

MAY 6, 1976

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music magazine

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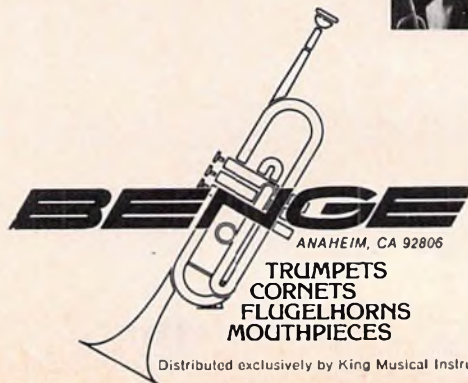
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Slingerland Percussion Profiles:



Mel Tormé and Donny Osborne

Mel Tormé is undoubtedly one of the most talented performers working today. Composer, arranger, lyricist, vocalist, and drummer, it has all played a part in his prosperous career.

Backing up Mel's new show is a 22-year-old seasoned drummer, Donny Osborne. No newcomer, Osborne has played with the Buddy Rich Big Band, Steve Allen, Terry Gibbs, and the award-winning Mt. Hood College stage band. Osborne knows his way around the drums.

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DRUM BEAT!

●**Rim Shots** Vibist David Friedman recently released a new album "Winter Love-April Joy" on a Japanese label, East Wind. The album features Friedman as a soloist and with the Friedman/Samuels mallet duo.

Adjudicating outfit solos for the recent California Percussive Arts Society state percussion festival were clinician Carmine Appice and Louie Bellson.

●**The Spotlight** Jazz drummer Joe Morello is scheduled for a clinic and concert this month at the Annual Tri State Music Festival in Enid, Oklahoma. A record attendance is expected.

Bobby Christian has recently completed a series of ten instruction books for beginning and advanced studies. Published by Neil Kjos. The "Lessons with Artist Series" covers note reading, technique and a variety of time signatures and exercises.

●**Trappings** — Bob Tilles

A common error of beginning outfit players is the correct set up of their outfit to the easiest playing position.

Finding the proper throne sitting height where your hands and feet are most comfortable is the first step. Follow this adjusting and re-adjusting with each stand and drum to achieve a "custom-made" feel for the entire outfit. Bass drum and hi-hats should be at positions where the legs do not tire, due to extended playing and solos. Cymbals and drums should be placed at angles that are "sure hits" with a minimum amount of arm movement and reach.

When considering expanding your present outfit, be sure the added component will fit, in terms of sound and playing ease.

●**Pro's Forum** This month by clinician David Friedman, Manhattan School of Music, New York.

Q. Should a mallet player use alternate sticking as much as possible?

A. No! The main problem with alternate sticking is the constant motion of either hand from the natural bars to the sharp/flat bars. By using double sticking (two consecutive notes struck by the same mallet), the arm motion is drastically reduced. Try the Eb major scale with the sticking as indicated below; then try alternating strokes.



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May 6, 1976

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the first chorus

By Charles Suber

The jazz 'n blues singer has got to be the loneliest musician in town. It's the toughest job in music to stand out there in the dark with just a voice and reshape someone else's words and music into a private meaning for each listener. And for this, we listeners are wont to denigrate the vocal musician as an "entertainer" or a "band vocalist" or some such. It's as if we must retaliate for being touched.

Howlin' Wolf learned his place playing "so hard" on Mississippi plantations. "Some of the jobs . . . was 50 cents a night, back in Hoover's days." Later, after WW II, as part of the Chicago blues scene, Wolf made and sold records, changed to electric guitar, and did concerts at universities. But he still knew his place. "Now, I don't consider myself a professional musician . . . 'cause I don't know too much about music, I'm just an entertainer."

It has taken Joe Williams 20 years to change his public label as "Basie's band vocalist" to his private label as an "intuitive singer." ("No matter what I do, it's mine when I'm through with it. It's personal.") The change wasn't easy; no single part of the Basie band is easily separated from the whole. And there is the confidence problem faced by any jazz 'n blues non-instrumentalist when forsaking the safety of known accompanists and arrangers. Even today, Williams admits to a confidence shortage when approached to create the John Henry role in *Big Man*, a folk-opera by the late Cannonball Adderley. But Williams is indeed well-suited to sing and perform the role of the legendary pile drivin' man who stood alone against the machine that would put him down, and whose birth was signaled by "panthers screaming in the cane-breaks and the Mississippi River running upstream a thousand miles."

In his long and distinguished career, Mel Torme has had professional problems—but lack of confidence was not among them. For even in his mel-o-tone adolescence, Torme had the supportive confidence of being his own writer-arranger: he had control of his own musical circumstances. But, as the interview in this issue reveals, musical self-sufficiency is not always enough, particularly in the wondrous world of trendy producers. Even the most compleat and experienced singer-musician is alone against the number people.

Helen Merrill, a jazz singer by anyone's definition, is no stranger to less than equitable recording contracts and other business-of-music hassles. But like all musicians, business matters become secondary to the subject at hand. "If you don't do what nature intended, some terrible explosions start gathering inside your body and you have to get it out . . ." Merrill also speaks of something else, peculiar to American artists who try to go home again. "I'm afraid of the U.S., because I remember when I first started how hurtful it was for me to try to be me."

All this is remindful of what a famous native son once wrote: "*The American environment which produced the blues is still with us, though we all labour to render it progressively smaller. The total elimination of that area might take longer than we now suspect, hence it is well that we examine the meaning of the blues while they are still falling upon us.*"—Richard Wright (Paris, 1959). db

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The Ear Wax Brigade?

I could not believe my eyes when I read Pete Welding's review of *Changes, I And II*, by Charles Mingus. I sincerely hope that he doesn't take himself too seriously. I am confident that boxes of Q Tips will start showing up in all of db's mailboxes.
C. T. Pitts Detroit, Mich.

I totally disagree with Russell Shaw's review of John Klemmer's *Touch*. Shaw says the album is very boring and lacking in excitement. . . . I think it is one of the nicest mood albums released. It is a tribute to Klemmer that in this day of funk and rock albums that he has been able to record an album of pure beauty. . . .

I suggest that Mr. Shaw listen to the album again, this time with *both* ears. . . . I just bought another copy of *Touch*, in case I wear my first copy out.
Tom Ricci Schenectady, N.Y.

Global Question

You know, it's really a shame. I just bought albums by Eddie Henderson and Jean-Luc Ponty. Most of the songs are good . . . for a minute or two. But then the same riff over and over in B flat, or whatever, really gets old. . . . I can think of very few artists into the jazz/funk scene that can make a fully interesting L.P.

People like Cobham, Return To Forever and the solo albums from that group, Hancock, etc., have songs that start off good, but get old, older, and finally, monotonous, dull, and boring. Have all these musicians run

out of ideas?

What's the world coming to???
Dave Clancy Dallas, Tex.

Notable Omission

In the 1/29 db, Environ was mentioned as a major jazz loft in New York City. . . . A principle person connected with Environ was inadvertently omitted from mention: this person is Jay Clayton, Environ's concert manager.

Jay has been associated with us from the beginning . . . and pursues her own career as an innovative vocalist, as a composer and leader of The Voice Group, and a member of the Jankry Ensemble. She recently toured Europe and Canada with Steve Reich.
John Fischer/ New York, N.Y.
Christopher Brubeck/
Daniel Brubeck/Perry Robinson
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Album Of The Year Plugs

I'd like to nominate Billy Cobham's *A Funky Thide Of Sings* for album of the year. Cobham, as we all know, is the best drummer our country has to offer. . . . He shows his creativity in his music and drum solos. . . .

Usually Billy C. has one or two good songs on an album. Yet on *Funky Thide* he seems to have really let go. Every song . . . is worth praising.
Keith Shawell New York, N.Y.

One listen will reveal that Duke Ellington's *Afro-Eurasian Eclipse* is the album; reveal. . .

to anyone with a passable ear that Ellington could get more sounds out of a piano than Jarrett and that Ellington could arrange circles around Thad Jones and epicycles around Gil Evans. It provides proof that Ellington listened, really *listened*, to the sounds everyone else was making.
Richard O. Lightburn Santa Fe, N.M.

The album of the year can be none other than Keith Jarrett's *The Koln Concert*, a testimony to the sensitivity and creativity of the greatest artist of our time.
Randall Ferris Milwaukee, Wis.

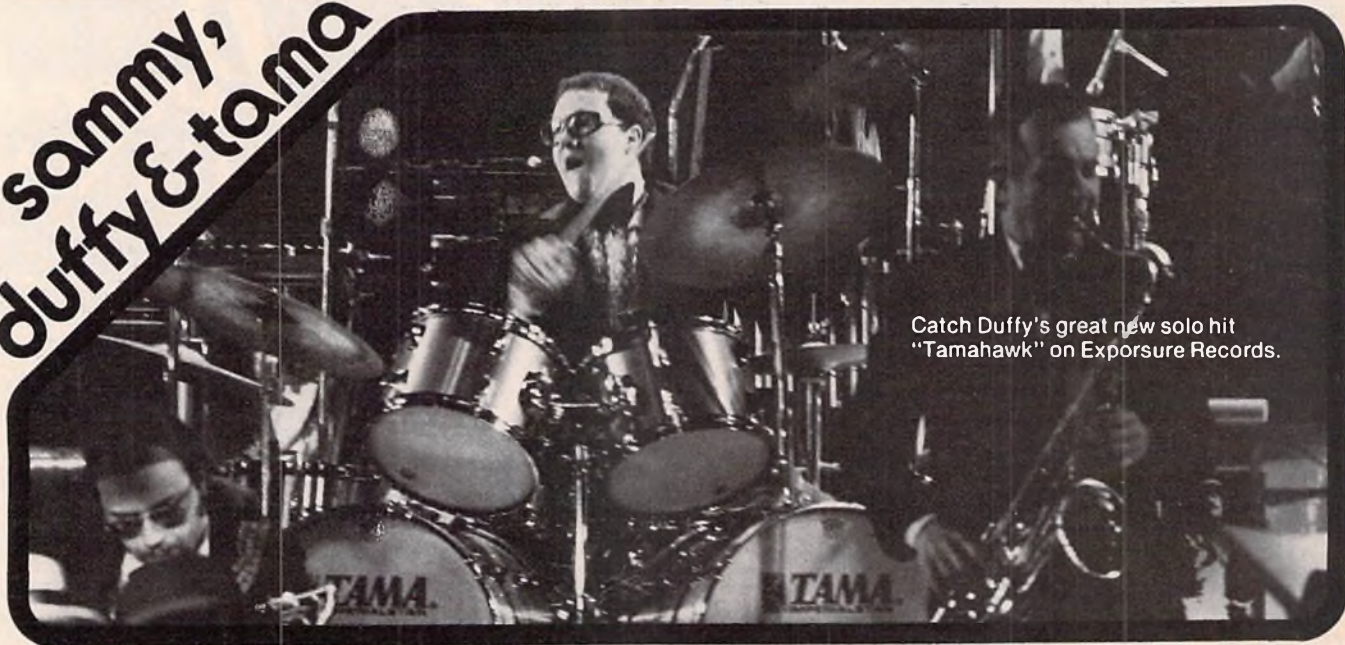
In Rebuttal

I would like to answer the two letters attacking me in connection with the playing of a Jimi Hendrix record on the Joe Pass Blindfold Test (db, 4/8).

As it happens, this was the only record on the entire test which I had not heard prior to playing it for Joe, so it seems a little ridiculous to attack me for deliberately playing something "unrepresentative" or of launching a "propaganda" campaign against Hendrix.

My policy in selecting records for those interviews is one of simply picking material I think will be of interest to the listener, and will elicit reactions of equal interest to the reader. If I had happened to play a Hendrix record which Joe Pass might have given five stars, it would have made no difference to me, as long as his comments were interesting and pertinent.
Leonard Feather No. Hollywood, Cal.

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Message From Mandel

CHICAGO—Keyboardist Mike Mandel called recently to apprise us of current developments in Larry Coryell's Eleventh House and on a solo project of Mandel's own. Eleventh House's new, Randy Brecker-produced LP is due shortly on Arista, on which Coryell and Mandel are joined by fellow bandmembers Danny Tone, John Lee, Gerry Brown, and Terumasa Hino, plus the Brecker Brothers, Dave Sanborn, and Mtume. Mike also mentioned something about yet another Coryell disc which would feature Larry in duet with several other top jazz and rock guitar-

ists, but that project is still in the planning stage.

Mandel's own disc was recorded in Wooster, Massachusetts at Longview Farms. Mike hopes to sell the master in Europe first, and then seek a domestic label after release across the pond. Mike's tentative title for the LP is *Jupiter Snowdog*, and again features Coryell and Tone, along with Basil Furrington, Steve Jordan, and Jeremy Steig. The leader describes the session as one side "esoteric and freeblowing, with the other side more cohesive, structured compositions."

SCHULLER TO RETIRE

BOSTON—Gunther Schuller, President of the New England Conservatory Of Music, has announced that he will be retiring from his position as of June, 1977. Schuller assumed presidency of the Conservatory in 1967, when the school was deep

in the midst of a fiscal crisis. Under Schuller's expert guidance, the Conservatory has recovered greatly, attaining its present rank of prestige.

Mr. Schuller plans to devote more time to his career as composer come '77.

DANIELS DELIVERS DARE

NASHVILLE—Charlie Daniels, who recently became Nashville's highest paid entertainer when he signed a long-term high-finance contract with Epic Records, has something he wants to get off his chest.

"I want to challenge two people," said the burly dude from Mt. Juliet. "Mr. Stan Kenton and Mr. Buddy Rich. Stan Kenton said something to the effect that country music was a national disgrace. Buddy Rich came to Nashville last year and slammed country music. Now I, Charlie Daniels, will bet \$10,000 that Mr. Stan Kenton and Mr. Buddy Rich—neither of 'em—can go into a studio and cut one decent country record—I'll take a day off any time they wanna try it—then I'll turn around and give them 5, 10, 15, 20 Nashville musicians that can sit down and cut any f----- chart they wanna write.

"I DEFY STAN KENTON!! I DEFY BUDDY RICH!! I'll bet both of them \$10,000 apiece—not an album—just one record. Stan Kenton has always felt like he's been misunderstood because he's such a progressive jazz man—what he writes is just noise, man, there's no melody to it. Music is stuff you can snap your fingers to and stomp your feet and hum and remember the melody, it's not *City Of Glass* and all that shit. F--- all that stuff, it ain't music, it's bullshit.

"The reason they slam country music is because it's beyond them. It's human being music and they're not human beings. Where the hell are they coming from? National disgrace? Kenton is a national disgrace. He's a f----- national idiot to make a statement like that. Who the f--- is Stan Kenton, anyway, man. F--- Stan Kenton."

Jazz Repertory On Tour

NEW YORK—The New York Jazz Repertory Company has embarked on a tour of the country. Executive director George Wein announced that the tour package will include performances in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Madison, Wis., Evanston, Ill. and Iowa City. (The latter three venues will be at the University of Wisconsin, Northwestern University and the University of Iowa.)

The program will consist of the NYJRC's "History And Evolution Of Jazz" and will be under the

direction of Billy Taylor. In tracing the metamorphosis of the music, the works of Louis Armstrong, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Charlie Parker and other living composers will be highlighted.

Performing members who will appear on the tour will be Eddie Bert, Lloyd Davis, Ralph Dorsey, John Gordon, Budd Johnson, Virgil Jones, Jimmy Owens, Cecil Payne, Victor Paz, Eph Resnick, Larry Ridley, John Stubblefield, and Billy Taylor.

Machito Meets Terry



JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

Clark Terry

NEW YORK—In the days of the Savory Ballroom, the Palladium and the Roseland, and often in smaller halls and theatres across the country wherever and whenever tours would cross, the excitement of two big bands sharing the same bandstand was electric. It is now the dog days and elephants' graveyard of the big bands with only a handful of them touring the concert halls and colleges. Two of them, one very much a permanent fixture in New York, the other made up of some of the finest sidemen in this town, recently alternated sets at The Riverboat, a supper club that has become the home for Jazz Interactions' bashes.

Machito and his Latin band opened the proceedings at 1 a.m. and brought the dancers out

in such multitude that it was impossible not to bump rumps with someone other than your partner. Lew Soloff was featured with the band and traded licks with Machito's regular trumpet soloist, Manny Duran.

Clark Terry's band highlighted the alto work of Chris Woods, who proved the heavy of the night. His interpretation of *Jeep's Blues*, the Johnny Hodges showcase, was especially gutsy. Frank Wess' *Flute Juice* and Sonny Cohen's *I Can't Get Started* were classics in virtuosity. A surprisingly standout performance was turned in by tenorist Mauricio Smith on *Etoile*. Heads turned asking, "Who is that?"

By 5 o'clock all hands retired, vowing to return "later."

potpourri

San Diego disc jockey **Ron Galon** has initiated a live-in-the-studio jazz program over **KPBS-FM** (89.5). Galon's jazz night is Saturday from 6 p.m. til 1 a.m., and the live shows are set for the last Saturday of each month. Featured concert-interviews thus far have involved area jazzmen **Ted Picou** and **Joel Krebs** of *Epicycle*, saxophonists **Joe Marillo** and **Danny Jackson**, and trumpeter **Eddie Meadows**, who heads up San Diego State's jazz curriculum.

A "Jazz Strings" curriculum has been added to all of the 1976 Combo/Improvisation Clinics sponsored by the Summer Jazz Clinics on various college campuses in the U.S. The new curriculum has been formulated, and is conducted, by cellist **David Baker**, head of jazz studies at Indiana U. (Bloomington) and an internationally known author, educator, and composer. The unique program—there is nothing comparable on the high school and college level—features small group performance with emphasis on improvisational skills and techniques. Further information is available from

Summer Jazz Clinics, Box 221, South Bend, Ind. 46624.

Sarah Vaughan has pacted a deal with **Atlantic** and has an album due late this spring.

Flutist **Hubert Laws** has jumped to **Columbia**, ending his lengthy association with **CTI**.

Don Schlitten is producing a series of concerts in Japan, featuring such artists as **Barry Harris**, **Jim Raney**, **Charles McPherson**, **Sam Jones**, and **Leroy Williams**. Vinyl results will undoubtedly emerge on Don's **Xanadu** label.

The **Fifth Annual Canadian Collectors' Convention** will be held in Montreal April 23/24/25. The program includes discographical sessions, record sales and auctions, and film shows. Organizations represented will be the **International Association of Jazz Record Collectors**, **National Library Of Canada**, **Jazz Archives**, **Winnipeg Jazz Society**, **West Mississauga Jazz Muddies**, and **Jazz Ottawa**. db



Trombonist Raul de Souza, recovering from a broken leg, cheers up with an issue of db

More On Eddie

CHICAGO—Salsa's forward thinking pianist-composer, Eddie Palmieri, lingered around town after filling the Aragon Ballroom with fiesta-garbed dancers and hot big band sounds. It was his first one nighter since accepting the premiere Grammy awarded to a Latin music album—his genre-bursting *Sun Of Latin Music* and the dance, which also featured vocalist Ishmael Miranda and the orchestra trumpeter Tommy Olivencia, had roared on until 3 a.m. After rising in the afternoon Sunday, Eddie decided to take in a set of McCoy Tyner, who was ending an engagement at the Jazz Showcase.

A long line of fans awaited entrance to the late session, so the Palmieri party took refuge from the March night chill at a nearby Middle Eastern restaurant. Coffee and talk flowed—the coffee black and the talk somewhat resigned, as Palmieri explained again the unhappy circumstances around his current dispute with his record company and producer.

"It should have never been issued," he rued, referring to *Unfinished Masterpiece*, the latest record to appear under his name, which he claims is no more than outtakes from his last several LPs. "It interrupts the order, the divine order that really exists only in my mind, the order of all my work. Now it exists as a mark against my work, that I will always carry with me. Well, this must be what the gods ordained."

What Palmieri says he intended to follow his Grammy winner with was an intricate suite structured to reflect the development of salsa from past branches of Latin music, composed for a 23 member orchestra. Eddie makes no claims for the authenticity of his recrea-

tions: "When we play tango music, you know, we do it the way we can. None of us can imitate the way that was played originally. We just play a few measures to pay homage to the original tango musicians, and recall their spirits."

But that project has now been relegated to the closet that is stuffed with scores of uncompleted and unperformed potential masterpieces, as well as the "real" lyrics to the *Unfinished* material, which Eddie contends was overdubbed without his knowledge or consent.

"It's sticky," he admits, "since I'm suing them and they're suing me. So I'll be all tied up, and a personal appearance contract is involved, too. But if I can't do anything else, I'll spend my time at home, practicing my trills."

A dark, bearded figure of compact stature, Palmieri was mostly smiles and expansively at ease, in the company of his wife, the deejay-producer of radio's nightly *Latin Explosion*, Juan Montenegro, and Vic Parra, whose record store is a salsa center.

When they could see the crowd had filtered into the basement jazz bar, the coffee drinkers swarmed across the street, and right into the mezzanine table Showcase owner Joe Segal had reserved for them. McCoy, leading a powerful sextet, broke into solos three times in one song, preceding and following spots by each of his horn men. Palmieri, totally excited, couldn't stay in his seat. He was up, edging the narrow seating rail, trying to glimpse the Tyner hands at work, stroking, pounding and cajoling openended linear runs and thunderous block chords from the piano.

"He's marvelous," Eddie wondered, "he must be full of the spirits of the gods."

NEW FEATHER PLEASURE

NEW YORK—*The Pleasures Of Jazz*, a new book by Leonard Feather, will be published May 1 by Horizon Press Publishers of New York.

The book consists of more than 40 interviews with noted jazz figures, ranging from such old masters as Eubie Blake, Joe Venuti, Earl Hines, Hoagy Carmichael, and Red Norvo, to contemporary figures including Yusef Lateef, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea and Donald Byrd.

Special features of the book are an introduction by Benny Carter, an overview of the past 20 years of jazz, with quotes from many musicians representing various idioms; a long, in-

depth study of trumpeter/composer Freddie Hubbard; and profiles of such singers as Sarah Vaughan, Cleo Laine, Mahalia Jackson, Billy Eckstine, and Clara Ward.

A section on big bandmen includes pieces devoted to Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, Woody Herman, Maynard Ferguson, Mercer Ellington, and Bob Crosby. Such combo leaders as Dizzy Gillespie, John Lewis, Gerry Mulligan and Charles Lloyd (who is the subject of a special extended article) are included, as are interviews with Quincy Jones, Marian McPartland, Norman Granz, and the late Oliver Nelson.

New Releases

Columbia has come up with a slew of smoking vinyl. Among its new chart-toppers are *Black Market*, *Weather Report's* attempt at Record Of The Year for '76; *Romantic Warrior*, the first Columbia disc by **Chick Corea** and **Return To Forever**; *Amigos*, **Santana**; *Night Journey*, a disco waxing from *Tonight* show hot-lipster **Doc Severinsen**; a debut disc by bass whiz **Jaco Pastorius**; *First Course*, by guitarist **Lee Ritenour**; and the debut solo effort from former **Boz Scaggs/Allman Brothers** aide **Les Dudek**.

The second batch of budget goodies has been made available on **Antilles**, courtesy of **Island Records**. The 14 \$4.98ers include *Evening Star*, **Robert Fripp & Eno**; *Somebody Keeps Callin' Me*, **Fred McDowell**; *Live, Country Gazette*; *Five Leaves Left*, **Nick Drake**; *Rockin' Duck*, **Grimes**; *For Pence And Spicy Ale*, **The Waterasons**; *Other Sides Of Sousa*, **Antonin Kubalek**;

Nine, **Tim Hardin**; *I Don't Know And Other Chicago Blues Hits*, **Willie Mabon**; *Benzaiten*, **Osamu Kitajima**; *No Roses*, **Shirley Collins**; *Piano Vignettes*, **Harry Warren**; *An Electric Storm*, **White Noise**; and *Songs And Ballads*, **Frankie Armstrong**.

RCA has finally made the early **Sun** recordings by **Elvis Presley** available, via a 16 cut disc titled *The Sun Sessions*.

Buddah bombshells include *You Are My Starship*, the latest from percussionist **Norman Connors**; *Rock Father*, **Papa John Creach**; and a debut effort by **Miles Davis** bassist **Michael Henderson**.

Motown movers include *I Want You*, the long-awaited new platter from **Marvin Gaye**; *Midnight Lady*, **Rare Earth**; and *Ale*, **The Waterasons**; *Other Sides Of Sousa*, **Antonin Kubalek**;

Handy Works Out

SAN FRANCISCO—Alto saxophonist John Handy and percussionist Kwaku Dadey, a "master drummer" from Ghana, combined backgrounds and talents recently to present a musical revue that traces the development of jazz from 11th century Africa. ("Let's face it," Handy reportedly said, "I'll have to keep to the high spots.")

The two-hour show, entitled "Jazz Roots: Afro-Euro Fusion," began with Dadey's illustration of basic African rhythms played on indigenous instruments, including the balafon, a bamboo-and-gourd assembly which was

the ancestor of the xylophone and vibraharp. Dadey performed drum 'stories' on as many as nine drums simultaneously in a display of precision that stunned.

Handy then led Mike Hoffman (guitar), Hotap Cecil Barnard (piano), Ratzon Harris (bass), and his son, John IV (drums) in various contemporary genres of the music. The last tune, partly chanted by the audience, was *Hard Work*, from Handy's new *Impulse* album. Handy and Dadey hope to tour with the show and have reported that Voice of America is interested in sponsoring them.

JOE WILLIAMS

The Well-Tempered Blaze of Vocal Excellence

by arnold jay smith

The Buddy Rich band has just concluded a number with a Steve Marcus soprano solo that propelled the audience to its feet. Buddy throws in a few quips before introducing the star of the show as "that singer fella."

Joe Williams bounces into the spotlight with his mouth full of sparkling teeth and launches into . . . hold it! A ballad? *Little Girl Blue*, that Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart tale of self-pity, was never intended to be an opening number on anybody's program, let alone the lineup of the flamboyant Rich organization. Yet not only does Joe bring it off in the perfect silence that Mr. Rich demands from his patrons, but he does it sans orchestra, with Wayne Wright's guitar as his only accompaniment.

The musicianship that embodies the spirit of this so-called blues singer is evident in everything he does. Joe's demeanor is cool, not suave, just in keeping with his stage presence, which is his metier at all times. Even when he gets "dirty" he's a gentleman. You know instinctively he's a gentle lover, with words and music, as well as body.

When Joe first came up with the Count Basie band in 1954 he was obviously nervous. Basie would introduce him with the descending scale that signaled *Every Day (I Have The Blues)*, and announce, "Every band has his man, and here's ours." Joe would stand stark still, clutching the mike on the stand with both hands, paws large enough to crush a cantaloupe, and then proceed to belt out the tune that was to catapult both he and the entire band into international fame.

As the Christmases at Birdland came and went, Basie would play with his audiences. No one had to be told that that piano intro meant Joe Williams was going to do a half dozen tunes, nor that *Every Day* was to be the opener. But Bill went on introducing Joe. The difference was that we all became part of an "inside" clique, as Basie was heard to mutter, in a very off-handed manner, "I'd like you to meet my son."

The relationship has remained that close. When the two are playing the same venue, Joe often drops in to say hello, staying around to do a set. It happened on the S.S. Rotterdam during a Showboat cruise. It may happen again at Buddy's Place some evening when



HERB NOLAN

"Basie gets back home" to New York.

In the years following his departure from the Basie swing machine, Joe Williams shifted from blues-oriented items like *All Right, OK, You Win, The Comeback*, and *Roll 'Em Pete*, to balladry. The ensuing albums had such titles as *A Man Ain't Supposed To Cry*. Included inside were moody, lights-low tunes, composed by the likes of Matt Dennis (*Angel Eyes*), Bob Haggart (*What's New*), Johnny Mercer, plus the Duke Ellington songs that have remained in his repertoire.

More recently, Joe had teamed up with Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, once in a live date for *Fantasy*, and finally in a monumental effort of Cannon's, a folk-opera about John

Henry called *Big Man*. Joe plays the title role, speaking as well as singing.

Smith: How did *Big Man* come about?

Williams: Diane Lampert approached Cannon to write a score for a book and lyrics that she had written. He had never written music to lyrics before and as a result it took three or four years of work. I was unaware of the project until I was approached to do the role of John Henry. I suggested that perhaps I was not his man. I wanted someone who was a bigger-than-life person, much like James Earl Jones in *The Great White Hope*. In real life, of course, I always felt that he (Cannon) was the big man.

Another irony of the work was that Diane Lampert, a white, Jewish woman, could get to the heart, the feeling, the emotion of an era and a people that has to be foreign to her. That's proof that you don't have to pay the physical dues to make your point. For example, at one point she wrote into the opera how a mother would speak to a black, male child, and train him so that he would be able to survive in the world.

Diane got it all down, how the work gangs would kid with each other, get mad at each other. She even got the pathos of what took place when the stream drill was brought on the job and the big man was no longer at a premium. Such tenderness, his woman crying at his death, "River, in your travels, drift him back to me."

Smith: Was there any indication that Cannon was ill when you were recording *Big Man*?

Williams: None. We all knew he was working on a number of projects at once. That can get to you. He lived a full life. When he walked into a room his spirit would lift the whole room. He might just be there as a guest. He'd move his head with whatever music was

SELECTED WILLIAMS DISCOGRAPHY

- JOE WILLIAMS LIVE (with Cannonball Adderley)—Fantasy F-9441
- BIG MAN (with Cannonball Adderley)—Fantasy F-79006
- WITH THE JONES/LEWIS JAZZ ORCHESTRA—Solid State 18008
- SOMETHING OLD, NEW, AND BLUE (with Thad Jones)—Solid State 18015
- A MAN AIN'T SUPPOSED TO CRY—Roulette 42016
- THE COUNT BASIE VOCAL YEARS—Roulette RE107
- SING ALONG WITH BASIE—Roulette ES 12004
- MEMORIES AD LIB (with Basie)—Roulette ES 12005
- EVERYDAY I HAVE THE BLUES (with Basie)—Roulette ES 12006
- JUST THE BLUES—Roulette ES 12008
- JOE WILLIAMS SINGS—Savoy 12216
- WORTH WAITING FOR—Blue Note 84355
- COUNT BASIE WITH JOE WILLIAMS—Verve 68488

"The popular form of music in this country is hillbilly. That ties in with the type of mentality that is perpetuated here. So what we know as jazz is really for the sophisticated, for the aware. 90% of the people are not even aware of the music. Why should I try to convert hillbillies when my audience is 100% winners?"

playing, smile that smile, and the atmosphere brightened.

His legacy will take time to evaluate. Others haven't begun to do things with his work yet. When other arrangers begin to write around him, then we can see what he left.

Jimmy Jones thinks that there was a closeness in the thinking of Cannonball and Billy Strayhorn, because of the flowing lines and the thinking that went into them. An arranger can see that where you and I can't. You see, they must be re-arranged by someone other than Cannon. The same goes for Thad Jones. Except for *A Child Is Born*, nobody is doing any of his things right now. His contribution can only be evaluated after someone has taken them and broken them down into their component parts and put them back together using Thad's ideas.

Another factor is that Cannon, of course, and Thad will not get to do the volume of composing that Ellington did. First, there isn't enough time. Second, there was radio then. Wherever Ellington went there was a remote broadcast. Thousands heard him at once. Thad doesn't travel all that much. We know his work because we stay on top of it.

Smith: Is the session with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra still your favorite recording, as you once told me it was?

Williams: It's my favorite band, and one of the most exciting sessions I've ever done. There were the one-take items. We worked all night, then recorded in the morning. We all had a marvelous time with that. The exchanges between the band and me, amongst the band themselves, between Thad and Mel and me both musically and verbally can never be duplicated.

Smith: What do you want to do in addition to the nightclub act? The blues seem to have taken a back seat.

Williams: Oh, that's because I'm working in front of a big band and I have fewer blues charts than when I work with a trio. The charts I use with a band are television things, old recordings. I think there are only two albums where everything on them are blues, or blues-oriented. Yet there is something blue about all of the LPs.

Billie Holiday did not sing the blues as often as people would like to believe. Originally, she imparted feeling to her tunes and improvised on melody. That's what a jazz singer does.

Smith: Are you becoming a choreographed singer?

Williams: I hope not. I'm an intuitive singer. No matter what I do, it's mine when I'm through with it. It's personal. Someone once said about Lady, "You don't write for Billie; you write around her." That's the way I like my charts. Let me put part of myself into them. Dave Garroway said that when Billie Holiday sang *My Man* and she got to the line, "He beats me, too," you feel it.

Smith: Do you record with a band in the studio all the time? No overdubbing?

Williams: We work with a track now, unless it's something special. Then you work with the orchestra. You get a feeling when you work 12 □ down beat

with the band. Being with the group lends strength to you. You rise and fall together.

Interspersed among Joe's standard club act are such Ellingtonia as *It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*, *Jump For Joy* and *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*. If the audience shows some hipness, he'll honor written requests, a gag he started one night. Someone shouted out, "*Going To Chicago*," so he turned to the pianist, asked for the blues in three flats, and presto . . . he did the Basie/Rushing classic complete with the Jon Hendricks lyrics written for Lambert, Hendricks and Ross' *Sing Along With Basie*.

Smith: I've noticed you've taken to recitative, à la Lou Rawls. Do you vary the introductory material?

Williams: That depends on the audience. If I feel they are just into the music I'll cut it short. If they've tanked a little, I'll cater to the area I'm playing in. You know, the hometown folks like to think they're unique, muggings in New York, wind in Chicago, like that. It can be fun and it warms us up (the audience and myself) for the tune that follows.

Smith: Where did the idea for *All Blues* come from?

(*Ed. note:* Joe does a medley based on the modal changes of the Miles Davis' classic. Interwoven into the fabric are *Every Day*, *C.C. Rider*, and the title tune.)

Williams: That came from the top of my head one night, and whoever was with me at the time. If what they choose to contribute is important enough, I'll go with it. That's why it sounds different every time I do it. I can do a lengthy number on *Every Day*, as I do here at Buddy's. The audience wants to hear it. At concerts or colleges I'll do as many different blues numbers in there as I feel doesn't become boring. It's very easy to add to a chordal pattern like *All Blues*. It's also challenging and exciting for the musicians.

Grady Tate does the medley also. I love him. He does a thing I want to record, *A Little At A Time*. He's such a natural. It's all a matter of feeling and I feel that one.

Smith: It is my feeling that, while you haven't stopped singing the blues in form, you have stopped singing the blues in content.

Williams: That's all a matter of opinion. Many times in the past "blues" was used to denote whether it was a black singer or not. For instance, they say Lena Horne is a blues singer. The only two people that the connotation was not used with were Nat "King" Cole and Billy Eckstine. They were "romantic balladeers." Every other black singer, male and female, at some time or other, was branded as a blues singer, mainly by white writers. It's that simple. Blues is a feeling.

Helen Morgan did "torch" songs. That's what they called a white singer doing that type of song. For the blacks, it was the blues. That's how I see it.

Now, if someone says, "You don't have the feel of the blues," I'll take issue with that. The strongest things I do are *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, the opener, and *Heritage*, a

piece of great feeling by Duke, poignant, almost a hymn of love. All interpretations have to be done with blues feeling, or a feeling of what the composer wanted to say.

What do you call *When Sunny Gets Blue*, or *Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You*? Form is nothing compared to the feeling. Lady was called a "blues" singer and yet she rarely sang a blues.

Smith: Are you singing more for your audiences now than you have ever done before?

Williams: I feel this way about supperclub audiences today as opposed to those that we had 20 years ago. A lot of the things that were wrong 20 years ago are no longer wrong. The mental misery has changed, now I am more interested in answers rather than stating the problems. The legality of those wrongs has been corrected. The first time I did *In The Evening* was in Carnegie Hall with Jon Hendricks' "The Evolution of The Blues," in the '60s. In the recitative it was explained that you had to talk your master's tongue because you had the chains and he had the whip. *Pounding from Big Man* has got to be the strongest blues-feeling item in my act. It's the chain gang thing all over again, only told differently according to the changed arena, the United States in 1975.

Another thing is that the popular form of music in this country is hillbilly. That ties in with the type of mentality that is perpetuated here. So what we know as jazz is really for the sophisticated, for the aware. 90% of the people are not even aware of the music. Why should I try to convert hillbillies when my audience is 100% winners? I probably have no hillbillies out there when I'm performing.

Smith: Do you perform differently before predominantly black audiences?

Williams: No. I still do *Every Day* and *Going To Chicago*. Black audiences are a great deal more sophisticated than those hillbillies. It springs first from the spiritual training they receive as youngsters and continues with the music at home.

Smith: Ron Carter has stated that now that he has made over 400 albums, he would like to become a "household face." Would you go to extremes to become a household face?

Williams: There is nothing wrong with anything as long as it's done in good taste. I don't think there's anybody singing any funkier out there than Bill Withers. He has that marvelous feeling that sounds so honest and sincere that I believe him. Ron Carter can probably play a lot of rock better than those people that are doing it now.

Another point is that a whole bunch of the stuff is so good, but painful, too damned loud. I won't stand up there and do anything at the threshold of pain. I walked into a college and there were speakers right in my ears. There were three monitors on the stage, for just me and a trio. I can't fight it. I'm not about to say, "Looka here, get rid of all this junk." Let them play games with all of their electronics and not bug people. People don't leave home to come out and be bugged. I don't go into that bag and antagonize those that have paid a ten dollar minimum and a ten dollar cover to hear me sing. I do things that I



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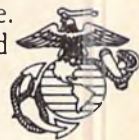
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The Velvet Fog in Mellow Pose

MEL TORMÉ

by John McDonough

I abhor my singing on that album," declares Mel Tormé. Poking his finger into the padded tablecloth at the Northshore Hilton, he leaves no doubt about opinion. "I abhor it!"

He's talking about the recently reissued, three-disc *Porgy And Bess* set on Bethlehem, which he recorded with Francis Faye, Russ Garcia, and Duke Ellington in 1956. It was recently reviewed in these pages and few reviewers are likely to be as hard on Tormé as Tormé.

"I sing lousy on it. The purpose was to bring the entire Bethlehem roster together into a single project. And it shows, because there are so many misfits. It locks individuals into material and a context for which they aren't suited, myself included. So many people come and tell me that set is a landmark. I've given up trying to tell people what it is. I just look at them in amazement. I was not prepared to do that work, and I'm not proud of that album."

Tormé has never been one to spare an inquisitor an honest opinion. Sometimes the opinions have been wrong. Sometimes they've stung. But they've rarely been dishonest. One would think such honesty would be good for the soul, or at least a little peace of mind. But that hasn't always been the case with Mel, a man whose life has included several wives and several more psychiatrists. In his younger days—he's a settled and very civil 50 today—he surrounded himself with money, cars, motorcycles, and guns. He swore. He talked tough to bosses and customers alike. Mel didn't take shit from anybody. Behind all that cocky bravado, though, there seemed to be a man deeply afraid of not being taken seriously.

"Women who dug my music thought I was a little doll," he once told *Time* magazine, to which his manager added, "With your baby face, nobody cares about your opinions." No wonder his assertiveness sometimes made him look like the perfect punk.

But there's more to it than that. There's all that talent. When he was still in his 20s, he was mounting a degree of musicianship and technique that giants such as Ella, Ray Charles, Frank Sinatra, and Carmen McRae only occasionally equalled—and combining it with a degree of freedom and taste that quickly set him apart from your ordinary pop singer. The reviews were heady at first.

Mel quickly provoked almost Hegelian antitheses, however, from those out to cut down this "egotistical, untalented little amateur," as Dorothy Kilgallen put it with her customary subtle grace and elegance. Every brilliant talent that sprouts early suffers through a "cocky little kid" period, but few are cursed with the prolonging effects of Tormé's kewpie-doll face.

Today, nobody would take Tormé for a cocky kid. And the last thing Tormé seems interested in is proving how tough he is. As is usual with such reputations and the behavior that feeds them, resolution comes with time. In Tormé's case, happily, the talent has not faded with the tough veneer. His prodigious abilities have grown, deepened, and matured. After a career in show business only four years younger than his birth certificate, he has a large and loyal following. Not a mass following. Mel still seems to patrol the outskirts of popularity, partly because he has never been willing to make the compromises essential to superstar status.

16 □ down beat



TOM SHRAIDER

"The bane of my existence," he says, "has always been producers trying to make me commercial by covering the Top 40. For years, I tried to say that if there's anything about this dumb voice of mine, it's that it has a kind of original sound to it. I don't sing like Dick Haymes or Frank Sinatra. If we fail, let us fail grandly in the common cause of doing good material.

"I've worked with a lot of producers over the years, and the best ones were the ones who understood and could accept my limitations. Dave Cavanaugh and Jack Tracy come to mind. There are others. Then again, I recall doing a record for Liberty once, where the producer was a young guy about 19 whom I didn't even know. We started a take of *Didn't We*, the Jim Webb tune. After a chorus, he came into the studio and stopped the recording. I asked him why he stopped the tape; I thought it was good. He said he wanted me to sing the second phrase like Johnny Rivers would sing it. Now, if this had been the Mel Tormé of 1947 or even 1958, this kid would have gone through life from that point forward with false teeth. As it stood, I simply told him that Rivers is a marvelous artist, but I don't sing like him. We discussed it and I convinced him.

"It has taken me a long time to deal with situations in that way. I've learned to temper my disgust, and it's a good thing. There are a lot of unqualified people in this business. It seems all a producer has to bring to his task today is youth, as if membership in the record-buying peer group qualifies one to guide a performance. The trouble is that young producers are often as insecure in their tastes as the young artist. They think in terms of reading trends. This defines their thinking.

"Trends define everything. If you're not with it, you're against it. People look at me through narrowed eyes and say, 'How do you like so-and-so?' What they're doing is challenging me to rap crap. And if I bite the bait, if I do rap it, then it's sour grapes because I was 'then' and everything else is 'now.' One of the great shocks of my life was recording for Liberty. Dave Pell was head of a&r. I was familiar with Dave's work and had a great deal of respect for him. I loved those octet albums he did, and I thought he was a good, solid tenor player. When I went to Liberty, I found a guy in beads, and a Nehru jacket, whatever the fashion was. And he was playing the worst rock, crap, pop shit I ever heard. And he came on me with a lot of, 'Hey, man. This is it.

This is where it's at.'

"The same thing applies to the Erteguns. I went to Atlantic back around 1960 with my hat in my hands because I always heard about Ahmet and Nesuhi being the ultimate jazz fans. When I was signed, I received a wonderful note from them, and I went to New York thinking I had found a record company that understands what I do. The first thing they gave me was *Comin' Home Baby*. All right, I sold out to do it; but I needed it at the time, and I wanted to prove I was flexible. And I showed them; it was a hit. Then a while later, Nesuhi came to California and brought a bunch of new material to my house. I couldn't believe what this man was playing for me. How could a man who boasted one of the great jazz libraries of the day, I thought, descend into the pits of such dreck? The answer, of course, is that he's a businessman. He is trying to make a very commercial record company work. It's not up to *him* to maintain artistic standards. It's up to the artists."

If Torme seems a bit uncomfortable with much of the present music scene, it's not because he holds any special brief for the old days. He looks for excellence, and he takes it where he finds it: in Steely Dan and Blood, Sweat & Tears, Stevie Wonder, Chicago, or Bread; in Buddy Rich, Charlie Barnet, Fred Astaire (whom he considers among the greatest of popular singers), Duke, Gershwin, or Frederick Delius. But quality is not easy to come by in a day when rock musicians can get by on three notes.

"When I was growing up in Chicago and listening to music, the bands were preeminent. Consequently, the level of music was higher simply because music was being written for a variety of instruments rather than just a rhythm section, which is what you have today—piano, guitar, drums. I'm not decrying it. But I'm not completely comfortable with it.

"There's a cultural difference too. It's difficult for people of my stripe to relate to performers who look grubby. To me, it looks unprofessional. I realize there are young people who can relate to it. A guy like George Carlin is no threat to them. I understand that; but it's hard for me to relate to it. I think a performer should show a kind of respect to his audience. It's a very personal thing, and I don't mean to put

"I've learned to temper my disgust, and it's a good thing. There are a lot of unqualified people in this business. It seems all a producer has to bring to his task today is youth, as if membership in the record-buying peer group qualifies one to guide a performance."

down rock musicians on the basis of their dress. People communicate with other people through clothes. A rock band is making a statement about itself before it plays a note simply by its costume. A strike at the establishment through its uniform.

"I may sound like a moldy fig, but believe me, I'm not interested in nostalgia. To me, nostalgia is nothing more than a mindless plundering of the past for the commonplace. Yet I find very little that's original or interesting in jazz today. I love Chuck Mangione, but I heard him and his brother on Riverside LPs back in 1959 and 1960. He paid his dues. But so many other young musicians have gone to the moon to be different. And what has come out is patently unmusical. Music played before 1960 seems light years away to them, I suppose. If I was born in 1950, God forbid, I might think jazz began with Trane.

"My tastes were all fully formed long before 1960. There are so many things that have built my outlook. I can say some country and western has done it for me. Certainly Bessie Smith and the early masters. The best dixieland. I was very fond of the Bob Crosby band when Yank Lawson and Ray Bauduc were in it. Ray was my first drumming hero. Not Buddy Rich or Gene Krupa—not even Chick Webb. My first drum set was a Ray Bauduc Special that I got in Boston when I was 14. Lunceford does it to me, particularly with the Sy Oliver and Billy Moore charts during the Columbia period. Records like the two-part *Dinah*, *Bugs Parade*, *Morning Glory* were all coming out when my tastes were becoming mature.

"Trummy Young influenced me as a singer with numbers like *I Got It*. I listened to Woody Herman as a singer. Bing, Frank, Ella, naturally. And Bon Bon with Jan Savitt. Leo Watson was the greatest pure jazz singer I ever heard. His *Nagasaki* with Gene Krupa still knocks me out. I loved Helen Humes' *Sing for Your Supper* so much that I sang it myself on my first dectet album with Marty Paich, who wrote the most brilliant charts I've ever worked with.

"I've always listened closely to arrangers and their relationship to a band. Some bands are built principally on soloists, others on an ensemble sound. In the second case, the arranger dominates. Change the arranger, and you change the whole shape of the band. The individual musicians have little impact in such bands. A glaring example is the

Goodman band. In the '30s, it played Fletcher Henderson charts. In the '40s when it went over to Eddie Sauter and Mel Powell, it was a different band completely. Two absolutely separate groups, the latter less driving and more relaxed. Sometimes, when the personality of the bandleader is so strong, the *arranger* is the one to change. Take Jerry Gray—he did 90 per cent of the charts for the Artie Shaw band before November, 1939. Then he went to Glenn Miller. It's hard to believe that the same man who wrote *Lover Come Back* for Shaw did *Sun Valley Jump* or *String Of Pearls* for Miller. Here we have two different bodies of writing completely.

"But even more than jazz, I keep returning to classical music. And the more I've gravitated to classical, the more it has influenced my own writing, particularly ballads. I find I write a lot of triads. I'll write a G-flat triad over a C, which recalls the end of *Firebird*. I'm rather catholic in my tastes, but my favorite composer is Frederick Delius, who was blind and paralyzed during much of his life. There was a man called Eric Fende who was very close to Delius. For some years I had sought an audience with him, and I finally located him; he was teaching at the Royal College of Music in London. I called him and introduced myself very apologetically as Mel Tormé, an American singer. I certainly didn't expect him to know who I was. 'Oh, the *Mountain Greenery* boy,' he said. 'Delighted.' I was absolutely shocked that he was familiar with my work.

"Like a lot of popular singers, I guess I've always had a feeling that artists in other areas of music wouldn't know who I was. It's the opposite of snobbish arrogance, a sense of inferiority that causes one involved in popular material to cower in the awesome shadow of the classics. Perhaps it's because popular music is a craft; classical music is an art.

"But that doesn't account for the peculiar brand of insecurity that afflicts jazz, which is *undoubtedly* an art. Think of all the attempts to 'legitimize' jazz by imposing classical forms and terminology on it. The fact is, I think, that classical music reduces to jazz forms far better than jazz expands to classical forms. When Stan Kenton tries to inflate a large jazz ensemble to classical dimensions, I think the results are far less impressive than when Lunceford reduces Chopin's *Prelude*

Number 7 to the dimensions of a jazz orchestra. The former seems strained and pretentious; the latter seems natural and appropriate.

"Jazz writing is best and attains its greatest heights when it defines its own forms, not when it tries to obey rules laid down in the 19th century. One of the most forward looking, most progressive pieces of music I ever heard was *Benny Rides Again* by Eddie Sauter. I felt it represented a whole new dimension in writing for a jazz orchestra. I hesitate to call it a jazz work. It has several themes but a feel of formlessness. It rambles so beautifully. It was written in 1941, but it is so far in advance of any jazz-rock chart I've heard from any current band that there's no comparison."

Mel Tormé is not only a man of music. He is a man of words as well. To him, the assembly of words into ideas seems as challenging a delight as the assembly of tones into emotions. Good conversation is like a chase chorus between two great musicians. He explains, for example, how when writing a book on Judy Garland, he included authentic dialog—nothing was made up. He says he can do this because he remembers what he hears; a photographic mind, he says. "No," says his listener. "A phonographic ear." Tormé congratulates him on a good verbal riff.

Tormé is a prolific writer. In addition to the Garland book, there was a western called *Dollar Hide*, which he adapted as a *Virginian* TV episode. Currently an almost completed novel is in the works about the music business and a singer who came up during the big band era. Beyond that, preparations for a biography of his close friend Buddy Rich. Tormé contends that Rich almost singlehandedly turned the Artie Shaw band into one of the two or three greatest of all time.

His writing is now done during the tiny slots of time available to him between performances; performing is still the main activity of his life and is likely to remain so. His recent album, *Live At The Misonette*, won him five stars in *down beat* and a Grammy nomination. Tormé has little reason to complain about his reviews. Few of his records have been hailed as unanimously.

"I've generally trusted the critical fraternity to make correct judg-

HUGH MASEKELA

THE COLONIALIZATION OF THE OOGA-BOOGA MAN

by Howard Mandel



TOM COPI

Hugh Masekela is a compact, energetic trumpeter whose tough, independent style—of hustling, as well as horn blowing—has kept him popular with American audiences since his first stateside album, *The Americanization of Ooga Booga*, hit in 1965.

"That was a live album from the Village Gate", he remembers, "and I got \$3,500 in advance for it. I lived on the money for a year in a loft on Warren St. in downtown New York. The president of MGM swore to me the music was crazy and would never make it, that American people wouldn't go for it, and then nine months later it popped out in L.A.

"I've been living out on the West Coast ever since, spending time between in Africa." In between his touring and album making? As he talks, it becomes clear Hugh Masekela is thinking about Africa all the time.

"I'm a citizen of a few countries there," he explains. "It's necessary, otherwise you have to collect too many visas. But no, I don't have to pay too much in taxes. We don't have much taxation in Africa, 'cause people don't make much bread. If a guy makes \$3, how much are you going to take from him?"

Masekela makes more than \$3—per year or per hour—and this kind of explanation doesn't adjust the contradictions of his multinationalism. To justify his pan-African nationalism with his recording-studio polished entertainments, wiry Huey brings together some unusual appraisals concerning the world of which he's a citizen. Satisfyingly, his comments illuminate his most recent project, the completion of *Colonial Man*, a theme album that is his debut on Casablanca Records.

It's a mid-afternoon awakening for Masekela, in Chicago for a five night stint at Perv's House, a sophisticated South Side club owned by one of the Staple Singers' scions. Huey hasn't had coffee yet, and it's cold bright and snowy beyond the motel room drapes, but his thoughts turn to Africa.

"There's a lot of traditional life in Africa. If a person makes 50 bucks in three months, he's got his old land in the country, he buys himself some seeds and goes home. He lives for six or eight months doing nothing, living off

his crop. Africa is still basically a craftsmanship continent; a very small percentage of the population wears store bought clothes. Most make their own clothes or have them made. And many still weave. They also make their own pots and pans, and spoons and utensils, and everyday objects."

He shows off his instruments with pride.

"Now the guy who made these is a real craftsman, man. He's been making trumpets since he was 12, and his father used to make trumpets. At some point the guys who came to this country to make instruments stopped being artisans and started becoming manufacturers. But this guy still does it himself—Caldomique Filipo. He's got a house with a big back yard on which there's a whole shop, and he still makes them by hand, right there, in California.

"I've bought about ten of his trumpets so far, and the fluegelhorn became my favorite; I've been using it for the last eight years. I don't have a fluegelhorn mouthpiece per se . . . I've developed my mouthpiece to fit the fluegelhorn, so it can have a trumpet range. I can go all the way up and all the way down, but the thickness of the sound stays. I have more of a trumpet sound, there's brightness in it.

"We developed the horn over a few years, and if things go well I'm going to buy his whole line, and take over his firm before he dies and have him make as many as possible. They're going to be worth a fortune; they're the best instruments I've ever played. He's a generous old man, 78 years old and he looks in his 50s, and a really good friend, too, to sit

SELECTED MASEKELA DISCOGRAPHY

COLONIAL MAN—Casablanca NLBP 7023
HOME IS WHERE THE MUSIC IS—Blue Thumb
6003

THE BOY'S DOIN' IT—Casablanca 7017
I AM NOT AFRAID—Blue Thumb 6015
INTRODUCING HEDZOLEH SOUNDS—
Blue Thumb 62

around and rap with. Old artisans are a rapidly disappearing generation. When I was growing up, we had that kind of craftsman around—though not making musical instruments.

"I was born about 100 miles east of Johannesburg, but over the last five years I've traveled extensively all over Africa, and I understand it more as a whole continent and better as a collection of small colonies. The continent got sliced up by a few European wise guys, so they could go down there and draw flowers and mountains and maps. The colonial intention was to separate the different states so they could serve the mother country, and to make sure the natives never met.

"As a result, my father, who lived in South Africa, never met his dad, who was from Nigeria. We're living in an era now where Africans are meeting one another musically, and on all levels where we have a lot in common, and it's not so much a difficulty, anymore. South Africa is quite open, actually.

"If you have a few pennies in your pocket to get around with, and a few friends, you can go almost anywhere, actually; and you can travel for years, it's so much cheaper to live there. You can have a fantastic time for ten years on that continent, traveling! It's so big. If I could get a grant to travel in Africa and do research, in music, I'd do that and I'd give up anything cause I'd learn so much more, I'd understand so much more of the living experience. . . . Now, I'm talking in terms of a long grant and a long time.

"Like, to put together a collection of different African music. Go all over and tape and bring out the artists—I could at least try to distribute some of their music. There were fellows who came into Africa in the '30s and '40s and taped, and then sold the tapes overseas. *Missa Luba* sold over 5 million records—I don't know how much money those people in the Congo got.

"No, they don't give grants within Africa very much, that idea hasn't made it there, yet. The Ford Foundation, and others, used to give grants to study there. Or, you know, Rhodes scholars. Nobody knows about Cecil Rhodes—they know about him as a great

HONORING THE WOLF

by Pete Welding

Howlin' Wolf, the powerful Mississippi born singer who was one of the major shapers of the electrically amplified modern blues style that has been so dominant an influence on all popular music since his time, died January 10, 1976, of complications arising from a kidney disease for which he was being treated. At the time of his death he was 65 and had been active as a blues performer for more than four decades, first as an itinerant singer-guitarist at simple back country entertainments in his native Mississippi and Arkansas, and from the late 1940s as a recording artist, radio performer, and leader of one of the first electric blues ensembles to achieve national prominence.

For the last 25 years of his life he was one of the foremost and greatly respected blues artists resident in Chicago, where he had moved in 1952 after signing an exclusive recording contract with that city's Chess Records, for which he made his finest recordings and continued to record until the recurring illness of his final years forced him to curtail much of his performing and recording activities. Still, despite several heart attacks and a kidney illness of such severity that he required regular dialysis treatment and heavy medication, Howlin' Wolf did not give up performing entirely, and he invariably made his scheduled concert appearances.

Like most of the performers of the early postwar period, Wolf was fundamentally a traditional Mississippi blues musician, a spell-bindingly powerful singer, guitarist, and harmonica player whose strongest and most durable musical allegiance over a long professional career was to the traditional blues of the Southern countryside where he had been born, raised and first drawn to music. Many of Wolf's early recordings derived in fact from the work of older musicians he had encountered in the Mississippi Delta region, most notably his mentor Charley Patton, and, as do few recordings of the postwar period, they possess a sense of dark power and naked emotional force that are almost overwhelming in their intensity. Typical of this approach are



ANDRE SOUFFRONT

recordings such as *Saddle My Pony* (learned from Patton and recorded in 1948); *Moanin' At Midnight*, *How Many More Years* and *Dog Me Around* (from 1951); *Baby How Long, No Place To Go* and *Evil Is Goin' On* (all from 1954); *Forty-Four* (1955); *Smokestack Lightnin'* and *I Asked For Water* (from 1956), and *Who's Been Talkin'?*, *Moanin' For My Baby*, *Tell Me* and *Sittin' On Top Of The World* (all recorded in 1957), among others. His wry, vinegary harmonica playing, more rural in orientation than that of virtually any other postwar player of the instrument, is heard on just about every one of these performances, for he tended to feature harp on his most country-styled songs, though not exclusively so, and he continued to utilize it throughout his recording career.

Additionally, a number of his performances were organized on scalar and modal rather than on harmonic principles—as, for examples, *Moanin' At Midnight*, *Riding In The Moonlight*, *Crying At Daybreak*, *Smokestack Lightnin'*, *No Place To Go*, *I Asked For Water* and *Moanin' For My Baby*—an approach that is typical of some of the older forms of Mississippi and Deep South blues and which permits the projection of a particularly forceful rhythmic base of hypnotic intensity. On numbers of this sort Wolf frequently employed to striking effect a wordless moaning and falsetto melisma, giving his recordings a highly distinctive character as a result.

In light of his early background as an exponent of the blues of his native state, the strong, sustained traditional bias of Wolf's music is explicable. He was born Chester Arthur Burnett on June 10, 1910, in West Point, near Tupelo, Miss., and as a young teenager moved, in 1923, to Ruleville, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. It was while living in this cot-

ton-producing area, where his parents were employed on Young and Mara's plantation, that Wolf was first drawn to music, his inspiration being the great Delta singer and guitarist Charley Patton who lived on the nearby Dockery's plantation.

"It was he who started me off to playing," Wolf recalled. "He showed me things on the guitar, because after we got through picking cotton at night, we'd go and hang around him, listen at him play. He took a liking to me, and I asked him would he learn me, and at night after I'd get off work I'd go and hang around."

"He used to play out on the plantations, at different one's homes out there. They'd give a supper, call it a 'Saturday night hop' or something like that. There weren't no clubs like nowadays. Mostly on weekends they'd have them. He'd play different spots; he'd be playing here tonight and somewhere else the next night, and so on. He mostly worked by himself because his way of playing was kind of different from other people's. It took a good musician to play behind him, because it was kind of off-beat and off-time but it had a good sound the way he played. I never did work with him because he was a traveling man. In the spring of the year he'd be gone; he never came in until the fall. He followed the money. He couldn't make too much money in Mississippi in the spring of the year because people didn't have any money until harvest time. He'd always come back in the fall."

"I felt like I got the most from Charley Patton and Lemon Jefferson—from his records, that is. He came through Mississippi, in different areas, but I never did see him. What I like about Lemon's music most was that he made a clear chord. He didn't stumble in his music like a lot of people do—*plink!* No, he made clear chords on his guitar; his strings sounded

clearly. The positions he was playing in—that made his strings sound clear. There wasn't a smothered sound to his chords. As a kid I also heard records by Lonnie Johnson, Tampa Red and Blind Blake—they played nice guitar. I heard tell of Tommy Johnson too but I never did see him.

"After Charley started showing me guitar I came along slow. I didn't really pick up my time—didn't get that right—until somewhere in the '40s. I got my first guitar in 1928. My father bought it for me before we left Ruleville. We were living out there on the Quiver River, on Boosey's plantation. . . . At that time I was working on the farm with my father, baling hay and driving tractors, fixing fences, picking cotton and pulling corn. . . . It was in the late 1920s when I decided to go out on my own, to go for myself. I just went running 'round through the country playing, like Charley and them did. . . . Just all through the cottonbelt country, and mostly by myself. I was just playing blues and stuff like that. Some of the first things I learned how to play was *How Many More Years* and *Smokestack Lightnin'*, just common songs you heard down there. When I started playing guitar and blowing my harp, anything come to mind I'd just sing it and rhyme it up and make me a song out of it. Mostly I'd just take things I heard from people round there. I just picked up music, just playing guitar. I mostly just stayed in the country farming.

"It was Sonny Boy Williamson—the second one, Rice Miller—who learnt me harmonica. He married my sister Mary in the '30s. That's when I met him. He was just loafing around, blowing his harp. He could *blow* though. But he lived too fast; he was drinking a lot of whisky and that whisky killed him. Sonny Boy showed me how to play. I used to strum guitar for him. See, he used to come there and sit up half the night and blow the harp to Mary. I like the harp, so I'd fool around and while he's kissing Mary I'd try to get him to show me something, you know. He'd grab the harp and then he'd show me a couple of chords. I'd go around the house then, and I'd work on it.

"It was somewhere around this time that I met Robert Johnson. Me and him played together, and me and him and Sonny Boy—Rice Miller—played together awhile. . . . I worked a little while with him around through the country; we was playing around Greenwood, Itta Bena and Moorhead [Mississippi]. We didn't stay together too long because I would go back and forth to my father and help him in the farming. 'Cause I really wasn't ready for it—the music, you know. At that time I couldn't play near as well as he could; I'd just be hanging around trying to catch onto something. Rice, though, he could play with him. We took turns performing our own tunes. If I played lead and sang, they'd back me up, see, 'cause at that time I wasn't good enough to back them up.

"I don't know how long Robert had been playing when I met him but at that time he was playing nice. . . . I believe Son House mostly taught him because, Son and Willie Brown, I used to play a little with them. I worked with the two of them at some of those Saturday night hops. They was playing music for dancing mostly, fast numbers to dance to. That's the only time those people would have a chance to enjoy themselves—on a Saturday night or a Sunday—'cause those landlords would want them to work any other time.

"When I'd go out on them plantations, the
20 □ down beat

people played me so hard. They look for you to play from 7 o'clock in the evening until 7 o'clock of the next morning. That's too rough! I was getting about a dollar and a half and that was too much playing by myself. People would yell, 'Come on, play a little, baby!' A bunch would come in and they was ready to play and dance. So I decided I would get a band, get two or three more fellows to help me out, but I didn't do that until 1948. Some of the jobs I had taken was 50 cents a night, back in Hoover's days. Seven in the evening 'til seven the next morning."

Wolf continued this life of farming and occasional or part-time performing until he was inducted into the Army in 1941. He remained in the service for the duration of the war, spending much of his tour stationed in Seattle, Wash. He returned to Mississippi and farm work in 1945, later rejoining his father on a plantation in Arkansas. After two years of farming on his own in Penton, Miss., he moved to West Memphis, Ark.

"It was there," he recalled, "in 1948, when I formed my first band and began to follow music as a career. On guitars I had Willie Johnson and M. T. Murphy, Junior Parker on harp, a piano player who was called Destruction [Bill Johnson]—he was from Memphis, and I had a drummer called Willie Steele. We played all through the states of Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri. The band was using all electric, amplified instruments at that time. After I had come to West Memphis I had gotten me an electric guitar. I had one before I went into the Army and when I came out I bought another one. I was broadcasting too, on a radio station in West Memphis, KWEM. It came on at 3 o'clock in the evening [afternoon]. It was in '49 that I started to broadcast. I produced the show myself, went around and spoke to store owners to sponsor it, and I advertised shopping goods. Soon I commenced advertising grain, different seeds such as corn, oats, wheat, then tractors, tools and plows. Sold the advertising myself, got my own sponsors."

Wolf's regular radio broadcasts were extremely helpful in creating a demand for the music of his group, and he began to perform widely through the Deep South. Also helpful were recordings, for at about the same time he began making records, his earliest sides being made in Memphis for the then newly established Sun Records operation of Sam Phillips. The recordings—which included *Saddle My Pony*, *Worried All The Time*, *Moanin' At Midnight*, *How Many More Years*, *Howlin' Wolf Boogie*, *My Last Affair*, *Oh! Red*, and others—were issued as singles on Chess Records, the Chicago-based independent to which Phillips was providing master recordings. At much the same time Wolf was recording for RPM Records through the agency of the young Ike Turner, who was serving as talent scout and record producer for the West Coast label. As a result of the success he enjoyed with *Moanin' At Midnight/How Many More Years* (Chess 1515), Wolf was signed to an exclusive recording contract with Chess and, following a second recording session for them in Memphis, he moved to Chicago late in 1952, where he made his home for the rest of his life.

The move was to prove beneficial to the development of his music. With few exceptions his Memphis-made recordings were not particularly distinguished, at least when compared with the strong, well-focused recordings he soon was making under the direction of

Leonard Chess. As a result of his recording of Muddy Waters and others, Chess had developed a real understanding of rural-based modern blues of the type Wolf performed so well, and he lavished considerable care and attention to recording Wolf's music, providing him supporting musicians sensitive to its demands. It paid off handsomely: Wolf's finest and most successful records, artistically as well as commercially, have all appeared on Chess Records.

After recordings had created a demand for his music, Wolf set about establishing himself on the busy competitive Chicago blues performing scene and put together a solid band of his own with which he began working the city's blues clubs. The most notable addition to his band was guitarist Hubert Sumlin, who under Wolf's tutelage and encouragement developed into one of the most consistently interesting and individualistic of all modern blues guitarists. From the start Sumlin has been one of the most important contributors to the distinctive, characteristic sound of Wolf's records. For the rest, Wolf employed Chicago musicians, drawing from the large reservoir of superior bluesmen resident there.

During the 1960s he settled in to a long stint at Sylvio's Lounge on Chicago's near West Side and for a number of years his was among the finest, most consistent and satisfying club presentations to be heard in the city. With regular employment, the personnel of his band remained considerably more stable and, consequently, the performance quality invariably higher than that of just about any other ensemble on the Chicago blues performing scene. And the live performances of his music were fully the equal of his recordings.

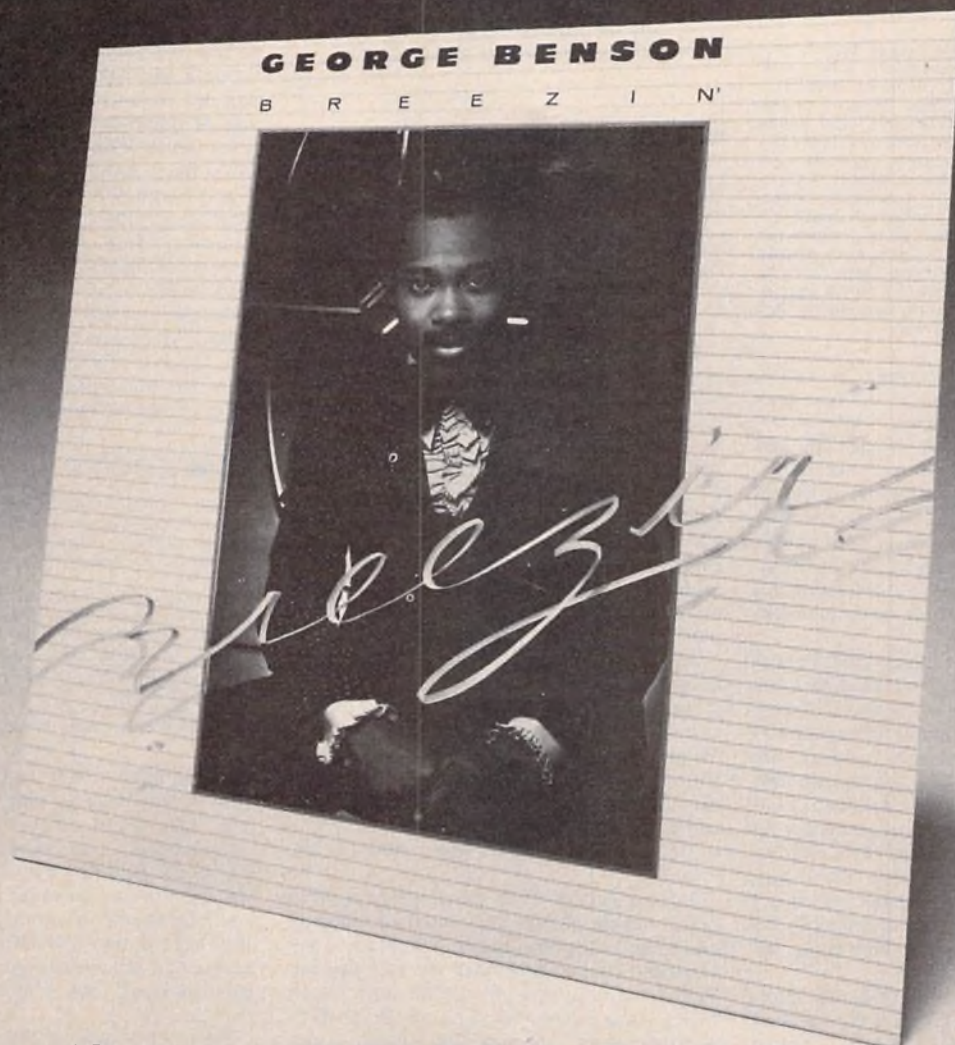
"Now, I don't consider myself a professional musician," Wolf observed. "I couldn't say I'm a professional 'cause I don't know too much about music, I'm just an entertainer; I can entertain pretty well in my way of doing. Before I became an entertainer, though, I sang for myself. Anything I set up and figured was good, I made up a song about it. I just watch people, their ways. I play by the movement of the people, the way they live. You see, everything that I sing is a story. The songs have to tell a story. See, if you don't put a story in there, people won't want to listen to it, because people mostly have been through the same emotions. Since I'm an entertainer, that's what I have to give the people who come to hear me, buy my records. I always tried to play a different sound from the other fellow . . . have a good sound, to play something different. My music."

Howlin' Wolf left a rich legacy of music behind him. The best single introduction to his glorious Mississippi-based modern blues is provided by the low-priced 2-LP set *Chester Burnett A.K.A. Howlin' Wolf* (Chess 60016). His early RPM recordings have been collected on *Howlin' Wolf Sings the Blues* (Crown 5240), which also has been issued as *Big City Blues* (United 7717). Single LP albums on Chess include *Moanin' In The Moonlight* (Chess 1434), which later was issued as *Evil* (1540); *Howlin' Wolf* (1496); *The Real Folk Blues* (1502); *More Real Folk Blues* (1512); *Change My Way* (418); *Message To the Young* (50002); *Live And Cookin' At Alice's Revisited* (50015); *The Back Door Wolf* (50045); *The London Sessions* (60008) and *The Howlin' Wolf Album* (Cadet Concept 319).

He will be missed, and sorely too. Honor his memory. db

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performing selections by Bobby Womack,
Jose Feliciano, Leon Russell and others.

Produced by Tommy LiPuma.
On Warner Bros. records and tapes.



RECORD REVIEWS

Ratings are:

***** excellent, **** very good,
*** good, ** fair, * poor

GIL EVANS

THERE COMES A TIME—RCA APL 1-1057: *King Porter Stomp*; *There Comes A Time*; *Makes Her Move*; *Little Wing*; *The Meaning Of The Blues*; *Aftermath*; *The Fourth Movement (Children Of The Fire)*; *Anita's Dance*.

Personnel: Evans, keyboards; George Adams, tenor sax, flute; Herb Bushler, bass guitar; John Clark, french horn; Joe Daley, tuba, trombone; Bruce Dittmas, drums, percussion; Sue Evans, tympani, percussion; Joe Gallivan, drum synthesizer, steel guitar; Peter Gordon, french horn; Billy Harper, tenor sax, flute; David Horowitz, synthesizers, organ; Howard Johnson, baritone sax, bass clarinet, tuba; Ryo Kawasaki, electric guitar; Peter Levin, french horn, synthesizer, organ; Tom Malone, synthesizer, trombone, tuba, piccolo; Paul Metzke, bass guitar, synthesizer; Hannibal Marvin Peterson, trumpet, koto, vocals; Ernie Royal, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Dave Sanborn, alto sax, soprano sax, flute; Warren Smith, percussion, vibes; Lew Soloff, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Bob Stewart, tuba; Tony Williams, drums.

*** 1/2

On the subject of arranger Gil Evans, superlatives are commonplace; the best ones have become ancient clichés. Only a few charts in the Kenton book of the '40s and '50s might pose competition to his ceaseless, daring expansion of the jazz orchestra's tonal spectrum, or to the legerdemain versatility with which he blends and juxtaposes colors, contours and rhythms. *Svengali* blurted the title of his 1973 album, and his captivating, often hypnotic sonic sculptures verify the nickname.

There Comes A Time is Evans' most fervent embracing of electronics and hard-rock essences. The instrumentation is unorthodox—what other "big band" features four synthesizers and five percussionists—and so are Evans' constructs. Take, for instance, his classic chart on *King Porter Stomp*, originally conceived for soloist Cannonball Adderley in 1958. Here it has been stripped of its niceties, augmented with computer sounds and congas, and turned into a showcase for the pained grit of altoist Dave Sanborn, who is pushed by his surroundings into his most impressive recorded performance.

Little Wing, a continuation of Evans' interest in the music of Jimi Hendrix, forces Hannibal's unpretentious voice through amplified distortion to achieve a suitable approximation of Hendrix' black/white magic. And on *The Meaning Of The Blues*, the brilliantly hyper-expressive histrionics of saxist George Adams are contrasted with the chilled accompaniment of string synthesizer. In the two years since this revolting instrument has gained popularity, only Evans has found a way to effectively use it, exploiting its mechanistic plastic for hollow backdrops to his bleakest passages.

The 16-minute title track (a Tony Williams composition which is the only one *not* featuring Williams' drumming), best illustrates the 22 □ down beat

current thrust of Evans' art. It is a soundtrack for Armageddon, maintaining a maddening intensity over a laconic birhythmic pulse. It builds up a lunatic pressure through its sheer mass, as well as through Harper's monolithic tenor blasts, Sue Evans' tumultuous tympani and the pivotal trumpet work of Hannibal, who also sings the sense-assaulting lyrics. It is a piece of fascinating proportions (basically my view) or rude monotony, depending on personal limits. It is decidedly not subtle.

And it's that lack of subtlety that is the thorn in this disc's sides. The delicate elegances that formerly made up the Evans palette have no place in his latest opus, just as subtlety was long considered to have no place in rock. The results are often superlative but flawed, and strangely one dimensional. But they are not to be avoided.

(P.S. The movement from Hannibal's symphony, *Children Of The Fire*, is mistitled on this album. The movement that appears here is actually the fifth movement *Finale*, and not the fourth, as the record jacket claims.)

—tesser

MILES DAVIS

AGHARTA—Columbia PG 33967: *Prelude (Pt. I)*; *Prelude (Part II)*; *Maiysha*; *Interlude*; *Theme From Jack Johnson*.

Personnel: Davis, trumpet and organ; Sonny Fortune, soprano and alto sax, flute; Michael Henderson, Fender bass; Pete Coscey, guitar, synth, percussion; Al Foster, drums; Reggie Lucas, guitar; Mtume, conga, percussion, water drum, rhythm box.

For two or three years now, various accounts have filtered through the press about Miles Davis' '70s band, endowing them with a legendary status before they ever found their way into a studio. When Miles finally assembled the young troupe for a recording and conceded to release the results (*Get Up With It*), critics were cool. They weren't sure it was what they heard live, and they were even less sure they liked it. But, mainstream opinions aside, *Get Up With It* was a magnificent testimony to Miles' resourcefulness and determination to survive. And *Agharta* provides the living proof so many have waited to hear. Recorded on a lone winter night last year during a tour of Japan, it captures the demonic band at the peak of their integrative skills and performing ability. It won't change the fact that Miles' genius still has to be disseminated by his disciples and imitators before a general audience will recognize it, but after the sparks settle, one thing remains clear: Miles is inscrutable.

Interestingly, the best moments on *Agharta* occur during *Prelude* and *Interlude*, lengthy and propulsive performances that seem to say this band cooked best when the race was on. *Prelude* evolves from one simple motif which Miles states on trumpet, and alludes to time and time again. It sounds like a clock, winding and slipping, ticking off disjunct and exotic rhythms. Miles directs the motion, starting and stopping the band and shifting tempos in an almost capricious manner with frightening, jolting intrusions from his seat behind the Yamaha organ. (More than any other factor, it is Miles' strange, nearly perverse presence on organ that defines the temper of his new music.) The rhythm section aims for a big, unified sound, pushing some passages in a relentless, breakneck drive, until Miles shifts gears and sends them scurrying into a lifting action that pulls the meter up by its roots. *Interlude* flies by like a train ride in a dream, where scenes

flash past the windows in a fascinating and illusive sequence. Michael Henderson drives the piece with a mammoth, blues-derived bass line that inspires the other musicians to forge their brightest solo statements.

Saxophonist Sonny Fortune is the most lyrical and yet cautious of the soloists on this date. He floats over formidable rhythmic density, taking long and graceful breaks that wing off into a private reverie, and whose substance and structure owe much to Coltrane's *Love Supreme* period. By contrast, guitarist Pete Coscey throws all caution to the wind. His intense forays achieve a staggering emotional dimension, and freeze every other sound within range. One suspects Miles imposes the sense of stillness to underscore the effect of Coscey's solos, but sometimes it just sounds as if nobody else really knows how to respond to the guitarist's unique ferocity. Indeed, on the slower material, Coscey's work is unseemly and conspicuous, but when the band hits a blues groove, he proudly and justifiably displays his natural disposition.

Oddly, the *Agharta* band's only major failings are its attempts to recreate the recent past. *Maiysha* has none of the charm or humor of the *Get Up With It* version, and *Theme From Jack Johnson* suffers from an inability to come to grips with the relentless and triumphant purpose set forth so memorably in the original recording. Miles' trumpet alone, a plaintive voice speaking gently, poetically, and unpromisingly for its own right to endure, redeems their inclusion. And after all the shock value of Miles' present music fades, the understated passion of his own musicianship will remain. His brave journey has become one of the most significant musical odysseys of our time.

—gilmore

TOM SCOTT

NEW YORK CONNECTION—Ode SP 77033: *Dirty Old Man*; *Uptown And Country*; *New York Connection*; *Garden*; *Time And Love*; *Midtown Rush*; *Looking Out For Number 7*; *Appolonia*; *You're Gonna Need Me*.

Personnel: Scott, baritone, tenor, soprano saxes, flute, synthesizers; Ralph Macdonald, percussion; Hugh McCracken, Eric Gale, George Harrison (track 8) guitar; Gary King, Gale (track 9) bass; Steve Gadd, drums; Richard Tee, keyboards; Bob James, electric piano; McCracken, harmonica (track 2); Dick "Slyde" Hyde, trombone and bass trumpet (track 9); Chuck Findley, trumpet (track 9).

*** 1/2

Like a musical Horace Greeley in reverse, Tom Scott has "gone east, young man, gone east." The list of sidemen—Gale, Gadd and Co.—are most impressive, and in jazz' version of the Rolling Thunder Revue, Scott has somehow persuaded these New York hermits into joining him on a multi-city tour. On stage as on record, they weave from funk to mellow in shrewdly scheduled segues. The changes are most pleasant. One is soothed, one is entertained.

Where, however, is the enlightenment? It might be pressing the point a bit to call Scott a hack; maybe a plagiarizer perhaps, but not a conscious rip-off artist. His solo on Carole King's *Jazzman* reminded one of the missionaries sent to the heathens, and although it is unlikely any of the Denver/King/Olivia Newton-John crowd started buying Anthony Braxton, that cadenza served well, even if it reminded one of a perfectly stock tenor line.

That's precisely where the problem is. Technically, Scott is anything but limited; one would hear more mistakes on Ornette Coleman records. His tone is definitely fluid; as exemplified on the sensuous *Garden*, his

soprano playing is quite evocative. Yet overall, one cannot help but feel that Scott is holding back. Maybe he's afraid of losing his audience; but of course you can't eat lead sheets. Maybe royalties represent the ultimate judgment; purists often die penniless. There is, however, a wide middle ground between boring and abstract; 'twixt formula and self-indulgence. This great expanse of territory is filled with stars who do not underestimate their patrons, who are not afraid to take chances.

Just think. If you had Gale, Gadd, Richard Tee and Bob James under your wing, wouldn't you be at least tempted to try something more than alternating barrages of up-tempo scowls, third-rate Bensonisms and tinkertoy gimmicks? Scott, however, fails to inspire and all is predictable. It's a stand pat little world, with everything falling into place. Gale's lead on *Dirty Old Man* has been played ten thousand times, Tee's funky intro on *Uptown And Country* ditto. As for Scott's innumerable lead passages on a number of different horns—they are very nice.

Sarcasm aside, the phenomenon of Tom Scott's popularity is quite explainable. Original, virgin-perfect art is, in America, squeezed through a strainer and diluted for mass acceptance. Whether Scott is a heretic despot who spoils said art and is decorated for it, or whether he's just an honest, hard-working cat out to make a buck is a question only he can answer. Meanwhile his albums climb the charts. Vox Populi? Oh, hell, who cares.

—shaw

ABERCROMBIE/ HOLLAND/DEJOHNETTE

GATEWAY—ECM 1061: *Back-Woods Song*; *Waiting*; *May Dance*; *Unshielded Desire*; *Jamala*; *Sorcery I*.

Personnel: Abercrombie, guitar; Dave Holland, bass; Jack De Johnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BILL CONNORS

THEME TO THE GAURDIAN—ECM 1057: *Theme To The Gaurdian*; *Childs Eyes*; *Song For A Crow*; *Sad Hero*; *Sea Song*; *Frantic Desire*; *Folk Song*; *My Favorite Fantasy*; *The Highest Mountain*.

Personnel: Connors, guitar.

★ ★ ★

Although John Abercrombie's name leads the list of personnel, it would be a misnomer to proclaim *Gateway* as Abercrombie's sole brew. Basically, it is one of the more impressive team efforts of this season, an exercise in high creativity that promotes the mature and aggressive interplay generated between Abercrombie, Jack DeJohnette, and Dave Holland. Together and separately, these musicians embody a daring and visionary spirit which one finds wanting in so much of today's electric jazz. Their music relies on its ability to communicate directly with minimal use of overdubs, expanders, equalizers, or gimmickry. In the sense that this is a smartly successful fusion of melodicism with stray loose-form (rather than free-form) constructions, *Gateway* bears a strong resemblance to DeJohnette's *Cosmic Chicken*; the format here, however, is more intimate, fostering head-on interaction and reciprocal inspiration.

Whether that interaction breeds in nose-to-nose confrontation (*Unshielded Desire*, *Sorcery I*) or leisurely exchanges (*Back-Woods Song*, *Jamala*), this music moves. In the strict trio settings, Holland acts as a catalyst, stating an

ambulatory theme in the opening moments, driving and veering his bass line with disarming ease, and often providing a stable point of reference for the circular dialogue of the other two. (In addition, he wrote four of the six tracks.) Abercrombie and DeJohnette probably have a better continual rapport than any other guitarist-drummer duo in jazz. The former plays in an irregular, angular lead style, painting his solos in seemingly random but coherent strokes, while the latter extends his role beyond a timekeeper's task, playing with a full palette of tones and embellishments, and maintaining a consistent attention to rhythm. Their rampaging duet on *Unshielded Desire*, with Abercrombie indulging in some magnificent breackneck pyrotechnics that showcase his strong leaning towards Hendrix

mannerisms, is one of *Gateway's* monster delights. As far out as Abercrombie, Holland and DeJohnette often pursue their quest, and it is further than most, they never lose the telling edges of emotion and balance.

Where *Gateway* represents the work of a small and temporal visionary community, Bill Connors' *Theme To The Gaurdian* is a statement of solitary vision. Connors was the electric and acoustic guitarist on Return To Forever's first electric album, *Hymn To The Seventh Galaxy*, but here he speaks exclusively through the acoustic instrument. Or is that an electric that lurks so faintly in the background of *Sad Hero* and *The Highest Mountain*? Regardless, Connors' approach to composition and improvisation follows a fairly inflexible format: soft chord and arpeggio back-

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drops, with deep, resonant leads that are more memorable for tone quality than for substance of statement.

Largely, this is meditative music, yet one senses that it is hard to penetrate and find the personality that stands behind it. While comparisons to Ralph Towner's work should be inevitable, Connors is closer in theory to Jarrett's solo eclecticism, although he dramatically lacks the latter's affection for contrast and color. The task of making music by one's self is one that often lacks the advantages of conflict, and sometimes the lone creator must cover so much terrain that he leaves no overriding impression of his creativity. Flat affect and abtruse moodiness characterize *Gaurdian* more than anything else. This whole album can pass you by without instilling an emotion to remember, although that is, admittedly, a highly subjective reaction. For the moment, Connors may have more to say in the ensemble context.

—gilmore

ESTHER PHILLIPS

CONFESSIN' THE BLUES—Atlantic SD 1680: *I'm Gettin' 'Long Alright; I Wonder; Confessin' The Blues; Romance In The Dark; C. C. Rider; Cherry Red; In The Evenin'; I Love Paris; It Could Happen To You; Bye Bye Blackbird; Blow Top Blues; Jelly Jelly Blues; Long John Blues.*

Personnel: Phillips, all vocals; Sidel-Gabriel Baltazar and Sonny Criss, alto saxes; Jay Migliori, baritone sax; Robert Rolfe, Melvin Moore, Bill Clark and James Smith, trumpets; Louis Blackburn, Richard Leith, Ronald Myers and Peter Myers, trombones; Rodgers Grant, piano; Francois Vaz, guitar; Victor Venegas, bass; Charles Grant, drums; Raymond Triscari (tracks 2, 4, 7), alto sax; Louis Ciotti and Ira Schulman, tenor saxes; Teddy Edwards (tracks 2, 4, 7), tenor sax; Al Porcino (tracks 2, 4, 7), trumpet; Herb Ellis (tracks 2, 4, 7), guitar; Side 2—Jack Wilson, piano and electric piano; Ike Isaacs, bass; Chuck Rainey, Fender bass; Donald Bailey, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

This set consists of previously-unreleased material dating from Phillips' latter Atlantic years in the '60s, and, as is often the case with albums of this type, there are some drawbacks. Even artists with the staggering credentials of Esther have moments on record which are somewhat below their own self-defined plateaus of greatness, and some of them are in evidence here, right alongside enough portentous material to justify the package.

Esther's alliance with a large orchestra on the studio side works well in places, as on the title track and *Cherry Red*—which features an arresting piano outing by Rodgers Grant and an unusually evocative vocal by Phillips—but too often the 17-piece aggregation lapses into lush, uneventful readings. By and large, the band's wooden ambience seems to, if anything, discourage a prime effort on Esther's part.

The live side fares considerably better. Recorded at Freddie Jett's Pied Piper Club in Los Angeles (probably at the same time her fine *Burnin'* album was cut), these tracks show an enthusiastic, top-form Phillips in an infinitely more conducive setting. Her trio, punctuated by the crisp, sensitive drumming of Donald Bailey, succeeds in every way that the big band on side one fails. Their spontaneity-filled instrumentation is always sparse and dextrous, immediately adhering to any avenue Esther chooses to travel.

There is dubious wisdom in the choice of Cole Porter's classic *I Love Paris* in this environment, except possibly as a crowd-pleaser. This singer's ability to treat almost any song is inarguable, but her half-articulated liberties with the chorus render the song an oversouli-

fied anachronism.

From this point, though, the performance and material jump upward by very pleasing degrees. Esther transforms the essentially banal *It Could Happen To You* into a solid entity with her striking intonations, and by the time she dallies with the long, interpretive intro to *Bye Bye Blackbird*, the pace is at last established. The closing medley, obviously a tour de force, is a sheer delight. Here at last, the listener is treated to the full spectrum of Phillips' brilliance as she alternately croons over and cuts into each vehicle at hand. *Blow Top Blues*, *Jelly Jelly Blues*, and *Long John Blues* are definitely the saving graces, transforming an otherwise avoidable album into a necessary addition to this vital singer's library.

—pettigrew

KEITH JARRETT

BACK HAND-ABC Impulse 9305: *Inflight; Kuum; Vapallia; Backhand.*

Personnel: Jarrett, piano, wood flute, and Osi Drum; Dewey Redman, tenor sax, musette, and maracas; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums and percussion; Guilherme Franco, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

Only the true artists, the great virtuosos, are able to legitimately swim between genres while leaving their credibility intact. Lesser talents would, by this course, leave themselves open to charges of seeking "something for everybody," or "not having focus." Yet with Jarrett, such rules of criticism are waived. This also makes talks of "trends" and "directions" meaningless. Keith transcends analysis by the weather vane. His infinite number of approaches and limitless compositional concepts force the critic to deal in analogies as the only way to capture the mood and texture of each passing disc in his young but voluminous career.

Backhand. Hmm, not his best. Maybe *Treasure Island*, by its wiffulness, had greater continuity. Wave after wave of cadenzas, standard fare on ECM outings, are not to be found. Yet given the various ingredients—context, expectations, and potential—this work must rank among the better helpings of small ensemble Jarrett.

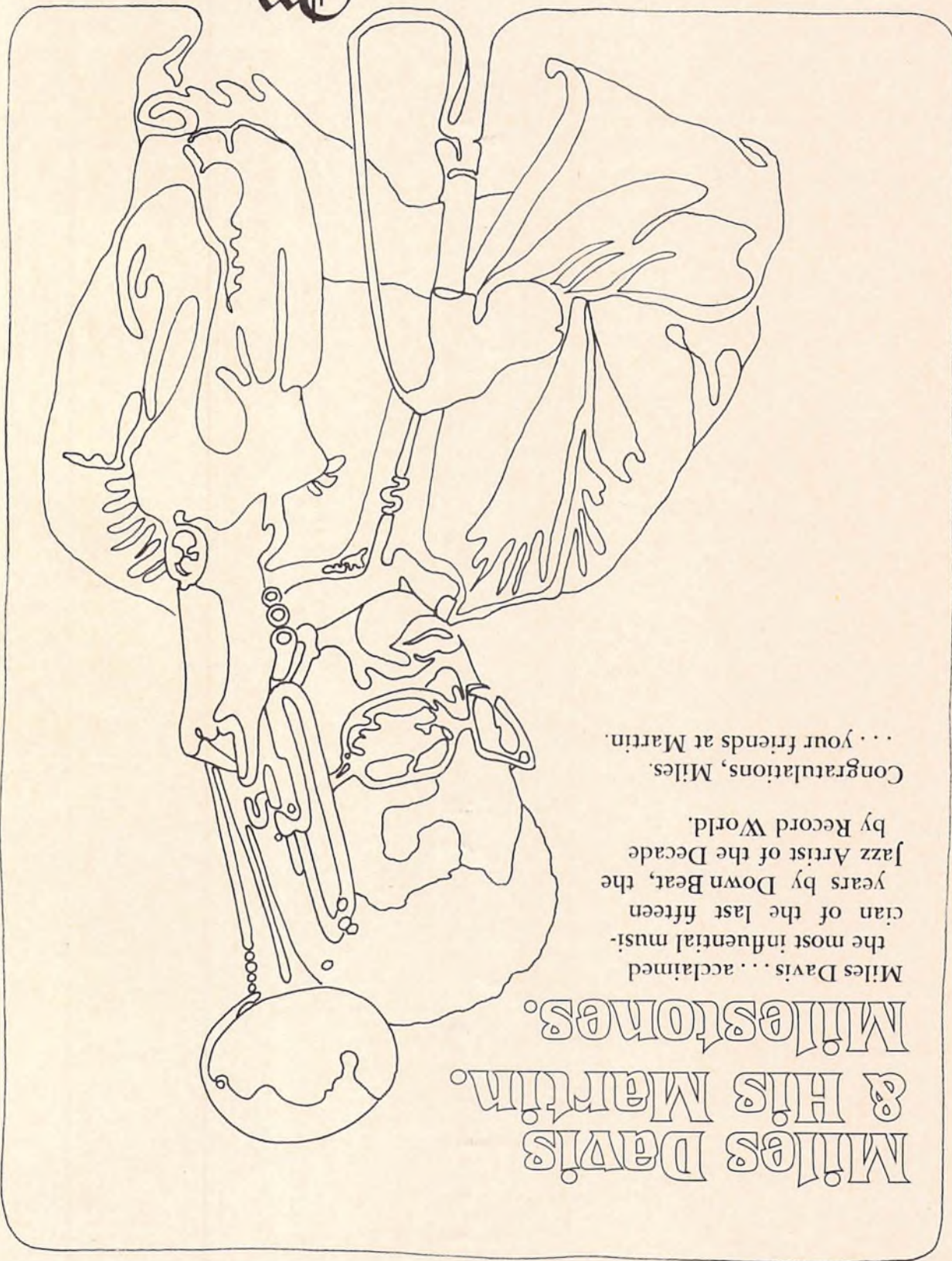
Surprises, while not overly plentiful, are here in pleasant doses. A significant and somewhat unexpected development has to be the apparent interbreeding of his other, lesser-known ECM profile with his quintet. Those European records with Jack DeJohnette are legion as a showcase of African winds, Jarrett deserting the keys for the mysterious tones of wood flute. *Kuum* finds the same wood flute brought to these shores, fronting a seemingly limitless and endless parade of Guilherme Franco's percussive artifacts. Additional accompaniment falls perfectly into place. Haden is divinely and conveniently deranged, first scratching, then bowing, and finally sawing, his huge bass like a hopped-up lumberjack on a redwood. Sure, he's frantic, even indulgent; yet faced with the semi-anarchic protestations of Jarrett's flute and Dewey Redman's musette, he's right where he should be. Which leads us back to the man of the hour.

Listening closely, we find even more unexpected features. There's a very brief, stolen ragtime roll near the beginning of *Inflight*. Proceeding to a boogie woogie on the left hand, Jarrett invites the tenor-blowing Redman into the conversation. Their parallel lines receive the welcome and traditional

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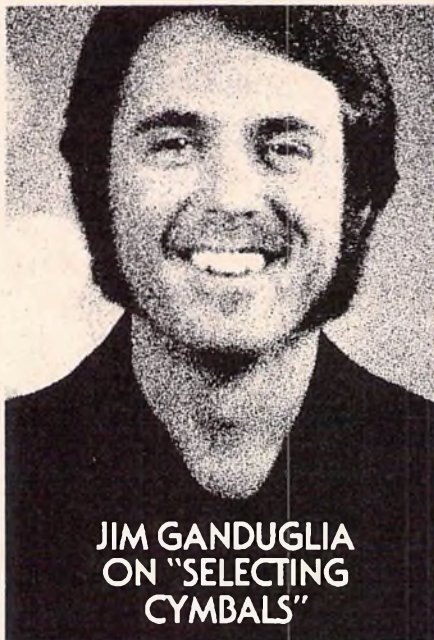
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Paul Motian underpinning, flourishes of cymbal and high hat. While intense, the emphasis, as in all of Motian's work, is not on speed but on coloration. The tenor-piano unison on the title cut is melodic, and when Jarrett departs on his own tour de force, an occasional blue note sparkles through the pyrotechnics.

There are a number of hidden bonuses. Better think about a new stylus, for you'll play *Backhand* often, the disc revealing a new secret with each spin. —shaw

BOBBY HUTCHERSON

MONTARA—Blue Note BN-LA551-G: *Camel Rise; Montara; La Malanga; Love Song; Little Angel; Yuyo; Oye Como Va.*

Personnel: Hutcherson, Willie Bobo (tracks 4 and 5), mallets; Oscar Brashear (tracks 1, 2, 3, 6, 7), Blue Mitchell (tracks 4, 5, 7), trumpet; Ernie Watts, Plas Johnson (tracks 1, 4, 5), Fred Jackson (track 1), woodwinds; Larry Nash, Rhodes piano; Eddie Cano (tracks 2, 3, 6, 7), piano; Dennis Budimir (track 1), guitar; Chuck Domanico (tracks 1, 4, 5), Dave Troncoso (tracks 2, 3, 6, 7), bass; Harvey Mason (tracks 1, 4), drums; Ralph MacDonald (tracks 1, 4, 5), Bobby Matos, Victor Pantoja, Johnny Paloma, Rudy Calzado (tracks 2, 3, 6, 7), percussion; Dale Oehler (tracks 1, 3, 4, 5), Hutcherson (tracks 2, 6, 7), arrangements.

Montara offers solid arranging by Dale Oehler, toe-tapping rhythms by first-class percussionists, and engaging mallet work from Bobby Hutcherson. Ultimately, however, there is an overarching sameness that, while stimulating the toe to continue tapping, causes the mind to drift into warm but numbing *cul de sacs*.

Much of the problem stems from Hutcherson's monochromatic soloing. In general, his approach seems too vibistic. His penchant for long mallet rolls on a single pitch, for example, grows tedious. He needs to push beyond the conventional stylistics associated with the mallet family.

Another factor contributing to the sameness is the mostly unvarying textural density of the rhythmic backdrops. With at least four percussionists articulating mainstream Latin patterns on each track, the rhythmic structure is overdefined.

Nonetheless, the individual tracks offer some good music. Hutcherson's switches from vibes to marimba on *Camel Rise* and *Yuyo*, for instance, provide nice coloristic shifts. The marimba's woody sounds along with the percussion help establish the album's basically Latin flavor. Hutcherson's *Montara* is a lovely ballad showcasing the reflective side of the leader's soloing and arranging. The solos of Ernie Watts, Larry Nash and Blue Mitchell are welcome, if too brief, contributions. —berg

THE BAND

NORTHERN LIGHTS/SOUTHERN CROSS—Capitol ST 11440: *Forbidden Fruit; Hobo Jungle; Ophelia; Acadian Driftwood; Ring Your Bell; It Makes No Difference; Jupiter Hollow; Rags And Bones.*

Personnel: Richard Manuel, vocals, electric and acoustic pianos, clarinet, Hammond organ, drums; Robbie Robertson, electric and acoustic guitars, clarinet, piano, melodica; Levon Helm, vocals and drums; Garth Hudson, Lowrey organ, accordion, synthesizers, piccolo, brass, woodwinds, soprano sax; Rick Danko, vocals, bass, harmonica; Byron Berline, fiddle (track 4).

When The Band infiltrated rock consciousness in 1969, they stood out like a troop of alchemists who found gold in the fields where others found only rocks. This group, most of whom were Canadians, had encountered the American spirit and shared their discoveries

in terms only a handful of artists could have created. The Band pursued nothing less than a frontier of possibilities in their first two albums, and for many critics and fans, they fulfilled a prophecy of rock, the apocrypha come to modern times. But the subsequent volumes were pale impressions of a once bold vision, relying on restatements of previous metaphors and bordering on a morality of distance. The Band's live album, *Rock Of Ages*, and their oldies collection, *Moondog Matinee*, were fine entries, but still space filler. Their recent work with Dylan exudes undeniable presence, but somehow it is their contribution to *The Basement Tapes*, nearly nine years old, that carries the greatest weight.

But with *Northern Lights/Southern Cross*, The Band takes another American journey, a curious one that crosses the border into their native Canada, yet roams the backstreets of New Orleans in pursuit of the horizon, or at least a respite. If songwriter Robbie Robertson's previous characters were resourceful and keen, his new ones are slightly haunted and bewildered. They face bankrupt and desolate times, take to flight, and make their greatest choices during that hegira. And they survive.

The opening song, *Forbidden Fruit*, reads like a warning song, an admonition against taboo and trespass from one who must have seen the consequences at a frighteningly close distance, close enough to recognize his own stranger within. In *Ring Your Bell* we meet the rebel, a sly and dangerous refugee who lives "like there's no tomorrow," and in *Acadian Driftwood* we hear the story of a man and his family (Virgil Kane's cousins?) who struggle in the aftermath of a divisive war. But the crowning moment is *It Makes No Difference*, a mournful ballad, the kind of thing The Band grew up on. In an album where loss and emotion embrace at every crossroad, the most moving moment comes in the delivery of the lines: "Now there's no love as true/As the love that dies untold." You might try to forget that singer's pain, or that stately blue sax, but it just won't happen.

This music is masterful. It's such a joy to hear Robbie's faultless, economical guitar, and Garth's new found eloquence with synthesizers, as Levon, Rick, and Richard trade vocals. It's true that little fresh ground is broken, so that *Northern Lights/Southern Cross* provides no radical musical departure. But this group stands still better than anybody else in rock. —gilmore

SONNY STITT

MELLOW—Muse 5067: *A Sailboat In The Moonlight; If You Could See Me Now; A Cute One; I Should Care; Soon; How High The Moon.*

Personnel: Stitt, tenor and alto saxes; Jimmy Heath, tenor and alto saxes, flute; Barry Harris, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

*** 1/2

My dictionary defines "mellow" as "sort of tender by reason of ripeness," and also "mature; fully developed."

Unfortunately, in jazz the word "mellow" is often tendered as a euphemism for "bland."

The people at Muse obviously harked to the dictionary definition when naming Sonny Stitt's new album, but alas, the latter connotation more accurately describes the playing on this date.

Everyone is entitled to off-days, or record sessions where the sparks don't really fly, and the singular Sonny Stitt is no exception, even when he's surrounded by such compatible col-

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leagues as Jimmy Heath, Barry Harris, Richard Davis, and Roy Haynes.

A Sailboat In The Moonlight, the notes tell us, hasn't been recorded since 1937, and small wonder. The rapid lead line inspires nothing in Stitt, nor does the more promising *If You Could See Me Now*. *A Cute One*, Stitt's original, starts off the same way, with Sonny's intonation at fault, but finally segues into a nice, riffish feeling toward the end of this lengthy cut.

I Should Care is the strongest performance on the album, with Sonny getting inside the piece and playing it for all it's worth. Added bonuses are a lovely flute solo by Heath, and an ingenious coda that wraps up this fine Jule Styne melody.

Soon is distinguished mainly by Richard Davis' lively bass solo, while *How High The Moon* spotlights Harris' piano and Haynes on drums. It's all pretty easygoing.

Professionalism dictates that any album boasting such superior musicians would have to maintain a certain level of quality, but *Mellow* never rises above the routine, and that's a shame. —maltin

VERA BRASIL

VERA BRASIL—Revelation 24: *Quase Ilusao; Nao E Por Falar; Depois Da Chuva; Tema Para Recordacao; Pra Voce Que Nao Vem; Samba Bom; Era Uma Vez; Rimas De Ninguem; Minha Fe, Meu Amor; Tema Do Boneco.*

Personnel: Brasil, guitar, vocal: Francesco Celano, Silvio Oliani, trumpets; Jose Cunha, Jorge Toni, woodwinds; Luiz de Andrade, flute, clarinet, clarone, cavaquinho, bandolim; Roberto de Azevedo, bass; Dirceu Medeiros, drums.

For some years one of my most played tapes has been a copy of the original Brazilian album on which this release is based. I taped Bill Hardy's copy of the LP and have in my turn made copies for those of my friends interested in authentic, well-written and performed bossa nova. Happily for us all, Hardy has now arranged for the U.S. release of this 1964 Farroupilha recording, an absolutely lovely set of performances by the trebly talented Ms. Brasil—singer, guitarist and, most important, one of the very finest of bossa nova composers. Her name may not be as familiar as those of Jobim, Gilberto, Bonfá, Menescal or even Sergio Mendes, but in her native land she is justly celebrated as an important and original contributor to the music, and her compositions have been recorded widely by large numbers of performers there.

We in the U.S. have a somewhat one-sided view of the bossa nova movement. We tend to consider those Brazilian performers who were able to make it here as the major shapers of the music, which is not necessarily the case at all. By and large the ones who succeeded here were simply those who either were capable of singing passably in English or were instrumentalist-composers of music with broad popular appeal. Among those who did not crack the American market and consciousness were those who sang superbly in Portuguese but not in English—Edu Lobo, Elis Regina, Nara Leao, Maria Bethania, Jair Rodrigues and the like—or were, like Vera Brasil, composers of subtle, relatively complicated music that requires intelligent listening. Hardy describes her correctly as "... an educated, sophisticated musician, rather at the cerebral end of the spectrum of Brazilian music that ranges from primitive hot folk music as personified by such performers as Dom Um Romao and Airoto to the more urban Jobim and Gilberto." He also is cor-

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rect in stressing the great diversity and breadth of Brazilian popular music, with a span from the typical rock/pop fare of the worldwide youth audience all the way through to almost indigenous Indian music.

Having started composing songs as a young woman in the mid-1950s, Ms. Brasil was in the early vanguard of the bossa nova movement of a few years later. Through the encouragement of international singing star Leny Eversong, she began performing her own music in the early 1960s and recorded this, her first, LP in mid-1964. A decade later, the album remains the finest, most completely satisfying representation of her art. The songs, all of which she wrote, are lovely, beautifully constructed and always marvelously lyrical, though not always in obvious ways: they are lapidary-like in the perfection of their detail and polish. They are classic early bossa nova pieces: warm, ardent, romantic, full of yearning and quiet intensity. Among the joys of the set are *Samba Bom* (which you are sure to have heard at one time or another), *Nao E Por Falar*, *Pra Voce Que Nao Vem*, *Rimas De Ninguem* and *Minha Fe, Meu Amor*, every one of which is simply lovely, all brilliant jewels of the bossa nova idiom. These are simply the standouts in an exemplary collection of superior music.

Hardy notes in conclusion: "Vera Brasil today finds herself in a massive world of Brazilian modern popular music, in which she remains more a composer's composer and a singer's singer rather than a performer who appeals to the masses. She continues in her art, however, and supports herself in her own business, an audio-visual studio in Sao Paulo." Thanks to Revelation we now can sample that intelligent, sensitive artistry, in a beautifully realized album that has no weak spots but, on the contrary, many high ones. It will continue to wear wonderfully well.

—welding

VAN DYKE PARKS

CLANG OF THE YANKEE REAPER—Warner Bros. BS 2878: *Clang Of The Yankee Reaper*; *City On The Hill*; *Pass That Stage*; *Another Dream*; *You're A Real Sweetheart*; *Love Is The Answer*; *Iron Man*; *Tribute To Spree*; *Soul Train*; *Cannon In D*.

Personnel: The credits are too vague to speculate. Parks plays keyboards.

★ ★ ★ ★

It's a wonder that Van Dyke Parks hasn't attracted a highly vocal cult of Parksophiliacs (they could call themselves the Society To Promote V.D.), nor that he has yet to be the subject of the lengthy, perceptive profile-article he so richly deserves. Maybe his tastes are simply too obscure. Or maybe he ultimately directs his albums towards himself, unlike his cousin in spirit, Randy Newman, who in spite of his obscurity, remains a spokesman of universal concerns. But where people find Newman disturbing (therefore attractive), Parks' penchant for lush, dense, and reassuring orchestration belies his own offbeat sobriety.

Van Dyke is a collector of little-known songs, and his albums are orphic cycles. It's been over three years since *Discover America*, but *Clang Of The Yankee Reaper* underlines the adage that good things come from care and patience. Apparently Parks must spend much of his time searching for his material, and, like last time, he has drawn largely from the otherwise untapped resources of the Caribbean, with its tropical quasi-American ambience and steel drum charms. (One song, *Tribute To Spree*, commemorates the origina-

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tor of the steel drum.) Van Dyke offsets the Caribbean selections with a sampling of pop, reggae, and r&b based tunes, an amalgam of love songs, narratives and commentaries. The *Yankee Reaper* of the title song, the only selection of the album that Parks helped write, is the bearer of change, a man who imports artifacts and customs and bodes tomorrow's synthesis.

With more resolve and clarity than on his previous albums, Van Dyke aims for the big sound, a compound of earthy, funky rhythm sections, melodious steel drums, and powerful, wallowing horns. The major differences, however, between this album and the two that preceded it are Van Dyke's up-front and confident vocals, and the strong rhythmic impulses of Trevor Lawrence's arrangements. Someday, when rock flexes its imagination and fulfills its Hollywood-heroic destiny, someone will inaugurate a new series of "Road" movies, like *On The Road To Jamaica* or *On The Road To Ashtabula*. They will probably cast the naturals (Dylan, Jagger, or Young) in title roles, and Parks and Newman will write the scores. I can hardly wait.

—gilmore

JOHN LEE/GERRY BROWN

MANGO SUNRISE—Blue Note BN-1A541-G: *Mango Sunrise; Breakfast Of Champions; Keep It Real; Ethereal Cereal; The Stop And Go; Her Celestial Body; Pickin' The Bone; Magnum Opus; Haida.*

Personnel: Lee, bass, Arp synthesizer (track 1), Clavinet (track 3); Brown, drums, percussion; Philip Catherine, Eff Alberts, Wah Wah Watson, guitars; Rob Franken, Eric Tagg, Mike Mandel, Jasper Van't Hoff, keyboards, synthesizers.

★ ★

This is a product that suffers from over-refinement. Like a "best-of-the-show" poodle, every strand has been teased, processed and manicured. Synthesized to the point of suffocation, these chic, tight pants-ed sounds are a bit too perfumed.

There are some fine solo spots by guitarists Eff Alberts and Philip Catherine and keyboardist Rob Franken. However, their energies are mangoized by echoization and other modes of electrical manipulation.

The title track, *Mango Sunrise*, points up the album's basic problem. A refined little funk-chunk pattern is established. Next enters the bass, a guitar, and then long languid strands from an ARP string ensemble. Against this backdrop are tasty solos by Alberts and Franken. But in the mix, each track is "precision balanced" and melded into the whole. Consequently, the efforts of Alberts and Franken are diluted and submerged. The result is an overly fastidious and uniform texture which is virtually unvarying from track to track.

John Lee, who takes credit for all "compositions," is apparently interested in smooth, polished, pastel surfaces. This approach has blunted the spontaneity and edge that originally existed in the improvisations. As is, Lee and Brown have fashioned an *au courant* background music suitable for sipping rum punch or shopping for baubles in East Side boutiques.

—berg

TAJ MAHAL

MUSIC KEEPS ME TOGETHER—Columbia PC 33801; *Music Keeps Me Together; When I Feel The Sea Beneath My Soul; Dear Ladies; Aristocracy; Further On Down The Road; Roll, Turn, Spin; West Indian Revelation; My Ancestor; Brown-Eyed Handsome Man; Why? ... And We Repeat Why? ... And We Repeat!*

Personnel: Rudy Costa, soprano and alto saxes,

clarinet, alto flute, galmiba; Mahal, banjo, mandolin, electric guitar, piano, electric piano, vocals; Hoshal Wright, electric guitar; Earl (Wire) Lindo, keyboards, arrangements; Ray Fitzpatrick, bass; Bill Rich, bass (track 10); Kester Smith, drums, percussion; Larry McDonald, congas, percussion; Kwasi (Rocky) Dzidzornu, congas (track 10).

see below

Since I cannot for the life of me understand why people adore Taj Mahal, and many do, I don't know how to rate his performances. This one seems to me more interesting than his last, but then Bob Haldeman seems to me more interesting than Maurice Stans, and I wouldn't want either of *them* in my house, either. Studied simplicity has always offended me, whether in a Taj Mahal, a Bob Dylan, a Rod McKuen, or a Jerry Ford. It was phony white folk music when the Weavers did it, regardless of how endearing their personalities or how attractive their politics, and it's phony black folk music when Taj Mahal does it, in my opinion.

Having said that, let me acknowledge the large quantity of perfectly agreeable music herein. *Feel The Sea* is a lilting but firmly rooted (by a fine, spare bass figure) folkish line with Mahal's acoustic guitar weaving in and out of the lead. *Ladies* starts with a lazy, noodling intro followed by a medium-tempo ballad. Costa's flute predominates, alternating regularly between a gentle legato and a tougher staccato; Mahal winds things up with a vocal and a guitar solo. *Aristocracy* begins with great promise: a raggy intro with Costa overdubbing on soprano and clarinet but voicing them like kazooes. A gas! But then, some lyrics, spoken by a female and written by Inshirah Mahal, intervene, and they are depressingly banal. *Roll*, by Joseph Spence, concludes side one; it's a gentle, attractive Caribbean line, but it bears an uncomfortably close resemblance to the gorgeous *St. Thomas* and suffers, naturally, from the comparison.

Side two is more of the same pleasant, nondescript fare, save for the last cut *Why*. The band goes through some effective modulations at the opening, led by Costa's soprano, and then settles into a loping medium tempo. Mahal's acoustic guitar solo, long and thoughtfully picked, is his most intense playing of the date.

It's neither Robert Johnson nor Charlie Christian nor Kenny Burrell, but it has some texture and individuality to it.

Costa is excellent in spots, and Mahal is Mahal. Only the backdrop changes from album to album. Some of his earlier albums with more horns were provocative fusion music and deserved attention. In these sparer settings, however, the pretentious simplicity of Mahal's concepts comes out more clearly. If it appeals, it appeals, but as I say, I don't understand why.

—heineman

JULIE TIPPETTS

SUNSET GLOW—Utopia BUL1-1248: *Mind Of A Child; Oceans And Sky; Sunset Glow; Now If You Remember; Lilies; Shifting Still; What Is Living; Behind The Eyes.*

Personnel: Tippetts, vocals, pianos, and acoustic guitars; Keith Tippet, harmonium (track 1), piano (tracks 2 and 6); Brian Godding, piano (tracks 1, 2, 4, and 7); Mark Charig, cornet (tracks 1, 2, and 3), tenor sax (track 3); Elton Dean, alto sax (tracks 1 and 2); Nick Evans, trombone (tracks 1 and 2); Louis Moholo, drums (track 2); Brian Belshaw, bass (track 2); Harry Miller, bass (track 3).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Maybe the voice sounds familiar, but the name doesn't ring a bell? You might recall Julie from her association with Brian Auger a

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few years back, when her last name was Driscoll; or, more recently, her guest vocals on Carla Bley's *Tropic Appetites*, or her own work with husband Keith Tippett on *Centipede*. Julie's first solo effort in several years, *Sunset Glow*, is a gem, but if you want to hear it, chances are you'll have to seek it out. I doubt that many "progressive" stations will program it, and it's rather unlikely that we'll be seeing Julie on *Midnight Special*. The musical framework she chooses to work within is too elusive and personal for mass tastes, and Julie has come too far to back off now. If *Sunset Glow* might seem cold and distant at first, spend some time with it. For beneath that strange covering of shy lyrics and dovetailed rhythms, runs an emotional bevy of extraordinary depth and warmth. It is a work of private beauty.

Julie's voice possesses a disarming range and a penetrative purity. Her calm, measured delivery can best be compared to the spacey breadth of Abbey Lincoln and the articulate mannerisms of fellow Briton Cleo Laine. Listen, on *Lilies* for example, to the ease with which she glides underneath a note and swells its size by a quarter tone. And whether she is in her lower range, where she has enough vibrancy to bounce a note, or her higher one, which she distinguishes with a clarion resonance, Julie exacts just the right amount of control. She sings about simplicity and innocence, the kind that grows from adult pain and chaos. While in some instances (*Mind Of A Child* and *What Is Living*), Julie may seem to surrender too readily to the joys of naiveté, she never offers up her resolution as a panacea to others.

For the most part, that simplistic approach also carries over to the songwriting and arrangements. Julie relies on her own sparse piano style to provide the rhythmic impetus, leaving the horns and guitars to weave complementary patterns around her chords. The effect they conjure is a cerebral, gravity-free one, more given to modal ambience than atonal rambling. In *Oceans And Sky* Julie asks: "When is a simple breath too much?" *Sunset Glow*, a work of uncompromised vision and consistent devotion, supplies a worthy answer to that question.

—gilmore

THE PAZANT BROTHERS & THE BEAUFORT EXPRESS

LOOSE AND JUICY—Vanguard VSD 79364: *A Gritty Nitty; Back To Beaufort; Loose And Juicy; Clabber Biscuits; Toe Jam; Work Song; Spooky; Skunk Juice; You've Got To Do Your Best; New Orleans.*

Personnel: Al Pazant, trumpet; Ed Pazant, alto, tenor, and baritone saxes, flute; Pete Yellin, tenor sax; Mike Terry, trombone; Ray Chew, keyboards; Perry Smith, drums; Pablo Lundrum, percussion; Aaron Thompson, bass; Harry Jensen, guitar; Betty Barney, Frances Courtney, "Cookie" Harris, vocals.

*

With every fad there are followers, some of whom may be contributors in disguise. Most, however, are mere opportunists. The Pazant Brothers and The Beaufort Express, I'm afraid, are an example of the latter, and *Loose And Juicy*, mechanically reproduced in the current style of Donald Byrd, Herbie Hancock, Kool & The Gang, MFSB, et al., has so little to say on its own as to be virtually impersonal.

The ten cuts (nine by the group or producer Ed Bland plus the album's only surprise, the inclusion of Nat Adderley's *Work Song*), offer the perfunctory assortment of bass-dominated "heavy" rhythm, snappy riffs and horn



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licks, swirling synthesizer, scattered vocals and (as added attraction) solos by Al and Ed Pazant, who may be somewhat more professional than the Beauforts, but who nevertheless show no real signs of personality.

Even in the world of background music, produced for consumption rather than distinction, there are standards. While a few such performers may go on to a steady job in television—if they play electric piano—or create a personal style as in the case of Donald Byrd, most of them, and that includes The Pazant Brothers and The Beaufort Express, will stay deservedly in the background.

—gabel

WAXING ON . . .

Good news: Nils Winther's excellent, Copenhagen-based SteepleChase Records is now receiving wider distribution in the United States. In a little over three years, Winther has built one of the world's strongest independent catalogues of modern jazz. Heading off the label's list of new releases is *Piano Man* by Hilton Ruiz, an accomplished mainstream pianist lately heard with Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Ruiz gets a rhythmic boost from the ever-reliable Buster Williams and the ever-impeccable Billy Higgins on an interesting selection of tunes, including two originals and pieces by Duke Jordan, Coltrane, Mary Lou Williams, and Charlie Parker (an unfortunately awkward, overlong *Big Foot*.)

One of the more valuable services performed by SteepleChase has been keeping Jackie McLean on disc. Now McLean's 30-year-old son René, most recently a part of Horace Silver's group, appears as a leader himself on *Watch Out* with a hard-driving, Blakeyesque sextet. The group includes trumpeter Danny Coleman, who doesn't get much room to blow; versatile guitarist Nathan Page; and one of the more propulsive recent rhythm combinations: pianist Hubert Eaves, an imaginative accompanist with an indomitable left hand; the redoubtable Buster Williams once again; and Freddie Waits, a consistently critically ignored drummer. Despite the solid support and big sound, it's René's show all the way. He is a forceful, mature instrumentalist of excellent taste and convincing expressive range on the three upper-register saxes and flute.

The same group format, minus guitar, holds forth on percussionist Michael Carvin's *The Camel*; but this disc boasts even more impressive personnel (Sonny Fortune, Cecil Bridge-water, Ron Burton, Calvin Hill) who also sound better as an ensemble. In addition, the group gets to work out on a wider range of tune styles than is shown on McLean's album. *Osun*, for instance, is an ebullient Highlife piece, while Trane's *Naima* features some lovely Sonny Fortune and exquisite, waterfalling piano accompaniment by Ron Burton behind Carvin's brush-breaths. There's also a lowdown, old-fashioned blues and the title composition, which employs Middle Eastern textures. Carvin, who worked with both McLeans in Jackie's Cosmic Brotherhood, has logged an impressive series of jazz credits and also a stint as a Motown staff drummer in '68-'69, which explains why a funky undercurrent motivates virtually every rhythm Michael

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lays down.

Ken McIntyre, the reedman-composer-educator who has worked with Eric Dolphy and Cecil Taylor, is represented by *Home*, a superior effort to his first SteepleChase LP of two years ago. Ken is well served here by Jaki Byard, the Boston piano master whose novel rhythmic and harmonic imagination is too little heard these days. A muscular drummer named Andrei Strobort and bass adept Reggie Workman round out the quartet, which works on a series of relatively brief, tough compositions. Like Dolphy, McIntyre plays a cornucopia of reeds: his alto is flexible, varied in its expressive range; but Ken's bass clarinet and bassoon work seems rather unstable in pitch and tone. Thus, it's rather difficult for him to get the supple, rolling quality that would best highlight the Caribbean rhythms of the pieces

on which these instruments are featured. McIntyre's oboe also recalls Coltrane's soprano on the lovely, folkish title piece. He has set tough compositional standards for his quartet, and even if the level of execution is inconsistent, *Home* remains both intelligent and emotionally direct.

Dexter Gordon usually manages to put his best foot forward on record dates. *Stable Mable*, his third LP for the Danish company, is no exception. Dex sounds relaxed and slick, blowing nary a line that doesn't make sense. Horace Parlan delivers a typically percussive, yet near-elegant series of performances, and acoustic bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen knows no peer on his instrument. Though the listener will rarely get the impression that any limits are being tested on this collection of tunes by Parker, Golson, Ellington, Miles

Davis, and Garner (the standard *Just Friends* is also included), taste and swing prevail.

There should be little doubt that Niels Pedersen is one of the three or four brilliant acoustic bassists in jazz, yet we hear him rarely. *Jaywalkin'* is an even more unusual occurrence: two full album sides of Pedersen up front. His virtuosity is almost enough to dispel this listener's reservations about the acoustic bass in a totally leading ensemble role. A loose, friendly feeling pervades the cuts, which was certainly the studio mood on the night I attended one of the sessions in Copenhagen. This genial good humor partially makes up for more-than-infrequent clams and clashes of instrumental voicing. It's a jazz-based session with certain rock overtones contributed by an unremarkable pianist, Ole Kock Hansen, and yet another new guitar talent, France's Philip Catherine. The latter echoes fellow Europeans René Thomas and Django Reinhardt as he travels a jazz path with harsh, more garish rock decoration occasionally used to generally good effect. Billy Higgins is the drummer; frankly, I can think of no session, including this one, that has not been immeasurably improved by his presence.

Finally, Winther and Co. have come up with one of the most beautiful vibes records I have ever heard: *Peace* by Philadelphia's Walt Dickerson, a trio date with bassist Lysle Atkinson and percussionist Andrew Cyrille. Atkinson is a *slow* bassist, offering an especially rich arco. Cyrille, one of the few drummers in the world who can also be called a percussionist, is one of our most compellingly disturbing musicians. His sound is charismatic. He works out of and into silence like a rhythmic nomad, but despite his restive essence, each element of his vocabulary is well-shaped, clearly voiced, with definition rarely ambiguous. Dickerson is clear-toned, lean-lined; he plays skittish, dry, marimbic, tonally colorless passages in percussive duet with Cyrille, at times recalling Cecil Taylor's collaborations with the percussionist, but less rapidly fluctuating and dynamically histrionic. Then Dickerson will frame this aspect with chord-color of Mondrian thickness and solidity. Abstract as it is, the project avoids exclusive cerebrality, thanks to Cyrille's dramatic, motile presence. He contrasts with the severity of Dickerson and Atkinson, generating a broader landscape of nearly encyclopedic relief.

• • •

Domestically, Gerry McDonald's Choice Records offers a new trio of LPs. *Strings Attached* reunites pianist Al Haig and Jimmy Raney on guitar, both alums of the Stan Getz "Storyville" ensemble of '50-'51. Haig, for many the quintessential bop accompanist, remains a master of the art, adding many needed rhythmic twists and turns to counterbalance the metronomic drumming of Frank Gant. Al's touch is at once light and deft. Much of his work with Parker and others in the '40s and early '50s predicted the accomplishments of keyboardists that Miles Davis found so attractive a few years later: Ahmad Jamal, Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, and perhaps even Bill Evans. All of this is reflected in Haig's performances here, especially his fine solo on Kaper's *Invitation*. Raney has his best moments on *'Round Midnight*, another pleasant-tasting chestnut, but there are also a couple of fine surprises in the repertoire: a relaxed, but curiously unstable *Dolphin Dance* (Herbie Hancock's tune) and J. J. Johnson's comely

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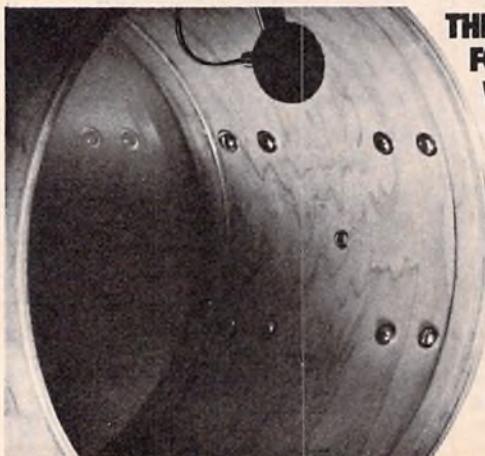
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Enigma, harking back to Miles' Blue Notes, here sounding sweet and unmysterious as ever. Only a sluggish *Freedom Jazz Dance* offers truly unfortunate moments, but the recorded sound is a bit thin; it diminishes some of the roundness of Jamil Nasser's bass tone, detracting from an otherwise fine performance.

Better recording quality could hardly have helped Jimmy Giuffre's Three salvage *River Chant* from a stagnating puddle of its own introspection. This listless music conjures up images of old beatnik joints and drafty lofts in which the pseudo-Oriental "head food" manifested in the sounds, and the liner quote from *Siddhartha* is allowed to pass for deep creation. Is this the same Giuffre who recorded those incomparable trio performances with Paul Bley and Steve Swallow? It hardly seems so. Dig out your old Paul Horn records before you spring for this.

Quiet, thoughtful music, of course, need not meander. Case in point: the third new Choice release, vocalist Irene Kral's *Where Is Love?* The program may indeed be all of a single mood, but that just means it should be saved for those intimate times. Kral is not a "jazz" singer, in the sense that she sings with no improvisatory embellishment of the melodic or lyric line. Her work, flawlessly phrased, is distinguished chiefly because of her skilled pitch control (the direct approach is often the most difficult to master) and ability to shade subtly in a dynamically very narrow format. Alan Broadbent's piano accompaniment, the only other voice on the disc, is perfect. In its lack of pretense and skilled choice of intelligent material, Kral's is a very sophisticated record.

What Kral and Broadbent have wrought with voice and piano in no way could be matched by the half-hundred or so collaborators (some rather illustrious) who indulged Stuart Scharf in a collection of ten of his tepid songs. This anthology is allegedly being sold in a limited edition of 1250 for 50 bucks a throw. Who are they kidding—or are they just kidding? Vocalist Bob Dorough had much to do with the production of this precious confection: he would do well to expend his energies on a showcase for his own matchless talents. And Roberta Flack, who co-produced most of the LP, only gives further evidence of the utter deterioration of her taste and ear. For shame. . . . At 97 cents, this is a two-star album, at \$6.98, it rates one; at \$50, well, it's a waxout.
—mitchell

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Rene McLean, *Watch Out* (Steeplechase SCS 1037): *** 1/2

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Jimmy Giuffre Three, *River Chant* (Choice CRS 1011): *

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Patrice Rushen

by Leonard Feather

By the time Patrice Louise Rushen was born, the Dave Brubeck Quartet was three years old, the MJQ two; Charlie Parker had six months to live. Growing up in Los Angeles, she crammed an incredible amount of knowledge into her early years, catching up with a speed and acuity that called for an exceptional I.Q. ("I was once given an I.Q. test," she told me, "but my parents wouldn't tell me the results. They just wanted me to lead a normal childhood.")

She began her studies at the age of six, in 1960. It was at Locke Junior High School, under Jazz Workshop Director Reggie Andrews, that she came into local prominence as a pianist, composer and arranger. In the summer of 1972 she won a best instrumentalist award, and the workshop band won the sweepstakes award in the annual summer Battle of the (teenage) Bands at the Hollywood Bowl. She was three months short of her 18th birthday.

Since late 1972, in addition to studying at USC (from which she is currently on leave for a semester), she has worked with Melba Liston, Abbey Lincoln, the Sylvers, Gerald Wilson, Donald Byrd, and Benny Golson; has recorded two albums of her own, several more with Jean-Luc Ponty and others, and now has so many job offers she is turning many down. This was her first blindfold test.

1. KEITH JARRETT. *Treasure Island* (from *Treasure Island*, ABC-Impulse). Jarrett, piano, composer; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

Well, that was definitely Keith Jarrett and it sounded like one of Keith's tunes. I've heard that before; in fact, I think I have that album, but I have so many of Keith's albums that I get them mixed up from track to track. I'm pretty sure that must be Charlie Haden on bass, Paul Motian on drums.

I like the tune and I really like the way the chords flow. All of Keith's tunes seem to be searching for something, then they get there, and they go off into a really nice groove, and then they just solo on that. A lot of them are that way, and I really like that. And, of course, Keith's melodies are really nice. I would give it four and a half stars.

2. WOODY HERMAN. *A Child Is Born* (from *Giant Steps*, Fantasy). Thad Jones, composer; Alan Broadbent, arranger; Herman, clarinet; Gregory Herbert, tenor sax.

I like that. That was nice. That is *A Child Is Born* by Thad Jones. I think it was the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis big band. Some of the voicings sounded like Thad and some of them didn't. It's hard to tell. I liked the arrangement, whoever it was. I couldn't tell you who the clarinetist was and I couldn't say who the saxophone solo was. I thought the saxophone solo was really nice—not hurried, paced really well. If I had to rate it I would have to rate the tune and then rate the arrangement. I love the tune and would definitely give it four stars and I think I'd give that arrangement maybe three and a half.

3. MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA. *The Way Of The Pilgrim* (from *Inner Worlds*, Columbia). John McLaughlin, guitar and guitar synthesizer; Narada Michael Walden, drums, composer; Stu Goldberg, piano and mini-moog.

Hmmm, I haven't heard that one before. But the first thing I really liked was the sound of the album.

The instruments were recorded really well, especially the synthesizer, and I liked whoever that was. . . . I don't know who that was. Maybe Jan Hammer, although I really don't think so. But the synthesizer solo was very good, and the electric piano in all the ensemble spots was really nice. The guitar player I couldn't say. Maybe Jeff Beck, but I'm not sure. The main thing, this tune had a very nice feel. The drummer was very good; he didn't play too much, but he provided the strength that was needed for the tune. I'd give it three and a half stars. Who was it?

Feather: Mahavishnu.

Rushen: That was Mahavishnu? Wow! It was really very relaxed for him, you know. I'm more used to him playing a lot more, but that sounds good!

4. BUD POWELL. *Keepin' In The Groove* (from *The Amazing Bud Powell*, Blue Note). Powell, piano, composer; Paul Chambers, bass; Art Taylor, drums.

I don't know who that was, but it was nice. I really didn't like the head of the tune that much, but the solo was good. I liked what was happening harmonically, plus, whoever it was. . . . the record sounded like it was kind of old, but he was really an experimentalist in terms of his harmonic concepts and linear concept, because the tune was a blues, right? So he was taking it sort of out for that time period. I loved the arco bass solo; I don't get to hear that very much, and that was a really well done solo. But I couldn't begin to tell you who that was.

Feather: Can you tell me what school you think it was?

Rushen: Sort of Bud Powell school a little bit, and the bass solo was. . . . I'm trying to think of who that might be reminiscent of. I don't know. I give it three.

5. DUKE ELLINGTON. *Sugar Rum Cherry* (*Dance Of The Sugar-Plum Fairy*) (from *The*

Nutcracker Suite, Columbia). Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, arrangers; Harry Carney, baritone sax.

Well, that was from the *Nutcracker Suite*—*Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy* by Tchaikovsky—it was an arrangement of that. That was a bari sax solo, so I would think it was Gerry Mulligan just right off the top of my head. It sounded really smooth, and when I think of him, that's the sound I hear in my head. I liked the solos. The tone was very, very mellow.

I think I'd give it two and a half stars. I wasn't knocked out over the arrangement. To do an arrangement of something like that, which is already kind of harmonically rich, and not really do that much with what's there, is kind of what happens sometimes when an arrangement isn't really supercreative; not that it always has to be. I just didn't get that much out of it.

6. GIL EVANS. *King Porter Stomp* (from *There Comes A Time*, RCA). Jelly Roll Morton, composer; Evans, arranger; Dave Sanborn, alto sax; Ryo Kawasaki, guitar.

That's hard. I have no idea. I didn't like the guitar solo too much. The alto solo was pretty good, but I don't know who it was. I've heard the tune before but I don't know the name, and I don't think it was this recording that I heard. You really got me on that one.

If I had to rate that, I don't know how I would rate it. The arrangement was O.K. I think it was really adequate for the type of tune that it was; it was really jumpy, bright. The people playing were really swinging and it sounded good. I didn't like the sound quality. . . . I don't know how old the record is, but the sound is not too good—like the rhythm section was way in the background. I guess I would give it three stars. It was really strong and very spirited.

7. AL DIMEOLA. *Short Tales Of The Black Forest* from *Land Of The Midnight Sun*, Columbia) DiMeola, acoustic guitar; Chick Corea, acoustic piano, composer.

That was very nice and very well performed. The piano player sounded like Chick—certain lines that he played, and the guitar player is super-fast. Wow, what technique! It didn't sound like John McLaughlin, though, so my second guess would be somebody else who can play really fast: Al Di Meola. I liked the subtleties in the tune. I've heard a few more tunes that were done sort of in that style where a lot of parts were very small ensemble and other parts were ensemble sections. That was very well performed, clean, and very musical. It was a good recording too. I would give that four and a half.

8. GEORGE DUKE. *Sister Serene* (from *I Love The Blues—She Heard My Cry*, MPS/BASF). Duke, keyboards; Byron Miller, bass; Ndugu, drums, composer.

That was George Duke. It sounded like Byron Miller on bass and Ndugu on drums. I knew this tune because—I don't remember what they were going to call this tune—but I played on the demo of this tune for George to hear, so that's why I was laughing, because it's been such a long time since I heard it.

I like George. I like the way he uses synthesizers, the different sounds that he gets out of them. It's a nice tune, too; there's a lot of space in it. They record in a very different kind of way, so every time I hear one of George's records I'm amazed at how well it comes out. Sometimes it's just he and Ndugu and they do tracking, and then everybody else comes in. So when it comes out I'm amazed, since I haven't heard everything. I think I would give it three and a half stars, mostly on the merit of the players as individuals.

Feather: What would you have given five stars to?

Rushen: I don't know. I save five stars for things that really just wipe me out all the way around. Just offhand, maybe Miles Davis' *My Funny Valentine* album. That deserves five stars. Keith's *Facing You* solo album. That's a five star album. db

Profile

HELEN MERRILL by herb nolan

There's a fundamental law of survival in the American music business that says if you don't keep your name and music before the public, they forget—very quickly.

Helen Merrill knows how that law works. She is a jazz singer who came up working and recording in the company of people like Bud Powell, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, John Lewis, Quincy Jones, Earl Hines, George Russell, Oscar Pettiford, Gil Evans, Charlie Mingus, and Charlie Parker. Extremely popular in Europe and a big star in Japan, where she lived for close to a decade, Ms. Merrill returned to the United States three years ago to face the fact that she was virtually unknown except among other musicians and a few dedicated fans. Her name had drifted into that dusty file marked "legends" that record producers sometimes look at while searching for reissue material.

Although she has performed a few times here since her return, her music career has generally been as active as a Pet Rock—now she hopes things will change.

"Coming from Japan, where everybody knows who I am, it's a little rough on the ego to come

"The few times I did work here, I was very fortunate to have musicians who had respect for what I did and rehearsed beyond the call of duty."

Over the years, Helen Merrill has always had the respect of her musical peers, going back to the start of her career in New York City, at age 16, working a club on the same bill with Bud Powell and Miles Davis. Being a New Yorker, she assumed these were normal, average musicians. "I didn't realize the privilege of being brought up in that school. Once I got on the road, I really appreciated it, and I certainly appreciate it now."

She remembers having a chance to work with Charlie Parker on several occasions: "Of course I was young, but he was always very sweet and gentle; he had an empathy with people who were struggling to say something and was always very, very encouraging. A lot of peculiar things have been written about him, but I think if you were to ask Miles or people who really knew him about that side of his personality, you'd find that Bird was a very sweet person.

"I had a unique style when I started—of course now people are stretching out and doing all kinds of things—but then there was really no commercial avenues for me." Helen Merrill's early ideas about singing came from home. Her mother, a woman with a beautiful voice, would sing to get rid of emotional energy. "Emotionally, I got the idea that



HERB NOLAN

back and hear Helen who? And begging for a job is not my style." She sat in the study of the large Chicago apartment she shares with her journalist husband, an executive with United Press International. Pictures, images representing pieces of her history as a performer, covered part of one wall. Flora Purim's *Stories to Tell* lay on top of the piano.

"Sure, I felt a need to do something immediately when I came back, but to do something just to do something makes me very unhappy; and to go on the road and rehearse with new musicians all the time—oh, no, no. You can't work that way constantly and do the things you want; instead, you have to do the safe things, things you know will work. You find yourself sticking to solid songs that everybody knows that won't take too much rehearsing. But that doesn't represent me as an artist.

"A singer has special problems: you have to sing new songs, you have to sing material with some sort of intellectual interpretation, and that takes rehearsal and a lot of time. It's not like a musician who can learn *I Got Rhythm*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, and the blues and take his horn to the gig.

one could sing with whatever was inside from her. She was Yugoslavian and correct harmonies were very much a part of our culture. Harmony was always very important to me."

The radio was another factor; there was only one in the house and since Helen's sister was older, she got to listen to it, the jazz stations specifically, and consequently Helen Merrill was exposed to the music of the day—the big bands, Billie Holiday. "I think Billie had an influence on almost everybody who heard her. What I got from Billie Holiday was the courage to just be myself.

Like many people, I was terribly, terribly shy so it was difficult for me to be aggressive in a commercial sense. Musicians were the people who always helped me throughout my career. I've never been helped by a manager or a booking office, it has always been musicians. I was just like a musician they'd call; I'd work with them and complain about how horrible the music world was and how nobody knew what they were doing except us."

In those days, music was in a period some have labeled the "cool school." Most musicians spent their time practicing chord changes and checking out Stravinsky and Bartok. Nobody was making

money, but musically it was an interesting time.

"I've always been encouraged and protected by jazz musicians because I was one of them," Ms. Merrill said as she talked about her first recording contract. Benny Goodman's interest in her talent, which stemmed from her stint with Earl Hines, led to that early covenant with the Emarcay record business. At Goodman's urging, Emarcay producer Bob Shad signed the new singer to a contract. "A lousy contract," Helen Merrill said in a voice like someone who'd just discovered mold on a piece of American cheese. But she admits candidly that, in those days, she signed all the wrong contracts. Thinking in non-commercial terms was fashionable. "With what we were doing, we didn't think about making money. We hoped for it, but mostly our payment came from peer acceptance."

Helen's first album for Mercury, cut in December 1954 and still available as a reissue on Trip, featured Clifford Brown and was arranged by a young unknown named Quincy Jones. For years, everywhere she went in Europe and Japan, Ms. Merrill found that album selling.

"A point I want to make," said Helen Merrill, "is that I never chose the people I worked with when they were famous. I was attracted to these people because of their abilities. I've always been interested in talented people because you can relax with very creative musicians. If someone is gifted, they are usually very sensitive to what other people are doing."

Another arranger she worked with was Gil Evans. After doing a record with him, she recalls telling Miles Davis (they were on tour together), "I just finished this album with Gil Evans and, boy, you've got to use him." Miles said, "Well, yeah, I forgot about Gil; I think I'll give him a call." That's all he said, and the rest is jazz history.

In 1959, Helen Merrill left the United States for the first time and went to Europe. Initially she'd gone to work on the BBC but decided to stay abroad and look around. "I don't want to paint a beautiful picture of Europe, because unless you have a name it's very difficult. European musicians don't like other people competing for their bread. But it was the first time, except among my peers, that I was treated with a great amount of respect—I loved it, I adored it. Over there, I found another dimension of respect for an artist and the respect of jazz as a music.

"I don't want to sound negative, because these aren't bad days for jazz. These are good days; with kids growing up in this country now learning about jazz and the complexities of the music, I think we're going to have a whole new generation interested in jazz the way people are in Japan and Europe. . . . But still it always breaks my heart to come back here and find it's still a struggle. I'm afraid of the United States," Helen added quietly, "because I remember when I first started how hurtful it was for me to try to be me."

On a tour of Japan, Helen Merrill met her current husband—then Tokyo bureau chief for UPI—and she stayed. In Japan, she says, she did some of her best and most creative work. She performed extensively and recorded with, among others, Teddy Wilson and bassist Gary Peacock, who was studying Buddhism. Perhaps the most unusual thing she did in Japan was to record and perform native Japanese folk music accompanied only by the *shakuhachi*, an eight-holed bamboo flute. The Japanese were a little concerned at first about the updating of traditional music, but the work finally became quite popular and even helped revive interest in the national folk art.

Since her return to the U.S. three years ago, Ms. Merrill received good notices at New York's Michael's Pub, played at the Matador in San Francisco, and appeared in the last Monterey Jazz Festival at the urging of John Lewis.

Monterey was something of a disaster. "Just before I went on, there was a pause to change the backdrop and everybody thought it was halftime," she recalled. "When I was introduced, the audience was on its feet, going for hotdogs. I thought I'd have a heart attack when I walked on stage and saw everybody on their feet, looking the other way. But perhaps about 200 out of 8,000 people there had ever heard of me—another matter of

Helen who?"

Ms. Merrill hopes to correct the "Helen who?" reflex. She has recently been huddling with agent Jack Whittemore, who's setting up some bookings. An appearance at the Smithsonian Institution and a fall tour of Japan is in the works. All in all, the times seem right for a jazz singer like Helen Merrill. "I really know that my turn is next; I have to have the strong will to do it. I don't know what else to do but music—I haven't done anything else.

"I found out something about myself. If you don't do what nature intended, some terrible explosions start gathering inside your body and you have to get it out. . . . I know this is the time for peeking at all the jazz people, and I know I'm next to be peeked at." She laughed a nervous laugh.

JOE ROCCISANO

by lee underwood

Without becoming a Los Angeles studio musician or maintaining a steady club gig, reed player/composer/band leader Joe Roccisano has managed to survive and make a comfortable living, to maintain his sanity and clarity, and to consistently evolve and develop his own musical concept, which has attained its fullest flowering to date in his new, 15-piece group, Rocbop.

"In all of the stages I've passed through in putting Rocbop together," he said, "I never felt I had found the combination I wanted. I now feel I've definitely found that base from which I want to project all of my present and future music."

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts on October 15, 1939, the alto saxophonist emerged from an old world Italian background. "Music was always around," he said, "particularly during holidays when families got together and played and sang, using the instruments of the culture: accordions, guitars, violins, mandolins. That was my earliest influence, being exposed to the highly emotional, uninhibited, joyful pleasure of people singing and dancing and having a hell of a time."

Joey began playing mandolin at eight, clarinet at 13. He privately studied reeds with the late Al Stroman and then with Harry Huffnagle, "who was a great writer and arranger. I took six to eight months of lessons from him, and I've always felt that what he gave me was essentially all I have ever needed.

"Beyond those basics, I think that writing is imagination, pure imagination. You can do anything you want to do. All you have to do is hear it in your head and write it. There are no rules. You just have to do it.

"You should know scales and the structures and textures of chords and how to build them, and you should also know the ranges and limitations of the various instruments. Those are fundamentals, which shouldn't take too long to learn, because they are not all that involved.

"What does entail a lifelong process is constantly developing your own imagination, stretching your own limits of creative powers, trying to find out what else is there. This is what I try to do when I'm writing for my band."

After attending college in Potsdam, New York, Roccisano went on the road with the Tommy Dorsey band (led by the late Sam Donahue); he traveled all over the world, finally settling in Los Angeles in 1966.

Once here, he played all of the reeds in numerous L.A. bands, including Don Ellis, Louis Bellson, Terry Gibbs, Don Menza, Bill Holman, Ed Shaughnessy, Howlett Smith, and one of his early idols, the incomparable Ray Charles.

Roccisano learned an immense amount from Charles, because "he uses his voice as a natural instrument. The inflections, the innuendoes, the phrasing, the breath control, the changes of tone, the emotional ranges he can put forth—if you can apply that to your own playing as an instrumentalist, you have something."

Joe prefers to dwell less on his past achievements as an accomplished reed player than on his

present endeavors as a composer and bandleader.

"My primary motivation," he said, as we talked in his small, comfortable North Hollywood home, "is not immediate fame or financial reward, but trying to create something, and wanting to, and believing in it, and enjoying it, and loving it. I love the challenge of getting to know who and what I am through the act of creation, getting to know what my potential is as an artist in my chosen field: the creation of music.

"I would, of course, like to record my band, sooner or later. That would enable me to reach a greater audience.

"There is a great deal of love involved in creating something I believe in. I don't think anyone is so selfish that they can create something only to turn around and say, 'I don't give a damn if anyone other than me ever experiences this.' There's a love there that you want to share with people, something that they can listen to and get a great deal of pleasure from, something that will evoke positive feelings in them or make them forget some of the negative aspects of their lives during that time they might be engrossed with what is coming across in sound."



Joey loves the personal freedom of sitting down with an empty score pad and saying, "Hey, I can make anything I want happen here."

He is also well aware that the same freedom can be terribly inhibiting. "But you don't have to use all of that freedom all at once, and that's the point.

"You don't throw everything you can possibly think of into one composition. You come up with the basic motif or concept, and then you say, 'What can I use to complement and expand this idea to bring it to maturity?'

"I think some Greek said, 'There is no freedom without law.' And Stravinsky said something like, 'The hardest part about composing is trying to decide what not to do.' The whole idea is to create an intelligent, swinging composition that includes improvisational freedom."

As a reedman, Joe makes a comfortable living, which "keeps my head clear to create. It frees me up and gives me time. I'm not always worrying about where the next dollar is coming from."

Although he does a certain amount of studio work, he carefully avoids the session syndrome. "Without a put-down to those friends of mine who are studio musicians, I am happy that I am not, because it seems like the only reward is monetary.

"It seems like many busy studio musicians were once what we might call 'sensitive artists.' Many of them were highly creative people who found themselves involved in the studio thing everyday. Now they seem a little bit frustrated.

"Many times they fall into certain traps. They started making a great deal of money. When you



"Bloody Comfortable..."

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do that, you start spending a great deal of money. So you don't really have a lot more than you had before. Obviously, you have a bigger home and a pool, but then something strange happens.

"If things slow down, there's this big emotional pressure of: Where is The Money Going To Come From? They then have to do things they don't really want to do.

"It's all relative. I mean, the guys who are making \$50,000 a year are probably more worried about how much they're going to make next week than I am.

"There is no way I could have maintained this kind of creative effort I'm doing with Rocbob if I had gotten caught up in the mainstream of work in this town."

Like Detroit, Hollywood is an industry town. The "product" here, however, is music. While there are unlimited opportunities for those who make music-to-order, there are few clubs or jam sessions for the serious, personal artist. "There is no underground that I know of comparable to New York," said Roccisano, "where there's always this big creative thing going on, a subculture interested only in art for art's sake.

"I love playing, but I'm really trying to develop as a writer. In a sense, writing seems to come easier. In the act of creating it, you can do it alone. You don't have to be dependent on getting the right players to play it before you write it, etc.

"I write from what I would have to call an honest viewpoint, an honest feeling. I always approach the style, the concept, the sound, and the mood from the standpoint of what I want to hear, not from any of the other considerations, such as, 'This will knock this or that audience out,' or, 'This will sell a million.'

"Whenever I write down those notes, those melodies, those harmonies, and everything goes together, I look at it simply as a creation that is me at that particular moment. This is what I hear and feel *then*. That's the only thing you can do.

"There are pieces I've written that I won't play now; but at the time I wrote them, I felt completely at home with them. They were just innocently and unabashedly there as a creation of something I felt at that time. The reason I won't play them now is because they do not enhance the musical direction which I now want to pursue. They no longer have a place in my vocabulary."

Every artist confronts what is perhaps the greatest single obstacle of all: self-discipline. As a novice, Joey had that interest, energy, and straightforwardness of mind; he would play until his hands ached and his lips bled. He then reached "a certain level of ability, and sort of coasted.

"Then, considering the time that had been available to me, I felt I had not applied myself nearly to the extent that I could have toward discovering my own potential and developing it. I felt a great deal

of guilt about this. I'm sure we all do. As evening came, I would say, 'What did I do today?'

"I'm not saying that I now jump out of bed and leap on the piano and compose. I still have problems, but I feel I'm really overcoming them. And I know that nothing is accomplished without a great deal of effort."

Joe recently fasted for three weeks, eating nothing but carrot juice and vegetable broth. "Beyond the obvious reasons of cleansing my system, it was also a contest with myself to see if I *did* have the discipline, this energy, this ability that I once had.

"Some other people can be creative dynamos while living the most dissipated lives in the world. For me, however, the better I feel internally, physically, mentally, and spiritually, the more energy I get going and more thoughts start happening.

"I get into that creative area where I just do it, because something is making me do it, and I want to do it. It's not a chore, not a discipline, not something I'm struggling with all the time. It's something that begins to become more and more natural. I want to do it, and that's the difference.

"I never force anything. I don't believe in a bolt of lightning coming out of the sky and hitting me with a ray of inspiration so that I rush over to the piano and score something, crying, 'This is it! I've never had one of those moments.

"But there are things that happen. I think the creative process is a constant process.

"For example, I've thought of certain moods, or I've created things in my mind when I go to bed at night, just before I fall off to sleep. I might think of melodies or a motif or an idea or a concept or a composition. And it might stay with me for a long time. The brain is sorting things out, putting them into perspective. Finally, the music comes to the surface, and I'm ready to write it down virtually from beginning to end. That happens to me a lot. That's only one way. I'm sure it happens other ways, too."

While there are a great many horn players today whom he respects for their musicianship and virtuosity, Roccisano does not feel that "there are any new giants on the horizon.

"I hear fantastic musicianship, but it is nevertheless basically a retreat of what has already happened. I don't know of any artist, like Charlie Parker, for example, who is taking everything that went before, synthesizing it, and emerging with new concepts that will turn everybody around. I'm not saying that a person or people like that don't exist. I just haven't heard them."

With his fiery new group, Rocbob, Joe Roccisano blends all of his past influences with his own personal view of the present. The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic sophistication of bop fuses with the urgent, sometimes highly electronic immediacy of contemporary jazz-rock.

caught Winter in the Hinterlands . . . Sancious: a Tonal Abyss . . .

THE WINTER CONSORT

The Bluebird, Bloomington, Indiana

Personnel: Paul Winter, soprano and alto sax, percussion; David Darling, acoustic and electric cello, percussion; Robert Chappell, harpsichord, organ, harmonium, synthesizer, acoustic guitar, percussion; Tigger Benford, tabla tarang, traps, percussion; Ben Carriel, tympani, surdos, bass marimba, percussion.

The Bloomington concert of The Winter Consort answered the musical question: what-ever happened to Paul Winter? After Oregon (Paul McCandless, Glen Moore, Ralph Towner, Collin Walcott) separated itself, they recorded several LPs, but Paul Winter didn't, and people wondered if The Winter Consort was indeed together. It is.

"A lot of people thought that we dis-

banded," Winter said. "We've continued to play more concerts through the years, but we're always out in the hinterlands at colleges." The Consort gets to these concerts with a 40-foot truck, loaded with seeming hundreds of instruments. It ain't easy.

Everything didn't fit in The Bluebird: all the exotic and other instruments were cramped onto the dance floor; the sound equipment and more instruments had to be located on the stage far away; the players contorted over-under-around-and-through things. "We've gotten used to things being hard," Winter said, "because it's never been otherwise. But there's as much opportunity to play as we want, and we want to avail ourselves of it. There are beautiful audiences out there."

The people at The Bluebird didn't see everything through the obstacle course of in-

struments, but they listened. Some didn't know what to expect. Oregon played The Bluebird twice and were very popular. (The Bluebird is usually a bastion of boogie, but Oregon—and Charles Mingus and Dizzy Gillespie, among others—played to beautiful audiences indeed.) Some expected The Winter Consort as it was with the players of Oregon, which it is and it isn't. "We're two nucleuses from one embryo," Winter said.

They play Bach and Bartok, folk and free pieces. It's not jazz exactly, nor classical, nor categorizable at all. But it's a consort as much as ever, a communion of people—the players and the people listening. Winter didn't get mere replacement musicians for Ralph Towner *et al.*, but new and just-as-individualistic musicians: Ben Carriel, Tigger Benford, Robert Chappell, all percussionists, with Chappell also on multiple keyboards. David Darling, on the cello, remains from the previous ensemble. "It's the people that count, no matter what they play," Winter said. "Rather than five or six virtuosi, we have general practitioners who each have an environment of instruments to explore themselves."

They explore themselves through intimate-yet-powerful pieces. *Icarus* is their hit, the soaring sound-poem Ralph Towner composed. With a variation on a Bartok variation on a peasant dance, they free themselves: Carriel thundering around a battery of tympani and *surdos*, field drums of Brazil; Darling playing in duet with himself, from baroque to honky-tonk through an echoplex. Chappell and Benford then do what they will, evolving together from simpler sounds of bells and tablas into a frenzy of rhythms on the *amin-dinda*, a log xylophone from Uganda. They sing. And throughout it all, Winter is a presence, whether playing or simply being there.

The concert was a benefit for Greenpeace, people in Vancouver (and now in Bloomington and elsewhere) protesting dangers to the earth, recently the slaughter of the whales. "The whale is the symbol of all life on earth," Winter said, and they played a piece, *Ocean Dream*, with the song of the whales re-created, as a film was shown of Winter and others of Greenpeace, out at sea, playing music to the whales—and the whales listened. What seemed just erratic home movies became literally dreamlike in the music. The audience was involved, not just in sympathy with the cause, but with the profound feelings of the players for the music and for the earth. Even die-hard cynics, like me.

Pete Seeger was a guru to Winter and said: "If you can't get the audience to participate, you're not doing what you're supposed to do." Winter is trying to get the audience to "lose your minds and come to your senses"—often through artificial means like playing in the dark, but more so through the very presence of the music. Some of the concert is show; some of the more fantastic improvisations were not all that spontaneous. But all of it was an offering of great sincerity.

Sincerity is sometimes embarrassing, especially if it's for a concern you're not moved by. Winter moves the people. In a piece inspired by and dedicated to all endangered animals, Winter got into people's heads and hearts. As they re-created animal sounds, Winter said: "It's our thought that if we can listen to the voices of these beings, and really hear their being, we can learn something about the oneness of which we are all a part. The title is from Thoreau: In wildness is the

preservation of the world."

And as they all began to howl, Winter said: "Of all the voices of the earth, the song of the wolf is most symbolic, for it's been close to us and most misunderstood. The wolf howls not in threat, but in celebration of their existence—much as we sing hymns—of the joy of being alive. And we invite you to chant for the whole earth, sharing the joy." Some people were into it, but others started to laugh, embarrassed; it was an awkward moment. Then Winter said: "When was the last time you had a good howl?!", and the people were at once ecstatic, howling, shouting, laughing with joy—and they knew what it was all about.

The Winter Consort plays on. They've recorded for the first time in years. "I've been working on it for three years," Winter said.

"The title of it is *Unpawaug*. It's about the human condition." Winter once asked Pete Seeger what was needed to do all the things The Winter Consort is trying to do, and Seeger answered "a considerable amount of genius and a lifetime of work"—both of which Paul Winter manifests with music, in consort with the whole earth. —*michael bourne*

DAVID SANCIOUS AND TONE

The Other End, New York City

Personnel: Sancious, keyboards, guitar; Gerald Carboy, bass guitar; Ernest Carter, drums.

After casual hearings of his two albums, I linked 22-year-old David Sancious' music

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with the more progressive jazz-rock fusions, pretty much without a second thought. I guess I was subliminally influenced by the company—Stanley Clarke, Lenny White—Sancious has kept as a sideman, and maybe also by the fact that Billy Cobham produced his first LP. But after I heard him during this engagement, closer and more reasoned scrutiny was unavoidable, and I changed my mind about the Sancious style.

Sancious composes attractive, classically rooted melodic fragments; like Keith Emerson, he understands (for what it's worth) how the visceral elements in both rock and Baroque or Romantic music can work together. Problems arise when he tries to do more. Like Chick Corea, Sancious often sees an extended composition, with mini-"movements", as a vehicle for creating and sustaining overt drama. Unlike Corea, he fails to infuse such writing with variations in color and a smooth, subtle flow of contrasting textures. Further, he is a detriment to his own music's improvisational content, carrying the bulk of the solo responsibility and performing unimaginatively.

A prime example was the set opener, *The Forest Of Feelings*, also the title piece from his first album. Clobbering the audience with its Emersonian, stentorian head, Sancious followed with a couple of energetic, uninventive keyboard solos, first acoustic piano, then synthesizer. *Forest* remained in a harmonic prison set by the opening theme; and only an interlude of lyrical acoustic piano chords over synthesized strings provided a release that was pleasant, if obvious.

Such monotonous predictability leaves no room for the "sound of surprise" in Sancious' music, and it doesn't seem to me that such a vital sense should be endemic only to "pure" jazz. Even if one was to disregard the limitations of his solo work, everything else was so rigorously pre-programmed and mechanical that I had to view Carboy's dopey quote of *Rule Britannia* during a brief bass solo as a real *tour de force*.

Sancious was even reluctant to think on his feet during the set's two relatively unstructured pieces. He introduced *Sky Church Hymn #9* as "the real thing", in reference to his opening slide work. The tune then moved from a slow blues to a Hendrix-influenced rave-up; but Sancious, on electric guitar, concentrated on reproducing his recorded solo, despite blues/rock changes (rife with implications for further expansion.) Backing out of the piece, he even quashed what could have been a funky little excursion into *Shortnin' Bread*, having already introduced the quote as a joke.

Sancious also offered a solo piano improvisation, a mishmash of echoes: a little Jarrett, a lot of Corea, and a whole lot of the noodling that pop singer-songwriters keep themselves company with these days. The vital connection between unfettered spirit/imagination and keyboard technique, necessary for good solo piano, was depressingly absent.

In fairness, it must be added that when all three members of Tone are playing together, their collective enjoyment radiates. And it's easy for an audience that's a little loose to get off an energetic, yet hopelessly repetitive music. But neither of these observations, of course, have anything to do with the creation of anything worth remembering.

To give this young man the benefit of the doubt, one has to assume his best years are

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probably ahead of him. But it is still remarkable that such an unformed artist already has two solo albums to his credit. That may say more about the state of popular music in 1976, than it does about David Sancious.

—michael rozek

—1776-1976— IT HAPPENED

Prelude: 1775—Joel Barlow opines, "one good song is worth a dozen . . . proclamations." Joe Warren, lyricist of the most powerful revolutionary war song, *Free America*, dies in the battle of Bunker Hill.

1776—T. Jefferson collaborating with J. Adams, B. Franklin, R. Sherman, and R. R. Livingston pens the mightiest lyrics of all, *The D. of Independence*.

1776—William Billings, America's first popular songwriter, publishes *The Singing Master's Assistant*. Nowadays that collection of songs would probably be titled, *Billings' Greatest Hits*.

1798—Robert Treat Paine writes the first presidential campaign lyrics, *Adams and Liberty*.

1831—Samuel Francis Smith, a man of the cloth, pens the words to *America* to the tune of the English national anthem.

1842-1861—Stephan J. Meany, Thomas E. Williams, Thomas A. Beckett, Davis T. Shaw, and Thomas D. Sullivan all claimed to be the writers of *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean*.

1866—T. Kennick and G. Bicknell pen the first sexy song in an American musical show, *You Naughty, Naughty Man*.

1891—Henry J. Sayers pens the first successful nonsense lyric, *Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-E*.

1910—Rida Johnson Young pens the smash philosophical lyrics, *Ah Sweet Mystery of Life* (the mystery turns out to be love).

1918—George and Ira Gershwin begin their successful brother team of composer and lyricist in the stage show, *Ladies First*.

1919—Recordings become song pluggers with the Victor recording of George Stoddard's, *Mary*. It sold over a quarter-million records before it was either published or heard in live performance.

1931—Congress officially approves Francis Scott Key's *The Star Spangled Banner* as our national anthem. (It only took them 117 years after the song was written.)

1935—Radio becomes a song plugger with its weekly *Hit Parade* program, an expose of the top ten tunes.

1960—Alan Freed, rock 'n roll platter master for New York's WABC and L.A.'s KDAY, plugged a bit too hard and was arrested as part of a payola investigation that finally put a federal statute on the books against the receiving of goods for the play of songs and records.

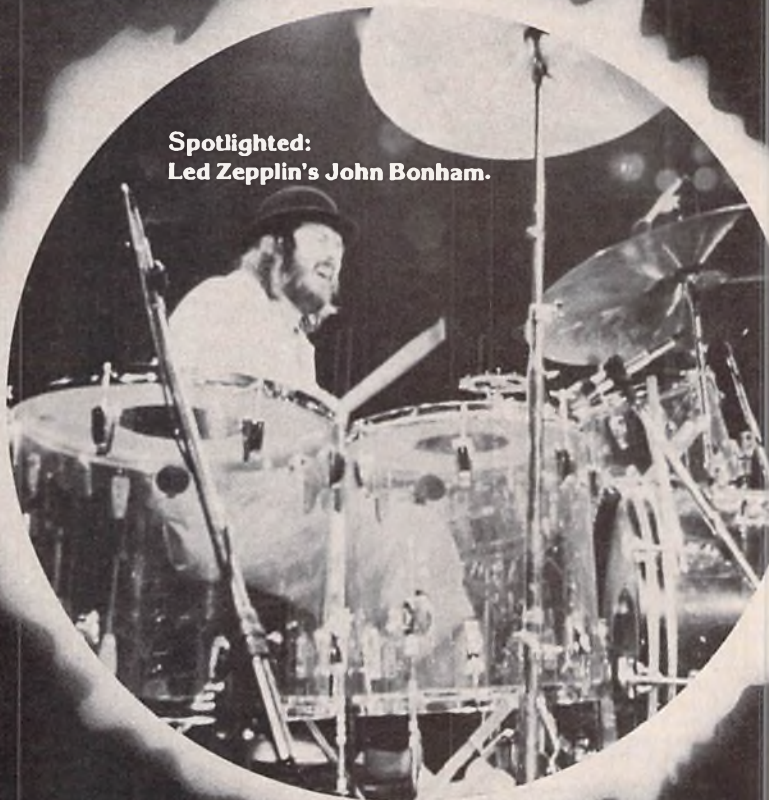
1964—Folk poet Bob Dylan plugs an electric guitar into his amp, forgets how to protest, and wails out the cryptic, verbally dense *Subterranean Homesick Blues*. Popular song lyrics were changed forever.

1968—Darwin K. Wolford, Ph.D., of Rexburg, Idaho, accuses rock lyricists of attempting to foment another revolution in his two-bit pamphlet, *Four Messages of Rock*.

1976—Nobody has yet found out who really wrote *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean*.

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HOW TO hear the words

by Dr. William L. Fowler

In the early days of records and radios, carbon mikes conspired with curved megaphone speakers to distort all but the smoothest sounds. Perhaps panicking over possible pay-loss, a lot of lesser lyricists seemed to seek salvation through acoustic goo. They loaded their poesy with such sine-wave syllables as June, moon, spoon and tune. Soon crooners turned teeners into swooners. But while *oon* may have been a word-smith's boon, it also tended to restrict subject matter to frothy romantic stuff (unless some lyricist could figure out just what's the message in goon and loon—or raccoon and spittoon). Yet no rhyme, however expedient, should suffice as sole reason for lyric content. So was the June-moon syndrome soon doomed? No, not in the hands of the competent who, perhaps attuned to amp improvement, often sought the strident as apposition to the smooth for vivid word-imagery:

"They asked me how I knew My true love was true.
I of course replied, Something here inside
Cannot be denied. . . .
Now laughing friends deride Tears I cannot hide.
Smoke gets in your eyes."

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(Otto Harbach, 1933)

Yet even in 1948, the year Columbia created the LP, the year of distortion's death-rattle, the opening of an era where a crackling consonant could come out clean, Nick Kenny could still feel confident in responding to an amateur clamor for guidance in the get-rich-via-song route through his innocent *How to Write and Sell Popular Songs*:

"Write your lyrics in such a way that they can be sung by either sex and still retain the original meaning." (Helen Reddy ought to dig that!)

"From a purely commercial viewpoint, avoid anything controversial, political, or religious. Songs are bought by people for enjoyment, not to move them to anger or hatred." (There go *We Shall Overcome, Brother Can You Spare a Dime?, I Gotta Right To Sing the Blues, and God Bless America.*)

"Keep your lyrics clean. Suggestive songs are barred from the air and movies, and without those two sources of exploitation you don't have much chance to sell song copies." (*Love for Sale? Harper Valley PTA? Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover? My Heart Belongs to Daddy?*)

"On the repeat of a musical phrase, or repeat of a chorus, use the same amount of syllables as you did the first time." (Like *Alfie? Like Maria? Like Evil Ways?*)

"For rhythm songs, consonants are preferred as they give a firmness and rhythm to the melodic line. However, avoid words with too many consonants on one syllable, such as 'crisp' (which requires a different action of throat, mouth, tongue and teeth for each letter) or as example the word, 'mixed.'" (Maybe that's how we handled, "Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey. A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?")

In Columbia's and Kenny's year of '48, none seemed to note any change in America's air. And on into the '50's, pop song lyrics still stayed unresponsive to stirrings that America already had problems far more perplexing than who loves whom and how and why.

But '60 came quickly. Andrew Fletcher's maxim, "Let me make the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws," began to upset the establishment. Youth defied convention as its irate writers made fair game of mores, using taboo subjects, taboo words. The language of lyrics loosened toward totally explicit expression. And now, finally, the field of words ranges wide.

But amidst all the social seriousness (*Brain Police*—Zappa), searching subjectivity (*At Seventeen*—Ian), love description ("The moon is in the ocean and the stars are in the sky. And all that I can see is my sweet Maria's eyes."—Taylor), and sophomore sentimentality ("Big girls, they don't cry-yi-yi. . . ."—Valli), I, for one, have kept my ear perked for the funny ("Up in Harlem at a table for two there were four of us. Me, your big feet, and you."—Waller) and the earthy (" . . . You supply the satisfy and I'll supply the need."—Taylor).

Future lyricists can gain new subject matter, plenty of it, by reflecting on the attitudes, reacting to the events, and responding to the problems of America's third century, all while still pleasing their future audience.

"Now where are those advices concerning word-devices?
What about *alliteration*? What of *connotation*?
What of *onomatopoeia*? (It could be a good idea)
Where herin is shown the reason and the rule for rhyme?"

"Reader, check these pages one more time.
They're not like Keats or Shakespeare—not sublime.
And yet, by God, at least they're mostly mine!
But yours must deal
With what the future will reveal. . . ."



MILES TAKES FOUR

transcribed and annotated by David Wild

Miles recorded this solo on March 10, 1954 (it was recently reissued by Prestige) with pianist Horace Silver, bassist Percy Heath, and drummer Art Blakey. Those interested in the evolution of Miles' playing might want to compare this with his other versions of *Four* recorded in 1956 (also Prestige), 1958 (Chakra, a non-commercial label) and 1964 (Columbia).
Points of interest:

1. Use of theme fragments to add coherence: the major ninth which appears at measures 7,

- 23, 39 and 55; or the figure at 12, 16, 28 and 48, for example.
- Melodic ideas developed through extension and embellishment (35-39) as contrasts with more common chorus phrases (44-47).
 - The opening break balances the tension of an off-beat quarter note with the release of the following four-note pickup.
 - The final long phrase (61-65) builds to a strong climax with a rhythmically altered echo of the theme.
 - Ending on the weaker (less-final) "g", effectively sets up Horace Silver's entrance.

M. DAVIS Solo: "FOUR" (March 10, 1954)

TRANSPosed KEY

WILLIAMS

continued from page 12

have never even recorded and I like to believe that that's what they come out to hear as well as the records. I do things that I believe in, that I like, either harmonically, or a particular arrangement. There's more to this business than making a living. A musician gets bored so he'll break out into a rock or disco thing. I could use all kinds of funny instruments, but it's not my bag.

Ellington said, "I didn't start the categories. It's all music to me. Either you like it, or you don't. Either it has beauty or it doesn't. Either it captures your attention or it doesn't."

It is interesting to note that of the entire John Levy "stable" of stars—Freddie Hubbard, Les McCann, Nancy Wilson,—only Joe

Williams has remained "pure." Says Joe, "Everybody else is making more money than I am!" Yet there is no resentfulness in his voice. Even Cannonball Adderley started to have that sameness of sound that characterizes a Levy personality. "Cannon had a great feeling in whatever he did. No matter what they did to his sound, it always came out Cannonball."

The *db* International Critics Poll has now bestowed its graces on Joe Williams for two successive years. He finds it difficult to accept such laudatory praises. He likes to talk about others. Ray Charles is the "President of the Soul Society," while Aretha Franklin is its queen. "Thad and Mel will stand up forever." "Ellington '65 is right now!"

Concerning his periodic reunions with Basie, Joe matter-of-factly states, "That's nostalgia, with fire." *db*

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ments. I don't think a critic has to be musically trained, but he should have an open mind and be familiar with what he is dealing with. I must say I do feel somewhat victimized by writers whose limits and interests don't go beyond rock. I got reviewed by a fellow of about 19 in Toronto, and he didn't have a clue to what I was doing. You meet very few critics who will admit that they are not qualified to write seriously on certain things. A pop writer will stay away from classical, but consider everything else within his field. I don't necessarily hold it against the critic. The fellow in Toronto, for example: it wasn't his fault that he didn't understand what I was doing. I blame the editor for assigning him to me in the first place. I think when critics spread themselves over too wide a spectrum—and this is particularly true in newspapers where one guy often has the entire entertainment beat from the Rolling Stones to Guy Lombardo—the long term effect is a general devaluation of all criticism. I appreciate a literary quality, particularly in jazz and classical writing. Irving Kolodin impresses me as being a very good jazz critic because he has style. And George Frazier, rest his soul, was a superb writer, as well as my severest critic. You know, the bad reviews that really hurt are the ones from the writers you know know what they're talking about. Frazier wrote some cruel things about me in the beginning, but they weren't dishonest.

"As for the *Maisonette* album, it's had the finest reviews I've ever seen. I can't begin to say what it's meant to me. I'm sure it helped me wind up second only to Stevie Wonder in the down beat readers poll."

But the *Maisonette* album is not entirely a happy story.

"Michael Cox produced it. He was a boyhood friend of Al Porcino and originally wanted to finance an album of Al's band at the *Maisonette* featuring me. Ultimately, he decided to make it a Torme album with Al's band, but then he turned around and sold me down the river to Atlantic. I had originally asked \$18,000 for it. He said he couldn't get more than \$9,000. I said that would be all right if Atlantic would take the other \$9,000 and put it into promotion. Cox then came back and said it was a deal. So the thing came out, and in a nation of 220 million people, they pressed 8,000 copies. Meanwhile, the musicians weren't paid; I wasn't paid for my arrangements or singing; and Cox had disappeared into bankruptcy.

"A while back, I saw Jerry Wexler. I asked him why such a small

pressing. I had thought Atlantic was glad to get it. He said it was so cheap, Atlantic couldn't turn it down. He said that they had been disrespectful to me and that he was ashamed. I asked him about the money Atlantic was supposed to put into promotion. It turned out that Cox had never made such a deal and had lied when he told me he had. Jerry said he showed the reviews around and tried to get up some interest in it. But today the company is rock oriented. There are a lot of young people up there, he said, and he couldn't get anybody interested in pushing it. So Jerry promised me the tapes. Then Atlantic called my manager and said the musicians weren't paid. I had to come up with \$5,000 to get the tapes for my own album, even though I had not yet seen one red cent from the whole project myself. Jerry has continued to promise me the tapes, regardless. Wexler is an honest man. One of the really upright, on-top folks in this business. He said to me his company did me a rotten service and he was ashamed. But I still don't have the tapes. I would have taken the thing to court, except that the record has done me such good. What I didn't get in money and volume, I got in prestige."

In fairness to Wexler, it should be mentioned that his association with Atlantic ended shortly after the Torme album came out and before it became apparent that there were problems. Therefore, his influence over the recovery of the tapes is limited. We talked to him recently and he confirmed the truth of the story as Torme related it—although he seemed a bit surprised at Mel's candor on the specific sums of money involved. All Jerry added was a comment or two on the difficulty of promoting middle-of-the-road jazz in today's market. Brilliant as it is, he said, "it's tough to get a handle on." Wexler also emphasized that the failure to attend to routine production matters such as payments to musicians has resulted in a union lien against the tapes for the necessary fees. Thus, Atlantic's \$5000 demand. "It's one of the finest albums I've ever heard," said Wexler, "But nobody's gotten a fair shake from it."

Perhaps the one bright element in the whole affair is the fact that, in a year or two, all the financial details and squabbles will probably be forgotten. What will be remembered is that, in 1975, Mel Torme made a sizzler of an LP. People will be talking about it and listening to it years from now because there is no statute of limitations on quality.

And apparently no limit to the talent that Torme continues to possess and develop in the 1970s. db

MASEKELA

continued from page 18

scholar, but I'm sure many people don't know Rhodesia was named after him because he discovered it. He was working for the Home Office or Queen Victoria to go down there. He'd go down to Africa—Stanley and Livingston were under his employ—and he'd say, look, there's gold in the Congo. You go down there and get it and build a railroad and send it here so we can send it to England. Every time I meet a Rhodes scholar I laugh.

"Africa, is, for all intents and purposes, the richest continent—culturally. But it's still basically preindustrial except for a few cities—there are 400 million people who are still leading their original type of life. Oh, I'm sure they have transistors and all that. Yeah, lots of people wail about 'the disappearing Africa'—but it's a whole lot of bullshit to me, because everybody else has advanced, the Chinese and everybody, for their own advantage. People want us to stay backward for their own pleasure—for their films, for their art collections; but when you think about us as a people of a rich continent, well, the reason why we haven't been able to keep what we've had is because we haven't always cared for what we have.

"We've always had it and thought we always will. Still, it's absurd for people to say Africa is disappearing just because Africans would like to own mansions and live in comfort."

Masekela takes a point of view, and follows it through. "Europe and the West was built from Africa, completely. If you look at it, there's more than 50 million people of Africa 44 □ down beat

can descent in the Americas alone. Then you take South America and Central America and the Caribbean, well, there are a lot of black people and they didn't come from Switzerland. You just consider the manpower that's been removed from there involuntarily and that's the greatest amount of wealth of Africa—not to mention the number of people who died on the way, or the people who are still there but on the plantations, in work gangs—and you get lots of millions of people. By the time you include mineral wealth, and art, Africa could take the world to the World Court, if there was one; the music is the only thing they haven't been able to cop.

"My father is an artist, a sculptor; a genius, architect, self-taught; but he works as a health inspector because he could never become that there, the profession isn't allowed. There are a lot of Africans like that, who have to settle for a municipal job, some work that would benefit the colonial government. My parents are community workers—they serve the community so it can keep on—but they're held close so they will work for the Man. And they work for the Man so they can keep living. That's the whole colonial pattern.

"Now this is a heavy discussion," he concedes, "but the album isn't this heavy. It's a funny album, it's fun. We talk about guys like Cortez—we have lyrics like 'Cortez was a pirate/Friend of Christopher Columbus/He was crazy about discovery/He was no friend of mine.'

"Now all the reflections, all the implications, they put you in a situation where you can think. To really understand the album you may have to go study some history. There are a lot of wrong facts that are put in on purpose,

so perhaps it will provoke people to find out what really happened.

"It's all dance music, though—you hear the lyrics later, or if you read them you understand. Everybody complains about my accent on record—they think I'm singing Zulu when I'm singing English. Until you read the lyrics it's easy listening music because you don't know what I'm saying. By the time you realize, you know the melody by heart. There's an advantage to that."

The rhythms to be heard in Masekela's live sets echo those felt in another message-carrying dance sound: reggae. The trumpeter ascribes the similarities to common African backgrounds and British colonial pasts. The main source of rhythm within his band is the remarkable percussionist Asante, who works out on indigenous instruments. Asante was one of Masekela's discoveries during a year he spent traveling, attempting to put together a band of African musicians. Some of the sidemen he saw at that time have been playing with him since the autumn of '74. While Hugh talks of the economic problems of touring the States and the prospect of touring Japan, it's as though he takes Africa along with him. And his thoughts return there.

"In Africa we play mostly concerts—Africa is boogie town. There are thousands of dynamite musicians there. The continent definitely has the tradition, it has music in its roots. Groups like us are influenced by anything having to do with black music, maybe even with European music, as far as technique, harmony goes . . . but when you trace that back a lot of it goes back to Africa, anyway.

"It's definitely contemporary music we're doing, not to be confused by any purist. So

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we're playing urban music, but most of the population there spends 50 per cent of their time in rural areas, and that comes back to us. They have that communal life style—the traditions and the customs were temporarily dislocated because of the colonial experience, but now the tradition is coming back very strong, a lot of people are going back to their roots, and you get into the traditional situation with your music.

"On a Sunday afternoon you can go around and listen to different types of music, for free, in the streets. Music is a way of life, it's part of our speech, there's no ceremony without music. A baby is born, there's music for that; there's music for death, there's music for running, for standing, for standing on your head, for pissing. . . .

"But we remember, for us, music is an occupation. If a guy goes to work for IBM every morning, he punches in. We've got parents who look after cattle and land in Africa, and you know everybody tries to build themselves a home. It's the same with us. Art for art's sake is not our bag. I don't believe in purism 'cause I don't think it exists. There's nothing pure, everything came from somewhere.

"I don't see any point in musicians not making money from music, because everybody in other fields makes money from what they do. When you make an album you try to reach as big a crowd as you can—you need to make money and sell an album. Nobody cries, nobody who sells a lot of albums. But everybody tries to get ahead of course, you get your talents together, and anything that is popular can go in. It might be protest if it manages to reach a lot of people. After all, Dylan didn't do it just to reach people, he got paid for it, too. Yes, I love the sound I make, but the first thing that encourages you is that people like what you're doing, so you can make a living off it."

Briefly, Hugh recalled his past: "When I first started playing, I played piano, classical music, when I was six, seven, eight. Then I moved to Johannesburg, and people who played piano or violin had to do a lot of fighting. All my friends played soccer, not piano or violin. I started playing piano when I was 13—I went to see a movie called *Young Man With A Horn*, with Kirk Douglas, Lauren Bacall, and Doris Day in it. Then I started playing dance music. I couldn't read music anymore, I'd forgotten all about the piano.

"I got a scholarship from Harry Belafonte. That was after I'd been playing in South Africa for a while. A lot of jazz musicians come through Africa, though black musicians were not allowed to come through South Africa. Tony Scott, June Christy, Bud Shank . . . John Mohegan, he helped me to come to the Manhattan School of Music, he was the one who pushed for me very heavily. And Miriam Makeba. But I was on a lot of records, there had been a few articles written about me, and I was also corresponding with some trumpeters in America who were sending me records and stuff. And there was big jazz activity in South Africa.

"In South Africa everybody sings and everything has a sad harmonic strain to it. It's so beautiful. We live the songs. You can start a song in a bus, one that everybody knows—there are about 100 of them. And everybody will sing along with you. That's one way you kind of survive there; put people together for more than ten minutes and they're bound to sing a song." **db**

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Grand Theatre (Quebec City): Glenn Miller (4/29).
Café Campus: blues and jazz groups (Mon.).
La Maison Beaujeu: student groups (Mon.).
Rainbow: various jazz groups (Mon.—Wed.).
Pancho's: Madrika (Tues.).
Rockhead's Paradise: Ivan Synonns (Tues.—Sun.).
Molo: Al-Hall Sayid Abdul Al-Khadir or Nelson Synmonds & Charles Biddle (Thurs.—Sun.).
Rising Sun: various jazz groups (Thurs.—Sat.).
Le Mixeur: various jazz groups (Fri.—Sat.).
Cock & Bull: Al Peters Dixieland Band (Sun.).
La Bagema (Ottawa): Vernon Isaac (Mon.).
Boyles's, The Bullter: various jazz groups (Mon.).
Black Bottom: Apex Jazz Band (Fri.).
Chez Lucien: Capital City Jazz Band (Fri.).

CHICAGO

Jazz Showcase: Joe Pass (4/21-25); Mill Jackson (4/28-5/2); Thad Jones/Mel Lewis (first week of May); Phil Woods (5/5-9).
Amazigrace: Sky King, Care of the Cow (4/21-22); Eddie Harris (4/23-25); Oregon (4/30-5/3); Bryan Bowers (5/7-10).
Auditorium Theatre: Bob Marley and the Wailers (5/11).
Museum of Contemporary Art: "Overview of Chicago Jazz" concludes with Muhlai Richard Abrams Big Band (4/25, 1 p.m.).
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NAB: Bobby Christian Big Band (Thurs.).
Louie's (Addison): Demicheal-Fuller Swinglet (5/11).
Sybil's Lounge (John Hancock Center): John-ny Gabor Quartet (Tues.—Sat.).
Transitions East: Muhlai Richard Abrams Big Band (Mon.); other contemporary music to be announced, call 723-9373.
Venice Inn: Von Freeman (Sun.).
Wise Fools Pub: Von Freeman (Mon.).

PHOENIX

Whole Colleehouse (U.-Minn.): Mose Allison (5/14-16).
Longhorn Eating Emporium and Saloon: McCoy Tyner (4/20-24); Jimmy Smith (5/4-8).
Prom Center: Maynard Ferguson (5/13).
St. Paul Civic Center Arena and Theatre: John Denver (4/30 arena); Aerosmith (5/1); Paul McCartney and Wings (5/2).
Hippogriff: Glenn Yarborough and the Limerlets (4/25).
O'Shaughnessy Auditorium: Ramsey Lewis (5/15).
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Saddleback: New Horizon (to 5/8).
Final Score: jazz jam (Sun., 3 p.m.).
Jed Nolan's: Hot Jazz Society (Sun., 6 p.m.).
Civic Plaza: Fleetwood Mac (4/23).
Page Four: Buddy Weed Trio (to 4/29).
A.S.U.: Jazz Forum (4/21, 4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19); Jazz Ensemble (4/27).
Black Angus: Silver Creek (to 4/24).
Phoenix College: Jazz Lab Band concert (4/23).
Reuben's: John Hardy & Phoenix
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LAS VEGAS

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Circus Circus Gilded Cage: Carl Fontana Quartet (nightly).
Celebrity Centre: Rick Davis Quartet.
Sahara Tahoe: Al Green headlines (5/13-19).
Sahara Vegas: Sidro's Armada (to 5/2); The Imperials (5/3-16); Tony Bennett/Count Basie (5/20-6/2).
Sands: Doc Severinsen (5/5-6/1).
Riviera: Staple Sisters (4/22-5/12).
MGM Grand: Helen Reddy & Paul Williams (5/13-26); Pointer Sisters (5/27-6/8).
Thunderbird: Dennis Grillo 40-piece orchestra (4/24).
Hacienda: Las Vegas Jazz Society (Sundays).

LOS ANGELES

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Hungry Joe's: Gene Harris Quartet featuring Henry Franklin (Tues.—Sat.); various artists (Sun., 5-9p.m.).
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Rudolph's Fine Art Center: John Carter Ensem-

ble (Sun. 3-5p.m.).

Eagle Rock High School: Concerts (2nd Sun. of the month).

Irish Knight (Toluca Lake): "Midgits of Jazz" nightly; details 845-2727.

King Arthur's Restaurant (Canoga Park): big bands (Fri. & Sat.).

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Indies Room (Key West): Noel Cruz Duo (indefinitely).

Bachelor III: Name jazz nightly, artists to be announced.

700 Club: Herbie Brock (indefinitely).

NEW ORLEANS

Municipal Auditorium: Doobie Brothers (4/21); Bruce Springsteen (5/13).

Preservation Hall: Percy Humphrey Band, Kid Thomas Valentine Band, Sweet Emma's Band, Kid Sheik's Band, Olympia Brass Band (alternate nights, 8:30 p.m.).

Jed's: Copas Brothers (4/23); Professor Longhair (4/24); Zebra (4/30); bluegrass (every Wed.).

Lu & Charlie's: Bjorn Alke Quartet (4/23-4/24).

Baton Rouge State Fairgrounds: "Country Jamboree" w/Willie Nelson, John Prine, Pure Prairie League, Rusty Weir, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown (5/1).

Pete Fountain's French Quarter Inn: Pete Fountain (Tues.—Sat.).

Late Flashes: New York Environ Loft in SoHo will close out April with the following concerts: saxophonist Ben Wallace and Friends (20); an evening of original choreography with Michelle Berne, Laura Brittain, Martha Rzaza, and Tom Wetmore of the Washington Square Repertory Dance Company (21-22); the Fred Farell Quartet with Rusty Cloud, Frank Clayton, Chris Braun (24, 4:00 p.m.); Blue Winds with Ronnie Boykins, Monty Waters, Harold White, David Eyges (24, 8:30 p.m.); Jill Kroesen (28-30). All concerts are at 8:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted . . . The Count Basie band has scheduled a couple of weeks at the Sahara in Las Vegas from May 19-June 2 following a series of Western dates in early and mid-May . . . Pianist Monty Alexander is engaged on a European tour from now through the middle of June . . . The hot Blackbyrds play Chicago's High Chapparral at the end of May . . . Chet Baker for two dates in Pittsburgh, one on April 26, another May 1 . . . Betty Carter, the nonpareil vocalist, will tour Japan in July . . . East coasters will have several chances to see the "Irish bebop" of the Chieftains at the end of April. The group hits Hartford (Bushnell Auditorium, 4/22), Providence (Memorial Auditorium, 4/25), Washington D.C. (Lisner Auditorium, 4/28), Toronto (Massey Hall, 4/29), and Rochester (Palestre, 4/30) before May swings through the West Coast and the Midwest . . . Keith Jarrett is on a European touring and recording binge for the first three weeks in May. Then he'll do five days (5/25-30) in Minneapolis with an orchestra and Jan Garbarek (the recd-man's American debut) before Newport.



"What I need is a clear, clean sound."

A conversation about music, electronics and the future with one of America's foremost keyboard artists—Chick Corea.

Return to Forever seems to be able to work as a team while each individual still does his own thing—such as solo albums—without hurting the group. What's different about your group that allows you to maintain your cohesiveness?

"I guess what's different is that we really confront one another with our basic problems and always make an effort to communicate any kind of difficulties that occur. An artist who creates his own music would naturally have a problem working in a team with others, 'cause there's the creative viewpoint of others to deal with, too. We all have the recognition of what it takes to work as a team. It's being able to understand and work with each other's creation. One thing that relieves the stress of that is solo projects, which allow us to originate our own product and then come back and work for the group product. The main solvent there is communication!"



*Chick's regular set-up uses a Kustom SRM VIII 8-channel mixer with an SRS XII bi-amp slave which powers his MF-1212, MF-1012 horn and MT-15 horn/tweeter. His monitor system includes the III monitor power unit and III monitor cabinets.

As a group, how do you determine the direction your sound takes?

"It's a planning of our direction in terms of how we want to communicate to people, and how we want it to feel. After that is decided, the way we put the music together comes from that."

How do you compose your music?

"The way I usually compose is to conceive of a feeling, and then the kind of sound I want. Like on the solo record I've just done—there were parts where I wanted to use a string quartet or a brass quintet, so I found the musicians I wanted to work with and wrote music I knew would be suited to their abilities. I kind of like to write more toward the abilities of people I'm working with, rather than writing a piece of music and then finding people with the abilities."

When you're on stage, what kind of amplification equipment do you use to produce the sound you want?

"I've used so many different kinds of amplification. I've been using Kustom equipment, and I really like it.* What I need as far as amplification goes is a clear, clean sound—which is what I've been getting with Kustom."

Do you use any special equalization or any special setting on it?

"No, there's a graphic equalizer on the mix board I use, but there's no radical curve on it. I run it almost flat. I roll off a little bit of bass, and I even roll off a little bit of the highs sometimes—because I play in the high registers on the synthesizers. But other than that, nothing special in the way of EQ."

What instruments do you use currently?

"I have a stack of them: Fender Rhodes, Hohner Clavinet, a Mini-Moog, the new Micro-Mini-Moog, and a larger Moog Fifteen. I use a little ARP Odyssey and a Yamaha organ. And soon to be delivered is a new polyphonic synthesizer called a PolyMoog."

Do you see your sound being much different in the future than the present sound of Return to Forever? And if so, how?

"I'm always one for expanding and evolving what I do. Musically, I see a lot of things I'd like to do, which I feel will begin to happen slowly. *Return to Forever* is not into radical change. We like to evolve things step-by-step. So our sound will be an evolving sound. We're looking for new ways to use electric and acoustic instruments in performance—we devote half our concert now to acoustic instruments. Individually, I'd really like to do more composing. I haven't done too much orchestral composing and arranging, which is something that I'd like to do. There's a bit of that on my new solo album."

What's the next project for Chick Corea and Return to Forever?

"A new solo album of mine, called 'The Leprechaun', released in February. Right now, I'm rehearsing with *Return to Forever*, and our new recording ("*The Romantic Warrior*") will be released sometime in March."

Chick, what do you see in the future for electronic music?

"Electronic instruments are very young. As they're used by people who write for them and create with them, the way they're used and the way they're built will be refined. Then you'll have something which I think you'll be able to call a fine art."



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