fred Heller**, the group's upcoming album will be produced by veteran studio-sharpie **Jimmy Ienner**. The disc should appear in late March, coinciding with BS&T's concert at New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

**Columbia Records** has announced a \$2 price reduction on some 500 albums in its catalog. The \$4.98 list material is largely made up of items which were best-sellers in the past, with 30 country, 20 jazz, and 50 pop/rock artists featured in the series.

Two-time **Electric Flag** lead guitarist **Mike Bloomfield** has turned into a soundtrack specialist. Not on the big scale, but as a composer for the musical scores of budget pornographic flicks. Bloomfield's first opus, *Hot Nazis*, should be appearing soon in X-rated caverns.

While on the topic of World War II nostalgia, French vocalist **Serge Gainsbourg** has emerged from underground with a ditty tagged *Rock Around The Bunker*, a celebration of life during the German occupation.

Discotheques have become the rage in the gold dust towns of **Las Vegas** and **Reno**. The boogieing is reported to be heavy and marathonic, with the in spot of them all being a place called **Dirty Sally's**. The club holds 400 people and has become so popular that even would-be swingers **Perry Como** and **Bob Hope** were required to undergo a 30-minute wait before being admitted to the frenzied writhing.

**Island Records**, an independent label which has only been based in the States for one year, has announced that it plans to sign more American acts. **President Chris Blackwell** says that the label intends to "break away from the way that people

categorize us as a British rock and reggae label."

Bluesman **Taj Mahal** will write and perform the music for the television pilot of *Sounder*.

How about this pearl of wisdom from **Gene Russell**, owner of **Black Jazz Records**: "Your Julliard training doesn't do you any good when *Kung Fu Fighting* makes it."

**Hound Dog Taylor** and his **HouseRockers** have teamed up with **Freddie King** and **Sonny Terry** and **Brownie McGhee** to do a tour of Australia and New Zealand. Concert dates include Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Auckland.

The **American High School Jazz Festival** will be held in Mobile, Alabama on June 5-7 this year. The festival will be non-competitive and at-large participants are invited to audition. Participating units may be high school jazz bands, combos, or vocal units and soloists. At-large audition tapes should be sent to **Maxine Crawford, Mobile Jazz Festival, Box 1098, Mobile, Ala., 36601**. Tapes must contain two or more selections on 7 1/2 inch tape and must be received before March 15. Photos and publicity materials may also be enclosed with the tapes. Clinicians for the event will include **Phil Wilson, Clark Terry, and Johnny Smith**, with all activities being designed by **Dr. William L. Fowler**.

**Julian "Cannonball" Adderley** recently made his speaking role debut in an episode of ABC's *Kung Fu* series. Cannon, who has appeared in several motion pictures in a mute role, played an itinerant musician for the TV shot. He was joined by guitarist **Jose Feliciano**, and the two composed several original interludes for the event. Asked if he now sees himself as a potential leading man, Cannon quipped, "No, only if they need a fat guy who plays the sax."

Two outstanding ensembles from the University of Rochester's **Eastman School Of Music** will make tours during the second week of April. The **Eastman Musica Nova** and the **Eastman Jazz Ensemble** will play back-to-back concerts, the former unit stressing new and experimental concert music with the latter performing big-band jazz. Tour dates include Case-Western Reserve University, April 7; Oberlin College, April 8; North Shore Country Day School, April 9; University of Illinois, April 10; Indiana University, April 11; and University Of Michigan, April 13.



# STRIPE UP THE BAND

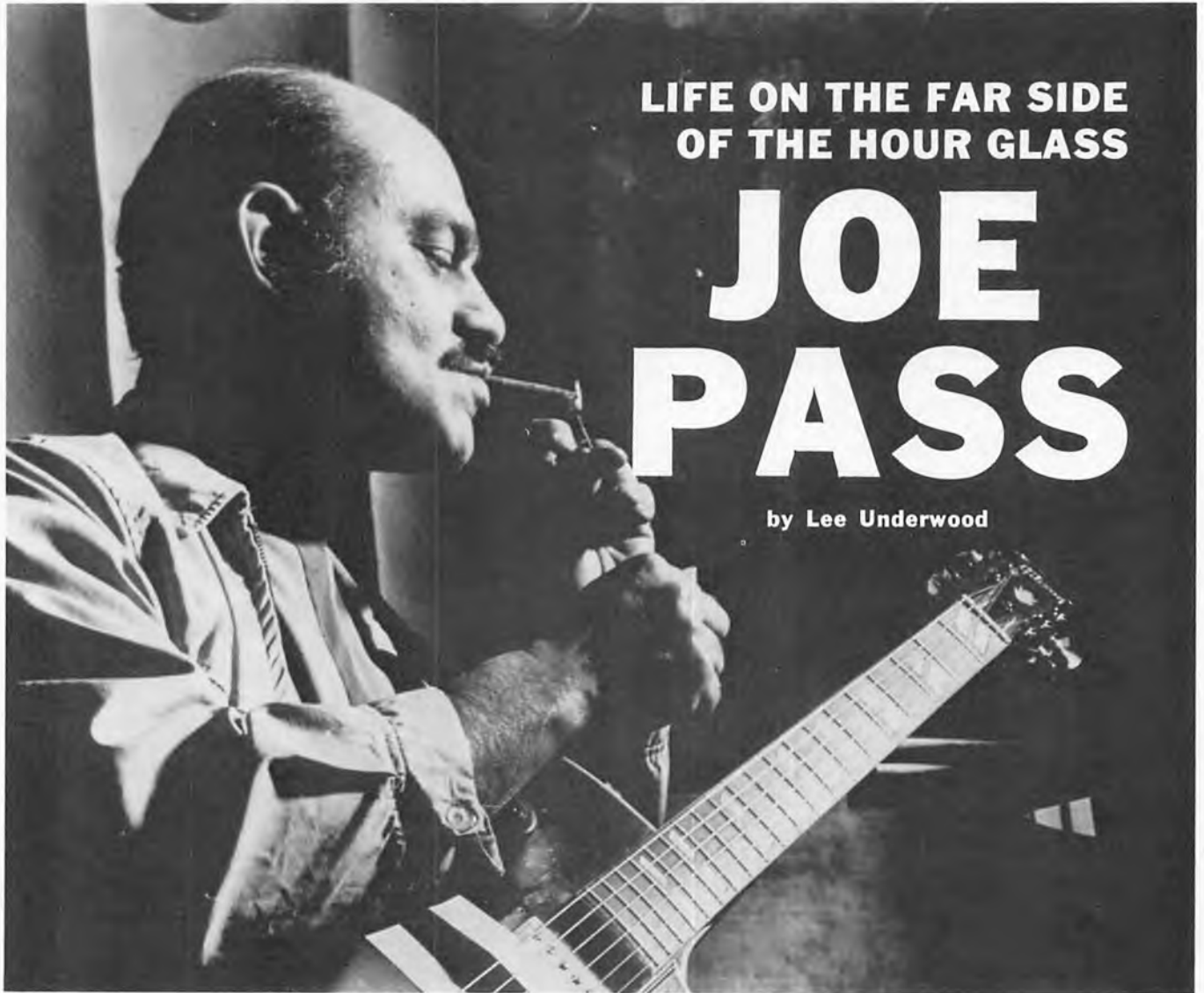
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LIFE ON THE FAR SIDE  
OF THE HOUR GLASS

# JOE PASS

by Lee Underwood

*When I first started, my father used to say, "Get the guitar and play for these people." I'd say, "Play what?" He'd say, "I don't know, but you better play! Play something. Play. Play whatever it is!"*

—Joseph Anthony Jacobi Passalacqua

When we measure our own insides by somebody else's outside, we always come up short, no matter how brilliant we are at doing what we do. Although Joe Pass is one of the most versatile and exciting guitarists on the national music scene today, he still finds himself somewhat amazed to be included in the same ranks with an Oscar Peterson, an Ella Fitzgerald, a Barney Kessel, or a Kenny Burrell. In a sense, at age 45, Sicilian-American Joseph Anthony Jacobi Passalacqua has only just begun.

One giant step has been the recent release of *Virtuoso* (2310-708) on Norman Granz's newly formed label, Pablo Records. To be sure, Joe is featured on three other excellent Pablo discs, released simultaneously: *Two For The Road*, a duo album with guitarist Herb Ellis; *Take Love Easy*, another duo setting,

with Ella Fitzgerald; and *The Trio*, with Oscar Peterson and bassist Niels Pederson. But on *Virtuoso*, Joe Pass stands alone—no bassist, no drummer, no front-line singer. Just Joe Pass: solo guitarist.

He regards himself as the present extension of the flame of tradition ignited by Django Reinhardt and handed down through Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery. He's a bebopper, not a rocker; but all the serious rock guitarists I know study Joe Pass almost as much as they used to study Jimi Hendrix. And Joe's *Virtuoso* album is a gold mine of guitar artistry.

He plays *tunes*—not riffs—great tunes with complex chord changes and dazzling modulations, classic tunes, like *The Song Is You*, *Round Midnight*, *Night And Day*, *How High The Moon*, *Cherokee*. He plays fast, like Django and Charlie Parker played fast. And he plays all the dimensions of the song himself: the melodies, the harmonies, the time.

"There are a lot of ways of doing a solo album," Joe smiles, brushing the top of his bald head with the palm of his hand. (He started losing his hair at age 20.) "One way is

to take a tune and work it out, decide on changes, intro, and ending, modulations, tempos—work it out, and go in and do it.

"What I did, though, was just go in, and somebody would say, 'Why don't you play *How High The Moon*?' I'd say, 'Yeah, that might be nice.' I had no tempo in mind, no key, necessarily. I just tried to make it from beginning to end, you know? I must have played about 20 tunes. Let's try this tune . . . let's try this one. Oh, no. Take it away! Well, how about this one?"

"I found myself getting into traps and then having to get out of them. Here and there you'll find places where I hesitated or doubted a little bit. But it's an exciting album, spontaneous and alive. I like to play that way, even on gigs."

Joe plays perhaps a half a chorus out of tempo, "and then it's time to change, so you get into a tempo. Now you're concerned with keeping a pulse and some kind of chordal sound—you can't just keep playing all notes. You add some bass lines and some chords. Now you gotta do some melodic improvisations, some lines. It gets to be a matter of put-



ting *all* these things together in such a way that they come out smoothly and you're not losing anything."

Today, Joe Pass and Alison, his wife of ten years, reside in the suburbs of Los Angeles with their two children, Joseph (6¼) and Nina (2½). Joe recently spent two weeks in London playing at Ronnie Scott's world-famous jazz club, after which he flew over to Holland and did a television jazz show on which he played one solo spot followed by two compositions with a 35-piece orchestra. He has a second solo album coming up on Pablo, still another album with Oscar Peterson (and Ray Brown), and he recently released the above-mentioned quartet of Pablo records. He also placed sixth in popularity across the nation in the latest *down beat* Readers Poll (Dec. 19, 1974) and second only to John McLaughlin in *Melody Maker's* annual poll.

To top it all off, he just finished recording a live trio album with Jim Hughart (bass) and Frank Severino (drums) at Donte's, one of L.A.'s most noted jazz clubs. The evening was a smashing success and included such songs as *Stompin' At The Savoy*, *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life*, *What's New*, and a searing-tempoed *Pent-up House*.

**H**e was born in New Jersey, but raised in the Italian working-class section of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. His father, Mariano Pasalacqua, worked in the steel mills and struggled daily to support his wife and four children. Even today, Joe, the oldest of three brothers and one sister, says, "I'm lucky, that's all. I always think in terms of my family and of making a living. My father had a rough time doing that. He was always laid off and out of work. So I'm surprised I can make a living playing the guitar."

For his ninth birthday, Pass got a \$17 Harmony guitar. "It had a big, thick neck and was really hard to play," Joe chuckles, "but I'd seen a movie called *Ride, Tenderfoot, Ride*, and I wanted to be Gene Autry. He was the first guy I ever heard."

In Johnstown there were "a lot of local Italian cats in the neighborhood who drank wine, and sang, and played the guitar. So when my father got me the Harmony, he had some of these friends of his come over and show me a D chord, a G, and an A. Pretty soon I could play 'em better than they could!"

He began taking lessons once a week, studying out of books by Nick Lucas and Volda Oclat Bickford, and playing pieces like *Spanish Dance Number 5* and *Song Of India*. He attended the lessons regularly, but at the same time he retained *everything* the teacher showed him, "so instead of reading the music, I played through all those books by ear. Maybe ten years later, I got to a scene where they put some music in front of me, and I couldn't read it! I could read the notes, but I couldn't read the time. In a way, I had to start all over again."

Although Joe's father, Mariano, was not a musician, he nevertheless had an intuitive sense of what was necessary. Mariano pushed Joe. Joe practiced every morning before school, every afternoon when he came home, and every evening after dinner for three or four more hours, running from the first page of whatever book he was in at the time to the last page of the last book.

"My father would say, 'Practice the scales! Practice!' Then he would hum a tune, or whistle something, and say, 'Get that.' And I would have to try to get it. Or if he heard a guitarist on the radio—I remember there was a guitarist who played on the *Blondie & Dagwood Show*. He played the same lick in the theme song all the time. Every time that show came on, I'd have to go get the guitar and see if I could play it!"

"My father would insist that I learn *tunes*, too, and then fill them up. Play the tune, learn the melody, and do the fills. He instinctively felt I should be doing these things. He would hum an Italian song, I would play it, and then he'd say, 'Fill it up!'"

Today, Joe teaches, which he considers a form of practicing. At other times, he plays

#### SELECTED PASS DISCOGRAPHY

VIRTUOSO—Pablo 2130-708  
TWO FOR THE ROAD (with Herb Ellis)—Pablo 2310-714  
TAKE LOVE EASY (with Ella Fitzgerald)—Pablo 2310-702  
THE TRIO (with Oscar Peterson and Niels Henning Orsted-Pederson)—Pablo 2310-701  
INTERCONTINENTAL—MPS-BASF 20738  
CATCH ME—World Pacific/Pacific Jazz WP 20073 (out of print)  
FOR DJANGO—World Pacific/Pacific Jazz WP 20085 (out of print)  
SIGN OF THE TIMES—World Pacific/Pacific Jazz WP 21844 (out of print)  
STONED JAZZ—World Pacific/Pacific Jazz 1854 (out of print)  
SIMPLICITY—World Pacific/Pacific Jazz 21865 (out of print)



all day, either at home or in the studios. "I also do a lot of practicing on the gig, just going out there and trying to play something right off the seat of my pants. I think playing guitarists should be able to pick up the guitar and play music on it for an hour, without a rhythm section or anything. Play so that somebody can relate to the fact that you're playing, even if they don't understand it. At least they can hear *music* coming out, and they can see something happening. I think that's a good way to learn, to actually put yourself in a place to *play* it."

Joe recommends his own excellent book, *Guitar Styles*, as well as books by Barney Kessel, Howard Roberts, Tony Mattola, and Carcassii.

He contends that younger players today have all the information they need, but they often can't do anything with what they know. "They go to school, universities, and colleges, but when I ask them just to play something, they say, 'Well, what kind of thing would you like?' How about a pop tune? A standard tune? How about an original tune—anything: just play some *music*. I think guys should be working on putting all their scales and knowledge into a piece of music. It then becomes a test of how they hear, how they put things together."

A good deal of information can be theoretically correct, but impractical to utilize. "So you learn to leave those things out," Joe explains. "Either you go through 25 years of playing to discover that, or you could start right away by just sitting down and trying to do things and seeing what happens."

"There's no reason that a guitarist can't sit down and play *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life*. If he can't, then he should learn. It's an important area that so many overlook."

"Learn to play *Sunshine* or some other tune ad lib, without a tempo, giving yourself enough time to put in things that you think fit. Create a composition. See what you can do with the melody and the chord changes. Can you add some fills? Can you modulate? Try experimenting. Put everything into that tune that you think fits. And then go to your teacher and have him listen. See if you're on the right track. See if your thinking and hearing are right."

At 14, Joe began playing in local groups for dances and weddings, "and I *still* feel like I'm playing for dances and weddings," he laughs. His weekend jobs at \$3-5 a night augmented the family income, as well as providing him with an education. "We had a bass, a violin, a rhythm guitar, and me," Joe recalls, "no drummer. We'd play swing tunes, like *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Lady Be Good*, and I would play the melodies. The guy who headed the group was a friend of my dad's, so I was in good hands. A chaperone-style gig. I'd play the job, take my three bucks, the leader would drive me home afterwards, and that would be it, you know?"

Around 1948, he discovered bebop—Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins. "At that time, these records were hard to get, but there was a store in town, and every once in awhile a few of them would slip in. I'd go to the store, and they'd put the record on the machine, and I'd stand there and listen to it. After that, you went home, because there was only one record. I remember one time I went home and copied *Visa*, part of Bird's solo."

In 1949 and 1950, 52nd Street was boom-



ing. New York was the undisputed jazz mecca of the world. Clubs abounded: Minton's. Birdland. The Royal Roost. The Onyx Club. The Three Deuces. The White Rose Bar. Every other door was a "jazz joint." Dizzy was there, Charlie Parker was there, Curly Russell, Al Higg, Billy Eckstine, Kenny Clarke, Billie Holiday, Coleman Hawkins, and Art Tatum. They all were there, and so was young Joe Pass from Johnstown, Pa.

But he blew it. He became a junkie, thus entering a 12 year period that he regards as being almost a total waste of life. "From about 1949 to the end of 1960, I spent most of my time in the interstices of society. I lived in the cracks. I was in New Orleans for a year, for example, playing bebop for strippers. They didn't care what you played, as long as the tempo was right."

He traveled from one place to another, finally getting busted in Fort Worth, Texas, and jailed for five years. When he came out, he jumped back on dope, and in 1960 he found himself "out on the streets and not playing a note."

Some men develop, grow, and expand their innate potentialities steadily and surely. Others live a life shaped something like the silhouette of an hour glass laid on its side. Their odyssey begins with wide-open potential, only to diminish at an increasing rate until they finally reach their own personal bottom. If they are lucky, and if they survive and change, then they perhaps once again begin to grow and expand. Their new lives spread wide with renewed hope and opportunity, like the far side of the hour glass, the open end of a newly-born triangle.

Joe Pass had reached his low point. He realized it, and decided to change. He entered Synanon for three years, straightened out, cleaned up, grew up, and learned how to live in a decision-making, adult world.

"A lot of kids think that in order to be a guitarist you've gotta go out and be a junkie for ten years, and that's just not true. I can't credit any of that time, saying that's when I really learned. I spent most of those years just being a bum, doing nothing. It was a great waste of time. I could have been doing then a lot of things I'm doing now. Only I had failed to grow up."

Joe discovered that he plays better when he's completely straight. "The thing that hangs people up is being conscious of things outside. They think that if they have five drinks or some grass or something, they'll relax. They think they'll get over saying, 'Will they like me? Will they not like me?'"

"I don't say I've overcome that. I still get nervous, because I want to do my very best. If I have to play a solo gig tomorrow night, I'm nervous! If there's somebody in the audience that I have a lot of respect for, I get nervous!"

"Having a few drinks or smoking pot, however, doesn't change the fact that the audience is still out there and that I'm going out on stage to play for them. All it does is alter my senses and my feeling so that I'm not entirely present. If I'm not entirely present, then I can't play my best, because I'm not there."

"If you don't believe me, if you want to make a test of it, record something when you're straight, and then record it when you're under the influence of something. You can see the difference, you can detect it, you

can hear it."

Overcoming extreme self-consciousness and nervousness is a matter of practice. It's a matter of "acting as if" you were confidently in control, until you learn how to relax for real. "If you go through the motions of doing something over and over again, you simply get better at it. In the beginning, you always get those feelings—anxiety, fear, you know? I always felt small, like a little kid, even though I was an adult, right? But the more you do something, the easier it becomes. The more you go through the motions of getting up on the stand and playing straight—if you do it for one year, everything you felt at the beginning of that year will be minimized by the end of that year. I don't say you get rid of all the anxiety, but you certainly do get rid of most of it. It becomes the difference between being nervous, self-conscious and uptight, or being primarily excited and prepared to play. Each time it gets better."

Things began to improve almost immediately. Joe began playing again, at first just a little bit, and then full-time. Dick Bock, one of the sponsors of Synanon, and owner of World Pacific Records at the time, recorded Joe (and Arnold Ross, David Allen, Greg Dykes, "and a drummer and bass player who had never played before") on a record called *Sounds Of Synanon*.

Joe also began playing weekends with Bud Shank and others at L.A.'s now defunct jazz club, Shelly's Manne Hole, while continuing to record with World Pacific.

Since leaving Synanon more than ten years ago, he has been increasingly productive and successful. He initially began playing numerous casuals, "casualties, as they call them." He then recorded three or four albums with Gerald Wilson's big band (including *Moment of Truth*), a few albums with Richard "Groove" Holmes, and some with Les McCann.

He became involved in studio work, playing four or five years on various television programs, including the *Woody Woodbury Show*, *The Donald O'Connor Show*, and the *Good Morning* show. "I learned how to do all my reading right then and there. Although 90% of it is nothing, there's that 10% that really gets tough!"

For many, the world of the anonymous studio musician is a nether world indeed. "You have to have your regular guitar, a 12-string guitar, a banjo, a mandolin, a wah-wah pedal—all the tools of the trade. When they call you, they expect you to be able to do everything that's contemporary. 'Can you remember what so-and-so did on such-and-such a hit record? Well, we want that.' And if you can't play that, they don't call you again."

After leaving the lucrative limbo-land of studio work, Joe played a couple of years with George Shearing, and in the last year or so he has been involved with Pablo Records. "I'm finally doing what I want to do, which is playing jazz and making a living at it," Joe says. "And I'm starting to go out on my own and do trio and solo work."

Joe plays two guitars: his "workhorse," a Gibson ES-175, and a hand-made Jimmy DiQuisto guitar, "acoustically the best being made." He uses medium-gauge DiQuisto strings and a Polytone transistorized amplifier, stock model 102 by Tommy Gumina. "It's got that warm, round, clean sound. If

you play a chord, you can hear every note in the chord without distortion. It weighs only 22 pounds, and it's small. You can't beat it. I use it all the time."

Even with all of the successes that have come his way, including tours and recordings with Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Pass cannot quite believe that he belongs in the major leagues. He still feels as if he were "chosen" to play the guitar, as if his music were somehow separate and distinct from himself. "When somebody tells me I sound great, it's hard for me to believe. If I didn't play the guitar, I might be doing something infinitely simpler in life. I don't know what the hell that might be. Maybe I'd be a milkman or something."

He considers Django Reinhart, Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery to be innovators, while he considers himself to be a craftsman. "Remember when they used to have shoemakers and guilds? And if you really got good, then maybe you would emerge as an innovator: you might go down in history as someone who made the best shoes in the tradition of making good shoes. That's the way I consider what I'm doing. I put myself in the area of just playing the guitar, of carrying on the tradition, of just playing it, without pedals or anything else."

Although Joe has enjoyed playing several rock gigs, utilizing the solid-body guitar, the wah-wah, the fuzz-tone, phase-shifter, feedback, etc., he nevertheless prefers to remain relatively "pure."

"I could learn things from rock guitarists, but I don't want to try to do it just because that's what's happening, or that's what the newest cats are doing. It took me all this time to get to me. What I should be doing is perfecting what I'm doing and get the meat out of that."

"I would be doing myself an injustice if I jumped out there and surrounded myself with things that I don't feel. I try to learn those things that fit my musical soul, my musical mind."

Of contemporary guitarists Joe feels that Mahavishnu John McLaughlin is an innovator of perhaps the same caliber as Django, Charlie Christian, or Wes Montgomery. "The way he plays, and his concept . . . he can play! He's really a guitarist. He uses all the electronics, but he incorporates all the volume and the pedals into his concept, so that the technique becomes secondary. It's a means to furthering his overall vision."

"And I dig that. I'm thinking about doing that. The first step is getting the right kind of material, then the right instrument and sound. Like, I can't just go out and plug in my hollow-body guitar with my medium-gauge strings, and the way I play, and make something happen. I tried that, and everything I tried sounded different, but there was nothing different that I could do with it."

"So it will require some kind of work, some kind of study, some sort of plan, which I'm looking forward to. I have to sit down and let the sound generate, and find a way to get in there and use it."

In a recent review, a certain critic felt that Joe was not relaxed enough in his Vancouver performance, that he didn't take enough chances. "How many chances I take depends on how I feel, because I don't have nothin' prepared, man. I don't play the same tune the same way twice. My style is my style, but I

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# RANDY NEWMAN

by michael cuscuna



JOHN RANDOLPH, WTTW

Randy Newman has become a leading singer-songwriter within the last two years. People have finally begun to realize his genius. Randy denies it, wouldn't admit it and usually jokes nervously or squirms at the mention of it, but he does know his own worth.

His songwriting began to mature in the mid '60s, in a unique direction that did not fit into familiar pop patterns. Newman writes most of his songs in the first person; he is simultaneously the author and the actor in musical vignettes that come from many external sources, but rarely from his own experience.

Born in New Orleans, Newman was raised in Southern California. Although his father and brother are doctors, his three uncles Emil, Lionel and the late Alfred Newman were among Hollywood's greatest film composers and conductors. While still in Hollywood High, Randy Newman began writing songs for Metric Music.

Those were the days of the great songwriting teams that could telescope all the elements and qualities of pop music into two-minute symphonies. There were Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, Gerry Goffin and Carole King, Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield, Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, and a handful of others who could consistently turn out hits and follow-ups.

But Randy Newman could not really compete in that field. "I admired a lot of those people, but I couldn't write a hit single. If an artist was having a hit, everyone would try to write the follow-up. But it never worked for me. Whenever I would try to deliberately write a hit song and I was sure that it was good, people would always tell me otherwise. I thought *I Wonder Why* was going to be a hit. In fact, the only hit single of one of my tunes is *Mama Told Me Not To Come*. I had forgotten about the song and didn't even think it was very good.

But my producer Lenny Waronker dug it out and asked me to use it on my second album. The group Three Dog Night picked it up from there, and it was a hit."

There were no hits in the early '60s during his period at Metric Music. Newman did have some luck. One of his tunes was the flip side of a Fleetwoods hit, and his first professional arranging job came with that group. In 1961, still in high school, Randy got his first chance to record: it was a single for Dot produced by Pat Boone. The A side was a tune called *Gridiron Golden Boy*, a rather juvenile effort about a football hero who is stealing the singer's girl. Randy was so nervous at the session the tune was recorded that it came out as *Golden Gridiron Boy*, which makes a lot less sense. Mercifully, the record bombed.

That early period did produce a couple of noteworthy songs: *I Don't Want To Hear It Anymore*, recorded by Jerry Butler and later Dusty Springfield, and *Snow*, recorded by Harper's Bizarre. By 1966, Randy had switched publishers to January Music and was crystallizing his style.

Randy Newman's little musical dramas developed a distinct and mature harmonic and melodic quality. His characters and his stories were more unusual and subtle than most of the words that get crammed into the song form. Singing in the first person, he got inside his characters and uncovered their fears, their obsessions and their fates, always maintaining a high comedic level.

Take the first album. *Love Story* finds a typical middle-class American planning out his simple-minded existence with the woman he "likes," following the same boring, dreary life pattern that thousands have lived, are living, and will live. Newman takes it to the very end, singing sweetly of retiring to Florida and playing checkers all day "till we pass away." Dozens of middle of the road singers like Jack Jones have sung that song seriously. That might tell us where they're at.

Then there's *Davy The Fat Boy*. An enterprising mercenary explains that he was a friend of Davy and a comfort to his parents until they died. Now he is the boy's ward and takes him on a sideshow, earning money by having people guess Davy's weight. Newman acts out his character perfectly in all phases, from the touching friend to the callous, energetic carnival barker.

Although there were a couple of serious songs like *Cowboy*, a moving lament to the character in the film *Lonely Are The Brave*, Newman's first album in 1968 was made up of musically and intellectually rich songs that simultaneously evoked pathos and laughter.

He claims, "I write those songs to make people laugh. I don't want to bring out sadness. Those characters I write about are assholes. Their situations are their own doing." If you talk to Randy on another day, you might hear a different story. He is not one for consistency when talking about his attitudes on his music career. In fact, the depth and understanding with which he creates and delves into the soul of his characters automatically negates such a flip attitude that they are just "assholes."

As for the inconsistencies in talking about his music, Newman is a complex individual with changing feelings and sometimes simultaneously contradictory opinions or feelings about the same issue. Randy usually finds interviews to be tedious and uninteresting. He's not kidding when he says, "I can't imagine why anyone would want to interview me. I really have nothing to say. I'm not that interesting." The humor and the imagination and the creativity that is Randy Newman are all in his music as well as his being.

An example of the deficiencies inherent in a Newman interview occurred in a conversation we had in Los Angeles last year. I told Randy I thought a certain song, which shall go unmentioned, was autobiographical (which is rare in his work). He denied it. I gave the reasons that I thought so. He paused for a minute or two and said, "Oh, yeah, I suppose you're right." Another time, he said, "You know, I keep telling people and myself that songwriting isn't that important to me. But I sure do spend an awful lot of time talking about it and worrying about it. I guess I do care. I don't know."

At any rate, that first album, released in 1968, was the public's first dose of an extraordinary new singer-songwriter and arranger. And the reviews were great: lots of critics and disc jockeys loved the album, planting the seeds of a dedicated cult following. As for the record buying public, sales amounted to just a little over nothing. Newman's style of song and subject matter was just a bit too new, and his reticent singing voice and Van Dyke Parks' bizarre mixes put the music even further out of reach for a large audience.

But a cult did develop, mostly within the music business and in musician's circles. A second album, *12 Songs*, came in 1970 with Randy in better voice backed by a light rock accompaniment. The cult grew.

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# NORMAN CONNORS

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## A BROTHERHOOD OF RHYTHM

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by herb nolan



CLARENCE E. EASTMOND

Occasionally events are remembered not in terms of dates, those neutral figures that catalog days, but in terms of other, ostensibly unrelated, events. That's the way Norman Connors recalls his move to New York City, not with a date, or a season, or a year . . .

"It was right before John (Coltrane) died—it was the year John died," the percussionist repeated, not certain whether he meant 1965 or 1966. Nor was it important. His coming to New York, the pilgrimage that a musician must make to advance his art, was significant primarily in its coincidental relationship with the death of a musician who had become both a musical and spiritual force for a new generation of young musicians like Norman Connors.

Although he hasn't been in New York's music melieu as long as some of his contemporaries, Connors has already accomplished a great deal. Since 1972 he's put out four albums (the fifth is on the way), albums over which he has had complete artistic control from the music and musicians on down to cover art. He's worked with such diversified performers as Marion Brown, Sun Ra, Jack McDuff, Lou Donaldson and Pharoah Sanders.

In a conversation that began late one Sunday night in a dimly lit backroom that served as a dressing room and storage area at the rear of the Ntu Theater-Bar on Chicago's 75th St. where he'd brought a band that in-

cluded vocalist Jean Carn, percussionist Neil Clark, saxophonist Carlos Garnett, bassist James Benjamin, and pianist Hubert Eaves, he talked about his music.

We began talking about *Slewfoot*, Connors' fourth and most recent recording. It seemed like a good place to start since the record was a departure from his three previous albums, *Dance Of Magic*, *Dark Of Light*, and *Love From The Sun*.

"Was *Slewfoot* a conscious attempt at achieving more of a commercial success?"

"I did the short cuts," he said over the mechanical whir of an ice machine's compressor, "because they (the record company) wanted 45s. They thought they could sell a lot more records with a 45, but . . . a-ah . . . four of the tunes on that album are really traveling out of the same thing I've been doing. I think the group and the record has its own sound. It's not going in the same direction now, it's going away from that.

"*Slewfoot* isn't a step away from things, it's a slightly different approach to the same concepts. We do a few things like we did on the album when the band is playing live, so I figured we'd try that on a record—I mean why not? You know, it's good to change up a little bit, not a drastic change, but just to try a few other things instead of staying in one particular bag all the way. I never believed in staying in one place anyway.

"*Love From The Sun* is my favorite album," allowed Connors who sees each recording as a fragment of a larger concept—a masterplan. "It's the best of that particular series. "*Slewfoot* is like the start . . ." He paused and changed his mind. "It's the fusing of some of the rock elements: the fusing of electric guitar and clavinet with the spiritualness of Jean's voice and the prettiness of Eddie Henderson's trumpet. It is like the end of one thing and the beginning of something else. I never think in terms of doing a rock album or doing this or doing that, I just think in terms of things I like."

Why do you pick certain instruments and musicians?

"Because I like certain individual sounds and I like to blend them to a specific sound that I hear conceptually. For example, I like the sound of Eddie Henderson's trumpet with the sound of Gary Bartz' soprano. I like *that* sound. I like to contrast certain things like Carlos Garnett's tenor with Eddie Henderson's trumpet, or his fluegelhorn with Gary Bartz' soprano. I like that sound. I like the bass playing of Cecil McBee and Stan Clarke, it's a thing they have that I hear. I like the sound of Jean's voice along with Eddie's trumpet with Gary Bartz' and Carlos' horns and Hubert Laws' flute. That sound I hear is light but it's strong at the same time. It has a certain cohesiveness and prettiness about it."

Do you do the arranging on your albums?

"No, it depends whose composition it is. Richie Clay, who writes a lot of songs, does the arranging on his tunes, Carlos arranges his, and so on.

"But before I even do a date I can almost hear it. I go home and I hear certain things and I play out of what I hear. Then I go about getting certain individuals to fill that concept. I don't think of myself as a composer necessarily. I look at the music as segments of concepts, and each record is a separate project—a whole separate conceptual project. It takes months and months of planning and thinking, thinking about and hearing things. (Connors does two albums a year.) Like, I go home to practice certain rhythms, or I'll sing certain things to myself. There are also certain songs I like, and I go around and try to get the best person to arrange that particular song."

How do you approach the drums within those concepts?

"That's hard to say. It depends on what composition you're playing. I approach the drums in terms of compositional structure and the personality within the structure of what's happening musically. I try to create the warmest feeling that I can give the music based on all my knowledge. The most important thing is to make whatever you are playing tasty."

Have you felt your playing change over the years?

"Yeah, somewhat. But a lot of things I'm doing now I've been experimenting with for a long time—ten or 15 years. I would try things with certain people, but often they'd clash so I just bided my time."

Do you like what Billy Cobham is doing?

"I love what he's doing, that's all I can say," he replied, laughing. "I like the way he plays, I like what he does, and I'd go to see him. Billy Cobham is Billy Cobham, that's what makes it good. As a matter of fact, I use two bass drums, too, but I don't play them the way he does."



**A WEEK LATER** as we drove along Lake Shore Drive through a cold, steady rain, I went back to the subject of the double bass and the way Connors uses them.

"I've always experimented with two bass drums, all the way back in Philly. It was just a matter of time until I felt I could include it in my sound. I get another dimension out of the two drums because each is tuned differently. It's like adding another person. I use the drums polyrhythmically, I use them as another color; sometimes I don't even feel like playing snare, I just feel like playing bass—two basses. Like, I'll take my foot off the sock and just play the basses. Then sometimes I'll mix it up, the foot comes off the sock for a moment, I play some bass drum punctuation and then back to the sock, you know. It's part of my whole rhythmic nature right now. It's like another tom-tom, it's part of me, I'd feel lost without two bass drums.

"I've just added some timbales, so that'll be another color. The Chinese cymbal at the left I like because it sounds very African. All my drums are tuned very deep, a very bottom sound, a very rich sound."

*Are drummers today paying attention to tuning?*

"No. Drummers now don't pay attention to tuning the way they did in the days of Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones. I mean, all the drummers going back to the '50s and '60s really spent time tuning their drums. A lot of drummers today just beat and pound. They just beat drums with no kind of musical tone.

"I'm not speaking of drummers like Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, or Lenny White. The young greats, they tune their drums. But many players have a bunch of drums and they just beat on them, it sounds like tin cans sometimes. Tuning the drum is just as important as playing it.

"But you know, I don't look at music from a drummer's point of view, I stopped doing that years ago. If a drummer is playing, I look at the whole band, not just the drummer's technique. I try to enjoy the whole concept of what's happening. I don't take things apart anymore, I did that when I was much younger."

**NORMAN CONNORS** grew up in the projects of North Philadelphia. His earliest influence was his neighbor, drummer Lex Humphries. "He lived right across the street, and when I was about six or seven years old, I would hear him practicing all the time. We went to the same elementary school, and in those days Spanky DeBrest, Lee Morgan, Reggie Workman, and a lot of different people were around rehearsing all the time at Spanky DeBrest's house.

"After Lex Humphries, I guess it was Max Roach. Max really cooled me out, I don't know what I'd be doing if it weren't for him."

Like many young musicians, Connors learned a great deal from Roach, a father figure whose advice went beyond just playing. Roach has given and continues to give musicians insight into themselves as well as their music. He has shown them how to maintain their art, deal with criticism, and continue to play music in a country that is often ignorant and indifferent to it. In short, he has helped musicians survive.

"When I went to New York, Marion Brown gave me my first gig, then Archie Shepp gave me my first recording date. After that I worked with Sun Ra, Jackie McLean, Sam



WILLIAM ELSBERRY

group, where he worked for a number of years.

"I was getting the music and concept together in 1971, it was just a matter of time," he explained. "*Dance of Magic* came about because Stan Clarke, Cecil McBee, and I were working together with Pharoah, and it was a matter of feeling comfortable together. I love the way Stan plays, and I wanted to have Stan and Cecil together. Gary Bartz and I worked together a few times, and he's such a warm, beautiful person that I wanted to use him. Carlos Garnett and I have been working together for four or five years, so that was automatic. Eddie Henderson, I always loved his playing. Herbie? I really wanted to use Lonnie Liston Smith, but he was doing something else at the time. Billy Hart suggested I call Herbie Hancock; I called and he said he'd love to do it. Once he did *Dance of Magic*, he said he wanted to do all the records. That's how Herbie came into that particular brotherhood of projects.

"From the beginning I had no problem in the studio, it was like one big brotherhood. All the musicians, Herbie to Bartz to Carlos, everybody, it was unbelievable. That's another reason I pick the musicians I do, because everybody gets along so well. They are all very beautiful, warm people, and they get that same kind of sound out of their instruments whenever they play. I don't choose a person because I feel he's a name or that he might help sell records, it's not that sort of thing. It's just that I love certain sounds."

*What do you look for when you choose percussionists?*

"I always get a percussionist who can play different types of concepts. I mean, not just congas and African sounds but very simple playing, too. For example, he might shake something in the right place, or on a ballad he might not even play anything except to hit a bell on the last note. It's that sort of thing, very sensitive playing.

"That's the thing I like about Airtó and Dom (Um Romão), they are very sensitive players' players. I also like to expand things, like fusing together African percussionists with Indian percussionists and Cuban percussionists. I like the Indian drummer Badal Roy who plays with Miles. I'm thinking about fusing together drummers from different lands, but that's another project all together.

"I do a whole lot of research, I've been studying all my life. I do research into African music, Brazilian and Cuban music, and I like to experiment with different rhythms from different lands, putting them together to get something else."

*What difference do you see between African and say Brazilian rhythms?*

"The Brazilians have a different feeling, it flows more and it's lighter. The African feeling is strong, it has more bottom, I think it has a different kind of punch. The accents are different, too, so when you put a person from Africa and a person from Brazil together they hear different accents, but playing together as one you get an all-together different sound."

*What do you see for yourself in the future?*

"Well, I'm still studying, practicing and developing as a stylist. I want to do more things with people from other parts of the world. I want to go to Africa and study for a while, that's something I really want to do, and I want to go to Brazil.

#### SELECTED CONNORS DISCOGRAPHY

##### Featured

DANCE OF MAGIC—Cobblestone 9024  
 DARK OF LIGHT—Cobblestone 9035  
 LOVE FROM THE SUN—Buddah 5124  
 SLEWFOOT—Buddah 5611

##### with Pharoah Sanders

BLACK UNITY—Impulse 9181  
 LIVE AT THE EAST—Impulse 9227  
 WISDOM THROUGH MUSIC—Impulse 9233  
 VILLAGE OF THE PHAROAHS—Impulse 9254  
 LOVE IN US ALL—Impulse 9280

##### with Archie Shepp

THE MAGIC OF JU-JU—Impulse 9154

##### with Sam Rivers

STREAMS—Impulse 9251

##### with Carlos Garnett

BLACK MAGIC—Muse 5040

Rivers, Jack McDuff, Lou Donaldson, Lonnie Smith, Leon Thomas . . . I always wanted to work with John.

"Miles? On Tony's (Williams) last night with Miles, me and Eric Gravatt went up to tryout for the job, but he'd already picked Jack (DeJohnette), so I never got a chance to play with him."

In 1972 Norman Connors put together a remarkable group of musicians, including Airtó, Nat Bettis, Alphonse Mouzon, Billy Hart, Carlos Garnett, Herbie Hancock, Eddie Henderson, Gary Bartz, Stanley Clarke, and Cecil McBee, to record his first album, *Dance of Magic*.

The ideas for that first record started to form while Connors was in Pharoah Sanders'



# RECORD REVIEWS

Ratings are:

★★★★ excellent, ★★★ very good,  
★★ good, ★ fair, ★ poor

## PHIL WOODS

MUSIQUE DU BOIS—Muse 5037: *Samba Du Bois; Willow Weep For Me; Nefertiti; The Last Page; The Summer Knows; Aregin.*

Personnel: Woods, alto sax; Jacki Byard, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Alan Dawson, drums.

★★★★

PHIL WOODS QUARTET—Testament 4402: *Charity; Cumulus; Nefertiti/Riot; Yesterdays.*

Personnel: Woods, alto sax; Jaki Byard, piano; Pete Robinson, keyboards, synthesizer; Henry Franklin, bass; Brian Moffatt, percussion.

★★★★

Every thriving art form has a tradition as well as a present; and often an art's most successful practitioners are those who combine a mastery of the inheritance with the courage to be on the cutting edge of further change. Jazz is no different, except perhaps that, more than in almost any other art, openness to change is the tradition. This remarkable pair of albums by the newly repatriated Phil Woods confirms what his recent European albums suggested: that here is a musician who plays both inside and outside—in the tradition and on the edge—with the beauty and power of a master.

Both sets are quartet dates, with the altoist backed by keyboards, bass and drums. There most of the resemblance ends. The Muse rhythm section is worth a review in itself. Don Schlitten first assembled the trio of Byard, Davis, and Dawson for some Booker Ervin dates a decade or so ago which remain minor masterpieces (they're on Prestige); and the passing years have scarcely tarnished the ensemble's sheen. As a rhythm section, they set the standard, to my ears at least: an aggregation which negotiates the changes—rhythmic as well as harmonic—with effortless skill that seems to sense and instinctively reproduce the exact color or texture required. They listen like one set of ears and play like three telepaths. *Musique Du Bois* also demonstrates, for the unimpeached time, that each is a more than worthy soloist: Dawson speaking his piece crisply and concisely, Davis tempering his power with a fluent lyricism. Byard pulling from his Pandora's box a dissonant treasure trove—unequal parts aleatory, impressionistic, circus-like, and, of course, Tatumesque.

And then there's Woods. At this late date, 20 years after Charlie Parker's passing, I hope it's no longer the critical kiss of death to compare an alto saxophonist to Bird. (After all, does Solzhenitsyn complain when critics compare him to Tolstoy?) Woods, of course, has a lot of Bird's *sound*, but even more of Bird's *spirit*. It's pointless to run down the soloist's performances on this set (a balanced and conventional one—two originals, two ballads, two modern standards) because Woods masters them all. You can hear other saxophonists in his playing too, if you care to—Adderley in the unerring feel for 20 □ down beat

rhythm and phrasing. Dolphy in the intelligent use of the entire range of the horn, Rollins in the sense of drama and structure, in the quotations and the forays into the gruffer timbres of the horn. But the overriding impression simply is of being in the presence of a superior improviser, who restlessly and inexhaustibly creates melodies, explores them, embellishes them, discards and returns to them, and forges the whole venture into something lucid, coherent, and satisfying.

The Testament date is a different animal. The cumulative product of Woods' personally unrewarding sojourn in California in 1973, it finds him in an electrified context (his sax is amplified and distorted most of the time) and with sidemen whose sound is sparer and more problematic than on the Muse set. Woods runs a wide gamut here: he gets to play linearly over a spectrally funky backbeat (*Charity*); yearningly, with acoustic piano accompaniment (*Yesterdays*); and with wah-wah over a free rhythm section (*Cumulus*). But the 7-minute treatment of *Nefertiti/Riot* is the high point. The Muse *Nefertiti* is laid back, the leader playful and casual, Byard a bit more reflective. On Testament, there's a tenser reading, evolving into a furious, frenetic electric piano solo, and culminating in a fascinating series of spaced-out dialogues and trialogues with synthesizer. While I don't find Robinson's synthesizer work consistently effective (the shattering glassware during Franklin's only extended solo doesn't do much for me), most of his contributions as performer and composer (*Cumulus* and *Charity*) are quite effective; and Moffatt's open, sensitive percussion sound is a delight. Finally, Woods is one of those rare birds who plays as interestingly electrified as acoustic; and considering how good he is unamplified, that's saying something. *Phil Woods Quartet* isn't a perfect album, but it's a challenging and innovative one, perhaps the best electric sax album yet; and since when has the cutting edge of this changing music ever been perfectly smooth anyway? —metalitz

## AZAR LAWRENCE

BRIDGE INTO THE NEW AGE—Prestige (Fantasy) P-10086: *Bridge Into The New Age; Fatisha; Warriors Of Peace; Forces Of Nature; The Beautiful And Omnipresent Love.*

Personnel: Lawrence, soprano & tenor saxes; tracks 1 & 5: Jean Carn, vocal; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Woody Murray, vibes; Clint Houston, bass; Billy Hart, drums; Guilherme Franco, percussion; tracks 3 & 4: Black Arthur, alto sax; John Heard, bass; Ndugu, drums; Mtume, congas and percussion; Joe Bonner, piano (tracks 2, 3, & 4); Julian Priester, trombone (track 4); Hadley Caliman, flute (track 4); Kenneth Nash, percussion (tracks 2, 3, & 5); (Shams) Ray Straughter, wood flute (track 5).

★★★★

As builders, Azar Lawrence and his producers (Orrin Keepnews and Jim Stern) have laid a sturdy foundation with Lawrence's recording debut as a leader. Marshalling fine sidemen, finding a suitable and sensitive lyricist (Ray Straughter) and the perfect corresponding vocalist, coming up with fresh material and arrangements to showcase his talents as saxist and composer, Lawrence has made all the right choices. As McCoy Tyner's hornman, Azar has been compared critically to Trane, although he's been responding to the pianist's music with an increasingly personal style. In his first effort at direction he shows he has the technique to comprehend his predecessors, but also the imagination and ambition to go beyond them. All this, from someone who is just 21!

The title cut features traditional African sounds and an invitation feelingly sung by

Jean Carn to enter "the land where children dance," while Hart and Houston spread rhythms like chasms for Lawrence to leap. Shaw's solo is surefooted, alternately smoky and piercing. Murray takes a fleet chorus before the tune returns to the singer's astounding vibrato. *Fatisha* is a ballad in which Bonner's modulating keyboard touch and Nash's apt percussive effects cohere satisfyingly with Lawrence's long, sustained melodic statement, reminiscent of early Wayne Shorter. *Warriors* contains Azar's strongest solo on the album. Bonner kicks off a Latin-tinged rhythm with pianistic chords and octaves, while the saxman raises and brandishes his musical sword, spreading the power of song. Through Black Arthur's flowing alto solo and Bonner's heavily accented romping, Mtume's congas add subtly to the textural bottom. Lawrence almost sings the out chorus through his horn. The energy peaks with Arthur wailing, while the tenorman holds his keynote through the fadedown.

On *Forces* Lawrence picks up his soprano and heads a supplemented horn section over a syncopated bass line that leads into Caliman's warm, clean and supple flute solo. The mechanics of the composition, written by Ernie Straughter, who arranged *Love* and *Bridge* as well, keep the song moving in giant strides. Priester jumps in on the dot, shaking his 'bone, exhorting with inspiration and control, building to a breathless moan. Lawrence's intensity develops into long, fast lines, as Bonner feeds him the long swinging bridge which he nimbly crosses. *Love* ends the album with a peaceful chant extolling the musicians' selfhood. Jean announces the lyric and behind her Shaw trades phrases with Lawrence. The vibes and rhythm section infuse the setting with a fullness matching the vocalist's lovely open vowels.

The age Lawrence is building towards is the future, of course, and he's started well, with distinctive melodies, rhythmic complexities, and energetic, emotion blowing-offering joyful and affirmative sensuality in sound. —mandel

## BILL WATROUS

MANHATTAN WILDLIFE REFUGE—Columbia KC 33090: *Spain; Sho; Dichotomy; Zip City; Fourth Floor Walk-up; Dee Dee; Ayo.*

Personnel: Danny Stiles, John Gatchell, Dean Pratt, George Trifon, trumpet; Watrous, Charlie Small, Wayne Andre, Joe Petruzzo, Joe Randazzo, trombone; Alan Gauvin, Ed Xiques, Charlie LaGond, Frank Perowsky, Juroslav Jakubovic, reeds; Dick Hyman, keyboard; Joe Beck, guitar; John Miller, bass; Ed Soph, drums.

★★★★

Bill Watrous is possibly the greatest trombone virtuoso to appear in jazz since Jack Jenny. He is certainly the most impressive since the emergence of J. J. Johnson and Urbie Green in the early '50s. The days of the slurring trombone long ago yielded to the much more demanding linear approach. Yet in the 25 or so years since that transition, I can think of few if any who could match Watrous' unique mastery of both speed and accuracy, particularly in his frequent triple tonguing passages. The fact that he often favors the highest reaches of his instrument dazzles the ear even more.

Equally striking is his tone, full-bodied, clean, uncluttered and highly cultivated. It never sacrifices itself to acrobatics, but remains remarkably even and imperturbable through the most dexterously complex executions. Even at the top of the register, where other trombonists tend to lose body and accuracy, Watrous' tone and attack seem com-



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pletely comfortable. Although he doesn't play them here, his virtuosity and sound are ideally suited to ballads.

The Manhattan Wildlife Refuge is a working band for the most part, filled out with only a few studio ringers (Dick Hyman, Joe Beck, et al). The sound is particularly natural, the result of one mike per section rather than one per instrument, as is too often the custom these days. For this, we can presumably thank producer John Hammond.

Most of the material is original but only occasionally of above average interest. *Sho* is a particularly successful blend of reeds and brass, featuring the leader at his most swinging and least exhibitionistic.

Because of the extraordinary virtuosity he wields, Watrous is frequently tempted to solo. He yields to this impulse on *Fourth Floor*, a long, loosely-structured solo piece with several breathtaking a capella codas, in the process stirring up some pretty compelling music. One is reminded of the wild fury that Roy Eldridge sometimes exhibits, only to discover that somewhere along the way the idea has vanished. You feel this briefly on *Ayo* during an uninhibited passage of lip-busting runs. But only briefly. More important, even though the flash may sometimes overwhelm the substance, there is seldom a loss of control.

This is an upcoming band and Columbia's behind it. Its impact seems very similar to what Maynard Ferguson has been doing in recent years. The idea of teaming a brilliant instrumentalist with a jumping big band and some good pop/rock charts, works well with Ferg. And all indications are that it will do the same for Watrous. —mcdonough

## RAVI SHANKAR

SHANKAR FAMILY & FRIENDS—Dark Horse (A&M Records) SP-22002: *I Am Missing You*; *Kahan gayelave Shyam salone*; *Supane ma aye preetam sainya*; *I Am Missing You (reprise)*; *Jaya Jagadish Hare*; *Dream, Nightmare & Dawn—Music for a Ballet*.

Personnel: Shankar, sitar, vocals; Lakshmi Shankar, vocals; Alla Rakha, tabla; Hariprasad Chaurasia, bamboo flute; Shivkumar Sharma, santoor; Ashish Khan, sarod, swarmandal; Shubho Shankar, sitar, vocals; numerous other musicians.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ravi Shankar and George Harrison, now a record producer and owner of Dark Horse Records, have combined their talents to create an imaginative fusion of Indian and Western musical forces.

Shankar, of course, has long experimented with Indian-Western musical hybrids, but this new release carries his own conceptions of his art to a broader, and in some ways more authentic level.

*I Am Missing You*, an enchanting song with English lyrics, is the most Western in orientation; but it still retains the immensely complex Indian vocal style of trills and pitch embellishment. Lakshmi Shankar, Ravi's sister-in-law, sings *I Am Missing You* with magical purity and makes more traditional-sounding numbers like *Kahan Gayelave Shyam Salone* into intricate webs of vocal expression.

Side Two is called a ballet even though the actual dance exists only in Shankar's head and has not yet been set down on paper. "Sometimes a ballet can be without a story, it is visual, abstract," Shankar commented in a recent interview, and this ballet, entitled *Dream, Nightmare & Dawn*, heavily stresses the abstract.

Shankar's interest in dance goes back to his days with a Hindu touring troupe which played in Paris when Shankar was a young man. The present "ballet" work, though obviously influenced by Indian dance forms, is a mixture of East and West, movement and sound, structure and formlessness. The parts run together, some segments definitely of Western orientation and some of Indian origin.

The "friends" referred to in the album title include Alla Rakha, the great *tabla* disciple of Kader Bux; Hariprasad Chaurasia, a skillful bamboo flautist; Shivkumar Sharma, a fine, classically-trained *santoor* player; Hari Georgeson, an assumed name for—well, you can guess; and the mysterious Billy Shears on drums. He made his debut on the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* LP in 1967. Thirty-one other musicians also help out, playing everything from the *esraj* to Moog synthesizer.

In addition to his recording and performing career, Shankar has composed film scores for the respected Indian director Satyajit Ray, has played with Yehudi Menuhin, and even had a part in organizing the Concert for Bangla Desh. This latest album is a composite of much of Shankar's earlier musical experiments—classical and modern, Western and Indian—and shouldn't be overlooked.

—kriss

## JERRY GOODMAN/ JAN HAMMER

LIKE CHILDREN—Nemperor (Atlantic) 430: *Country And Eastern Music*; *No Fear*; *I Remember Me*; *Earth (Still Our Only Home)*; *Topeka*; *Steppings Tones*; *Night*; *Full Moon Boogie*; *Giving in Gently*; *I Wonder*.

Personnel: Goodman, electric and acoustic guitars, electric and acoustic violins and violas, electric mandolin, lead vocals; Hammer, electric and acoustic piano, Moog lead and Moog bass, Oberheim Digital Sequencer, drums, percussion, vocals.

\*\*\*\*\*

The first time I played this album, it came on as a vital, important, almost revelatory experience. The second hearing was curiously disappointing, and the third was a bit of both.

If you listened to Goodman and Hammer's work with Mahavishnu, you have some idea of what to expect, but this is far more of a studio date, much more dependent upon electronics than anything they've done previously. This isn't to disparage it; indeed, I've never heard two men sound more like a large, integrated, interacting group. Extensive overdubbing almost always sounds forced, sterile—test-tube music. This session is alive.

The first cut begins with an acoustic piano intro, followed by a Moog-played melody with some interesting intervals reminiscent of mid-'60s Coltrane (though the phrasing and voicing is entirely dissimilar). Segue to a second theme harmonized by Goodman on violins and violas. The alternation is then repeated, this time with lyrics behind the first theme (I say "behind" advisedly, since all the lyrics on the record are awfully hard to get because of muting and underrecording.)

*No Fear's* title must be ironic: it's a speedy piece performed solo by Hammer on Moog and sequencer, and the visual image I get is of tiny mechanical men moving in maniacal concert. Definitely a song to avoid if you're susceptible to paranoia. *Earth* is really attractive. The lead riff, done on bass Moog, seems both Afro and ricky-tick, if such a mixture can be imagined. This leads into a chanted vocal (again, the lyrics get swallowed) followed by a fine rock solo on guitar.

Side two contains some more adventurous

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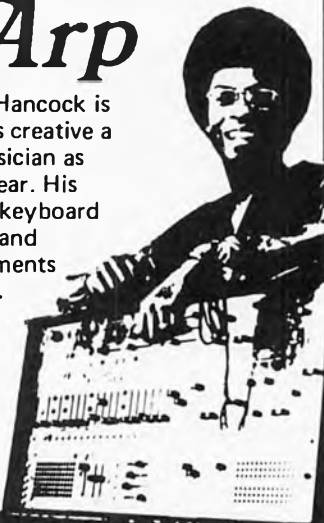
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metric experiments. *Tones* sounds like it's in 5, but the 5 seems to me just slightly off-center, creating some effective tension. The second part of *Night* is also in some weird meter which I tried and failed to break down, and *Wonder* is in 13 (subdivided 3/3/3/4). *Tones* is begun by the Moog bass; it's a walking pattern, more or less, but the intervals are spacy. (Trane might've liked this one, too.) There's actually no horizontal development to speak of, but the mood—tentative, somewhat sad, but also whimsical—is effectively conveyed. The first part of *Night*, however, is quite similar in voicing and feeling, and I think somebody erred in putting the two tunes together. *Boogie* (those garbled lyrics!) is a Goodman showcase; he converses with himself on guitar and violin in a biting, propulsive sequence.

This session is astonishingly complex but almost never pretentious; the playing is virtuoso without seeming egotistical; and the mood is simultaneously warmly relaxed and nervously exploratory. What's missing, if anything, is the raw energy of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and I guess that's why I've heard this album differently each time I've played it. When I come to it with my own energy high, it's dynamite; but when my own is low, this won't get to me. With Mahavishnu, you can have been dead for three days and still wanna boogie when he opens up.

—heineman

## ARIF MARDIN

JOURNEY—Atlantic SD 1661: *Street Scene (Strollin')*; *Dark Alleys*; *Love on a Rainy Afternoon*; *Parade*; *A Sunday Afternoon Feeling*; *Journey (Journey, Flight)*; *Forms*.

Personnel: Mardin, composer, arranger, electric piano, percussion, with various groups including: Michael Brecker, Phil Bodner, Joe Farrell, Romeo Penque, Seldon Powell, David Newman, Pepper Adams, Frank Wess, Bill Slapin, saxes and oboes; Hubert Laws, flute; Randy Brecker, Marvin Stamm, Mel Davis, trumpets; Tony Studd, Garnett Brown, trombones; James Buffington, French horn; Don Butterfield, tuba; Michal Urbaniak, Gene Orloff, violins; George Ricci, cello; Gary Burton, vibraphone; Ken Bichel, Arp synthesizer; Richard Tee, Pat Rebillot, Ken Bichel, electric pianos; Pat Rebillot, Milcho Leviev, clavinet; Cornell Dupree, David Spinozza, Jerry Friedman, guitars; Tony Levin, Gordon Edwards, Ron Carter, Alex Blake, basses; Bernard Purdie, Stephen Gadd, Grady Tate, Billy Cobham, drums; Ted Sommer, George Devens, Ralph MacDonald, Armen Halburian, percussion; Ursula Dudziak-Urbaniak, voice; Ilhan Mimaroglu, tape music.

★ ★ ★ ★

What kind of music does a producer make? When Mardin's name is on the bottom line of an album, he does—and does well—the conventional producer's thing: bringing the date together, helping to weld it into a unified package, a coherent statement in sound. But Mardin's move to the top line (not a movement to the other side of the control board—his instrumental contributions are minimal) results in a very different kind of album: erratic, flawed, but rich in musical ideas which, if they don't always hang together, are usually challenging and always worth some serious listening.

*Journey* is, of course, well-produced—I'd say overproduced. Mardin moves his cast of thousands in and out of the studio like so many extras in a Cecil B. DeMille extravaganza. The sound is glossy and cold, dominated by the electric instruments, the precise drum work. Mardin likes to mix horns way back, so some solos are virtually inaudible. But then the album isn't about solos (few of them are memorable)—it's about forms, moods, textures, which succeed each other in rapid and sometimes seemingly arbitrary suc-

cession. Most of the tunes have tags, codas, abrupt shifts of theme, tempo, or arrangement. *Flight*, for example: repetitions of a catchy unison line to start out; then a laconic melody stated by Laws with wide open spaces interspersed and occupied by the rhythm section; then a suave and intriguing goulash of soloing and reprises of the two themes, with keyboards, bass, and percussion moving in and out of earshot, upstage and up front, constantly changing color and texture.

The title track is a similar journey well worth taking. It opens as a big band swinger, fairly conventional in form, though not in line, with Cobham kicking things along quite nicely. But the form begins to change as the Brecker brothers solo *sotto voce*; Urbaniak's sinuous statement is underlined by bass-heavy riffing; synthesizer builds to a climax and disappears; and the whole thing ends in a duet, Newman's soulful tenor wandering through the shimmering cascades of the leader's electric piano. *Sunday* crams a whole week into five-and-a-half-minutes. Here again, the solos are just a pretext for the subtler manipulations of Ron Carter and Grady Tate. *Forms* takes things out in avant fashion, with Dudziak and Mimaroglu neck-and-neck in otherworldliness.

The first four tracks are much tamer—in fact, pretty dull. The major influences seem to be (in order of appearance) the Crusaders, Bartok, elevator music, and call-and-response gospel sounds. Michael Brecker contributes some attractive dissonances to *Dark Alleys*, and Farrell preaches nicely on *Parade*; but otherwise the cuts strike me as questionably conceived, indifferently executed, and (despite the arrangement of titles) not particularly compatible. Mardin tries for a lot on this album; and while some of his attempts don't make it for me, he brings off more than enough intriguing music to justify his move to the top line.

—metalitz

## HANK CRAWFORD

DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT A THING—Kudu (CTI) 19: *Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing*; *Jana*; *All In Love Is Fair*; *Sho Is Funky*; *Groove Junction*.

Personnel: Crawford, alto saxophone; Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis, Alan Rubin, trumpets, flugel-horns; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Phil Bodner, Joe Farrell, Jerry Dodgeon, Pepper Adams, Romeo Penque, reeds; Hugh McCracken, electric guitar, harmonica; Bob James, Richard Tee, keyboards; Ron Carter or Gary King, bass; Idris Muhammad or Bernard Purdie, drums; Ralph McDonald, percussion; string section.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## DAVID NEWMAN

NEWMANISM—Atlantic 1662: *Baby Rae*; *Song For The New Man*; *Violet*; *Don't Be Blue*; *Foxy Brown*; *Newmanism*; *Sweet Tears*; *Let Me Know*; *Brandy*.

Personnel: Newman, soprano, tenor saxes, flute; Roy Ayers, vibraphone; Pat Rebillot, electric piano; Ron Carter, bass; Andrew Smith or Roy Brooks, drums; Armen Halburian, percussion.

★ ★ ★

Both of these records are of the easy-listening variety—enjoyable and unforced, posing the listener no demands but, instead, offering generous portions of lively, enthusiastically played and eminently listenable music that is alternately funky and romantic but always soulful.

Of the two, I prefer the Crawford set for its greater consistency of mood and the richer, more interesting textures that the large supporting group is able to provide his glistening, liquid alto. He also has the benefit of the Creed Taylor organization's production savvy of which, for this kind of presentation



at least, there is none better or more skilled: as a result, this album is a very model of its type—meticulously, intelligently contrived to provide maximum listening pleasure, primarily through Bob James' deft, handsome orchestrations which offer plenty of color and texture. For the sake of greater variety in programming, I would have preferred that another lush ballad on the order of the lovely Crawford composition *Jana* be included, possibly by halving *Sho Is Funky*, an infectious riff-based piece that goes on much too long (almost 13 minutes) for its limited resources. But this is minor carping in the face of such a successfully realized set of joyous, listenable music, for which all the participants are to be commended, particularly guitarist McCracken, who has an absolutely stunning solo on the title track.

Within their more limited means, Newman and his fellows pursue a similar path. There is, of course, a greater reliance on the conventions of collective improvising—or at least interplay—but this is not the major focus of the music here. Rather, the creation of warm and appealing contemporary mood music seems to be the intent (certainly it's the result) of the careful and controlled approach the group follows. This impression is seconded by the character of the materials they've chosen to decorate, all of which are charming and unambitious, and support similar improvisations. Perhaps the best cut in the album is the marvelously funky *Foxy Brown*, written by vibist Ayers, which cries out for more fulsomely commercial presentation. In the right hands, it could be a hit.

A very pleasant, enjoyable set of performances by a group whose overall feel is that of an updated John Kirby Sextet—graceful, urbane, and deliciously tight in a totally unpretentious way. —welding

## THE ALLMAN BROTHERS

DUANE ALLMAN, AN ANTHOLOGY (VOL. II)—Capricorn (Warner Bros.) 0139: *Happily Married Man; It Ain't Fair; The Weight; You Reap What You Sow; Matchbox; Born To Be Wild; No Money Down; Been Gone Too Long; Stuff You Gotta Watch; Dirty Old Man; Push, Push; Walk on Gilded Splinters; Waiting For A Train; Don't Tell Me Your Troubles; Goin' Upstairs; Come On In My Kitchen; Dimples; Goin' Up The Country; Done Somebody Wrong; Leave My Blues At Home; Midnight Rider.*

Personnel: Allman, guitar, vocals; various other artists.

See below

THE GREGG ALLMAN TOUR—Capricorn (Warner Bros.) 0141: *Don't Mess Up A Good Thing; Queen Of Hearts; Feel So Bad; Stand Back; Time Will Take Us; Where Can You Go?; Double Cross; Dreams; Are You Lonely For Me; Turn On Your Love Light; Oncoming Traffic; Will The Circle Be Unbroken.*

Personnel: The Gregg Allman group: Todd Logan, Peter Eklund, trumpets; Randall Bramblett, soprano, alto, and C-melody saxophones; David Brown, tenor saxophone; Harold (Bullet) Williams, baritone saxophone; Chuck Leavell, piano, electric piano; Allman, organ, vocals; Tommy Talton, guitar; Scott Boyer, rhythm guitar; Kenny Tibbetts, electric bass; Bill Stewart, Johnny Lee Johnson, drums and percussion; unidentified strings; Annie Sutton, Erin Dickins, Lynn Rubin, backup vocals. Cowboy: same personnel except: Tibbetts out, Brown moves from tenor to electric bass; Bramblett doubles on organ. Allman out except for organ on track 6; Talton and Boyer, vocals and lead guitars.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

I cannot imagine why anyone would buy the anthology. Not that the music isn't good,—much of it is—but it's not even close to his best. Some of it features Allman as little more than rhythm accompanist, and, most important, all but six cuts (about 22 minutes) are available elsewhere.

And "elsewhere" covers a multitude of sins: Allman is heard here with everyone from Aretha Franklin (*Fair*) to Lulu (*Dirty*)

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to Herbie Mann (*Push*) to Boz Scaggs (*Train*) to Sam (the Sham) Samudio (*Upstairs*). Perhaps a couple of the less familiar re-releases are worth mentioning. Although Allman was always a persuasive and versatile lead guitarist, no matter what the setting, his slide guitar breaks on *Weight* are particularly outstanding—all the more so considering that this tune was an ill-advised vehicle for King Curtis. It doesn't lend itself to a soul treatment till Allman takes over.

It's also nice to hear Otis Rush again, even on this mediocre cut from his one pathetic major album as a leader. Poor Otis: all the other major Chicago bluesmen had their moments; but Rush, in some ways the most interesting of all the younger generation of them (Guy, Wells, Magic Sam), never got there. *Push* should also be noted, inasmuch as it's a ten-minute track on which Duane plays his longest solo of the anthology and demonstrates, alas, that he isn't a jazz soloist, and not even a soul-jazz or jazz-rock soloist. It takes Duane an awful long time to get anywhere in the solo, probably because he was somewhat anxious in a jazz context. He finally breaks into some variations of the good-feeling but eventually tedious, rock riffs he's set up, but it's too little too late.

The main focus should be the new cuts. *Married* is a basic Jerry Lee Lewis structure, except that there's a lovely little rhythmic ripple at the end of each chorus. *Money Down* is another facet of the Great Tradition: Allman out of Chuck Berry by Muddy Waters. It's a quiet, unsensational tune; but maybe for sheer musicality, it's the best of all the new material. *Dimples* is more closely recognizable Allman territory, another tight and rocking spinoff of *Susie Q*. *Kitchen* is at once the saddest and happiest of the new pieces. It's Delaney and Bonnie and Duane: all acoustic, accompanied only by Sam Clayton on quiet congas, jamming for a radio broadcast. God knows what has happened to D & B. And Duane is dead.

Which leaves Gregg, incontestably a weaker singer and arguably a less charismatic force in general than Duane, though certainly a fine, honest musician. Don't be put off by the cover notice on the double album that there's another group (Cowboy) and a 24-piece orchestra involved. The "orchestra" is a big but integral unit, apart from the irrelevant string section (which doesn't do much damage). Cowboy has only two tracks (*Time* and *Where*), so you get the full measure of Gregg Allman.

The star of the session, however, is really Bramblett. His work on alto (*Queen, Where*) and C-melody (*Good Thing, Love Light*) is uniformly excellent. It's no ego trip, since he fits snugly into whatever's going down at the moment; but he's also miles beyond the sort of cliché-laden riff-honking one finds so often in hard rock groups. Check out the incomparably raunchy solo on *Love Light* and the sinuous, assured work at the beginning of *Where*, and you have an idea of Bramblett's range and flexibility. Indeed, *Where* is the best cut on the album in many ways. There are fine, firm solos by alto, piano, and Talton on slide, but then Talton gets playful, whimsical. The band drops out, except for the rhythm section, and there's some very pleasant noodling by several of Cowboy's members before a monster crescendo that takes the tune out beautifully.

*Dreams* tops it, however. Allman's vocal is melancholy and affecting; he stops to use the spaces in the middle of lyrical phrases here, which he seldom does elsewhere. Then in

comes Talton on slide, positively otherworldly. The interplay between the guitar, organ, and rhythm section is gripping. It's a fine track altogether. Without sacrificing strength or attempting to move out of their established genre, Allman and Co. manage to evoke extreme ethereal sadness that's rare or nonexistent in previous work.

As well as this band does its various incarnations of the hard-rock-son-of-c & w and rural blues, the over-all impression, despite fine musicianship and moments of contagious excitement, is a high-level but muddy sameness. —heineman

## LIONEL HAMPTON/ BUDDY RICH

TRANSITION—Groove Merchant GM 3302: *Avalon; Airmail Special; Ham Hock Blues; Ring Dem Bells; E.G.; Fum.*

Personnel: (tracks 1-4) Hampton, vibes; Zoot Sims, tenor; Teddy Wilson, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Rich, drums. (tracks 5, 6) Sal Nistico, Joe Romano, Zoot Sims (track 5 only), reeds; Hampton, vibes; Jack Wilkens, guitar; Ken Barron, piano; Anthony Jackson, Bob Cranshaw, bass; Ted Sommer, Stan Kay, percussion; Rich, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

The transition from swing to jazz/rock is the musical business of this LP, which is really two albums in one.

The swing side is chipper, energetic and occasionally charged with the promise of genuine inspiration. Buddy's brush work keeps *Avalon* restrained as compared to the volcanic power it generated under the sticks of Gene Krupa. *Airmail* lies by leaving a jet stream of spine-tingling excitement. The lines are crisp and clean, and the unusual changes are still a challenge. *Ham Hock* is a medium blues suggesting a little funkiness behind its smooth-swinging sophistication. Rich rocks hard behind Sims, generating some bright sparks. Unfortunately, the performance fades away without a satisfactory resolution.

This brings us to *Bells*, an incredible morsel of pure inspiration that vaporizes before our helpless ears just as we are on the threshold of a classic in the making. From the first note, this one literally swings in the same surging way the Hampton-Chu Berry *Sweethearts On Parade* swung in 1939. Yet we are needlessly left hanging in bewilderment by some cretin at the mixing panel, whose arbitrary and senseless fade utterly destroys the tension of a great performance.

That aside, let it be said that Teddy Wilson contributes some of his better work here. He is most impressive when his right hand spins single note lines around Hamp and Rich. Zoot Sims seems something of an afterthought, with his attention focused on Hamp and Rich. This is Hamp's best record in years, however, and reminds us that MGM/Verve might consider putting together a package of the great Hampton/Rich sessions from the early '50s. Better still, how 'bout another date like this (except do it right next time)?

Side two features a pair of jazz-rock charts by Mike Abene and Jack Wilkens. Abene's *E.G.* is a medium-paced item with perhaps a bit too much going on in the rhythm section. It sports two basses and two percussionists in addition to Rich, who seems more than able to keep things on track by himself.

*Fum* is a more interesting 32-bar theme with a release that jolts the listener into eight charging bars of 4/4 time. The contrast is electrifying in the hands of Rich and bassists Bob Cranshaw and Anthony Jackson. Hampton again contributes superb work, which should surprise no one who has heard him

with his own group. Like most vets who have maintained headliner status, he has adopted some jazz/rock items into his own program.

The sound quality is excellent, a vast improvement over Rich's Victor LPs, whose bass lines were so thin the music seemed to have no bottom. Here the drums sound fat and deep, the way they should. —mcdonough

## TOM WAITS

THE HEART OF SATURDAY NIGHT—Asylum 7E 1015: *New Coat Of Paint; San Diego Serenade; Semi Sulte; Shiver Me Timbers; Diamonds On My Windshield; The Heart Of Saturday Night; Fumbly With The Blues; Please Call Me, Baby; Depot; Depot; Drunk On The Moon; The Ghosts Of Saturday Night.*

Personnel: Waits, vocals, piano, electric piano, acoustic guitar; Mike Melvoin, piano, electric piano; Arthur Richards, electric and acoustic guitar; Tom Scott, tenor sax, clarinet; Oscar Brashear, trumpet; Jim Hughart, acoustic and electric bass; Jim Gordon, drums; Bones Howe, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Tom Waits is both the practitioner and chronicler of the hobo life, a state of existence that has altered rapidly in recent times. His songs are filled with melancholy, restlessness, exuberant image, blatant exaggeration, and a forlorn sense of worldweariness that somehow strikes close to the heart.

Whereas his first album, *Closing Time*, failed to convey an accurate picture of Waits' true depth, *The Heart Of Saturday Night* captures this unique artist in his chosen milieu. Tom's coarse, sometimes abrasive, vocals and stark piano accompaniments are marvelously expressive as they catalog the trials and tribulations of a woman in love with an over-the-road trucker, a wasted-out poet intoxicated on his verse and the full moon, and an inveterate hitchhiker caught between destinations on an eternal odyssey.

Excellent backup work by Tom Scott and Oscar Brashear are skillfully welded to the framework of the songs. Although he is always arresting, even when an excessive string section occasionally intrudes, Waits is outstanding on *Diamonds On My Windshield*, a Kerouac/Corso-like slice of beat poetry which he recites while snapping his fingers to the thump of Jim Hughart's throbbing upright bass.

It may be hard to believe, but Waits is a true contemporary street poet, one who promises to grow even better. —hohman

## JUNIOR WELLS

JUNIOR WELLS ON TAP—Delmark DS 635: *Watch Me Move; Someday Baby; Key To The Highway; What My Mama Told Me; You Gotta Love Her With A Feeling; The Train I Ride; So Long; Junior's Thing.*

Personnel: Wells, vocals, harmonica; A. C. Reed, tenor sax; Charles Miles, alto sax; Johnny "Big Moose" Walker, piano, organ; Phillip Guy, guitar; Sammy Lawhorn, guitar; Herman Applewhite, bass; Roosevelt "Snake" Shaw, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## JAMES COTTON

100% COTTON—Buddah BDS 5620: *Boogie Thing; One More Mile; All Walks Of Life; Creeper Creeps Again; Rocket 88; How Long Can A Fool Go Wrong; I Don't Know; Burner; Fatuation; Fever.*

Personnel: Cotton, vocals, harmonica; Mat Murphy, guitar; Little Bo, tenor and alto saxes; Charles Calmese, bass; Kenny Johnson, drums; Lenny Baker, baritone sax (track two); Phil Jekanowski, piano (track one).

★ ★ ½

Junior Wells and James Cotton, the men most responsible for the rejuvenation of blues harmonica and vocal stylings in the '60s, are each trying to keep up with the changed sounds of the '70s, and each achieving different degrees of success.



When Junior first appeared, his recordings were enlivened with dramatic spontaneity in his rich voice and varied bag of vocal tricks, while his harp blowing was distinguished by complete melodic statements, plaintive enough to make one cry, strong and clear as a sax solo. *On Tap* is Junior's third outing for Delmark, a company that's found an artistically satisfying way to record "the little fellow": let him do in the studio exactly what he does at a live club gig. As a result, the session men here are regulars from Junior's adopted home, Theresa's Lounge on Chicago's South Side, plus keyboardist Walker and a sparingly used horn section. Their sound is very close to what's heard at the bar, funky and informal, with all the high harp squeals faithfully reproduced and no muddiness obscuring the steady backbeat.

Junior's singing is as affecting as ever, and as original. His versions of standards like *Someday Baby* and *Key*, taken at deliberately slow tempos, are sorrowful and fresh tellings of old folk yarns. The r&b influence permeating the South Side is evident on *Watch Me*, a James Brown type rhythm with a *Ticket To Ride* bass line arranged by Phil Guy, who also provides a stinging solo of his own on guitar. Lead guitarist Lawhorn's work throughout the album provides imaginative counterpoint to Junior's phrasing; Sammy takes some breathtaking chances, breaking from fast strums into complex, angular lines seldom heard in a blues context. A.C. Reed leads the horns through simple but effectively edgy background riffing, takes a good chorus on *So Long*, and trades yakety licks with the organ on the bouncy, cooking *Thing*. *Junior's Thing* also contains two measures of the most exciting harp blowing on the set, then fades out teasingly.

*On Tap* is not the harmonica album many have been anxiously awaiting from the man who has adopted the Sonny Boy Williamson legacy as his own. But a single performance like the updated *Train* is enough to make up for relatively lackluster blowing: Wells sings as a lovesick conductor calling out the stops from Jackson through Paducah and right into Chicago, shouting over the ominous, loping organ and churning rhythm. "*Watch yourself! It's my home . . . it's my home . . .*" till you hear the train slamming into the station.

Cotton, who once blew upbeat, swinging tunes in the company of bluesmen like Otis Spann and S. P. Leary, has not concocted his newest release with the success of Wells. His band, though plenty tight, depends excessively on raging tempos, chorus singing, hand-clapping and fancy stop-time novelty numbers rather than their native feelings for the blues. The James Cotton Blues Band has a slick, rockish sound, emphasized by the thin recording mix. Intrusive arrangements obscure Cotton's energetic wailing, and all too often the material is nothing to wail about in the first place. Guitarist Murphy's playing is supportive but not very personal; rather than the overdubbed horns, this group could have used another guitar playing rhythm, or a piano to add some harmonic texture.

All the worst of the record comes together on *Creeper Creeps*, a harp showcase taken at breakneck speed for some seven-minutes. One of Cotton's eight harp breaks develops into *Jingle Bells*. *Rocket 88* gets a flashy rendition featuring a smooth sax solo definitely not out of the '50s that seems somewhat inappropriate. Side two starts better, with *How Long Can A Fool Go Wrong* asking also "How long can a bird sing?", to which Cotton responds with squeaky, thoroughly controlled

high harp playing. *Burner* is really a hot instrumental, and Cotton finally gets to show that his stuff is still considerable, even if he never gets his voice together to do justice to the Bobby Bland style ballad, *Fatuation*.

James Cotton makes it perfectly clear he wants to have a boogie band, but his beat is drained of the blues and just doesn't hold up to the jazzy versions of some of these same songs that came out of his South Side band a decade ago. Get those old Vanguards on your turntable for some vintage Cotton blues.

—mandel

## ART RESNICK

JUNGLEOPOLIS—Symposium (Takoma) SYS 2005: *Jungleopolis*; *S'cool Fool* (dedicated to Eric Dolphy); *Makin' Room* (inner city) (dedicated to Arnold Schoenberg); *Full Moon*; *Ballade (Budi)* (dedicated to Igor Stravinsky).

Personnel: Resnick, keyboards; Robert Rockwell 111, soprano & tenor saxes, bass clarinet, flute & alto flute; Willard O. Peterson Jr., acoustic bass, bass guitar, clavinet (track three only); Paul F. F. Lagos, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## STREETDANCER

STREETDANCER—Future (Dharma) Records: *Affirmative*; *Directions*; *Night Tune*; *Rush*; *Casa*; *Lines In Your Mind*; *Timeless*.

Personnel: Santez, soprano & tenor saxes; Robert Long, keyboards; Kestutis Stanciuskas, bass; Lester Crawford, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

## MAULAWI

MAULAWI—Strata SRI-104-74: *Street Rap*; *Root In 7/4 Plus*; *Eltin*; *Naïma*; *Sphinx*; *Rabbit*.

Personnel: Maulawi Nurudin, soprano sax; Silas King, Adam Rudolph, percussion, conga, drums; Michael Fuller, Andy Potter, drums; Rufus Reid, Al Erick, bass; Jim Cullen, piano; Edwin Williams, trombone; Joyce Major, alto voice; Diane Cunningham, soprano voice.

★ ★ ★

Aside from their Midwestern proximity (Resnick's group is from Minneapolis, the others Chicago), these three groups demonstrate a grassroots direction for "jazz" in the second half of the '70s. A number of common musical elements link them together: all fuse post-Trane stylings within primarily electric textures and rock or r&b rhythms; all deal with the current advantages of the soprano sax in a highly melodic-rhythmic context. Accidentally or not, the bassists leave the strongest impression after the hornmen; and perhaps most importantly, the material is both original and healthfully eclectic.

*Jungleopolis* is the most impressive of the three albums, and also the one with the strongest tie to past styles, both electric and acoustic. The powerful presence of hornman Robert Rockwell can hardly be matched; and while pianist Resnick is the ostensible leader, Rockwell is the real leading force behind the quartet. The most immediate comparison is with the Jan Garbarek-Bobb Stenson Quartet (notably on *Witchi-Tai-To*) of the album, still an import, that couples Garbarek with Keith Jarrett.

On *S'cool Fool*, Rockwell handles the tenor in a Dolphyesque manner, and with *Makin' Room* he approaches serial techniques from the bottom up with the bass clarinet. Peterson leaves his mark primarily on the title tune, alternating between electric bass and bowed acoustic, but he is strongly present on the other cuts. Both Resnick and Lagos supply good, if not stunning, support. Finally, *Jungleopolis* is not as consistently strong as Rockwell's *Androids* (★★★★ db, 12/19/74).

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but it is more readily available in record stores, as well as a good indication of the growing musical scene in Minneapolis.

*Stretdancer* is strictly a fusion record. Bassist Stanciasukas, another Eastern European making his mark, wrote all but one of the tunes (the moody *Night Tune*, penned by pianist Long), and immediately reveals himself to be an exceptional composer within a very narrow world. This means that the tunes come on strong on the first side, but lose their luster somewhere on the flip side, due to a lack of compositional variety. But still the playing is superb. Santez is a relative newcomer to the scene, yet he handles his instrument with the authority of one much more mature. He likes to take melodic fragments and weave them into bursts or clusters of notes and then return again to that same fragment. Particularly impressive are *Directions* and *Rush*.

*Maulawi* is the least pleasing of the three. Taking on all composing duties himself, with the exception of an arrangement of Trane's *Naima*, Maulawi is unable to organize his thoughts into a coherent musical whole. His own sax playing is overbalanced to the rhythmic side of things; the harmonic qualities are skeletal and there's little melodic flow. This also is the problem, as well as the strength, of the tunes. Rhythmically they're full of life and fire, but they lack the harmonic-melodic superstructure to pick them up off the ground. Bassist Reid, Chicago's finest, is the saving grace here; and *Naima*, arranged in a quirky Latin rhythm, is the best number. From the wild and carefree goings on on *Street Rap* and *Sphinx Rabbit*, *Maulawi* apparently was more of a joy to record than it is to listen to.

In sum, here are three groups from the Midwest, recording on small, independent labels in their own backyards, each in their own distinctive way leaving an imprint on the music world, with promise of more to come. Write **db** for more information. —townley

## FOCUS

**HAMBURGER CONCERTO**—Atco 36-100: *Dell'In Musicae; Harem Scarem; La Cathedrale De Strasbourg; Birth; Hamburger Concerto (Starter; Rare; Medium I; Medium II; Well Done; One for the Road).*

Personnel: Thijs Van Leer, flute, alto flute, recorder, organ, piano, electric piano, harpsichord, mellotron, vibraharp, accordion, voices; Jan Akkerman, lute, electric and acoustic guitar, percussion; Bert Ruiter, electric bass, autoharp, percussion; Colin Allen, drums, percussion.

\*\*\* 1/2

This is a group with pretensions to grandeur. Sometimes they even achieve it, which is more than can be said for most. The musicianship is high, the performances bravura, especially by Van Leer and Akkerman, the twin levers of the group, who do all the composing as well.

The first cut is an *hors d'oeuvre*, an arrangement of an ostensibly traditional, but suspiciously Bachian, melody for guitar and recorder. *Harem* is good, hard, undistinguished rock and roll—an obligatory performance, one supposes, to make the listener sit still for the more classically-oriented performances to follow. *Strasbourg* is the first really meaty composition: a suitably ceremonial, Mousorgskyesque theme, diminishing to a piano-guitar unison, some brief lyrics sung by Van Leer (something about "la nostalgie"), who then whistles a segue into a floating passage for guitar and piano over a loping 6/8.

*Birth* is the best on side one. A Bach-tinged harpsichord introduces a slow-rocking four over which Akkerman solos on guitar followed by Van Leer on flute. Van Leer is an

ordinary flutist: his counterpoint on this cut is rather poorly played, and the tone is thin, scratchy, unnecessarily irritating. (Possibly the engineer shares some of the blame.) On the whole, however, it's a fine performance. It's unhurried, secure, almost magisterial, but the tension and emotional drive are authentic. The rock feeling, while not especially soulful, is as convincing as it needs to be.

The main dish is *Concerto*, which fails more than it succeeds, despite some highlights. It's built around two main themes: one from Brahms' *Haydn Variations*; the other close to, if not actually taken from, the intro to the Beatles' *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window*. (The sound on this second theme, like much of the music on the album, is descended from George Martin's white album/*Abbey Road* laboratory.) *Starter* and *Rare* are mostly variations on that theme. *Medium I* features Van Leer: it includes a nutty vocal sequence of gargling, yodeling, falsetto, some nonsense-word, fake-magnifico lyrics, and then—after an organ interlude—a vocal in what is presumably authentic Danish. *Medium II* spotlights Akkerman, who displays virtuoso technique. His sound and ideas, however, are neither especially novel nor emotionally strong.

From about the middle of *Concerto*, all the playing is pulled down by the lack of rhythmic variety. By the time the climax is reached—a sustained chord on the organ, some raga figures on guitar, a pianistic impression of Big Ben—the listener is apt not to care anymore. —heineman

## BLACK LION ALLSTARS

**BLACK LION AT MONTREUX**—Black Lion (Audiofidelity) BL-213: *I Surrender Dear; I Want A Little Girl; I Know That You Know; Poor Butterfly; All God's Children Got Rhythm; Old Devil Moon; Tea For Two.*

Personnel: Track 1: Freddy Randall, trumpet; Dave Hewitt, trombone; Danny Moss, tenor sax; Dave Shepherd, clarinet; Brian Lemon, piano; Kenny Baldock, bass; Johnny Richardson, drums. Tracks 2, 3: Bill Coleman, trumpet, vocal; Guy Lafitte, tenor sax; Marcel Hemmeler, piano; Jack Sewing, bass; Daniel Humair, drums. Track 4: Shepherd; Teddy Wilson, piano; Baldock, Richardson. Track 5: Stephane Grappelli, violin, replaces Coleman and Lafitte. Track 6: Barney Kessel, guitar; Sewing, Richardson, Track 7: Grappelli, Kessel.

\*\*\*

Culled from Black Lion's *Salute to Swing* at the '73 Montreux Festival (the event's primary purpose was to provide a forum for recording), this uneven album is brightened by contributions from expatriates Coleman and Kessel, veteran French fiddler Grappelli, and Swiss drummer Humair. (Teddy Wilson plays a fine chorus on *Butterfly*, sandwiched between the able but unexciting Goodmanisms of Shepherd.)

Humair, best known in this country for his stint with Phil Woods' European Rhythm Machine, is featured on *I Know* and cooks up a storm on *All God's*. He is that rarity—a European drummer who can equal the best we have to offer.

French tenorist Lafitte, inspired by Byas, Webster and Lockjaw Davis, is a superior mainstream player with a sound worthy of his models. He scores on *Little Girl*. Pianist Hemmeler makes a nice impression, but the very able Lemon has nothing to do on *Surrender*, which offers Randall's Harry James impressions (I recall him as a much less mannered player) and Moss' florid tenor rhapsodizing (he's done better, too).

Coleman, who went to France in 1935, came back home in '40, and returned to France to stay in '48, is one of the few surviv-

ing giants of his generation (he was born in 1904). Because of his vibratoless tone (which, combined with very mobile lines and great harmonic sophistication, makes him one of the pioneers of "modern" trumpet style), he hasn't suffered much of a decline. He's in good if not exceptional form on *Girl*, and also sings in an engaging manner. It would be nice to see and hear Bill Coleman in the U.S. again (are you listening, George Wein?).

Grappelli and Kessel go hand-in-glove on their unaccompanied duet, *Tea*. The violinist, recently in the U.S. for concerts and club work, has been exceedingly well-represented on records in recent times (the duets with Yehudi Menuhin; an album with Kessel; a double LP with Oscar Peterson; and several discs of his own—not to mention the rich harvest of reissues by the Hot Club of France Quintet). He seldom disappoints. Kessel has *Moon* to himself, fleet of finger and nimble of mind. But *All God's* is the high point of string features—in fact of the album. —morgenstern

## MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

**FREDDY RANDALL/DAVE SHEPHERD JAZZ ALL-STARS**—Black Lion BL-214: *Someday Sweetheart; Embraceable You; Hindustan; Sometimes I'm Happy; Loverman; Beale St. Blues.*

Personnel: Freddy Randall, trumpet; Dave Hewitt, trombone; Danny Moss, tenor sax; Dave Shepherd, clarinet; Brian Lemon, piano; Kenny Baldock, bass; Johnny Richards, drums.

\*\*\* 1/2

**BILL COLEMAN/GUY LAFITTE: MAIN-STREAM AT MONTREUX**—Black Lion BL-212: *Blue Lou; Idaho; Sur Les Quais Qu Vieux Paris; L And L Blues; Tour De Force; Montreux Jump.*

Personnel: Bill Coleman, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Guy Lafitte, tenor sax; Marc Hemmeler, piano; Jack Sewing, bass; Daniel Humair, drums.

\*\*\*\*\*

As the great jazz masters pass from the contemporary scene, it must please them to hear the innovations of their youth echo in the music of a variety of young players today. While it's nice to be in touch with your time, as the giants of the swing era certainly were, it's better to be in touch with all time. And the restless vibrance of this music suggests they may well have been.

The Randall/Shepherd set is full of enthusiasm and zest. Clarinetist Shepherd comes straight out of Benny Goodman through Peanuts Hucko. On another Montreux LP and a couple of studio sessions before that, he fills Benny's shoes in a Teddy Wilson-led group. Here his most explicit Goodmanisms come in *Hindustan*, where he strikes sparks against Richardson's Krupa-like tom-tom work, a *la Sing, Sing, Sing* with *Nagasaki* quoting from *Hy Ya Sophia*, a 1948 BG staple.

Moss's tenor is steeped in Bud Freeman, particularly on *Beale St*. Although the liner notes compare him to Lester Young, he has none of the ethereal, floating quality that marked Pres. Randall is an extroverted trumpeter in the Eldridge or Wild Bill Davison tradition. His ballad style is broad and dramatic, and sometimes frilly in the manner of Harry James, as on *Embraceable You*. Together they make up a group that anyone with ears for exciting small band swing will enjoy.

The Bill Coleman disc is something of a visitor from another generation, but he is certainly among friends. Now 70, he brings the stamp of originality to Montreux, being an authentic veteran of the swing generation. More important, he plays beautifully, as lyrically and reflective as ever on *L And L Blues*. He even plays with rip-roaring bite and explosiveness on *Idaho* and *Jump*, showing a



level of intensity not normally found in his prime earlier work. His technique is completely assured in all ranges and his solos are as graceful and nimbly mobile as ever. A total delight.

He is supported by the talented, big-toned French tenor saxist Guy Lafitte, who has joined with Coleman on several previous LPs. The rhythm section is commonplace, as most rhythm sections are, but does its job. One final note: the quality of Black Lion pressings aren't what they should be. Surface noise is prominent.

—mcdonough

## SHAWN PHILLIPS

**FURTHERMORE**—A&M SP3662: *January First; Starbright; Breakthrough; Ninety Two Years; See You; Planscape; Troof; Cape Barras; Song For Northern Ireland; Mr. President; Talking In the Garden; Furthermore.*

Personnel: Phillips, vocals and guitar; Peter Robinson, keyboards; John Gustafson, bass; Barry de Souza, drums; Caleb Quayle, guitar; Paul Buckmaster, cello; Raul Mayora, percussion; Ann Odell, mellotron (track 2).

★

The music of Shawn Phillips could well be one of the last remnants of the folk/rock protest songs of the 1960s. He is an unhappy combination of angry young man, expatriated Texan, and self-conscious lyricist. With unfortunate consistency, Phillips fills his songs with loquacious metaphors that effectively smother his feelings behind a cloud of triteness. He is, in the true sense of the term, a hot-air artist.

A small sampling. From *Mr. President* we get this political insight: "Mr. Prime Minister won't you administer/decrees to decrease the war/it really ain't funny when you're/makin' that money from/gore and blood and spillin' his guts." Phillips blunders his way through a love song with equal aplomb: "In the haze that comes with summer/in the blue mist of your slumber/I will come to you in wonder/and I think I'll sometimes ponder/are you me?"

From whence does this talent arise, you ask. Well, Phillips hails from Ft. Worth, Texas, toured with the Navy, befriended Tim Hardin in Greenwich Village, lived in England, was declared a *persona non grata* in Dublin, and took refuge in Positano, Italy. After this memorable start, he recorded his first LP, *Contribution*, in 1970 and now has six albums to his credit.

I really have no patience with this kind of music. I find it neither clever, nor meaningful, nor instrumentally creative. I do find it boring, egocentric, and, in spite of all the promotional claims to the contrary, lifeless.

—kriss

## BOB RIEDY BLUES BAND

**JUST OFF HALSTED**—Flying Fish 006: *Cruz-ing; I Got A Woman; Haint; Pretty Baby; Coming Home; Heart Akes And Pain; Road Dust; Caldonia; Hard To Leave You Alone; Just Off Halsted.*

Personnel: Riedy, piano; John Reda, Dan Draher, guitars; Bob Falvey, electric bass; Richard Hub-Cap Robinson, drums, vocals (tracks 2, 3); Carey Bell, chromatic harmonica and vocals (tracks 6, 9), sound effects (track 3); Eddie Clearwater, vocals (tracks 4, 8); Mike Willens, baritone and alto saxes; Mike Cogan, tenor sax; Mark Gaston, trumpet.

★ ★ ★ ★

The Bob Riedy formula is simple. Take a few of the brighter but less well-exposed stars in the Chicago blues firmament; add a back-up group of competent young musicians; provide them with simple, clean arrangements of blues and r&b standards; and turn them loose. The formula worked almost to perfection on Riedy's earlier Rounder release, *Lake Michigan Ain't No River*. On *Just Off Halsted*, Riedy has reduced the number of featured

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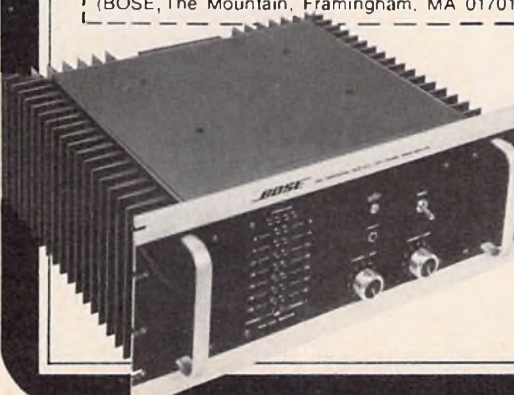
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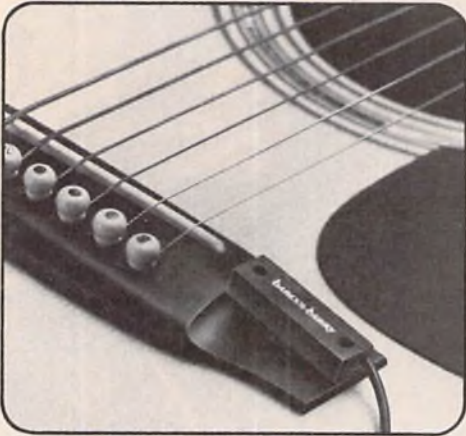
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artists, while broadening the scope of musical styles assayed. The results are generally good.

First, there are the big-band jump numbers, which make basic but effective use of the added horns. Vocalist Clearwater brings off *Caldonia* and *Pretty Baby* with aplomb, and the whole group catches fire under Robinson's direction on *I Got A Woman*. Carey Bell's contributions—spine-tingling, shadowy after-hours blues, with subdued accompaniment—are my favorites of the set. Competing with a cast of greenhorns, fading oldsters, egomaniacs, and assorted ghosts, Bell is probably playing the best harp in Chicago right now, and is blessed with a wonderfully evocative voice, too, as *Heart Akes* and *Alone* (both originals) will attest. Robinson's *Haint* is from the same general bag, but with a fuller back-up sound and more vigorous vocals.

The album's weaknesses stem not from the vocalists, but from Riedy's basic quintet. The best blues singers benefit from the presence of equally strong instrumentalists: Junior Wells has Buddy Guy, B. B. King has Lucille, but Bell, Clearwater, and Robinson have to make do with Reda and Riedy himself. The former plays a commendably uncluttered but undistinguished guitar, while the leader is a bit too restrained to fill up the Otis Spann mold he's carved out for himself. Consequently, the soloing is weak throughout, and the set's four instrumental tracks don't, for the most part, compare with the others. There's reason to hope that with a little more time working together (Riedy and Robinson are the sole holdovers from the Rounder date), these problems will be overcome. In the meantime, Bell, Robinson, and the honest, unpretentious, and exciting Riedy formula makes the set well worth the price of admission.

For more information on obtaining this album, write **db**.

—*metaltiz*

## LABELLE

**NIGHTBIRDS**—Epic KE 33075: *Lady Marmalade*; *Somebody Somewhere*; *Are You Lonely*; *It Took A Long Time*; *Don't Bring Me Down*; *What Can I Do For You*; *Nightbird*; *Space Children*; *All Girl Band*; *You Turn Me On*.

★ ★ ★ ★

Patti LaBelle and the Bluebells had precisely one hit single back in the mid '60s, *I Sold My Heart To The Junkman*. Patti's reformed group, known simply as LaBelle, and comprised of Patti, Sarah Dash, and Nona Hendryx, has been on the comeback trail now for four years. *Nightbirds* is their fourth album and if it doesn't begin to establish them in the front ranks of the r&b assault it's not because the starstuff ain't in these grooves.

Each of these three women has a singular gospel and sex-drenched voice. The tunes themselves are imaginatively arranged and performed with the particular Creole intensity natural to producer Allen Toussaint and the Meters. The group persona, as established by the lyrics, is of an independent woman—proud, intelligent, and open to love. And it's that ancient old jungle love they're talking about. *You Turn Me On* is about as hot and honest an anthem to loving sex as has ever been heard from woman.

The album is marred by the occasional projection of alienating hipper-than-thou stance, as on *Space Children*, and, ironically, by a sort of Aquarian Age idealization of the power of love, *What Can I Do For You*, but I hear at least six absolutely fat-free tunes here. Many groups are making it on far, far less. The new single is *Lady Marmalade*. Listen for it.

—*adler*



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# Ralph Towner



LINDA WING

by Charles Mitchell

blindfold

In a time when the title of Fastest Guitar In The West changes hands every time a new, hot set of strings gets plugged into a wall-size bank of amplifiers, the acoustic innovations of Ralph Towner pump fresh blood into the current music scene. With his fellow members in the quartet Oregon, Towner has helped to pioneer a new style of totally acoustic ensemble playing. The group achieves a modern sound, yet one which is warmly reminiscent of simpler, pastoral landscapes, far from urban madding crowds.

In addition to his remarkable abilities on classical and 12-string guitars, Ralph is a pianist of increasing skill and depth; and he has taken to electric keyboards on two strong jazz-rock recording dates with reedman Clive Stevens.

Towner studied at the University of Oregon and in Vienna with Karl Scheit. He first came to the attention of listeners through his performances with the Paul Winter Consort (a group that contained the other three members of Oregon), and on Weather Report's *I Sing The Body Electric*. His most recent work can be heard on Oregon's new Vanguard LP, *Winter Light*, and on his first solo album for ECM, *Diary*. Future collaborations for the German label (a duet album with bassist Glen Moore pre-dates his new solo LP) will feature Ralph with the likes of John Abercrombie, Bill Connors, Jan Garbarek, Gary Burton, and Eberhard Weber.

This Blindfold Test, the first for both of us, was part of a much longer session. For publication, I chose Ralph's comments on acoustically-oriented music. He was given no information about the records played.

test

## 1. LARRY CORYELL-JOHN McLAUGHLIN. *Rene's Theme* (from *Spaces*, Vanguard). Coryell, McLaughlin, guitars.

That was Larry and John in duet. Kind of a hysterical piece, like a shootout, but I like the fact that it was in the Django style. That's its saving grace, actually. It was crude, but I know they didn't have any rehearsals before recording. Given the conditions—it's really competitive—it's really a nice thing. What I'd like to hear in a multiple guitar session, I think, is a bit more organization. Folk musicians have a really nice approach in one sense; they'll always organize their playing so that they don't double their voices, for example. I'd like to hear something that isn't so full of conflict. It can be great to get good players and put them in an instantly creative situation; you generate a lot of excitement. But more often than not, you end up with a bit less music than is possible with more preparation.

## 2. BADEN POWELL. *El Solitario* (*The Lonely One*) (from *Solitude On Guitar*, Columbia). Baden Powell, guitar, composer.

It's definitely Brazilian—it could be Baden Powell. Laurendo Almeida also writes pieces like that, but Baden has a strong, tense sound like we heard there. He gets a lot of nail noise. Classical guitar is difficult to record. It'll always sound different—every day, even during one session. You're subject to atmospheric conditions: even the slightest stiffening of your hands will change the sound. It's a real headache, and can drive some people to become so meticulous that they forget about music and just concentrate on technical details of playing. Baden Powell just plays, regardless of conditions. He projects so strongly... If you hear a studio guitarist on classical gui-

tar, on a jingle or something, they always sound very clean, but they're only projecting about two to three feet. Baden Powell is aiming for a hundred rows back at least—an explosive player. He was an early influence on me. When I first got into the guitar, I tried to play Brazilian music, and I sounded exactly like Baden. His is such a successful format for the guitar.

## 3. BILL EVANS. *Re: Person I Knew* (from *The Bill Evans Album*, Columbia). Evans, electric piano, piano, composer.

I can't say enough about Bill Evans. He's meant everything insofar as inspiring me to play jazz piano. I wasn't really interested in jazz until I heard LaFaro and Evans. His style is still very much ingrained in everything I do on piano. I recorded this tune, *Re: Person I Knew*. I think it makes sense, in terms of the piece, to start out with electric piano and switch to acoustic. But I don't think Bill is as convincing on electric piano as he is, of course, on acoustic piano. The electric is not as responsive to touch. I think Chick gets the best touch control and clarity out of it. It has to be played differently, you have to be aware of the knobs and attachments.

The tendency with an acoustic piano player—not Bill—is to murder the instrument, really bash away at it. If you're going to play the electric piano, it has to be approached differently, not as a substitute. Bill does approach it on its own terms, but I think that having spent so much of his life and soul on the acoustic instruments—which I do prefer, incidentally—there's a whole range of things happening on the inside of the electric instrument that are too complex to be synthesized into the electric piano. There's such a greater emotional reaction. With the more attachments

you have on electric, of course, the wider your range is. But I don't think Bill is as convinced by the electric piano. I've always been really moved by this piece; it's one of the few pedal pieces he's written.

## 4. JOHN McLAUGHLIN. *Goodbye Pork-Pie Hat* (from *My Goal's Beyond*, Douglas). McLaughlin, guitars; Charles Mingus, composer.

I have a very small record collection, and this record is in it. A great album, this side especially. John is showing his really lyrical self in it. I know this tune pretty well, because I just recorded it in duet with Gary Burton. John's a great player—I don't know what else to say.

It does bring to mind, however, some thoughts about John in general. He never ceases to be a great player, and he's constantly changing his playing, constantly improving. When somebody achieves the point where they express themselves so well and so distinctively, it burns me up when he gets criticized. I think that happens quite a bit. If you get very well known, for awhile you can't do wrong; then suddenly you reach a stage when people reject you. It's a very fickle thing and not really based on the music. It's completely extraneous to the musical development of a person. I don't care what the current press is, John's a great musician.

## 5. JAN GARBAREK. *Scarabee* (from *Afric Pepperbird*, ECM). Garbarek, tenor sax, composer; Terje Rypdal, electric guitar; Jon Christensen, percussion.

I don't know the title of the record, but it's Jan Garbarek—an early record, when he was recording with Terje Rypdal. Jon Christensen, I assume, is on drums. Jan can't be judged from any one recording. He's like Keith Jarrett; he can do everything on his instruments. I don't think that there are any national claims to superiority in improvised music. The European players are great. Think of Weather Report: an Austrian pianist, an Afro-American saxophonist, (at one time) a Czech bassist, and a Brazilian percussionist. The original Mahavishnu Orchestra was the same way.

Jan is so capable that it'll be a while before we get a full picture of what he can do. Jan doesn't unload all of his musical and technical resources at once. Again like Keith, he's got a great quality of restraint. We'll spend a lifetime listening to these two people.

## 6. JACK DeJOHNETTE. *The Right Time* (from *Sorcery*, Prestige). De Johnette, John Abercrombie, Mick Goodrick, David Holland, Bennie Maupin, Michael Felleman, voices.

I guess it was Frank Zappa, but maybe not, because this is an area which a lot of us are starting to get into. Oregon does some talking pieces; if we're doing one of our instrumental improvisations and speech starts happening, we'll do it. It's funny, but it's also hard to do right. These guys did it right. You can almost get waves going if you hit the right rhythm and vocal timbres.

Sometimes when we're in the car spending hours on the road and going crazy, we'll start chant-reading bits and pieces of road signs. It gets uproarious. The thing is, a lot of people can do this, if they'd just come out of the closet like these guys did. They were really musical about it. I suppose, though, that it might get tiring for the listener after a while.

There's something of a barrier that remains with an instrumentalist, it's expression in a more abstract sense. You're not laying your verbal self on the line. A singer is a lot more exposed as far as his verbal-personal point of view.

**Mitchell:** This is Jack De Johnette's new album, with John Abercrombie and Mick Goodrick, David Holland, and a few others.

**Towner:** Well, I've done things very much like this with John. We have a bunch of tapes—we'll do whole operas. Mick and John have gotten into it too. It's great that Jack is letting it out. db



# Profile

## LEE RITENOUR

by joan levine



NACIO JAN BROWN

## MICHAEL HOWELL

by len lyons

Michael Howell, 30-years-old, lives due east of Golden Gate Park, near the geographical center of San Francisco. Two years ago, he was playing acoustic guitar with an obscure saxophonist, named Jamal Chisholm, on the corner of Market and Powell Streets, where the cable cars start their long uphill pull towards Fisherman's Wharf. Though a strangely brief period of time has elapsed since he was gigging on the street, Michael's second album has been released on the Milestone label.

However, his apparently rapid ascent from the street corner to the recording studio doesn't seem nearly so strange in the light of the background that prepared him for the journey.

Michael was born in Kansas City, where his father, Al, wrote an entertainment column for one of the nation's first black-owned newspapers, *The Call*. His household was the scene of frequent jam sessions for local musicians; and Michael, at the age of four or five, attended them by invitation or otherwise: "I remember when I was supposed to be in bed, I'd crawl into the living room and listen to the musicians playing. Later, I'd get caught asleep on the floor. Jazz is what I thought all music was. It's all I knew."

Charlie Parker, also from Kansas City, was leading the vanguard nationally, and his influence was especially pervasive in his hometown. "With all the musicians coming by the house... well, it was a long time before I realized Charlie Parker was human. I really thought he was God. They'd come in and play his solos by memory. Play them and sing them, too. All I heard was Charlie Parker

for years. That's the best ear-training you can get. If you can sing all that, you'll start hearing things.

"I remember there was this park, Paseo Park, in Kansas City, where winos, musicians, and all sorts of people hung out. I specifically remember the musicians there. If they didn't have their instruments with them, they were still sitting around *singing* the solos. And you know if you sang a wrong note, they'd know it—and tell you about it."

Michael moved to Denver from Kansas City. There he attempted to study music, but found that no one would teach guitar or take the instrument seriously. Looking back, he doesn't seem to take his academic training much more seriously than the university took his goals. "I can remember getting kicked out of theory class for insisting that you can play parallel 5ths. Of course, you don't do that in Bach, but no one explained that what we were learning was a style, and not the only way music should be played.

"Actually, one of the reasons I came to California was because I knew there were schools out here where they taught guitar. I worked with a teacher for three months who had studied with Segovia, but she was too good for the school and went back to Spain. My next teacher just didn't have it together, so I quit."

But it was in San Francisco that Michael first saw Wes Montgomery, who—aside from Parker—was his most important influence. "Wes was playing at a dinky old club called The Playpen, now defunct. There weren't more than four or five people in the place, but he was playing like it was packed. Actually, the first time I heard him was on a 45 (r.p.m.) cut of the Montgomery Brothers, before Wes started recording for Riverside. It was called *Finger Picking*. I didn't know who he was at the time, but I knew this cat was it. I always had the concept of playing melodies with chords on guitar. Father hipped me to Johnny Smith, and I thought, 'Now that's fine for ballads, but I want to get into something.' Sure enough, there was Wes doing it."

Chester Thompson, currently the organist for Tower of Power, opened up a new conceptual path. "Chester turned me on to the Lydian mode, which turned everything I knew around backwards. First of all, there were a lot of fingerings I didn't know that I needed to play within that concept. A lot of technical things."

Woody Shaw's ten-piece band also played a role in Michael's musical education, as Tommy Smith does currently. Smith, an organist Michael has worked with for the past two years, is part of the house band at The Scene, a San Francisco club. "The type of music we're playing isn't modern at all. We play standards and ballads, but around here. The Scene is one of the few places where you can play music at all. The only alternative is playing a hotel or rock gig. For studying, I can't beat playing the standards, and Tommy plays in all the keys. Actually, Tommy Smith must have had all the great guitarists with him at one time or another. Wes worked with him in the '50s. Jerry Hahn. Gene Edwards, who was with Gene Ammons."

Michael's present concern involves using the classical finger-technique for playing jazz, in order to use the full capacity of the instrument. "You've heard of one-handed pianists, where everything is in the right hand. But then there's Art Tatum. Listening to him, it's obvious that he's using everything the instrument can do—sometimes I think he might have used too much at once, but he played the instrument. On guitar, if you get the finger-style down, I have no doubt that you can do more, simply because you have five fingers but only one pick. If you listen to the contrapuntal lines that classical guitarists play, I don't see how

Lee Ritenour started playing the guitar when he was eight-years-old. That was back in 1960. Raised in Palos Verdes, California, Lee spent his formative years diligently mastering the guitar. When he was 12, he played in a 19-piece orchestra. At 13, he did his first session on John Phillips' solo album. During high school, he stayed home from the parties and football games to maintain his nine hour a day practice schedule. "I'd come home from school, finish my homework by four, and then start in and practice til midnight, just taking one break for dinner. During the summer, no one ever saw me."

Besides doing a lot of playing, Lee also did a lot of listening. "Wes Montgomery was the greatest influence on my playing, and I've had a lot of influences, from B. B. King to John McLaughlin. For me, Wes was the only pure guitarist, he really played from his heart. Everything he played was so melodic, yet he was completely unschooled. He really knew music."

Charlie Christian's name came up, and Lee commented that, indeed, "Christian was heads and shoulders above 'em all. He was a definite influence on B.B. and Wes, but they developed their own style, and naturally, Wes took it a step further."

Lee also believes strongly in evolving his own musical message. "I've tried to open myself completely to my own style, especially with my own compositions." Lee has been composing since he was 12, but sporadically, until recent years. Lately, he has been approached by people who want to do his tunes, but confides that "it's an area I want to explore alone for awhile."

He was 17 when he got his first playing exposure in a "jazz group" with the Craig Hundley Trio. After that, it was musical studies at USC with Christopher Parkening, and private lessons with Joe Pass and Howard Roberts. Lee credits ses-

you can do that with a pick. The classical style guitarist plays the instrument: the bass line, the melody, the chords."

His concepts, however, extend beyond his own playing to the status of the instrument in jazz. "I think the guitar has been cheated in jazz. Charlie Christian liberated it from playing 4/4 in the rhythm section, but no one has done very much since then. The truth is that guitarists are just becoming musicians, though I'm going to have a lot of people mad at me for saying that. Of course, Jim Hall hasn't been cheated because he's a musician, and Kenny Burrell knows his music." He cites the negligible number of guitar albums, his own included, as further evidence of the problem. "The biggest criticism of my first album is that it's not a guitar album—you don't hear my soloing all the way through. But I don't think I'm that interesting yet. I just want to play some music right now, and I like horns and other instruments."

Despite his rather sudden ascent to the status of recording artist, Michael's self-image doesn't seem altered by any of the changes often associated with unanticipated success. "I know what level of musical society I'm on, because I'm still the type who'll run up to a musician and tell him how good he sounds. I don't think you're supposed to do that. I've had some very top name musicians look at me like I'm crazy, like they're saying, 'What do you expect?', but sometimes I feel compelled to do it."

His younger brother, Glenn, incidentally, appears on one track of the newly released album (he is also the bassist for a free-form San Francisco group, Infinite Sound), and Michael's wife is an aspiring singer, who—according to Michael—is presently trying to overcome certain effects of her formal voice training. Thus, there may be other Howell profiles in the offing, if not a family portrait. **db**



sion veteran Roberts with giving him a lot of pointers on studio work.

Deciding to expand his musical horizons, Lee left the inhibiting world of academia and toured Japan with Sergio Mendes. He recalls that "until then, I'd always led a pretty sheltered life, but it was by my own choice. Music was my foremost interest. The tour to Japan was a real awakening for me. It taught me a lot about life, and how to relate to people. Of course, the fact that I was with eight Brazilians probably helped a lot!"

Lee returned to the States where he got his big break at Donte's, the Los Angeles jazz spot where musicians go to listen as well as play. He recalls that "every Monday was 'Guitar Night.' One night they asked me to bring in my own group. I'd been playing there pretty regularly, so we got a quintet together and played that year. One night, Larry Carlton and I were going to play together, but he got tied up in the studio. John Pisano and I wound up playing together, and it was such a good collaboration that we played together the rest of the year. Then he rejoined the Tijuana Brass, and I formed my own group."

Lee's group now includes Dave Grusin on piano, Bill Dickinson on bass, Harvey Mason on drums, and Jerry Steinholtz on percussion. They've been playing Tuesday nights at The Baked Potatoe to loyal crowds for the past few months. The collective energy on stage is consistently high. Of course, Grusin could play a kiddie piano and do okay, but Lee really has it together. Someone once mentioned that Jim Hall has asked Lee how he played so fast.

The guitar has been such a major force in Lee Ritenour's life that it has offered him a triple threat career. As Lee tells it: "I've had three careers going for the past couple of years, but it's only been this past year, that my favorite one has taken a jump, getting my own band together." Another highlight for Lee in 1974 was the Monterey Jazz Festival, when he participated in the "Guitar Summit" with veteran pickers Joe Pass, Mundell Lowe, and Jim Hall, and with another youngster like himself, Michael Howell.

The second aspect of Lee's career is studio work, which he says is "interrelated with playing in my own group. It's the way I earn my living, because you can't really earn a living playing exclu-



JOAN LEVINE

sively at small clubs. I like to play in front of an audience because it's more spontaneous. So, for the ideal, I try to balance my studio work with my "live" playing." Lee pauses a moment and adds: "A lot of musicians stop playing in front of audiences. They practically bury themselves in their studio work. Then, it becomes like any nine-to-five job. They never really see the light."

A day in the life of Lee Ritenour might include a morning gig for a children's cartoon show, then an afternoon session with Gato Barbieri, and an evening concert with Cleo Laine. The next day, Lee might be taping a country television show, doing some "jingle" work, or a session with Mantovani. Lee grins sheepishly at the incongruity of it all, and comments: "You'll find the most incredible jazz musicians on some of the strangest dates. One week, you'll be playing with Oliver Nelson, and the next week, with Sandy Nelson. Each session I do, I learn something new. I'll always do studio work, because it's a challenge, and there's a lot of great people to work with."

Lee has worked with some of the best, includ-

ing Peggy Lee, Paul Simon, Carly Simon, and Alphonse Mouzon. Lee describes Mouzon's latest release as "the best album I worked on in 1974." Of course, his opinion may be a bit biased, since it is a guitar-featured album, with Lee, Tommy Bolan and Jay Graydon sharing solo duties.

Lee is especially proud of his association with Dave Grusin, who he met a few years ago at a party at Sergio Mendes' house. "Our association began when I did some sessions with Sergio that Dave produced," Lee proudly declares. "It's been a solid association ever since. Dave has really been a good influence for me. Not only is he the finest pianist/composer I've ever played with, he also has managed to keep his integrity in this town, and maintain higher standards for himself, and that's not easy. He's the ultimate professional musician."

From session work, the natural progression would be for Lee to record his own album, since he is also a competent composer. Interestingly enough, Lee did record a samba/bossa nova album in Brazil last year, with Oscar Neves, Sergio Mendes' guitarist. But due to the relaxed work-style of the Brazilians, Lee has still not heard the finished product.

As for the third aspect of Lee's career, little did he know when he took his leave of absence from academia, that he'd be returning two years later to teach the late Jack Marshall's guitar workshop. Lee says that "the class is geared to give guitar majors more variety in their playing. All of the classical majors take it. I try and introduce them to bossa nova, flamenco, and pop harmonies." Later this year, USC will begin an experimental program which Lee and Duke Miller will co-direct. It's called the "Studio Guitar Program," and Lee is quite enthusiastic about it. "It will teach students how to be masters of overall guitar styles, and help them in choosing a career, whether as a teacher, or a studio musician. It will actually deal with the students' needs, offering them a master's musician degree in guitar."

Summing up his three-career parlay, Lee states quite simply: "I have all the stimulus that I need to keep me in tune with the basic realities of life. I can't really complain too much. I've got all my areas of interest covered. I just hope that the energies keep flowing." **db**

## Sun Ra

Keystone Korner, San Francisco  
Off-Plaza, San Francisco  
One World Family  
Teleport Lounge, Berkeley

**PERSONNEL:** Sun Ra, intergalactic organ, rock-chord, Moog synthesizer; John Gilmore, tenor sax, traps; Marshall Allen, alto sax, flute, oboe, bassoon; Danny Davis, alto sax, flute; Elton Omoe, bass clarinet; Danny Thompson, baritone sax; Walter Miller, Kwamie Hadie (Lamont McClamb), trumpets; Akh Tal Ebah, trumpet, fluegelhorn, vocals, dancer; Greg Underwood, guitar, vocals; Dale Williams, bass guitar; Mike Fuller, drums; Eugene Chiea Brennan, Ken Moshess, congas; Al Bateen, hand drums; June Tyson, Cheryl Banks, Judith Holton (Space Ethnic Voices), vocals, dancers; Sam Bankhead, vocals; Richard Wilkinson, lights, slides, film.

Experiencing the Arkestra was so exhilarating I caught them on five separate occasions. Though some material recurred throughout, each show had a unique structure and program. At the first show, after Marshall Allen laid down a base with some unaccompanied, free-form oboe, Sun Ra entered in one of his magnificent space suits, swirling an orange cape along with the music. Solemn mood thus established, he sat down at his keyboard console and played as if he were a child just discovering the piano. There were no rules about the proper way to hold the hands, or how to stay in the right key. Like Blake's child-like rhymes and meters, it was refreshing, and even though I'd heard the Arkestra on record, totally surprising. I laughed uncontrollably as Sun Ra massaged and elbowed the keyboard. The band had me



TIM HILDEBRAND

### THE YIN AND YANG OF RA

laughing all over again, when, after playing freely for awhile, they paused for a short message about the past from Ra segueing into an hilariously surrealist version of Ellington's *Lightning*. The next time I saw them, Sam Bankhead fell on the floor laughing and Sun Ra was so pleased that he got down with him. Not very dignified, you say? Well, you haven't met the captain of the spaceship yet, have you?

In case you haven't heard, this Spaceship

Earth is set on a course which will connect the past and the future in Sun Ra's Cosmic Equation. Ouroboros. The snake that swallows its tail. Black American music has taken a long trip. While seeming to divest itself of African outer garments in favor of European garb, it was actually returning not only to its West African basis, but to a concept of performance that ties pre- and post-civilized music together. So far, Sun Ra most completely realizes this concept. Yet within this

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simultaneously primitive and futuristic music, all parts of the jazz experience—from scat-singing to tap-dancing—are retained.

In non-Western cultures, the arts aren't separated from one another or from politics, education, science and religion. One of the strengths of jazz has always been its reflection of a whole culture, probably America's first "counter-culture." The Arkestra, through costume, slides and films, dance, song, music, poetry, incense, ritual and pageantry, creates a total theater, a complete world with implications that go far beyond our limited definition of music.

I can imagine that Duke Ellington's performances at the Cotton Club must have approached this kind of total theater: and Sun Ra seems best equipped to fill the role that Duke played for his generation. Certainly no one else has introduced as broad a range of new textures into the music, from free-wheeling saxophone duets and trumpet trios to futuristic electronic instruments and full-band drum choirs.

The link between Ellington and Sun Ra is Monk, another pianist who mixes humor and mystery. Monk has said that wrong is right, two is one and black is white, statements reminiscent of the mystical Oxyrhynchus papyri. Some of the lyrics sung by Ra and the band: "What do you do when you know that you know that you know that you're wrong? You got to face the music. You got to listen to the cosmo-song," and, "We hereby declare ourselves to be another order of being." Ra states that he is an ambassador from outer space and an angel. Much of this may seem silly or vacuous to those whose atomistic universe is stripped of mystery and magic, who have forgotten our relation to the stars and to one star in particular.

Jazz purists dislike anything that smacks of entertainment or showmanship; yet this music, like Oldenburg, Warhol, or the Beatles can be avant-garde while appealing to a wider audience. By unifying all the performing arts, they find themselves suddenly entertaining. The Arkestra would also compare favorably with other forms of total theater such as Greek drama, medieval miracle plays, a Roman Catholic mass, or more direct predecessors such as Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Little Richard.

Sun Ra has said that his music is protective, talismanic. This mysterious power is certainly one of the forgotten functions of music. The magus Agrippa wrote, "Musical harmony is a most powerful conceiver. It allures the celestial influences and changes affections, intentions, gestures, notions, actions and dispositions. . . . The elements themselves delight in music." Most reviewers latch on to isolated statements or musical phrases to use against Sun Ra; but this is a holistic music producing its effect not through isolated solos or parts, but through an orchestral totality. Skeptics search the music for referentials and are deaf to the reverential.

—ira steingroot

## MILES DAVIS

### The Troubadour, Los Angeles

**Personnel:** Miles Davis, trumpet, Yamaha organ; Pete Cosey, guitar; Sonny Fortune, soprano sax, flute; Michael Henderson, bass; Al Foster, drums; Reggie Lucas, rhythm guitar; Mtume, congas.

Who *knows* what music lurks in the heart of Miles Davis?

The Troubadour audience didn't, that's for sure. The legendary innovator, whose mere presence on stage initially generated excitement and high-voltage sexual energy, may

again be well "ahead of his time," but the final effect of his opening set, his first L.A. appearance in three years, was one of befuddlement and disappointed boredom.

He looked super-cool with his huge dark glasses, his white silk shirt and pants, his silver belt, and his orange scarf, but he shattered it all when he contemptuously spat on the stage and later, *sans* handkerchief, blatantly blew his nose with all the cool of a Georgia redneck.

After he left the stage the music dribbled off into a series of inconsequential blues clichés, finally faltering to a directionless halt. Most of the people clapped. Some because they felt morally obliged to.

He knew the press was there *en masse*, and it was almost as if he were spitting on *them*. I've since heard that he cleaned up his act and his attitude the following evenings and played some dynamic music. But his conduct opening nite was infantile, pointless, and boring.



TALAMON

What happened musically? Henderson, Foster, Lucas, and Mtume laid down a funky, rocking beat at a single tempo, which Miles retained for 45 minutes. The audience could relate to that—no problem. Over the top, however, Miles and lead guitarist Pete Cosey defied all of the "laws," all of the "rules," and all of the customs of what has traditionally constituted a musical experience.

Instead of playing within a recognizable scale, Miles and Cosey for the most part played completely outside. Rather than playing notes, Miles squeaked, whimpered, whooped, mewled, and growled. On the electric organ, he sustained great mashes of dissonant and seemingly arbitrary chords.

Instead of building series of melodic phrases within the traditional 4-, 8-, and 32-bar sections, he and Cosey generally played spurts and jumps of notes, apparently unrelated to each other, apparently coming from nowhere, leading to nowhere.

Occasionally, the mood would shift, and Miles would state an orthodox melody, or saxophonist/flutist Sonny Fortune (whom everybody liked) would take a relatively "inside" solo that tinkled bells of the familiar. On the whole, however, the audience left feeling excluded, confused, and unfulfilled.

I too left feeling unfulfilled, but at the same time I suspect Miles is trying to take us into a new, dark world of inner experience—a new mood—which jars with our every preconception and with all of our past associations.

Granted, his conduct was offensive, and he may still be searching for the perfect musical means of expressing his diabolical vision, but I personally believe he is leading us into an area that has all of the subjectively frightening urgency, the angry darkness, and the screaming jungle ferocity of a sleeping dream. He is leading us into our own broodingly primeval subconsciousness.

In this respect, Miles Davis is becoming profoundly natural, and I think in the future he is once again going to electrify us.

—lee underwood









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## HOW TO improve guitar sight-reading

by Dr. William L. Fowler

"For the guitarist, sight-reading used to be a status symbol: now it's a necessity."—Johnny Smith

Shortly before the recording session was to start, Howard Roberts sailed into the studio. He checked which type of guitar the score called for, tuned up, scanned his music, and was ready to play just as the conductor gave the downbeat. During the first run-through, a few wrong notes sounded throughout the orchestra. So the conductor checked in turn the various instruments. When Howard's turn came, he said, "There were a few copyist errors, but I corrected them as I went along."

Now there, friends, is sightreading ability, the lack of which is a common ailment among guitarists, an ailment which can prove fatal to chances of getting or keeping many choice gigs. For weak-reading guitarists who want to cure their ailment, down beat has obtained some prescriptions from three exceptional readers, Johnny Smith and Howard Roberts, each totally experienced in all phases of studio work and teaching, and 21-year-old Tim May, right now carving a place for himself in Los Angeles through stints with Louis Bellson, Percy Faith, Doc Severson, and Tony Rizzi's new multiple-guitar group.

Tim May on learning to read: "When I started to learn how to read more than just chord symbols, I went through a lot of those really basic beginning guitar instruction books, the ones with repeated quarter notes on the open strings. And when I could instantly recognize the open-string scales, intervals, and chords, I began concentrating, one at a time, on specific reading problems, like position playing, complicated rhythms, transposition, and the bass clef. I'd get pieces in G, for example, then play them in second position, then in seventh position, then in all the other positions their range would allow. And then I'd play them an octave higher than written, using extremely high positions, like the fourteenth. I'd get trombone music for practice in the bass clef, violin and flute music for practice with high ledger lines and especially with scalar passages.

"I'd read clarinet music because it uses exactly the same ledger lines below the staff as guitar does. I'd read all the music I could find in awkward key signatures, like B or G flat, and everything I could find that contained lots of chromatic accidentals. I'd get basic piano methods, then try to play on guitar everything written for both hands at the piano. And at each reading session I would concentrate as much as I could until I began to tire. Then I'd stop practicing, do something else for a while, then go back to reading for another short period.

"At all times during the reading sessions I made myself read a measure or two ahead of where I was actually playing, with my eyes traveling along the music as smoothly as possible. And I always kept the beat going in my mind, even when this meant leaving out notes or phrases that my technique could not yet handle accurately; I'd rather let the right time go by without playing anything than play wrong notes or passages. And when I came to Los Angeles recently I sight-read in every rehearsal band I could make."

Howard Roberts on studio reading efficiency: "Wasted time means higher expense in the studios. So guitarists who don't cause the orchestra to stop during the initial run-throughs get hired again. And the chances of making mistakes which will trigger such a calamity can be minimized by the guitarist's scanning his part before playing it. He should especially look for:

1. Key signature changes.
2. Time signature changes.
3. D. S., D. C., coda, and repeat marks.
4. Extremely high passages. These should be plotted for the general fingerboard area to be used and the fingering should be visualized.
5. Large interval skips. Again, fingering should be visualized.
6. Complicated rhythms. These should be mentally subdivided and their rhythmic feel memorized.
7. Written-out chord voicings. Because the top notes are most important to the ensemble sound, they should be given preference, the guitarist should read from the top note down.
8. Special effects, like echoplex, fuzz, wah-wah, tremolo, or finger-picking.
9. Expression marks, like dynamics, staccatos, legatos, and accents.

"If there is time left before the playing starts, the guitarist can now mentally run through his part, imagining the sound and visualizing the fingerings. Then he can run over the hard spots with his *amplifier turned off*. The idea here is to avoid any sound that will draw attention. The above pre-playing routine will help give a guitarist the confidence essential to sight-reading success in the studio."

Johnny Smith on actual pitch notation: "Guitar music has traditionally been written on a single treble clef, one octave above its actual sound. And since there is so much guitar music already in print, guitarists will have to be able to read this way. But a more practical notation, I feel, would consist of actual pitch written on both bass and treble clefs, as piano music is written. The actual pitch range of the guitar extends below the bass clef and above the treble clef, a wide range that forces the use of too many ledger lines in the present one-staff system. And the often contrapuntal nature of guitar solo music crowds the treble clef uncomfortably with stems, flags, beams, note heads, and rests, until the reading guitarist often cannot really see the flow of the separate melodic lines. But perhaps the most advantageous use of the double staff lies in indicating the correct bass note at its real pitch, thereby making inversions, voicings, and chord names easy to indicate correctly. I'm now using the double staff in teaching and in writing.

\*\*\*

Every guitarist ought to have a mini-library for reference as well as for developing his reading skills, fingerboard knowledge, playing technique, and improvising ability. From among the many excellent books now available, here are several that together make up an essential and well-rounded, if small, collection:

*Solo Guitar Playing* by Frederick M. Noad. The Macmillan Company, New York, N.Y.

This book contains not only concise explanations of all the classic guitar techniques, but



This excerpt from Howard Roberts' sight-reading manual contains many styles that guitarists must read in studio work. Guitarists, therefore, can gauge their reading abilities by first scanning it, then reading it. (Anybody who gets through it accurately moves to the head of the class!)

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# BOOKS

**MILES DAVIS: A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY**, by Bill Cole. William Morrow Co.; 256 p.p.; \$8.95.

This, I believe, is what is called "Black Studies." Anyone expecting an authoritative treatment of jazz's prime eminence comparable to Ross Russell's beautiful book on Bird will be disappointed. This is a reworked Masters' Thesis submitted by some quota-filler. It is not the definitive biography of a great artist. It is, instead, a tract filled with factual omissions and selected distortions, further marred by Mr. Cole's racial views. *A Musical Biography* was collated without contacting the subject and apparently without a proof-reading by someone knowledgeable in the field. This sort of stuff will get you by the Thesis Committee, but will hardly satisfy the devoted fan. Our writer will, in a matter of time, be metamorphosed into Dr. Cole. The flak-catchers will have been mau-maued again.

Mr. Cole's department head (Cole is now doing his Ph.D. dissertation on John Coltrane) must have known little or nothing of music. If he had, Cole would not have been permitted to call Charlie Parker's *Moose The Mooch, Moose And Mooch* (sic), or to put scat-singing Bob Dorough on the Columbia Gil Evans collaboration dates. (Someone should also tell Cole why Diz plays his trumpet bent the way it is. It's a fascinating tale).

The author is black. I know he is because he says he is and in case I missed the point, he calls everybody "brother." Only Cole doesn't use the appellation "black," he says "African-American." The entire book must constantly be translated in reading from the current patois. Cole's central thesis is that Miles, a gifted "African-American" musician whose art was in playing for and to "the people," has copped out and become a hip rock 'n roller of no interest to the illuminati. Appreciation of the music leaves off where the cover photo does, early in the '60s.

In short, the essay is not what the music is: epic yet minimal, the synthesis of man and art, the declarations of jazz's Picasso. There is nothing of the Davis persona in this book.

The ad for *Musical Biography* said that I was to meet Charlie Parker, the man Kerouac called Buddha-Bird; and John Coltrane, the guy all the young horn players try to sound like nowadays; and of course, Miles, the Main Man. All I know is that the Bird and the Trane and the Miles I love aren't in the book I read. I saw nothing of Miles the angry boxer I heard on *Jack Johnson* and saw at Keystone Korner this spring. Or the ivy-leagued dude I saw in '62 who profanely tells a fawning fan get off his back and drives away in the famed Lamborghini into the Hollywood night. The work just does not do justice to the man.

Worst of all, despite the musicology, Brother Cole doesn't really understand the music. He just isn't listening anymore: his Miles died with *Porgy And Bess*. Miles' music has entered an advanced period. No longer does it follow the theme/chorus/theme bop pattern of popular ballads or scatting blues progressions. He stays *on stage* during the

performances now, directing his young rock rhythm sections, listening to what is going on, apparently enjoying himself. The changes jump constantly, suggesting the flare and the flame of street speech, live-evil, a boogie riff, a T-Bone Walker shuffle, the tone and hideous scream of the corner "dozens," mockery, laughter, anger. But Miles is always shifting, changing, prowling like the fighter he is, waving his arms, directing the band with his whole body. The result is the closest whites will come to hearing and feeling the ghetto.

The book intentionally deletes the legendary personality. Did Bird get him hooked on heroin? Why did Coltrane leave the band? Does he really cook spaghetti and work out with boxers? Did his son fight in Vietnam? Does he really ball all those chicks? Is he a racist himself? Does he play for money? Miles once said he didn't like any of his records. Does he now?

I don't know how rough I can be on the author for not interviewing the subject. The artist need not be a "personality." His work should speak for itself. Davis' certainly does. But he is also a "personality" whether he wishes it or not.

What a beautiful book remains to be written! The American Debussy, uncompromising but not unyielding. Someone, black or white, may yet write the real story of jazz's greatest son. Russell, Gleason, and Balliett all have the chops for it. Meanwhile, Brother Cole is still learning his instrument.

—john p. valentine

Miles Davis' preeminence in jazz—as an innovator in "movements," a leader of great jazz groups, a trumpet player, and a developer of young talent—is simply one of the facts of life. The increased popularity of groups spawned by Miles and the growing general attention paid to Miles himself make it logical that a book should be written about him now. Unfortunately, Bill Cole's *Miles Davis: A Musical Biography* doesn't do Miles justice. It is a poorly written, narrow-minded, overly simplistic distortion of Miles's contribution to music, serving more as a forum for Cole's personal opinions than as a source of information and enlightenment.

Cole's thesis is that Davis was at his creative peak from the mid-'50s to the early '60s. According to Cole, the formation of the quintet that included Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams resulted in a decline from which Miles has never recovered. Cole is at his best when talking about earlier Miles. He appreciates the values in Miles' music of that time, and his treatment of the period from 1950-1963 is relatively objective and accurate.

Cole's view of a few of the events along the way, however, is open to question. He states, for instance, that the music on *Kind Of Blue* "lacked any emotional drive," and that *Sketches Of Spain* "lacked the basic ingredient of African-American music, rhythm." Criticisms like these stem from Cole's stated belief that jazz should remain "pure," limiting itself to the techniques of African-American music in its development. Accordingly, he puts down Miles' use of European "classical" and rock techniques, going so far as to criticize Miles for using white musicians in his bands. Happily, Miles has looked at these techniques as tools to make music, not as deviations from the path of Afro-American



"As soon as I find enough time, I want to study the synthesizer and include it in my sound. It's still very experimental but I hear certain possibilities. I see my music as being almost like a ritual, like an African priest who comes out and starts singing and dancing—very spiritual, happy music."

*What about frustration?*

"No, I think everything is beautiful. However, I think musicians should try to get closer together and love one another more. Everybody's been through a lot, but really we're all after the same thing, it's just that different people take different roads to get there. But we're all going the same place.

"The problem is that there's some funny stuff they said about Herbie Hancock's album (*Headhunters*). I think everybody should do what they feel like doing, that's what makes it beautiful. But that's just my point of view, other people might not feel the same way.

"I don't even worry about that kind of stuff, I just try to do my thing. I work hard and give everything that's in my heart and soul no matter who I'm playing with. I try to enjoy what I'm doing and just keep getting up. All those evil thoughts, jealousies—all that—I don't have time for that because there's so much work to be done. I'm doing the best I can.

"I enjoy other people's music, you know, but I haven't got the time to knock anybody. If somebody drops a stick or blows a strange note—so what? It makes me feel good that that person is just *playing*, because I know what they went through, what it took them to stick it out, especially in this country. So, it makes me feel good to be around them." **db**

## NEWMAN

continued from page 17

Meanwhile, Newman was becoming one of the most respected and frequently recorded songwriters. With the release of that album, Newman was persuaded to begin singing in public. He made his first appearance at the Troubadour in Los Angeles, then the Bitter End in New York, and the Main Point in Philadelphia. Initially he was nervous and disliked performing. But enthusiastic crowds and better working conditions have turned him into a first rate stage performer, so much so that he doesn't even mind it much anymore.

Those first club appearances brought out such luminaries as Bob Dylan, but the audience was basically comprised of die-hard Newman fans that knew more of his songs than he did and who sat in rapt attention mouthing the words as he sang. By 1971, he had enough of a following to half fill smaller concert halls in major cities. By 1972, he was playing to a sell out crowd at Lincoln Center in New York with a 50-piece orchestra supporting him. And his fourth album *Sail Away* climbed to the bottom of the album charts and sold over 100,000.

The cult had exploded into a mass audience, an audience with an uncanny knowledge and understanding of Newman's unique art. I don't know what exactly happened to cause such full scale popularity. Randy doesn't either. I suppose it is just another case of the public catching up with the innovator.

One could write a treatise about each of Randy Newman's songs. They tend to compact a psychological life history into three or four minutes of poetry and music. But nothing can replace hearing and experiencing them with one's own ear and mind. And although there are countless versions of many of his songs, Newman remains the supreme actor, the best interpreter of his works.

When I played some Newman material for bassist Charlie Haden about four years ago, he liked the music and lyrics, but was bothered by Randy's singing, which he found to be very imitative of a black Southern singing style. Randy told me, "I don't do that consciously. I've heard that criticism before. But I grew up listening to Ray Charles and a lot of other r&b singers. It seems natural to me. I can't sing any other way."

Newman's tunes approach theatrical songs in depth and melody,

never know when I'm gonna start, or where I'm gonna end."

Perhaps the most exciting dimension of Joe Pass is his recent discovery that he can be his own man, his own musician. "With Ella I would perform on large stages in front of lots of people I didn't know, but I was just a sideman, and it didn't make any difference. The heat wasn't on me. It was on her. It was *her* responsibility, not mine.

"If we're playing at Donte's for maybe 80 people, I can feel relaxed being the leader of my own group. That's my ground, my territory, you know? But if I go up to Vancouver and play on a big stage for maybe 500 or a thousand strange people, that's a whole new thing for me. Sure, I get nervous! I'm just *starting* to do that. Five years from now I'll be as relaxed with the responsibility I'm taking as I feel at Donte's, or as I felt playing with Ella. I'm beginning to see what it's like to be the magnet, and I like it. There's no way I can please everybody, but if there's some acceptance of what I do, then that's enough for me.

"I used to always censor things; don't do this, try not to do that. I'm always influenced by the place, the people, and my own emotional-mental thing. I look out there . . . if I play ten fast runs in a row, I say to myself, 'That's *enough* of that!' But maybe that 11th run might be the one that will take me off the hook and into something. If I censor it, however, then I'm into something that's not right.

"Everything has to roll and flow naturally, one thing after another, in a row. If you take one thing out, you break the sequence, and then it doesn't come out right. But when everything is right in your head, and you're not influenced by anything artificial, then

everything is right, and it comes out that way.

"I'm finally learning to play the guitar the way I feel, not the way somebody else thinks it should be, or the way the latest record sounds. I'm going to play it *this* way, with this many notes in it, whether you like this many notes or not, you know? I'm learning to say, 'This is it. This is the way I play. This is what I do. If you like it, okay; if you don't like it, that's too bad.'

"And honest to God, since I've come to that conclusion, I can play with freedom! That's hard to do, you know? I mean, I'll be sittin' home at night sometimes and playing the *shit* out of a tune. Even I say, 'Oh, boy!' But then I go to play it at Donte's, and it comes out terrible because I censor what's happening at Donte's in an effort to get back to what happened at home.

"I'm now trying to completely sense and feel the present, to give up trying to recapture a moment of the past, to play the way I play, to allow the flow to happen, to follow it, to enjoy what acceptance comes my way, and to make a living doing what I do.

"When I go out and play now, I play half the concert solo. *Half*. I sit out there by myself, and a lot of it is sheer terror. But I want to do a *whole* concert that way, maybe an hour, maybe two hours, and just get out there and play *anything*.

"Right now, I still play everything off of tunes, but a lot of times after I play the tune, it's no longer the same piece. I've developed something new out of it, something of my own. What I ultimately want to do is to go out there *without* a tune, to just start playing something and develop *that*.

"That's my goal. To use everything I've learned and have lived, and bring it out at that moment through this thing called an instrument, my guitar." **db**

but he has never really heard Kurt Weill and the like. The last time I visited him he was listening to the brilliant contemporary classical composer Krzysztof Penderecki, enthusiastically leafing through the score. Aside from classical music, he listens mostly to rhythm and blues. "I can't really get into jazz because they solo so long. It doesn't hold my interest. It's really not for me. I don't listen to a lot of what is around either. I do think that Joni Mitchell is incredible though." His knowledge of pop music is certainly limited. During one telephone conversation a few years ago, I told him that Duane Allman had died a few days before. He wasn't quite sure who that was. Books and television, more than music, serve as Randy's inspiration for new songs.

His new album *Good Old Boys* shows that his audience is still growing. The album was to have been a concept affair dealing with one Southern family, a series of songs chronicling where they arc and where they're going, explaining their background and situation with amazing insight and compassion. In the summer of 1973, Randy played me a batch of songs from the project. He was worried about maintaining his own standards. He was also bothered with the idea of finding other singers who could play specific roles and with skillfully organizing the whole thing. He was seeking feedback from me and other friends who knew his music.

As the album went into production, Randy procrastinated and eventually scrapped the idea of a complete song cycle. But many of the songs did survive to find a place on the album. While songs such as *GUILTY* and *Naked Man* have no other frame of reference, the bulk of the album is true to the original idea of the Southern family, with an added tangent that delves into Louisiana history during the reign of Huey Long. The historical portion was inspired by a book that he had read about Long and from listening to the stories of many relatives who still live in that state.

From the outrageous *Rednecks* which opens the album, to the closing *Rollin'*, Newman has maintained his customary quality. He continues to be one of the most sensitive, exploratory, and unusual singer-songwriter-arrangers in contemporary music. His ability to penetrate depths of the human condition enriches our existence. **db**



also exercises in those techniques, plus authoritatively-edited pieces from the solo classic guitar literature. And there are many beautiful duets! As a bonus, Mr. Noad pays considerable attention to the contrapuntal techniques of guitar playing.

*The Johnny Smith Approach to the Guitar*, Books I and II. Mel Bay Publications.

These two volumes together present a clear picture of the complete fingerboard harmonic resources and scale fingerings. And they are filled with information on how Johnny developed the immaculate technique and musicianship which have made him a true guitarists' guitarist.

*Howard Roberts Guitar Manual Sight Reading*. Playback Music Publishing Co., North Hollywood, California.

This book is a concise course for developing sight-reading to a high level. And H. R., through his direct and uncluttered choice of practice materials, makes the course understandable and enjoyable.

*Guitar Patterns for Improvisation*, by William L. Fowler. down beat Publications, Chicago.

This is not an instruction book for guitar technique. Instead, it indicates and demonstrates systems of melodic and harmonic explorations on the fingerboard, each of which can be developed into personal improvisational styles by individual guitarists. The ten subjects are graphically illustrated.

*The Arranger/Composer's Complete Guide to the Guitar*, by Tom Bruner. Gresco Publishing Co., Studio City, California.

This book is complete, all right! It's a real one-volume encyclopedia on *all* the fretted instruments, *all* the playing styles, and *all* the auxiliary electronic equipment. And every subject discussed in 130-page text is musically illustrated on the 99 recorded examples included. The depth of this book lies in its comprehensive coverage of subject matter concerning the fretted instruments, without undue concentration on any one subject. db

music. And he has chosen his musicians for their ability, not their skin color.

The weakest part of the book is the treatment of the music after 1964, the period of Miles' supposed decline. Cole simply does not understand some of the fundamental aspects of Davis' music of that time. He claims that, after *Kind of Blue*, "Miles never really explored more deeply the possibility of using modes, although, over a few years, he used them periodically." On the contrary: from 1964 on, Miles explored modal playing thoroughly; many of his solos of that period are models of modal mastery. Furthermore, Cole states that after 1964, Miles was "settling into hard bop as his mode of expression;" but the recorded evidence shows that Miles was radicalizing his playing as much as he ever had. What he was playing doesn't sound like "hard bop" to me.

The author's evaluation of Wayne Shorter's playing in Miles' group is eccentric to say the least. Cole considers Shorter to have been merely "a competent sideman," and faults his playing because "his tone had become round rather than hard and his articulation muffled by the use of too many sliding phrases." I wonder if Cole would criticize Coltrane or Charlie Parker for their "sliding phrases."

Would he put down Monk and Sonny Rollins for playing the melody in their solos, another charge he levels at Shorter?

Cole finds little to praise in Miles' work during this time, but he finds plenty to condemn. Typical is his view of *Bitches Brew*. He compares the album to "the longest airplane ever made going down the longest runway ever built and never getting off the ground" and says "there really seems to be nothing happening at all." He further labels the album a step backward from *In a Silent Way*, which he describes as "sluggish and monotonous." To add error to injury, he lists Gary Bartz and "Stuart (*sic*) Grossman" as saxophone players on the album, though neither plays one note on it. I can only suggest that Cole buy a copy of the album, read the liner notes to find out the correct personnel, and open up his head.

If a musician with musical knowledge and acumen had written these views, one might give them more weight. Cole doesn't seem to know much about music. To cite one example: the transcription of Miles' solo on *Sid's Ahead*, a blues in F. Cole gets almost all the notes right, but he writes the solo with a signature of three flats, the key signature of Eb. At approximately measure 58, the transcription breaks down because the rhythm is incorrectly transcribed; from that point on the notes are often not even in the right measure. There are errors of description (3/4 time, for example, is called a "ternary form"), and the musical analysis of Miles' style is generally superficial. Cole almost completely ignores the harmonic aspects of the music, and the analysis of melody (which doesn't deal with Miles' use of modal scales) and rhythm is in very general terms.

*Miles Davis: A Musical Biography* is hardly a definitive book about Miles. Most of the information it contains is available from other sources (cited in Cole's extensive bibliography), without the attendant bias of this book. The narrow range of perception displayed by Cole might deter unsuspecting readers from finding the beauty in much of Miles' music. One who has contributed as much as Miles deserves far better treatment.

—mark solomon

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# CITY SCENE

## New York

**Lionel Hampton** is a hot item since his recovery from surgery. First, a jazz cruise to Nassau (he'll be back again in June); and now a special benefit tribute to him and Lionel Hampton Foundation will be held under the auspices of **Jack Kleinsinger's** "Highlights In Jazz" on March 17 at New York University's Loeb Student Center. Guests and surprises will abound. Watch this space for full list of stars . . . March 1 brings Hamp into Carnegie Hall to back **Dr. Charles Kelman** (ophthalmologist extraordinaire) in his debut as a single blowing sax and singing . . . On March 2, a quartet made up of Hampton, **Buddy Rich**, **George Duvivier**, and **Teddy Wilson** will be at Carnegie . . . **Huddie Ledbetter**, better known as **Leadbelly**, will be praised in word and song at the Assembly Hall, Hunter College on March 15. **Pete Seeger**, **Arlo Guthrie**, **Sonny Terry** and **Brownie McGhee**, and **Lunenburg Travelers** will star . . . New Audiences presents **Keith Jarrett** in concert at Fisher Hall March 2 . . . Michael's Pub will see the close of **Bobby Hackett's** stay at the end of February. They'll pick up **George Wein's Newport All-Stars** for March . . . **Marian McPartland** continues her starring performances in Bemelman's Bar of the Carlyle Hotel thru March 2 . . . Boomer's soul ribs will share top billing with

**Roy Haynes' Hip Ensemble** thru March 1. **Charles McPherson Quintet** with **Stanley Cowell** comes in March 5 thru 8. Look for the **Sonny Fortune All-Star Quintet** with **Charles Sullivan**, **Cowell**, **Reggie Workman** and **Chip Lyle** beginning March 12 . . . A rare appearance in these parts is **Bobby Scott** at the Wig and Pen Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays . . . Creative Music Studio, Woodstock, N.Y., is presenting a series of concerts at the Washington Square Church on West 4th Street. March 7 it's **Karl Berger** with **Ing Rid** and others; March 8 **Leo Smith** and friends. In addition, they are sponsoring Open Orchestra Workshops at radio station WBAI's studios and NYU. Participation and admission are free . . . The Village Vanguard had **Gil Evans' Orchestra** subbing for **Thad Jones** and **Mel Lewis** on a couple of Mondays in January. **Joe Farrell** is in February 25; **Elvin Jones** March 4; and **Jon Lucien**, who sold out two Fisher Hall concerts recently, March 11 . . . **Jackie Paris** and **Anne Marie Moss** broke up a week at Boomer's with **Mike Abene**. Look for them to be up in Buffalo at the Hilton . . . **Sarah Vaughan's** octave olympics drew raves at the St. Regis-Sheraton's Maisonette recently. **Billy Eckstine** should draw screeches beginning February 24 for two weeks . . . Some steady gigs: **Rashied Ali's Alley** gives the man a voice . . . **Roswell Rudd's** St. James Infirmary has **David Amram** Monday nights and Ros with guests the rest of the week . . . Studio Rivbea features **Sam Rivers** and today's music today . . . **Lee Konitz** will be at Long Island University's Conference Hall at the Brooklyn Center in the Humanities Building February 28, 8 PM, Free . . . The Westbury Music Fair will have

**Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons and Jay and the Americans** February 28 thru March 2; **George Carlin** March 7 & 8 . . . The Capitol Theatre, Passaic, N.J., has the **Average White Band** and **Strawbs** March 1 . . . Gulliver's, West Patterson, N.J., brings in **Bill Watrous** and all-stars with **Derek Smith**, **Milt Hinton** and **Ed Soph** on February 28 thru March 1.

## CHICAGO

**B. B. King** will blues his way into Mister Kelly's March 10 thru 15 for a limited run. The Master will follow song stylist **Mara Lynn Brown** into the Rush Street nightspot. Mara struts her lovely stuff from the 3rd thru the 8th . . . Kelly's has also opened a weekly Talent Showcase each Sunday night at 8 and 10:30, with a cover charge of \$2.50 and no minimum. Produced by **Michael Wolf**, the Showcase will feature fresh talent backed by the able hands of **Larry Novak** and his house trio . . . **Maynard Ferguson** and the band will steam into Gordon Technical High School at 3633 North California Avenue for a concert on March 24. Tix are four bucks apiece, available by mail or at the school office. A call to (312) 539-3600 brings you more information . . . Otto's, a bistro on Halsted Street near Armitage, has tentatively booked **Mose Allison** for three days in March. Which three they are remains something of a mystery at this point, so watch the local papers . . . The Quiet Knight features **Jimmy Buffett** March 5-9, with other acts for the month yet to be announced. Owner Richard Harding has let it slip that **Gato Barbieri** will be in with a group sometime in April. Stay tuned to this space for more details . . . Also at the same club, on Belmont west of Clark Street, will be a benefit

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for *Sing Out!* magazine on March 2. **Pete Seeger** will be the featured performer, with lots more unannounced talent being signed up. Expect to possibly see the likes of **Bonnie Koloc**, **Steve Goodman**, **John Prine** and the rest of the Chicago folk elite (wo)man the boards in support of the great folk music publication, now 25-years-old . . . **Miles Davis**, **Herbie Hancock**, and **Bobbie Humphrey** are still on the bill for an Arie Crown Theatre concert March 29-30 . . . **Biddy Mulligan's** on Sheridan Road has **Baraboo** March 5-8 and 26-29; **Bob Reidy Blues Band** March 12-15; and **Sam Lay's Blues Band** March 19-22.

## Cleveland

Jazz is back on the air in the new year in Cleveland . . . **Dave Hawthorne** again plays jazz on WJW-AM (850 khz) after a monumental protest when the station put him in a pop-rock format last summer. Dave is heard nightly from 7 to mid. with 50% jazz/50% adult music Mon-Fri. . . Former Cleveland Correspondent **John Richmond**, also a jazz writer for the Press, is on WKSU-FM at 89.5 mhz each Saturday night from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. with solid jazz and jazz history broadcast, while **Chris Colombi**, present Cleveland correspondent and jazz writer for the Plain Dealer, airs *Jazz Comes To WCLV* each Friday for 3 hours beginning at 11:35 p.m. on that station's FM address, 95.5 mhz . . . Recent appearances at the Smiling Dog Saloon, **Rodger Bohn's** premier Cleveland jazz room, include: **Sun Ra**; the **Thad Jones-Mel Lewis** group, and **George Benson**. Plans are not firm for jazz bookings in March as of this writing, but **Bohn**, who was able to entice **Miles Davis** into a rare club appearance over the holidays, promises more nationally-known artists . . . The Jazz Heritage series set up by **A. Grace Lee Mims**, vocalist with **Descendants of Mike and Phoebe**, is very successful with an adult-ed seminar in jazz and related Afro-American arts. The nine-week series ends on Mar. 11th, with room for late registrants via the Shaker Hts. Recreation Board. The **Descendants**, by the way, were cited as most important new local jazz group in a feature article in *Cleveland*, this city's city magazine . . . An important area-wide event is scheduled for the Kent State University campus on Feb. 28th. **Dave Brubeck** appears with the **KSU Lab Band** and a massed area-wide university volunteer choir, in a performance of *Truth Is Fallen* the Brubeck oratorio based on the May 4, 1970 murders at Kent State. It will be given at 8:00 p.m. that evening, with **Michael Parkinson** wielding the baton over the performance . . . A new club featuring local talent and soon to book national artists is **Atmospheres**, 2179 E. 55th St. . . **Ernie Krivda** continues to appear with members of his group as the **Smiling Dog** house band . . . **Marriott Inn**, at West 150th and I-71, is fast becoming a haven for jazz lovers: **New Wave** (jazz and Jazz-Rock), led by **Tony Vilardo**, holds forth Wed. through Sun.; **Trevor Guy and his Guys and Dolls** offer Dixieland on Tuesdays; the **Erwin Michaels Jazz Quartet**, featuring pianist **Chick Chaikin**, appears on Mondays (Chick is still at the Colony as a solo the rest of the week, and still unstumpable on any request) . . . The **Continental Inn**, 1750 Madison Ave., also west of Public Square, now has the **Bob McKee-Tommy Claire** trio as house band, with jazz and the support of namers like **Kaye Ballard** and **Phyllis Diller** in separate shows

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at the club. **Barbi Benton** is also skedded . . . Sir Rah's negotiations with **Grover Washington Jr.** indicate his appearance for a week in mid-April at the popular Harvard-Lee nitery . . . Blossom Music Center, halfway between Cleveland and Akron, plans to book more name jazz concerts this summer, but announcements have yet to be made as to specific skedding on days when Cleveland Orchestra and Lorin Maazel are resting.

## BALTIMORE

First rate reggae music is the feature as **Bob Marley and the Wailers** come to D.C.'s Cellar Door for the week beginning February 25 . . . **Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band** play Baltimore's Painter's Mill on the 28th and return to the area for two shows at Constitution Hall on March 8 and 9. Also at Constitution in March will be blues man **John Mayall** on the first and **Sha-Na-Na** on the second . . . The left Bank Jazz Society will present the **Houston Person Quartet** with vocalist **Etta Jones** at the Famous Ballroom on the afternoon of March 2. The following Sunday, Left Bank brings the **Clark Terry 17-Piece Big Band** to the Famous for one show only . . . **Jethro Tull** has been signed for the Baltimore Civic Center, also for March 9.

## HOUSTON

La Bastille on Market Square is presenting **Eddie Harris** from Feb. 21 to March 2; **Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show** March 7-9; and **Stanley Turrentine** beginning March 13 . . . **Led Zeppelin** plays the Coliseum Feb. 27 . . . Saxophonist **Lou Marini** will be at the High School for the Visual and Performing Arts March 12-14. He is appearing courtesy of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. So far, **Billy Taylor**, **Bob Morgan**, **Marv Stamm** have been on campus for jazz around the clock. **Leon Breeden**, director of Lab Bands at North Texas State University was in Houston, headquartered at HSPVA in January. **Dave Baker**, **Bob Morgan** (again), and **Don Menza** are still to come . . . Channel 39 now

has a weekly jazz-rock show on Thursday nights at 11:30. There's a name group in addition to the house band, **Jambeaux**. The show is called, appropriately, **Jammin' With Jambeaux**.

## SOUTHWEST

**PHOENIX:** The biggest news in town is the opening of Balcony Hall in Scottsdale, formerly the famous Red Dog Saloon. Owner Marshall Marinakis has amassed a mind-boggling line-up of good music, starting with **Danny O'Keefe**, **Tom Waits**, **Canned Heat**, **Rachel Faro**, **John Lee Hooker**, and **Taj Mahal**. The 500-seat room asks \$3.00 cover and no minimum. Upcoming acts: **Goose Creek Symphony** 2/26 to 3/1, **Muddy Waters** 3/5-8, **Gene Clark** 3/9, **Jerry Riopelle** 3/12-15, and **Tim Weisberg** 3/19-22 . . . The Boojum Tree offers top jazz from the **Jim Bastin Trio** during February. The **Cal Tjader Quintet** takes over for the first week of March, and **Kenny Burrell** does a one-nighter on March 16th . . . Mesa Community College has tentatively scheduled **Pat Williams** for a clinic/concert on Feb. 27 . . . Band leader **Grant Wolf** brings his "Night Band" to the Varsity Inn on March 3, free . . . The Celebrity Theater has **Leonard Cohen** on 3/4 . . . **Grand Funk** hits Feyline Fields on 3/2 after dates in Tucson and El Paso . . . Lunt Ave. Marble Club has jazz on Saturday and Sunday eves with the **Armstrong Jazz Quintet** . . . A free jazz concert in Montfort Park, on Mar. 9 at 3 PM, will feature the Scottsdale C.C. Jazz Ensemble under the direction of **Chas. Sessions**. **John Robertson** of all-jazz KXTC (92.3 fm) will preside . . . Playboy Club has **Charlie Byrd** thru Mar. 1, with a possibility of **Les McCann** to follow . . .

**LAS VEGAS:** Billboard's recent article on the MOR Vegas music scene was fairly accurate, although tastes are changing. **Gary Naseef** is presently booking rock into the Sahara Space Center . . . **Petula Clark** doubles with **The Stylistics** at the Riviera thru 3/12 . . . **Helen**

**Reddy** is coming to the MGM . . . **Elvis** follows **Glen Campbell** at the Hilton, where there is always some good oldie rock in the lounge; this time the **Treniers** are among the performers . . . **Little Anthony** is still lounging at the Sahara . . . The rest is strictly **ANDY WILLIAMS**/**JOHNNY CARSON**/**BOBBY VINTON**/**JERRY LEWIS**/**LIBERACE**.

## KANSAS CITY

The **Modern Jazz Quartet** will be reunited for a series of concerts with the Kansas City Philharmonic, as part of the Duke Ellington Memorial Concerts, the first by a major classical organization. They will be presented in the Music Hall on February 25 and 26, and at the Plaza Theater on February 27. Maurice Peress is the orchestra's new conductor and music director this season. The M.J.Q., whose heavily-publicized break-up last fall included a farewell tour and two "last albums," continues to accept some concert engagements.

## London

The **Ruby Braff-George Barnes Quartet**, making their first appearance together in Britain where Braff has always been much appreciated, close out a season at Ronnie Scott's on March 15th . . . For two weeks from the 17th, Ronnie's has a double bill with **Joe Pass** and the new band led by ex-If tenorman **Dick Morrissey**. Morrissey's organist and drummer (**John Mealing** and **Bryan Spring**) also worked in Germany with **Klaus Doldinger's Passport** . . . The latest edition of the **Stan Tracey Quartet** (**Spring**, **Harry Miller** and **Art Themen**) is at the Seven Dials, Covent Garden on the 13th, followed by the **Alan Cohen Band** (20). Cohen, whose Duke Ellington recreations (**Black**, **Brown** and **Beige**, etc.) included your correspondent on piano, will be featuring his own compositions on this occasion . . . **Julian Marshall's** group **Quinciasm** completes a short tour by appearing at the Phoenix, Cavendish Square (Mar. 26) . . . **Steve Lane's Southern Stompers** changed their long-standing Thursday gig

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from the Queen's Arms, Barnet to the Red Lion, Barnet Hill, while **Alan Elsdon's** band is heard Tuesdays at the Lord Napier, Thornton Heath and Wednesdays at the Cock, Palmers Green . . . **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Oscar Peterson** arrive late in March for separate British tours but they will share the bill for one major London appearance at the Royal Festival Hall on March 31.

## Montreal

All the action is again at the In Concert club in the old Part of the city. **Dizzy Gillespie** blows from February 25 thru March 2; **Keith Jarrett** is in from March 4 to 9; and Chicago's own **Willie Dixon** lays down the righteous blues from March 11 to 16. db

## on the road

### CANNONBALL ADDERLEY

Feb. 24- Pioneer Banque Restaurant.  
Mar. 8. Seattle, Washington  
10-15. Oil Can Harry's,  
Vancouver, B.C.

### CHARLIE BYRD

Feb. 24- Playboy Club.  
Mar. 1. Phoenix, Ariz.

### ERROLL GARNER

Mar. 3. Beef 'N Boards,  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
4. Beef 'N Boards,  
Harrison, Ohio  
5. Beef 'N Boards,  
Simpsonville, Kentucky  
10-22. Hyatt Regency Hotel,  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Apr. 3. Orchesira Hall,  
Minneapolis, Minn.  
5. South Hills Performing Arts  
Center,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
8-21. British Tour (ten cities)

### ELVIN JONES

Mar. 4-16. Keystone Komer,  
San Francisco, Calif.

### KIM RICHMOND

Mar. 20-  
23. Orange Coast Jazz Festival,  
Costa Mesa, Calif.

### SONNY ROLLINS

Apr. 10-12. Notre Dame Univ.,  
South Bend, Ind.  
19. Oberlin College,  
Oberlin, Ohio

### SON SEALS BLUES BAND

Mar. 14. SUNY,  
Binghamton, N.Y.  
18. Northeastern Univ.,  
Chicago, Ill.

### HOUND DOG TAYLOR AND HIS HOUSEROCKERS

Feb. 20. University of Illinois  
Chicago, Illinois  
27. Auckland, New Zealand  
Mar. 1. Brisbane, Australia  
2. Sydney, Australia  
4. Perth, Australia  
9. Adelaide, Australia  
10. Melbourne, Australia  
18. Northeastern Univ.,  
Chicago, Ill.  
24-29. The Sting,  
Burlington, Vermont

### KOKO TAYLOR AND HER BLUES MACHINE

Feb. 27-  
29. Ruby Gulch,  
Champaign, Ill.  
Mar. 5-8. Wise Fools,  
Chicago, Ill.  
12-15. Biddy Mulligan's,  
Chicago, Ill.  
28. Sangamon State Univ.,  
Springfield, Ill.  
Apr. 12. Univ. of Miami,  
Coral Gables, Fla.

### STANLEY TURRENTINE

Mar. 2. Felt Forum,  
Madison Square Garden,  
New York, N.Y.

### JOE WILLIAMS

Feb. 17- Playboy Club.  
Mar. 1. Atlanta, Ga.  
22. Rainbow Grill,  
New York, N.Y.

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