

MARCH 10, 1977

60c

the contemporary  
music magazine

# down beat

## GEORGE DUKE

## ANDREW HILL

## SONNY CRISS

## HOW TO

## VISUALIZE

McCOY TYNER  
CHICK COREA

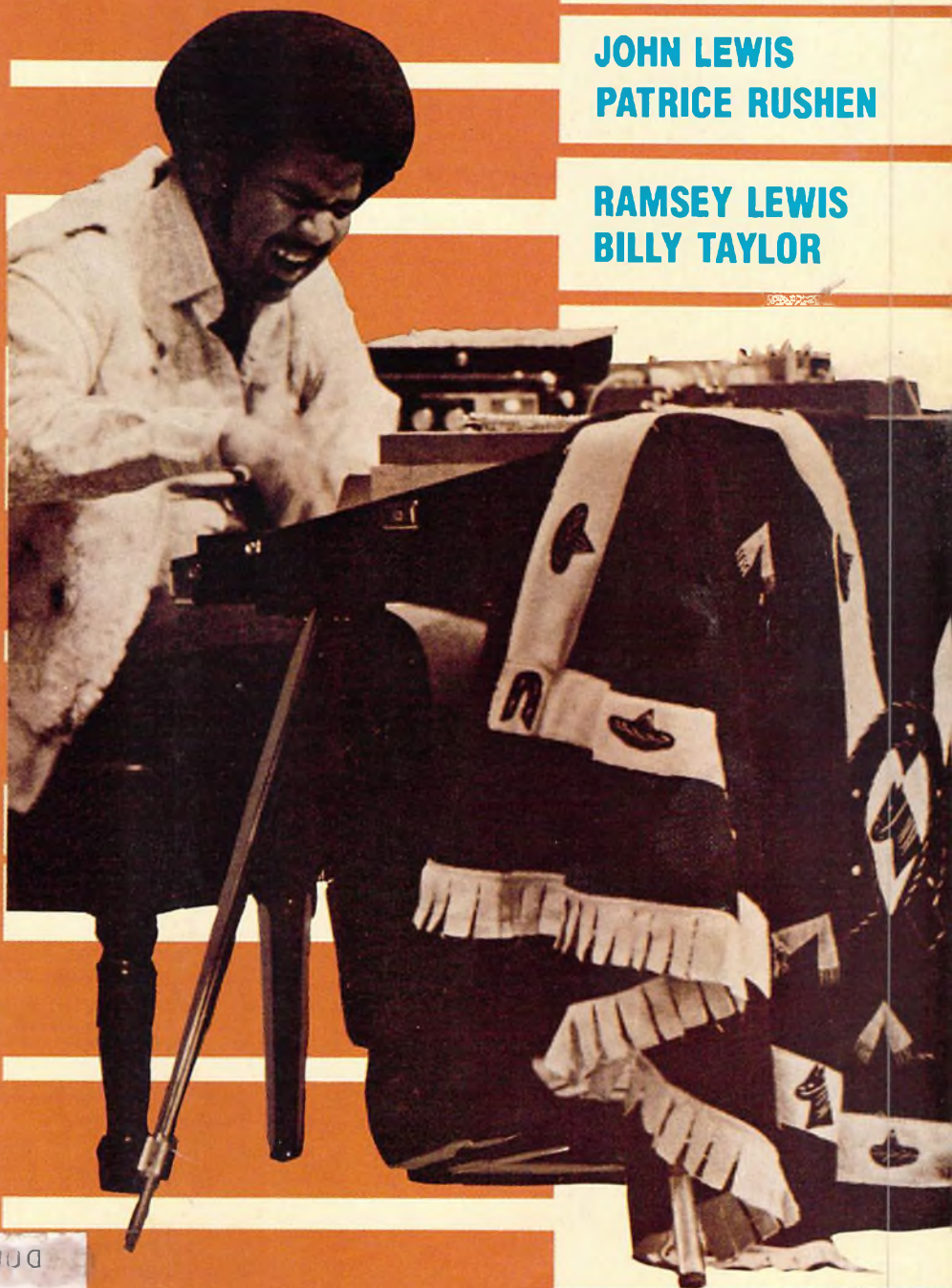
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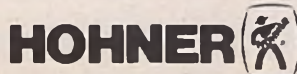
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## education in jazz

by Marian McPartland

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## the first chorus

By Charles Suber

As forecast, this issue is weighted with heavy keyboard musicians . . . and other players of note. There is much to read and ponder.

George Duke and Andrew Hill, the two principal pianists under investigation in these pages, have much in common in spite of how dissimilar their performances and public personalities may seem to be. Both men have impressive academic credentials: Duke earned his Masters degree at Cal. State-San Francisco ('69); Hill has his Ph.D. from Colgate ('71). Both are very serious about their music and their roles as players and composers and teachers in the music world. Where they differ is in their modes of expression.

George Duke uses all available electronic music sources. He regards "electricity as being a natural thing . . . a part of nature" and therefore not alien. Andrew Hill believes that "the whole energy school of playing isn't valid for the '70s. . . . It's time to become proficient on your [acoustic] instrument. All this noise." (*Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Seventies*, 1976)

There is, however, a more fundamental difference between Duke and Hill: the use, or avoidance, of humor. Duke uses humor "to break the show up"; he doesn't want his audiences "too comfortable." He does not feel that a sense of humor "should in any way devalue your musical worth."

Duke's use of humor is consistent with such as Art Tatum, Fats Waller, Erroll Garner, Thelonious Monk, Bill Basic, Duke Ellington . . . Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry . . . and Frank Zappa whose use of visual and musical satire has had a decided influence on Duke.

Hill comes from another place. He eschews humor as foreign to the dignity and seriousness of the music and its black origins. Hill—and many of his generation—are not without humor. But they avoid adding to the still-lingering cliché of the Negro entertaining quality folks with a watermelon smile. In this context, "jazz" recalls unhappy connotations: "blues" is too accommodating, too servile.

The commentary of the other pianists in this issue is chiefly concerned with what the future holds for their and our music.

Bill Evans prefers that any criterion of excellence not be based on "avant garde-ness" but on "who's saying the most . . . who's making the most beautiful music."

McCoy Tyner will not likely turn to the electric keyboard until all the still unexplored possibilities of the acoustic instrument have been exhausted. John Lewis thinks the electric will always be a good second instrument. Hampton Hawes points out that no one has yet done an album of solo electric piano.

Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock remain bullish on the utility of the electric market.

Joe Zawinul believes that Cecil Taylor is the only real innovator of jazz piano styles to come along since Tatum. Zawinul adds that he is likely to be the next major innovator.

All this could well come to pass.

Next issue dwells on the group dynamic of Jack DeJohnette's Directions, Elvin Jones' ensemble, and New York Mary; the singular pianist-composer Walter Bishop, Jr., jazz singer Randy Crawford, and arranger-guitarist-pianist-teacher (and an Outrageous Mother) Jack Petersen; plus a Blindfolded Stanley Clarke.

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**Disgusting Funk**

*The Funkiest Funk Ever Funked* (1/13) was absolutely disgusting! Funk music is so obviously only a money-making adventure. I can see little, if any, art involved in funk. This is not merely because funk players are making good money—making money through making music in itself is fine.

However, making music merely to make money is repulsive, disgusting and exemplary of modern, plastic, commercialized America. John Krajicek Denton, Tex.

Your article/interview with the Brothers Johnson was a joke! How can you put these funk-disco-bullshit people in the same magazine with people as hip as Ted Curson?

The Brothers Johnson—the place for star-spangled glitter dancing machines is in the discotheque, not the pages of *db*! One chord funk . . . is the big thing today, but people need to hear more about the Cursons, the Ira Sullivans, etc.

How about digging a little deeper, to tell us about the truly dedicated musicians who so deserve credit for attempting to be creative in a world of pop-disco-funk?

Let's get back to the roots; I think they still call it jazz. John Yarling Miami, Fla.

**Curson Encore**

Ted Curson represents the kind of musician that must remain in jazz. His thoughts were

both refreshing and reaffirming. I feel that if today's jazz did return to a hard bop, as Ted suggests it might, another renaissance of the roots would take form.

Disco alone is impotent; it denies us the delineation of commercialism and music. It would contribute to a rebirth in jazz if more musicians were as concerned. Go ahead on, Ted. Peter Fallico San Jose, Cal.

**Tuba Amazement**

I was amazed at the technical facility of the Matteson-Phillips Tuba Ensemble when recently seeing them at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago. The tuba arrangements were very interesting; however, the compositions by the guitarist, Petersen, which served as vehicles for the ensemble, were unimaginative.

I enjoyed the recent article on Ted Curson (1/13). Ted's performance at the 1976 Newport-New York Festival was, for me, the musical highlight of the year. James S. Dorsey Toronto, Can.

**Caught In '65 Mire**

I find it hard to believe that Ruby Braff (1/27) can exist in the 1970s. When he comments on the state of music, it sounds like he's stuck in 1865.

I think the stereotyped "frantic" avant garde musician Braff is ranting against exists only in Ruby's prejudiced head. Open your

ears, salty one. You're missing beautiful music by befouling your mind with poisonous envy. Rich Billingsley Pasadena, Cal.

**A Rave For Ra**

I recently caught a performance of Sun Ra and his Arkestra. . . . It was the best display of jazz I have ever seen. Ra is a monster musician, whether playing the keyboards (electric or acoustic), chanting, or playing the Arkestra (a la Ellington). When will he and his band members get the recognition they deserve? Why does America shut off its creativity in favor of charlatans such as Freddie Hubbard, Bob James and Herbie Hancock? Danny Davis, Marshall Allen and Danny Thompson are virtually unrecognized, while Arkestra mainstays John Gilmore and Tommy Hunter fare hardly better. . . .

Ra standards such as *Watusi*, *Space Is The Place*, *We Travel The Spaceways* and *Astro Black* were delights, while everything else was definitely enjoyable. . . . Support Sun Ra! Robert C. Lambert Tucson, Ar.

**God On His Side**

After reading the harrowing story of Don Ellis' illness and miraculous recovery (1/27), I can only conclude that God must like big bands, especially Don's. . . . Bill Egan Norfolk, Va.



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## Benefit For Childville



Jeff Berlin, Lenny White and George Benson wail at Childville fundraiser.

NEW YORK—The Village Gate, longtime home for fine jazz and donor of its facilities to worthy causes, was the site for yet another charity bash. Chakra Productions promoted the gig for Childville, a part of the Jewish Child Care Association. Childville is a special treatment center for emotionally disturbed children who have been severed from their families.

The first set's participating artists included Michal Urbaniak, Urszula Dudziak, Tony Williams, Steve Marcus, Larry Coryell, John Scofield, Sammy Figueroa, John Lee and Stu Goldberg.

Closing the early show was a group made up of George Benson, Lenny White, Ray Mantilla, Dave Liebman, Pee Wee Ellis and Leon Thomas. Emcee Herbie Mann sat in with this group.

The second set opened with a Keith Jarrett solo attack on the piano, followed by a duet by Coryell and Liebman. Thomas sat in for this one too. Richard Beirach's group, Eon, with Frank Tusa and Eliot Zigmund was up next. Janet Lawson's vocals concluded the evening.

Julie Coryell and Eleana Steinberg coordinated the effort, which netted Childville \$4300.

## Live Broadcasts In Buffalo

BUFFALO—WBFO, one of three public radio stations in Buffalo, recently celebrated its 18th year on the air. From practically its first day in January of 1959, WBFO has had some jazz in its programming schedule but never more than at present. Currently there are nearly 70 hours of jazz in the schedule which includes a full calendar of live jazz highlighted by the continuing series of opening night broadcasts in stereo from the Downtown Room of the Statler Hilton.

The series, which began a year ago with Milt Jackson, has met with favorable response from the listening audience. Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Byrd, Marian McPartland, Clark Terry, Helen Humes, Zoot Sims and Jimmy Rowles, and Kenny Burrell are among the jazz artists which have been included in the series that now totals 16 broadcasts.

From its inception these broadcasts have had valuable support and encouragement from Statler owner Bill Hassett, his assistant Gary Bove and the

staff of the Statler. It began as an experiment to give additional exposure to the artists appearing at the club while at the same time providing quality jazz programming for WBFO airwaves. More importantly, it seems to be acting as a catalyst for the expanding live jazz scene in the Buffalo area by making listeners aware of the calibre of talent coming into the city.

The format for most broadcasts has been to carry two complete sets plus an interview between sets with the artist. Generally, this has proven to be a comfortable arrangement for both the engineering crew and the performer.

National Public Radio has noted the heightened interest in live jazz broadcasts at WBFO and several of its other member public radio stations around the country. NPR is laying the ground work to utilize a certain number of these broadcasts on a national or regional basis, and hopefully these will be on the network beginning sometime in April of this year.

## New Releases

A&M has finally released the *Radha-Krsna Nama Sankirtana*, new album by Brazilian vocal **Alice Coltrane**; *Kirkatron*, Rah-sensation **Milton Nascimento**, **saan Roland Kirk**; *Joyous Lake*, who collaborated with Wayne **Pat Martino**; *Gate of Dreams*, Shorter on the *Native Dancer* **Claus Ogerman Orchestra**; waxing. Nascimento's disc is *Slaves Mass*, **Hermeto Pascoal**; and *Sleeping Gypsy*, **Michael Franks**.

New ones from **Inner City** include *Stardancer*, **David Friesen**; *Jubilant Power*, **Ted Curson**; *The Jazz Singer*, **Eddie Jefferson**; and *Last Sessions*, **Elmo Hope**.

New **Blue Note** twofers include *Back From The Gig*, **Booker Ervin**; *Here To Stay*, one unreleased **Freddie Hubbard** disc coupled with another re-issue; *The Trio Sides*, **Horace Silver**; *Little Nile*, a pair of sessions by **Randy Weston**; and *All Star Bags*, **Milt Jackson**.

The **Warner** "Crossover Collection" has expanded with *Happiness Heartaches*, **Brian Auger's Oblivion Express**;

The latest from **Catalyst** includes *Ju Ju Man*, **Gary Bartz**; *Now's The Time*, **Billy Mitchell**; *I Remember Bird*, **Sonny Stitt**; *Starrsong*, **Pat Britt**; *But Beautiful*, **Sam Most**; *Gannon's Back In Town*, **Jim Gannon**; and *Here And Now*, **Frank Foster**.

Bassist **Monk Montgomery** has formed a new record label, **Bean Records**. Artists set to record are Monk's brother **Buddy** and a Vegas combo called **Danny Skea and Full Circle**.

Vocalist **Bob Dorough** and bassist **Bill Takas** have released *Beginning To See The Light on the Laissez-Faire* label. **db**

## NATIONAL JAZZ ENSEMBLE ANNOUNCES PLANS

NEW YORK—The National Jazz Ensemble, now in its fourth year as an entity and its second as an adjunct to courses at the New School here, has announced its plans for 1977.

Chuck Israels, leader of the NJE, told **db** that he is planning four dates this year to be held in the school's auditorium on West 12th Street, Manhattan, on February 19, March 12, April 2 and 23.

Israels also said that he is beginning a one week residency with the group in South Carolina, sponsored by the S.C. Arts Commission. The residency tentatively will run from March 14 through 19. Concerts are also scheduled for Ithaca, Syracuse, Corning, Alfred and Plattsburg, all New York State, as well as

other venues in New England.

The busy Israels has plans for a California trip April 29 through May 8 including a stop at Concerts By The Sea in Redondo Beach.

The NJE is a large ensemble which plays the reproductions of charts and solos of the famous culled from meticulous transcriptions. Israels has written some originals for the band as well. Some of the finest studio and solo instrumentalists make up the band, including Gregory Herbert and Ken Berger, reeds; Rod Levitt and Jimmy Knepper, trombones; Tom Harrell and Mike Berger, trumpets; and Steve Gilmore, Bill Goodwin and Benny Aranov, rhythm. They have one album released already with a second due soon.

## Renaissance In Cleveland

CLEVELAND—The Playhouse Square Association, a non-profit organization formed to preserve the elegant Playhouse Square Theatre district in downtown Cleveland, reopened the State Theatre in January with jazz headliners as the inaugural two-week booking. Singer Della Reese and the New York Jazz Quartet played nightly sets from January 18 through 30 to near

capacity houses. The cast of *The All-Night Strut*, a jazz review, was the opening act each evening with a compendium of Ellington standards.

Ray Shepardson, head of the Playhouse Square Association, stated that the jazz booking would be tried again. Negotiations were considered for Sarah Vaughan and Maynard Ferguson for early spring dates.



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## BRASS CONFERENCE WARMS NEW YORK

NEW YORK—The sixth annual Brass Conference for Scholarships was held here in the midst of a driving snow storm for the second consecutive year.

The N.Y. Disco Brass had a big sound for a dance band of this type. Although the rhythms were repetitive, the soloists, like Waymon Reed on trumpet, were inspired. Tony Cofersi did the charts.

Paul Jeffrey's Octet was back at the conference this year with an abbreviated set. When they got down to business (such as on Tadd Dameron's *The Scene Is Clean*) the group was tight and cohesive.

Harvey Estrin next led a group of expertly trained studio musicians in a resurrected Sauter-Finegan concert. Eddie Sauter was in the audience cheering wildly as the group ran through *Doodletown Fifers*, *Rockin' Chair*, *Doodletown Races*, *The Four Horsemen*, *April In Paris* and several more.

Matrix had the dubious distinction of following this band with an excitement-packed, albeit long, set. Mack Goldsbury and Dave Markowitz were the featured artists.

Arnie Lawrence's Treasure Island brought the house down with the improvisational piece *Street Musician*. The group included Lois Colin, Mike Richmond, Badal Roy, Jeff Williams, Tom Harrell and Steve Turre.

The National Jazz Ensemble was up next, running through recreations and originals with aplomb. The rhythm of Steve Gilmore and Bill Goodwin propelled solos by Gregory Herbert, Rod Levitt, Mike Berger, Jimmy Maxwell and Tom Harrell. Margot Hanson vocalized on *Sarabande*, an original by leader Chuck Israels.

Bill Watrous' Manhattan Wildlife Refuge was led by its co-leader, trumpeter Danny Stiles. Even though the hour was late (3 am) the band proceeded to blow the walls out.

The three-day conference, under the guidance of Dr. Charles Colin, was held at the Americana Hotel and included exhibits and instruction as well as performances.

## potpourri

Apologies are in order to **Rick Milt Buckner**, **Cozy Cole**, and **Apetrone** and **Joe Corsello**. Our report (db 2/10) of **New York Mary's** demise was in error, and a **NYM** article will be coming up soon.

**Temple University** in Philadelphia has initiated a course in jazz improvisation that can be taken for college credit. **Curtis Harmon** will conduct a beginners' class as well as an advanced one beginning with the spring term.

The London-based **David Bel-fray Jazz Tour** will again journey to France for the Nice Jazz Festival (July 7-17). For information write 66 Tiddington Road, Stratford-On-Avon, Great Britain. France's Secretary of Tourism, by the way, is now publishing a complete listing of that country's jazz festivals.

**Louis Panassie**, son of the late pioneer of jazz criticism, Hugues Panassie, has produced a 90-minute film documentary called *Jazz Odyssey*. Filmed with the help of his father during the period '69-'72, Panassie's movie includes conversations with **Louis Armstrong**, **Lionel Hampton**, and the senior **Panassie**, plus performances by **Ellington**, **John Lee Hooker**, **Memphis Slim**, **George Benson**, **Jo Jones**,

and **Ed Cramer** (president of BMI) celebrate grand opening.

**Roy Ayers** recently had a surprise guest during his Roxy appearance in Los Angeles. **Stevie Wonder** came on stage and accompanied Ayers' group through ten minutes of *Spirit Of Doo-Doo*. Draw your own conclusions.

**Rahsaan Roland Kirk** has opened a new music school for all age groups called the **Vibration School of Music**, located at 9 Midland Ave., E. Orange, N.J. The school is named for the **Vibration Society**, a national organization headed by Kirk that expounds his musical philosophy and theories. Courses in the saxophone and drums are available as well as a special music awareness course.

**The Creative Music Studio's** spring session begins April 4 and runs through May 29. **Anthony Braxton** and **David Holland** have recently joined the CMS staff, and their courses during the spring session will include music theory, composition and ensemble playing. db

## Bolden Fictionalized

TORONTO—The legend of Buddy Bolden, the New Orleans cornetist-barber-scandal sheet editor who has been called the first jazz musician, and who spent the last 24 years of his life in the obscurity of an insane asylum, has been dramatized by Toronto poet-author Michael Ondaatje in *Coming Through Slaughter*, a book recently published by House of Anansi, Toronto. Included in the book is a photo of Bolden with his band, apparently the only known photo of the man.

Classified as "fiction" for the purposes of library cataloguing, the book elaborates on the few surviving details of Bolden's life (without acknowledging or solving the controversies), creating an extensive domestic life, detailing the rather seamy New Orleans milieu and weaving together various levels of actual "fact" and corresponding legend. The result is an interesting literary effort, rather than the definitive scholarly work. That's as much as could be expected.

## SONGWRITERS' HALL OF FAME OPENS



GERRY GOODSTEIN

l. to r.: Hoagy Carmichael, Jule Styne, Johnny Marks (hidden) and Ed Cramer (president of BMI) celebrate grand opening.

NEW YORK—The Songwriters' Hall of Fame finally opened in Times Square. With space donated by building owner Alex Parker, the exhibit at One Times Square is heralding Tin Pan Alley.

The walls are covered with sheet music and plaques representing all phases and faces of the music industry. There is a Duo-Art reproducing piano which is a player piano that recreates the sound of the original performer as well as his finger movements on the keys.

There is also the desk upon

which George Gershwin wrote, the lectern where Victor Herbert composed, and Fats Waller's piano. There is Durante's hat, Vallee's megaphone and Ted Lewis' stick. George Gershwin, Howard Dietz and Harold Rome are represented by paintings.

Hoagy Carmichael, Eubie Blake, and Sammy Cahn were all there for the grand opening of the hall which was supervised by Anna Sosenko. Oscar Brand is the curator. Ms. Frankie McCormick manages things and takes care of the exhibits. Displays will change periodically.

## JAZZ ED ON JOB

LAS VEGAS—The University of Nevada at Las Vegas has begun a jazz internship program that will deposit an estimated \$40,000 in the school's music scholarship fund. UNLV Jazz Ensemble director Frank Gagliardi coordinated the program, which was officially announced by entertainer Wayne Newton at a January 13 press conference.

The internship program allows music students, hand-picked by Gagliardi, to play one night each week in a Strip hotel orchestra. Not only does the student gain invaluable, on-the-job experience, he also receives the uni-

versity credit and full union scale for the hours worked. The monetary rewards are then channelled into the UNLV music scholarship coffers.

Wayne Newton played a pivotal role in the genesis and evolution of this unique training scheme. Several months ago, Newton began approaching Strip hotel executives with the idea, and the response has been unanimously favorable. Already, more than three dozen student musicians have benefited from the program, and the Vegas Hilton alone has allocated over \$5,000 in funds.

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# GEORGE DUKE

## PLUGGED-IN

## PRANKSTER

by lee underwood

In a whirlwind of drum rolls and electronic razzle-dazzle, the Billy Cobham/George Duke aggregation, featuring Alphonso Johnson on bass and John Scofield on guitar, completed its final December 1976 performance at the Roxy Theater in Hollywood and disbanded.

Once again, multi-keyboardist George Duke found himself on his own. This time, however, he had an international audience of fans, a hip-pocket swollen with studio credentials, and a newly signed solo recording contract with Epic Records.

Even as the newly released Cobham/Duke album, *Live On Tour In Europe*, threaded its way up the charts, George was already involved with his first Epic record, *From Me To You*. "This record is not at all the same as the *Live* album I did with Billy," said the 31-year-old pianist/composer/vocalist/studio musician. "This one is a whole production. Never before have I done a record of my own using strings, brass, a big band orchestra, backup vocals, and me singing."

Like Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul and numerous other contemporary "jazz/rock fusion" keyboardists, George Duke is something of a source of controversy.

His technical virtuosity is undeniable, and his knowledge of the jazz/rock, bebop, funk and Latin idioms is obvious. But George also plays a battery of electronic keyboards, and he doesn't apologize or defend himself for doing it. And—unkindest cut of all to the "serious" listener—George Duke has a sense of humor.

"When Billy and I got together in mid-1975," said Duke, "we were still searching for cohesiveness when a weird thing happened on a gig in Rochester, New York.

"We got to that spot in the show where I do whatever I want. Sometimes I do that humorous story about the zany Space Lady that greets me in the alley (see *Live*), but that night I said in my announcer-type voice, 'It's time for the first annual Billy Cobham dance contest,' and, man, people jumped up and started screaming.

"So Billy started playing a teen beat, and we got some dancers up on stage. The audience cheered and applauded for the best ones. We didn't have any prizes handy, so we gave away some salami and a couple of onion rolls. That was the night we became a band."

Born in San Rafael, California, on January 12, 1946, Duke was raised in "this little ghetto-oriented town in Marin County out by Sausalito, near San Francisco." When he was seven his mother took him to a Duke Ellington concert, "and, man, I went crazy! I started telling her, 'I can do that. You gotta get me a piano. I know I can do that.'"

Young Duke began taking piano lessons from Ms. Wyna Brown, then from Jules Hay-

wood. Ray Charles and Les McCann became major influences. So did Bill Evans after George heard Miles Davis' classic *Kind Of Blue*. "And when McCoy Tyner came on the scene, I said, 'Whoa!' and when Herbie Hancock came on, I said, 'Who's that!' Those guys were my heroes. Chick Corea, too. Today, I go back and listen to Parker, Powell, Dizzy and all of those other greats, but I didn't then. I started with Charles, McCann, and Bill Evans.

"Then I bought a lot of East Coast records, because their feeling was different than West Coast players—Miles, Trane, everybody—and I copied down all their solos and studied them. That's how I learned how to play."

George led several jazz and funk groups while attending Tamalpais High School, from which he graduated with honors in 1963. He received three scholarships to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music; he won his B.A. in Music Composition and Trombone in 1967. He received his M.A. in Music Composition from San Francisco State University in 1969. He then taught Jazz and Improvisation



BRUCE TALAMON

courses at Merritt Junior College in Oakland (1969), and at the S.F. Conservatory of Music (1970).

While attending and teaching school, George recorded his first solo LP, *The George Duke Quartet, Presented By The Jazz Workshop, 1966*, "a sad, sad record, all bebop, released only in Europe, I'm happy to say."

He also sustained a regular trio gig at the Half Note club in San Francisco for three years with John Heard on bass, and Pete Magadini, then Al Cecchi, on drums. For two of those years, singer Al Jarreau regularly performed with Duke's trio.

"Musicians from the Both/And club used to come down to the Half Note to sit in with us—Sam Rivers, Eddie Gomez—all of them. Cannonball Adderley didn't sit in, but he came to listen, and later he hired me.

"In 1967, I quit the Half Note, and for awhile I didn't know where my next dollar was coming from. I became the house player around people like Bobby Hutcherson, Dexter

Gordon and those folk. I'd rehearse a day with whoever came in, and then just read the chord charts. Those are the people I grew up playing with. That's how I got my experience."

In 1970, when Duke heard that violinist Jean-Luc Ponty was coming from France to Los Angeles to record for Dick Bock's World Pacific label, he bombarded Bock with phone calls, letters and tapes, saying, "Listen, man. I can play with Ponty. I'm the piano player, and I've got my own trio ready to go."

"That was the first time I had ever gotten egotistical and aggressive," said Duke. "I just felt like I knew exactly what I wanted, like I had to make that move."

Duke got the job. And in three weeks he recorded three albums—*Electric Connection*, *The Jean-Luc Ponty Experience (Live)*, and *King Kong* (with Frank Zappa).

While Duke was recording the live Ponty album, Frank Zappa sat in. He decided to use Ponty on *King Kong*. Ponty pushed to have Duke included. "Frank was hesitant at first, but then he loved me. 'Hey!' he said, 'you can read, you can play multi-style of music, and I'd like to have you in my band.'

"At first I said no. Two weeks later, I called him back and said I'd do the European tour. I stayed with him for a year, because I had never made so much money in my life."

After Zappa, Duke joined Cannonball Adderley (1971-1972), returned to Zappa (1973 to mid-1975), and then joined Billy Cobham as co-leader of the now-defunct Cobham/Duke Band.

Today, he is his own leader, assembling his own touring and recording group. "I don't know everybody I'll use yet," he said, "but Ndugu will be on drums, possibly Alphonso Johnson on bass. I also want a guitarist and two backup singers—not that I'm going r&b. I just need that element because there is so much vocal stuff."

**Underwood:** You are something of a master of contemporary electronic keyboards. I'd like to ask you a question I recently posed to several guitar winners of the *db Readers' Poll*: It seems that (keyboard) styles are being defined almost as much by the manner of the playing as by the actual content. In other words, tonal qualities and electronic effects are taking on increasingly important roles. To what degree is this true in your own personal approach? Do you feel that the actual sound of your playing is becoming a more important part of your statement?

**Duke:** No. Superficially, many people look at me that way, because all that sound is the first thing that strikes their ears. Because of electronics, there are many musicians who have become totally involved in nothing but timbre, rather than in what they are playing.

**Underwood:** Do you feel like an orchestrator up there?

**Duke:** That is exactly what I want to be—an orchestrator. I don't want to be just a pianist. However, I don't want to let the orchestration become more important than the actual playing of the music.

The problem with being an "electronic engineer" and a musician at the same time is that you can get so involved with turning knobs and dials that you forget the flow of the music. The flow falls apart, and you have to start over again. It breaks the concentration.

It's very difficult, and some people have more trouble than others. A lot of younger kids have to stop, break the flow, decide which knob to turn, then build the momentum

back up again. When you're improvising, you don't have *time* to think. All you can do is play. You can't destroy the flow.

I myself try to make the transition from one keyboard to the next as smoothly as possible, with a limited amount of changing knobs. If I have to make a timbre change from one synthesizer to another, I make it part of my overall flow artistically.

**Underwood:** For those readers who are keyboardists, what equipment do you use?

**Duke:** I have several units. I have a customized Fender Rhodes, split into three parts, which makes it total stereo, and which can be made quad. It has outputs for the bass, the middle, and the treble ranges. I can pan it and make it go left or right. It makes the piano very, very clean, and I can put any effect on any part of the keyboard I want to. I also have a switch so I can go back to the normal Rhodes sound anytime I want.

I have a Hohner D6 Clavinet, an Arp String Ensemble, an Arp Odyssey, a mini-Moog, a Crumar TM3 organ, and a Yamaha electric grand piano.

There are different human elements you can get out of each synthesizer that you can't get out of the others. They are really different instruments, so I use more than one, because I like to play a synthesizer as if it were an extension of me. I like to humanize it.

**Underwood:** The Yamaha electric grand piano is a new development, isn't it?

**Duke:** Yes, and I think it's a revolutionary piano. It's an actual acoustic piano, on a smaller scale—73 notes to date. It has actual strings on each note, and each note has a built-in pickup. In the studio, you can't tell the difference. It sounds acoustic.

***"I think it is possible to maintain your artistic integrity and be commercial at the same time. I dedicate myself to the proposition that it is possible to play good music and still sell more than 3000 records."***

**Underwood:** Do you use any special wiring on stage?

**Duke:** Wiring is important, but what is more important is really good amplifiers, especially for keyboards, because you're playing chords. I use Crown amps, which are not the cleanest amps, but they don't break down on the road.

I also have a Yamaha PM 1000 stereo board with 16 inputs, which are all filled up, a Malatchi sub-mixer for the organ, and a couple of JBL bass cabinets with a bass scoop and Gauss speakers and horns. I have a phaser bank, Eventide clockwork harmonizers, a whole bank of Mutron phasers, and seven MXR noise gates kept out of their cases in a rack mount to keep the noise down.

All of this is expensive, first-class stuff. It's like a little studio up there, and it's worth it, because it's clean.

**Underwood:** Did you always like electronics?

**Duke:** No. The first time I saw the Fender Rhodes I was with Don Ellis' big band in 1969. I was taking the other piano player's place, and all they had on stage was the Fender and a ring modulator. I played them, but I didn't like them.

However, when I did the live recording with Jean-Luc Ponty at The Experience in 1970, I became attracted to the fullness of the sound. "Hey! I can hear myself over the drummer!"

That was amazing to me.

I also found that because I play the piano so percussively I had a problem with the acoustic. I could play with finesse, but I always reverted back to playing hard. I hit it as though it were a drum, because to me the piano is a percussive instrument. When it's time to hit it, I'll hit it with everything I have. I'll break strings and everything else.

I tried to get away from that, but I found I was fighting with myself. So I stopped that. "Hey—be yourself." So now, I'm just me, and I'm developing my own thing.

I love the sound of the acoustic, because I studied classical piano. I love both acoustic and electric, and I'll always be playing both.

**Underwood:** Does the use of electronics tend to strip individual players of their personalities?

**Duke:** There is a whole group of musicians who have grown up with electronics. Some have learned how to deal with it, and some have not. Electronics is a very new medium.

I used to listen to Bill Evans a lot, but to hear Bill play a Rhodes is a little defeating, because his personal style is geared to the acoustic, and his playing on acoustic is incredible. If I were to hear Oscar Peterson play the Rhodes, it would be the same thing. It would be too weird, because both are too tied to the acoustic piano.

But people like myself, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, etc. do not lose their identity by using electronics. I think I can tell Chick Corea when he's playing either acoustic or electric piano. I can tell myself, and I can pretty much tell Herbie Hancock.

An electric instrument is simply an instrument, just like an acoustic. What you *do* with

it is up to you. You make your own personal statement. It's true, you can get lost, but you've got to find your own avenue there. You can't just turn knobs.

**Underwood:** What about the artificial nature of electricity? Some musicians claim that it negatively affects their emotions.

**Duke:** I regard electricity as being a natural thing. It happens in nature, it can be made from oil, it's all organic, it infuses the universe—of which I consider myself a part. I am part of nature; electricity is a part of nature. So I don't feel that electricity is alien to me.

As far as electricity affecting my soul, my feelings, I think it's wrong to say that. I don't think it's seriously affected anybody. True, I have lost a little dexterity in playing the acoustic piano, but whenever you gain something, you lose something. There has to be a give-and-take situation. That is perfectly normal.

As far as my feeling, which is more important than technical skill, I don't think I've lost a thing.

**Underwood:** While your keyboard wizardry has been praised, your singing has been severely criticized.

**Duke:** Yeah. The critics don't like it. But singing is a challenge to me, and it communicates to a certain group of people. Going by ASCAP, my record sales, the airplay, and the shouts I get from the people in the audience, I reasoned that, without abandoning the instrumental stuff, maybe I should concentrate a little more on the vocals. I'll stay 75% instrumental, with the vocals as topping.

**Underwood:** On the one hand, you speak of communication, which implies a musical reason for singing, and on the other hand, you talk about record sales and airplay. Are you in fact singing just for the money?

**Duke:** No. I think it is possible to maintain your artistic integrity and be commercial at the same time. I dedicate myself to the proposition that it is possible to play good music and still sell more than 3000 records. Besides that, there is my attitude toward music. Certain musicians are extremely serious. They don't like humor. I do.

**Underwood:** Humor plays quite a role in your performances.

**Duke:** I have a certain amount of humor, because I don't believe musicians should be so stuffy. I know a lot of people say I'm just jivin' around. And a lot of times I am, because I like to have a good time. Life's too short to just see the serious side of everything. But I am very serious about music, and I am very serious about myself. I don't feel that having a sense of humor should in any way devalue your musical worth.

**Underwood:** There are many musicians, Keith Jarrett, for example, who feel that a concert should be presented with dignity.

**Duke:** I love the way Keith Jarrett plays. He's an incredible musician, and he has done a lot for the state of the art. Let me get that on the record.

When I saw him at Newport, however, he told the audience he wouldn't start unless they were sitting down. He presented that very serious atmosphere, which is obviously alien to me. I appreciate where he's coming from, but I personally don't feel that you should impose your philosophy on other people.

**Underwood:** But he has given himself with great commitment to the art of music, rather than to specific goals of commercial success. I would say that to him, music is an end, not a means. Rather than tolerating people jumping

## SELECTED DUKE DISCOGRAPHY

**as a leader**  
FROM ME TO YOU—Epic  
LIBERATED FANTASIES—MPS/BASF G22835  
I LOVE THE BLUES, SHE HEARD ME CRY—MPS  
BASF MC25671  
THE AURA WILL PREVAIL—MPS/BASF MC25613  
FEEL—MPS/BASF MC25355  
FACES IN REFLECTION—MPS/BASF MC22018  
BILLY COBHAM/GEORGE DUKE BAND LIVE ON  
TOUR—Atlantic SD-18194

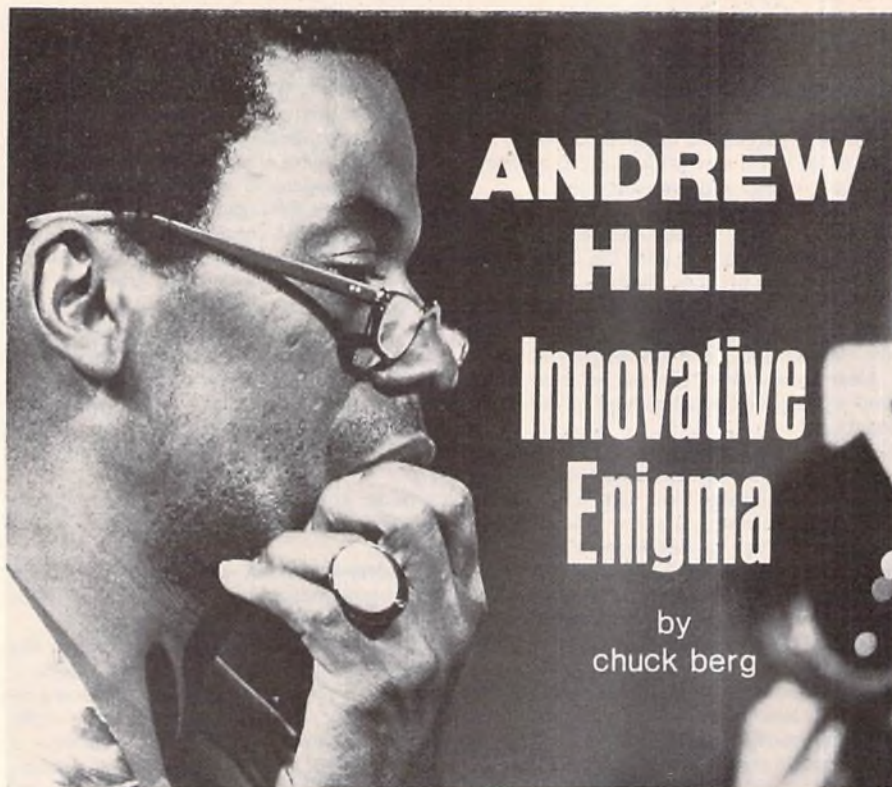
**with Frank Zappa**  
ROXY AND ELSEWHERE—Discreet 2DS2202  
APOSTROPHE—Discreet DS2175  
OVERNIGHT SENSATION—Discreet MS2149  
WAKA JAWAKA—Bizarre/Reprise 2094  
THE GRAND WAZOO—Bizarre/Reprise MS2093  
CHUNGA'S REVENGE—Bizarre/Reprise 2030  
200 MOTELS—United Artists S-9956

**with Cannonball Adderley**  
LOVERS—Fantasy F-9505  
PHENIX—Fantasy F-79004  
BIG MAN—Fantasy F-79006  
THE BLACK MESSIAH—Capitol SW BO-846

**with Stanley Clarke**  
SCHOOL DAYS—Nemperor NE 439  
JOURNEY TO LOVE—Nemperor NE 433

**with Billy Cobham**  
CROSSWINDS—Atlantic SD 7300  
LIFE AND TIMES—Atlantic SD 18166

**with Jean-Luc Ponty**  
JEAN-LUC PONTY EXPERIENCE—  
World Pacific ST-20168  
KING KONG—United Artists LA 373  
ELECTRIC CONNECTION—  
World Pacific ST-20156



GIUSEPPE G. PINO

**A**ndrew Hill is one of the most enigmatic figures on the contemporary scene. A gifted pianist and composer, Hill has refused to compromise his artistic vision for the traditional tokens of success. Instead, he has remained true to his drummer within. This constant course has had two results. On one hand, there is relative obscurity. On the other, there is a body of recorded work that constitutes one of the most intense and vital contributions to modern improvised music.

Hill was born on June 30, 1937, in Port Au Prince, Haiti. His family moved to Chicago when Andrew was four. He started out in music as a boy soprano, singing, playing the organ and tap dancing. For the liner notes accompanying *Judgment*, Andrew said: "I had a little act and made quite a few talent shows around town in 1943, when I was six, until I was ten. I won two turkeys at Thanksgiving parties at the Regal Theatre, sponsored by the *Chicago Defender*, a black newspaper I used to sell on the streets of Chicago."

At the age of 13, Andrew started learning blues changes from baritone saxophonist Pat Patrick. He, like all serious young players, also listened to the best contemporary talents. In the notes for *Black Fire*, Andrew remembers copying the solos of Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk and Art Tatum. "Monk's like Ravel and Debussy to me, in that he's put a lot of personality into his playing, and no matter what the technical contributions of Monk's music are, it is the personality of the music which makes it, finally. Bud is an even greater influence but his music is a dead end. I mean, if you stay with Bud too much, you'll always sound like him, even if you're doing something he never did. Tatum, well, all modern playing is Tatum."

In 1953 Andrew played his first real professional job with Paul Williams' rhythm 'n' blues band, doubling on piano and baritone sax. Over the next seven years Hill's reputation and talent grew as a result of sessions and

recording dates with Von Freeman, Wilbur Ware, Gene Ammons, Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster, Ira Sullivan, Serge Chaloff, the Johnny Griffin-Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis tenor team and Miles Davis. In 1961, Andrew departed from Chicago, hitting the road as Dinah Washington's accompanist.

Landing in New York, Hill backed singers Al Hibbler and Johnny Hartman and worked with such fine horn players as Clifford Jordan, Jackie McLean and Kenny Dorham. Then in 1962, Andrew got a call from Rahsaan Roland Kirk to join his band in Los Angeles. While in the City of Angels, Hill also met and married Laverne Gillette, the talented organist. In 1963 they returned to the more active New York scene.

Once back in the Apple, Hill resumed his productive association with tenorist Joe Henderson. Andrew talked about their woodshedding sessions in the *Black Fire* notes: "We really enjoy playing together. Joe understands me and I understand Joe in the best possible way, that is, we know how to surprise and inspire each other." As a result, Joe used Andrew for his Blue Note date.

During the session Blue Note entrepreneur Alfred Lion was so impressed with the pi-

## ANDREW HILL DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

LIVE AT MONTREUX—Arista/Freedom AL 1023  
 SPIRAL—Arista/Freedom AL 1007  
 DIVINE REVELATION—Inner City IC 2044  
 INVITATION—Inner City IC 2026  
 ONE FOR ONE—Blue Note BN-LA459-H2  
 GRASS ROOTS—Blue Note BST 84303  
 COMPULSION—Blue Note BST 84217  
 POINT OF DEPARTURE—Blue Note BLP 84167  
 SMOKE STACK—Blue Note BST 84160  
 JUDGMENT!—Blue Note BST 84159  
 BLACK FIRE—Blue Note ST 84151

### with Joe Henderson

OUR THING—Blue Note BLP 4152

### with Rahsaan Roland Kirk

DOMINO—Mercury MG 20748

anist's work that he immediately signed Andrew to an exclusive contract. This, starting with *Black Fire*, led to a string of Blue Note albums of Hill originals. Containing some of the most provocative music of the '60s, the settings included such musicians as Joe Henderson, Eric Dolphy, Booker Ervin, Bennie Maupin, Pat Patrick, John Gilmore, Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan, Woody Shaw, Charles Tolliver, Bobby Hutcherson, Richard Davis, Ron Carter, Cecil McBee, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Joe Chambers, Roy Haynes, Freddie Waits and Ben Riley.

Without any new recordings during the early '70s, it seemed that Andrew's career had faded away. Andrew clearly states in the notes for *Invitation* that such an assumption was absolutely false: "Even though I haven't received the promotion the last few years I received when I was with Blue Note, I'm happy to say I have been more active than I have been since I first signed with them. In a sense I haven't been away from the jazz scene, for I have been playing in rural America and the attendance and the audience response have been fantastic."

Andrew's first extended experience with "rural America" was in 1970 when he was appointed Composer in Residence at Colgate University, where his various compositions for string quartet and orchestra were performed. After Colgate, Hill became associated with a performing program sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute. During this period Andrew had a chance to play for audiences not accustomed to hearing jazz. Accepting the challenge, Andrew focused on his music's emotional and communicative dimensions. Andrew summed it up in the notes for *Invitation*: "I'm trying to make music a sensual expression, not an academic experiment."

Happily, Hill has been back in the studio over the last several years with two albums for Inner City and two more for Arista/Freedom. These latest efforts are logical extensions of his pioneering work for Blue Note. They are also important because they are bringing the music of Andrew Hill to a new generation of musicians and listeners.

I met Andrew at the Baldwin showroom in midtown Manhattan, where the pianist was simultaneously trying out pianos and a rhythm section. The stylistic approach was unmistakable. Complex jagged lines, dense harmonic clusters and unpredictable dynamics, textures and tempo shifts combined with echoes of Monk, Bud and Tatum. The pianist's energy attracted an enthused group of Baldwin employees and other interested passers-by who attentively followed each new exploratory probe. After the spirited session, Andrew and I departed for food and conversation.

Though warm and cordial, Andrew was initially reluctant to talk about himself and his music. At first, I attempted to check some of the basic information about his life and career. When I asked, for instance, about the accuracy of his date and place of birth, Andrew replied: "That's what the promotion pieces say. I won't say it wasn't, but I'll save all the details for my book. It may be the same, you know, but I figure there's been enough said about my past. So anything relating to me should, I feel, start at the present." That seemed fair enough.

I then switched the time frame to the present by requesting that Andrew comment on the current state of his art. "Well, I'm too busy



functioning to really describe it. I'm actually too busy doing it to give a general description." I then asked about his compositions.

**Berg:** Your compositions, tunes like *Black Fire*, *One For One* and *Laverne* are quite complex and yet prove marvelous vehicles for improvisation. How do you compose? Is there a routine?

**Hill:** Well, usually when I sit down to write a piece, I write it. Actually writing seems to be a natural talent, so I can really sit down and write all day.

**Berg:** How much writing do you do each day, each week?

**Hill:** It's hard to say. It varies. Right now I'm more in a performing period.

**Berg:** I'm interested in composition in terms of the personnel in different groups. On *Spiral*, for example, you used Lee Konitz, Ted Curson and Robin Kenyatta. When you get together with strong individual talents like those, do you write expressly for them?

**Hill:** Well, I used to write for certain people. But now I try to write so that almost anyone could fit. In other words, just because a person may not have a certain ability for playing it, I don't want to discourage him.

**Berg:** When you're getting ready for a recording session or concert, what kinds of abilities do you want your fellow musicians to have?

**Hill:** Well, people who will play with me. I remember when I was in California during the late 1960s I had a group of musicians who were so stylized they couldn't blend themselves together. That's why I thought I better

**"Things are happening anywhere a person is in space and time. I don't believe that old cliché that New York is where the action is happening. You're living wherever you are."**

get out of the commercial jazz market. Everyone in the group was following a separate style. I wanted to get out of that and find people sensitive enough to want to perform together.

**Berg:** How would you describe your own style?

**Hill:** I'd say interesting . . . happy . . . warm. There was an angry period, but you get tired of pounding the piano. It's too good an instrument.

**Berg:** Let me ask you about *Relativity* from your solo album *Live At Montreux*. What was going through your mind at Montreux? What response do you get from it when you listen to it now?

**Hill:** Well, that was a situation where I just got on the stage and played. There wasn't anything preconceived. I figured that I would just play the piano and enjoy it. That's what I'm trying to do now. You know, I don't need the piano to justify my existence, so I just enjoy it and hope that someone else enjoys it.

**Berg:** Well, music like yours really has that special power that lifts us all.

**Hill:** Yes, good music does. I think the experimentation of the '60s and '70s led to music being utilized for free communication. But the music was separated from the market by different labels. Now we're getting to the point where the new things can be marketed not as a product but as a sensual expression. There are musicians who are academically accurate, but the important ones are those who as people really have a feeling for it.

As far as I'm concerned, my thing is to

create a situation to play in, as interesting a situation as possible. I came to New York to play, to improve myself. I can't forget what I came for. The commercial thing is another matter that you can't let have control over your life.

**Berg:** How do you feel about the direction you're taking now? Your music today, for example, had a mellowness and, as you said, a warmth and a sensual dimension.

**Hill:** Each group takes on a different shape. The group I had today helped me get a light feeling. At other times, the more they open up, the more I open up.

**Berg:** In terms of playing contexts, do you prefer solo or group performances?

**Hill:** Well, variety makes life more interesting. And that's the way I live sometimes. I practice by myself. My wife Laverne plays organ and we perform duets together. Then various musicians come by and play with us.

**Berg:** Let me ask you about influences.

**Hill:** When I was in Chicago I used to listen to Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk and a lot of other individualistic piano players. When I was growing up in Chicago it was for me what New York should have been. It wasn't a simple place to market your wares but the Chicago musicians would get together freely and play. There were people of all ages, musicians who sounded like machines, other musicians not able to play a chord. But all these people got together and played their music and were happy. It was a really good time. Now everyone is so stylized it's hard to play together.

**Berg:** In addition to stylization, there seems

to be a kind of arrogance where some musicians refuse to play with other people. They only want to play within a closed group.

**Hill:** Well, it really isn't the best players who do this most of the time.

**Berg:** It's too bad because there are so many people with different backgrounds who really have a lot to give.

**Hill:** Yeah, like those two guys who were playing with me this afternoon, John Dooley, the bass player, and Al Dorino, the drummer. I met them when I was performing in a club. They approached me about getting something together and I told them that if they could play to come by the house. So if that's something that helps, I'm very open for it.

**Berg:** That's a beautiful attitude. It seems, then, that you wind up playing with all kinds of people in a wide variety of settings.

**Hill:** Yeah, even singers. I love music.

**Berg:** In regard to singers, does it bother you to have to play a more conventional style for accompanying?

**Hill:** It doesn't have to be that way if it's harmonically solid. There are so many things you can get from so many areas. But the strange part about New York is if you do something in one area, the other areas are seemingly closed off to you. This is something that doesn't happen in other cities.

**Berg:** Can you explain that a little more?

**Hill:** Well, if you're called a jazz artist, you're locked into a certain pigeonhole. The word "jazz" is like a curse because it leaves no area for advancement or anything. It's like getting on a merry-go-round. It's such a ri-

diculous situation.

**Berg:** So, you look at yourself as a player of music.

**Hill:** Of music? Yeah. That's why I'm enjoying playing solo piano. Each time I perform, it's different. And it's getting better and better.

**Berg:** Let me ask you about repertory. While focusing on your own compositions, standards keep cropping up as well.

**Hill:** I enjoy standards too. On the *Montreux* album I do Duke's *Come Sunday*. On *Divine Revelation* I do *Here's That Rainy Day*. On *Spiral* Lee Konitz and I perform *Invitation*.

**Berg:** Marvelous tunes. You obviously have a love and respect for standards.

**Hill:** Yes. It's all music. I can't see limiting myself to one harmonic or rhythmic conception.

**Berg:** That seems to me a healthy attitude. You talked earlier about musicians who lock themselves into one stylistic groove. That seems part of the problem because one of the best ways of growing is to explore as many of the great traditions as possible. There are some musicians, for instance, who never play standards.

**Hill:** Well, I can't say what's right for other people. My conception isn't for everybody.

**Berg:** The breadth of your improvisational style intrigues me. With an extended performance like *Relativity*, I hear aspects of all the major approaches and players. I'm wondering about contemporary influences. Who do you now listen to?

**Hill:** I listen to everyone. You know if you listen there's so much they can tell us. There are so many areas, it's just a matter of maturity, of the way you see it.

**Berg:** What do you see for the future?

**Hill:** I'm not a sage. I can hardly see what tomorrow might be. I remember in the '60s I said the foundation starts with the artist. For America I see a lot of possibilities for the arts that only used to be available in Europe. I don't mind walking through it, but I wouldn't want to live there.

**Berg:** Getting back to style, some people have described yours as being dark and brooding primarily because of the dense chords you often use. Would you describe your style that way?

**Hill:** Well, I wouldn't describe it because I'm still trying to be open, you know, to flexibility and change.

**Berg:** Do you feel that New York is the place where the important work and changes are taking place?

**Hill:** No. Things are happening anywhere a person is in space and time. I don't believe that old cliché that New York is where the action is happening. You're living wherever you are. I figure if a person has talent he doesn't have to be in New York. It doesn't matter where he is. New York is too commodity oriented. That's why I find the word "jazz" distasteful. It makes the music into a product.

**Berg:** What would you like to do for your next record?

**Hill:** The next record I do will be for a company that believes in my principles. I'll have to believe in the company. Most record companies have a shortsighted view. They'll spend 50, 60, 70 thousand dollars on some artists, but you've got to sell your soul. They're geared for volume. With me they sell 1000 copies and then the album goes out of print. That's ridiculous. Music shouldn't be dealt with as if it's a commodity. Music should be sensual expression.

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# PIANO PANORAMA

## INSIGHTS INTO THE IVORIES

compiled by len Lyons

**Do you feel that jazz acoustic and electric piano is in a stagnant period now? What possibilities and approaches remain to be developed in the future?**

**BILL EVANS:** I don't really think it's a good question. Until the acoustic and electric piano is proven to be outmoded and becomes of purely historical interest, a question like this doesn't really mean very much. It's a matter of the individual talents involved, and the talents right now on both acoustic and electric are fantastic. There's no possibility that the music could be stagnant.



GIUSEPPE G. PINO

I'm sure people thought that after Bach, Mozart, Scriabin, or after Stravinsky, or after Art Tatum, or after Bud Powell—they always think those boundaries are prescribed by the major talents for a period of time. At one point people thought Coleman Hawkins had done everything that could be done on tenor sax, and then Coltrane came along. There's a limitless possibility as far as I'm concerned, until music is no longer based on the 12-tone tempered scale or something like that.

You could theorize about new approaches, but until some exceptional talent comes along and *does* whatever-it-is, there's nothing to say. It's defined by the doing. I get a little angry at people whose preoccupation is modernity—always advancing. If it isn't like forging into the future, don't pay it any attention. Making the criterion avant garde-ness has gotten to be almost a sickness. Most iconoclasts are not great contributors in the long run, although they're contributors to progress. Usually, it's the eclectic person who arranges these things afterwards, like Satie and Debussy. Debussy crystallized, refined, and brought to full virtuosity the raw, primitive idea. Of course, some people may prefer Satie, but—generally—that would be an example. Who's 18 □ down beat

the most modern? I'd rather have people ask, "Who's saying the most? Who's making the most beautiful music?"

**RAMSEY LEWIS:** Great question, except I don't think we're in a stagnant period. Electric piano may have reached its own level for a while, even though it's been more popular than acoustic for the past few years. I was surprised to find out how many of the young piano players have been weaned on electric. A lot of players in name groups—I won't mention the names because they're not too proud of it—learned on electric. Later, they found out they were limited in terms of how far their musical taste could go, because they couldn't expose themselves to piano literature. They couldn't develop chops on the keyboard because electric piano doesn't demand that of you. Rather than a period of stagnation, therefore, we're in a period of reckoning. Now pianists are saying there must be more we can do, and we're not going to be able to do it all on electric piano.

Acoustic piano is growing more popular. At least two or three supergroup pianists I've come across in recent months have asked me what exercise books I'd recommend to them for getting into acoustic piano. If I told you their names, it would floor you. They sound flawless on electric, but on acoustic their technique is slow, choppy, uneven—with no tone. So this is a great day for the acoustic piano. But it's a great day for electric, too, because it's finding its proper place. It's always going to be here. Keyboard effects will also be here. But they'll never come up with anything like the traditional acoustic piano.

On new approaches, I don't know if you're putting the cart before the horse. I don't see a hell of a lot of players who have mastered the piano. Some have come close to playing everything they want to play: Vladimir Horowitz, Art Tatum, maybe Oscar Peterson. I can't begin to think about new approaches until the instrument itself has been mastered, until piano players as a group can perform all the music that exists now. When you master the instrument, your total concept will include playing percussively, playing loosely, dynamically, fast, slow—being the compleat pianist. When the day comes that the piano no longer offers us a challenge, we can start thinking about different approaches. Right now, there's 99 thousand times 99 thousand different ways to play the piano.

**PATRICE RUSHEN:** The music may have reached a temporary plateau. Music always seems to go through periods of development and settling. We're coming into the end of a

period of settling, I think. The problem today is that younger players—because of the way things are economically—aren't in the same position as the young players were in the '60s. I'm the age now that Keith Jarrett and Herbie Hancock and that generation were then. The musical environment now doesn't lend itself to the same preparation they went through—really mastering changes, melodic approaches, and the acoustic piano. They had the important musical elements together before they went on to experiment with other things. The demand on younger players is to jump right in. We don't have the intense playing situation of working with masters of improvisation, as say Herbie did with Miles and Donald Byrd.



You get out of school and the first thing you think about is security. How am I going to make it as a musician? The alternatives are studio work and recording—as opposed to playing six nights a week in a club. Who would want to do that now? Who could afford to do it? Studio work requires you to be able to jump into anything: synthesizers, electric keyboard stylings. You never get any one thing together unless you make it your business to find the time. Maybe an honest to goodness jazz education in the school system would help. I don't mean one lecture a week on the blues, either, but the actual players teaching in the curriculum—The Dizzys, Donald Byrds, Quincy Jones, and so on. I think there are approaches to be developed through the educational system. In school is where the interest usually starts.

It's really hard to say anything about playing styles in the future, because it's the leaders who would have to inspire energy for new approaches. I'm not faulting them, but it's a drag for the people who are looking up to them to see what they're doing and feel we have to go that way, too. . . . Right now, there's not any demand for mastery of the instrument. If you have a decent chordal vocabulary and a decent facility, you can get a gig. If you get a good gig, you lay right there. The demand to reach a new level of advancement isn't there as it was before. There are so many diversions right now.

**PAUL BLEY:** I'd like to answer that question by speaking of an instrument: the Yamaha electric concert grand. This instrument takes the acoustic grand as its sound-model. The fact that the sound is 100% contained in wire makes it suitable for modulation and treatment. It's going to outdate most of the other electric pianos in terms of what piano players have wanted for a long time: a touch control keyboard with real piano action. We're dealing with an instrumental problem in that we have better performers than we have instruments on electric piano today. I



JAN PERSSON

think the players are waiting with needs that the manufacturers are just beginning to fill.

**MCCOY TYNER:** Many people have made statements to the effect that there's nothing left to be explored—and that's why they went over to electric instruments. I disagree. The music isn't stagnant from the acoustic point of view. There's so much that remains to be explored. If one is in touch with the times, with what's going on around you, with nature—in tune with what's going on—the music has got to change. It changes with the times. And by "what's going on," I don't mean the Top 40. I mean being in touch with the environment.

Standards have decreased. When I was coming up, guys loved to play for the sake of playing and for the sake of developing their art. Now it's more of a business. Of course, business should be involved, but it's still an art form. There should be some way to adjust one's priorities so the business doesn't overtake the artistic end of it. That way the music



will stay fresh and inspired.

Yes, there are definitely things (new approaches) I want to explore with the acoustic piano. They're still untapped. I know what I want to hear, but I can't really put that into words. Music is another language anyway, so words are very limiting. When you think artistically, you're never sure of the next step; it should be that way. There's got to be a little apprehension or element of surprise in your artistic movements. But there is a lot left to be done. Just look at the last 15 years and see how the approaches have changed and developed. There's more to come.

**JOSEF ZAWINUL:** I'd like to be very honest about it. I think acoustic piano is in a more stagnant period than any other instrument. Except for Cecil Taylor, there hasn't been anything really new in jazz piano playing. When Keith got away from playing with the band and did those Cologne concerts, I don't think there was any great improvement there. People take all that a bit too seriously. Well, I don't want to get into criticizing anybody, because there's probably something lacking in

everybody. As far as I'm concerned, the last complete knockout solo piano player with a completely new approach to jazz playing was Art Tatum. I'm talking about jazz piano, not somebody playing pseudo-classical music. McCoy is a giant on the instrument, a monster. He's one of my favorites, but I don't think he's done anything very different in the past couple of years than he did eight or nine years ago. He's getting a lot better and developing what he's got, but there are a lot of masters of the instrument now: McCoy, Herbie, Chick, Oscar Peterson. Still, if there's something new—and I mean non-derivative, completely original—I haven't heard it. For me, Cecil is the only one who completely kills me. He's a composer of the first rank.

Again, I want to be honest with you without seeming that I'm putting myself ahead of anybody else, but I sincerely feel that I'm doing something different on acoustic piano. I'm working on a new way of playing solo jazz



HERB NOLAN

piano. The whole secret is in the left hand. It's not stride but a different way of playing rhythm with the left hand that's maybe stronger and more modern. I have some tapes done, but I'm still working on it and it will take some time. When it comes out, you'll know about it.

**CHICK COREA:** Of course it's not stagnant. Listen to Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, Dave Sancious, Jan Hammer, and George Duke.

The possibilities of development and expansion on these instruments are as wide as the imagination of the artists using them. I see a great future for the instruments.

**HERBIE HANCOCK:** I don't think either electric or acoustic is in a stagnant period, although there are some new ways we could go—like the interweaving of electronic and acoustic music. Technology is good enough for us to break down the distinction now. Even if you can't carry around your own grand, you can get the sound with the Yamaha electric grand, which sounds like an acoustic grand to me. See, the acoustic grand is not meant to be amplified electronically, which is necessary today. The Yamaha is also small enough so that it doesn't crowd the other instruments off the stage.

Another new direction is away from the individual instruments standing out solo. In the early '60s the melody was something you sort of played out of habit, and then you'd forget about it and go from one improvisation to the next. The melody gave you a place to start. Now there's more attention to the whole *sound* of the music, which requires a different kind of thinking at the piano. It's not so much what the instrument can do on its own, but how it can function in the context of the music as a whole. That's a new emphasis for the key-

board player. I think Joe Zawinul and Chick Corea are emphasizing that role. There's a question of values here. Which is more important, to know that someone in particular is at the piano, or for the music to sound good? By



JIM MARSHALL

the way, the pianists I've mentioned haven't lost any of their ability to play as soloists as a result of getting into a more group-oriented sound. I'm not suggesting this is the only playing one should do, but it is a new direction we might continue in.

**GEORGE SHEARING:** Acoustic/electric? Therein lies the first enigma. I can't deal with them together. The individual personality of the performer disappears on electric into that pre-set sound which every pianist must live with if he wants to play that instrument. I don't really believe the acoustic piano is stagnant. Why must we look for something different if what we have is good? It's true that if we never searched we'd still be living with outdoor plumbing. We'd also still be living with J. S. Bach, and what would be so bad about that? The only thing that something different guarantees us is something different. It may not be anything good.

I can't foresee any new approaches. I guess if I could and I thought they'd be successful, I'd do whatever it is myself. I think Erroll Garner, God rest his soul, might have brought something new to the electric—if he had played it. He had such an original and—at times—unpianistic approach.

**BILLY TAYLOR:** There have been some definite advances recently in the exploration of the acoustic piano, usually by means of devices used in other areas. For example, Chick Corea recently did some serious exploration of his Hispanic background (*My Spanish Heart*) using different styles of music. Keith Jarrett has been looking into textures more usually associated with impressionistic concert music. His touch reflects that kind of interest. The late Erroll Garner left a legacy of things that are currently being explored by pianists who found his rhythmic technique applicable to contemporary playing. I think we'll see more of this because after the death of a famous jazz artist, and a great one, his records are played more often and people see again the elements that made him important.

In my own work on the acoustic piano—especially solo—I'm doing some things that I don't hear anyone else doing. And in the trio, I've actually gone back to some things I did when I was working with Mingus: using a wider range of technical things in the left hand without getting in the bass player's way. I see a tremendous interest growing in the tonal possibilities of the acoustic piano, too, mostly because of the new systems of full keyboard amplification.

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**"... I don't know what 'bebop' means. I don't separate one era of jazz from another because I listen to everybody. . . . Everybody takes from everybody else and adds their own thing and goes on from there."**

# SONNY CRISS

## UP FROM THE UNDERGROUND

by howard mandel

**"T**he jazz musician doesn't have an easy life. I decided very young that I had something that gave me a lot of pleasure—and if playing does that for *me*, I assume that it can give other people pleasure, too. I decided to stick with it and figure out how to get that pleasure to those people."

So says Sonny Criss, who justifiably considers himself a survivor. His first jazz audiences were in postwar California, and his earliest music remains available through bootlegs and on anthologies. During the '50s Criss toured with Jazz at the Philharmonic, joined Buddy Rich's small group, toured with Stan Kenton and recorded on Imperial and Peacock. Then there was a period of silence from the altoist whose lightning speed, fast tongue and fingers, sharp tone and free-streaming imagination seemed full grown when he was in his early 20s.

Criss emerged from that silence (which was actually time spent in Europe, where he earned the standard expatriate's welcome) to record a series of highly identifiable LPs for Prestige through '69. Then came another silence, brought on by dark problems. And then 1975 saw a re-emergence. Criss scored with three recording sessions on two different labels, and contracted with a third.

Best yet, he took to the road again. To walk in on the dapper Mr. Criss blowing golden blues and silvery ballads, almost inhaling a passing run to breathe it out freshly phrased, is to experience the thrill of discovery that's at the heart of jazz listening.

And to speak with the man, whose urbanity covers a somewhat shy sensitivity, is a delight and an education.

**Criss:** The last few years have been fantastic for me. A lot of people are just now discovering me, and a lot of people who are hearing me on records never had the opportunity to hear me before. I think they're quite pleased because, even though records can be very exciting, an in person appearance *can* be a disappointment. Or it can be even better than a record. I think people are surprised because they like my records, then they find out my in person thing is good, too.

**Mandel:** Would you think about touring as on *Warm And Sonny*, with violins, electric guitars and electric pianos?

**Criss:** As long as we didn't get too far into the electric thing. I don't have any objections to an electric piano, as long as an acoustic piano is available, too. And the guitars, of course, have always been accepted in jazz, it just depends on who's playing them. It could be done, and I wouldn't mind doing it. The 20 □ down beat



ALAIN BETEX

### SELECTED CRISS DISCOGRAPHY

- as a leader**  
 SATURDAY MORNING—Xanadu 105  
 CRISSCRAFT—Muse 5068  
 OUT OF NOWHERE—Muse 5089  
 WARM AND SONNY—Impulse ASD-9312  
 SONNY'S DREAM—Prestige 7576  
 UP UP AND AWAY—Prestige 7530
- featured**  
 BLACK CALIFORNIA—Arista/Savoy SJL 2215  
 WEST COAST JAZZ CONCERT—Savoy 12196

only thing I would object to is if I were forced into some kind of format that would make me change my approach. As long as that doesn't happen, I couldn't care less, as long as the music is *good*.

What has happened, I think, in the last 10 or 15 years is that some jazz records have reached a greater number of people simply because of the background that was used, or the rhythm patterns. A thing like *The Sidewinder*—remember that? Lee Morgan never changed the way he played, it was just the way it was beat out.

You have to be careful when you go about categorizing music, especially jazz. There's the old myth that jazz can't be danced to, which is completely erroneous. I want to know what they think people were doing when Ellington was coming along. That's the greatest dance band the world has ever known. People danced to it.

If you have strong soloists who know their own direction and approach it doesn't matter who you put in back of them. I pick up things from my sidemen, if they're really doing their thing. This inspires me to create, because I have to be pushed into something musically. If I hear something and it effects me in a certain way, then I'll play a certain way. It's not going to change what I do basically, but it will make me feel a lot different.

Of course, I understand what you're getting at. One of the things that's confusing is that you have people in this business putting labels on things—calling it jazz and it's really not jazz. This serves to confuse people who are not really aware of what is going on.

Next, your question is what is jazz, right? I'm not going to give you a definition. I really don't care about it. I really don't. I decided a long time ago to stop giving definitions of "jazz." When somebody who doesn't know what I do, even musicians, ask me what kind of music I play, I tell them: "Sometimes I play really *good* music; sometimes it's not so good." Most of the time I can play anything I want to, but there are times I'm not satisfied with myself, and I think that's true of anybody.

**Mandel:** What throws you off?

**Criss:** I can't really tell. There have been times—and this seems to be true for all the musicians I've talked to—sometimes you get to work and say, wow, I feel like I'm going to really do it tonight. Then you play, and it's alright, nobody else knows, but in your own mind it isn't what you wanted to do. Then there are other times I think the show is a drag, and I walk off and the audience is going: "Whoooo! Marvelous, marvelous!"

You just can't tell exactly what's going to happen or how you're going to feel. There's no way. And if you could, that would take all the excitement out of it. There are so many things involved. Many times the people who are listening to you can inspire you to play things you don't normally play. Many, many times that can affect you, when the people really tune into you and the communication is so . . . complete . . . between the performer and the audience that the performer just floats off and the audience does too. They just float off and roost in some other place. That's nice.

**Mandel:** In the recording studio, does the empathy with your colleagues substitute for

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# RECORD REVIEWS

Ratings are:

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

## SONNY FORTUNE

WAVES OF DREAMS—Horizon A&M SP 711: *Seeing Beyond The Obvious; A Space In Time; In Waves Of Dreams; Revelation; Thoughts.*

Personnel: Fortune, alto and soprano saxes, flute, miniMoog, percussion; Charles Sullivan, trumpet and flugelhorn; Michael Cochran, acoustic and Rhodes electric pianos; Buster Williams, bass; Chip Lyle, drums; Angel Allende, congas, triangle, bombo, conga, shell; Clifford Coulter, miniMoog and Arp Odyssey synthesizers (tracks 3 and 5).

\*\*\*\*\*

Congratulations to Fortune and company on another well-crafted album. Fortune and Sullivan have now fronted four LPs that continue the modification of the basic jazz song format, allowing soloists to negotiate attractive melodies while an electronically spruced-up rhythm section holds steady the middling pace set by thoughtful arrangements.

Fortune and Sullivan are among a handful of players currently consolidating the experiments of the '60s. Of all Trane's lasting contributions, perhaps the greatest to the future of improvised music was his example of spiritual integrity and physical drive. Sonny blows with both. The incorporation of the synthesizer as a keyboard effects instrument into improvisatory settings is a task attractive to many leaders (or is it record producers?), and Fortune takes a chance by trying his hand at the dials.

Additionally, Fortune and Sullivan bring to their current efforts the straightforward sensibilities of musicians raised in '50s small ensembles. Both are strong technicians, eager to outdo their previous feats each time out. Of their cohorts, Williams is one of the most agile younger bassists. Allende and Lyle both appeared on Sonny's previous Horizon disc.

Sonny's compositions are becoming familiar, their characteristics recognizable as well as a bit predictable. But if his odd time signatures aren't startling, it's because they work so smoothly. The recording quality is a delight, clear and with some depth. Cochran's electric piano adds gloss to the warm, close sound of the horns.

Of the tunes, *Seeing Beyond The Obvious* races right to its point. *A Space In Time* is a lovely ballad with Fortune receiving mere trio support. The title cut is nicely programmed, the electronics retiring to the background after announcing themselves. *Revelations*, with irresistible flute and flugelhorn instrumentation, is as light as a samba. The theme of *Thoughts* rises and falls like an inspiration, embellished by Coulter. I think Lyle should have beat up a storm behind the electronics, but he didn't.

This session isn't a groundbreaker—everyone has done his foundation work—but the musicians are advancing a grand tradition, as Silver and Blakey and Hamilton did a generation ago. If you haven't heard what Fortune is up to, check him out; you might come away humming. —mandel

22 □ down beat

## STANLEY TURRENTINE

THE MAN WITH THE SAD FACE—Fantasy F 9519: *Evil Ways; The Man With The Sad Face; Ligia; You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine; I Want You; Whatever Possess'd Me; Love Hangover; Mighty High.*

Personnel: Turrentine, tenor sax; Paul Griffin, acoustic and electric piano; John Miller, acoustic piano (tracks 2, 6); Eric Gale, Cornell Dupree, guitars; Bob Babbitt, electric bass; Ron Carter, acoustic bass (tracks 2, 3); Buster Williams, acoustic bass (track 6); Charles Collins, drums; Idris Muhammad, drums (tracks 2, 6); Crusher Bennett, conga drums, percussion; David Carey, vibes (tracks 1, 5, 7); Richard Trifan, synthesizers (tracks 1, 5, 7); Kenny Williams, Vivian Cherry, Lani Groves, Maeretha Stewart, background vocals; Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff, Tommy Turrentine, trumpets, flugelhorns; Wayne Andre, Tom Malone, Barry Rogers, trombones; Peter Phillips, bass trombone; James Buffington, Bob Carlisle, french horns; George Young, alto sax, flute, bass flute, piccolo; Lou Del Gatto, baritone sax, english horn, flute, oboe; Gene Orloff (concertmaster), Aaron Rosand, Guy Lumia, Emanuel Green, Tony Posk, Harold Kohn, Joseph Malignaggi, Norman Carr, Peter Dimitriades, Raoul Poliakin, Julius Brand, violins; Julien Barber, La Mar Alsop, Richard Maximoff, Mitsue Takayama, Theodore Israel, violas; Jesse Levy, Maurice Bialkin, Anthony Sophos, Ted Hoyle, cellos.

\* 1/2

Lookout Salsoul Orchestra!—Stanley Turrentine's comin' ta getcha! Yes folks, this may well be the most distinguished cast that ever bothered to lend its class to trash, spelled c-a-s-h. If there remain any lingering doubts that musicians of the caliber of Jon Faddis, Ron Carter or Buster Williams would stoop to perform on an album dominated by pure unadulterated disco pap, those qualms are hereby laid to rest. As dubious consolation it must be added that this production is as slick as a greased weasel; if anyone is capable of rendering more polished, technically proficient disco it could only be the Chicago Symphony—perish the thought—or possibly Mantovani. There are lush plush strings galore, arranged and conducted by David Van De Pitte, who deserves at least equal billing for whatever it's worth, and to judge by Billboard's current jazz list it's worth plenty.

Yet there is still a touch of saving grace, sandwiched between tributes to Gamble-Huff, Diana Ross and the almighty dollar, by way of a couple of ballads by Jobim and Tadd Dameron, and in the performance of Turrentine himself, who manages to impart an occasional modicum of taste to even the most insipid material.

In fairness to Msrs. Carter and Williams they are featured on only a couple of tunes—the best ones natch—and Buster's bass on *Whatever Possess'd Me* is the tastiest work on the album. Unfortunately that's not saying much, particularly as there is nary a solo voice to be heard save for Stanley's, and the ensemble playing sounds so canned that the various credits seem unwarranted but for the chance to do some namedropping. I don't know who the man with the sad face is supposed to be, but if I had to play this stuff for a living I might look a little dolorous myself. —birnbaum

## PHIL WOODS WITH THE CHRIS GUNNING ORCHESTRA

FLORESTA CANTO—RCA BGL1-1800: *Canto De Ossanha (Let Go); Let Me; O Morro; Chaldean Prayer; Sails; Roses; Without You; Portrait Of Julia; Jesse; Menino das Laranjas.*

Personnel: Woods, alto sax and orchestration arrangements; Chris Gunning, orchestration and arrangements; Gordon Beck, keyboards; Alf Bigden, Chris Karan, drums; Daryl Runswick, Dave Markee, acoustic and electric bass; Tony Fisher, trumpet; Nat

Peck, trombone; Roy Wilox, flute; Jack Rothstein, violin and concertmaster; Kenny Wheeler, trumpet; Toney Coe, sax; Stan Salzman, sax; Bob Efford, sax; Chris Pyne, trombone; Louis Jardim, caxixi, guiro, quica, cabasa, claves, temple blocks, wooden agogo, triangle; Tony Uter, congas, guiro; Robin Jones, tambourine, caxixi, cabasa, pandeiro; Tony Carr, choco-lo, timbales, cabasa, maracas; Chris Karan, triangle, windchimes, claves.

\* \* 1/2

Ever notice lately how the "Latin jazz" idiom is being overworked, taxed and crowded by thoughtless commercial purveyors who sniff money, and not culture? I hesitate leveling that charge at Phil Woods, solely out of fondness for the mountain of fine music he has made in the past, but, nevertheless, *Floresta Canto* does boldly bear his name. Perhaps, were it not for the inner sleeve's endless gibberish about this being a genuine Brazilian record with authentic percussive "flavor," it might not seem such an overblown, off-target affair. Perhaps, but doubtful, given Chris Gunning's orchestral and arranging skills.

Gunning's style has about as much verve as Don Costa's, or in other words, about as much verve as a disco dance for the dead. His intentions are simply impenetrable: Either he uses (make that *misuses*) orchestration as an extraneous voice, a crowded amplification device, or he wildly gashes a passage with a grain contrary to the soloist's effect. In the hands of Toshiko Akiyoshi, Gil Evans, Carla Bley, or George Russell, such counterpoles can be meaningful, or at least captivating. Here, they're merely silly and detractive. And forget all that brouhaha about the rhythm section; they have about as much personality—and less presence—than a carton of metronomes. The drummers carry the weight.

Time and again, Phil Woods is *Floresta Canto*'s sole redemption, though not enough to recommend it as a stocking stuffer. When Woods plays here, he does so without compromise and with characteristic colorfulness. Trying to find him sometimes, however, is like trying to pick out the cutest monster in a Bosch nightmare. With all that density, who can tell? *Without You* is Woods' most direct, moving performance this time out, probably because it's his only composition, and his exceptional lyricism is never more apparent than on his own material. Why he insists on covering so much of Janis Ian's ilk (two doses here, which are two too many) is incomprehensible, but it makes about as much sense in a bossa nova context as Barry Manilow selections would.

Either a lot less Chris Gunning, leaving Woods some room to move with the excellent drum and bass duos and pianist Gordon Beck, or a lot more Jones-Lewis style stompers like *Menino das Laranjas* and *O Morro*, and *Floresta Canto* might have been a treat. As it is, its cosmetic structures belie its claims to authenticity, and its disparate designs denote the project a sad failure. —gilmore

## ART LANDE

RUBISA PATROL—ECM 1081: *Celestial Guests; Many Chinas; Jaimi's Birthday Song; Romany; Bulgarian Folk Tune; Corinthian Melodies; For Nancy; Jaimi's Birthday Song; A Monk In His Simple Room.*

Personnel: Lande, piano; Mark Isham, trumpet, flugelhorn, soprano sax; Bill Douglass, bass, flute, bamboo flute; Glenn Cronkhite, drums, percussion.

\* \* \* \*

In *Rubisa Patrol*, Art Lande presents a set of impressionistic chamber pieces for quartet. Played with precision and finesse, the group demonstrates an impressive maturity and

versatility. There are, however, several shortcomings.

The cool and subdued ambience of the music is unrelieved except for the refreshingly energetic *Bulgarian Folk Tune*. What is needed is more fire and passion, more emotional contours. Another problem involves trumpeter Mark Isham. While a more than competent player, Isham is too much under the spell of Miles, vintage *Kind Of Blue*. The smoky tone, high register staccato jabs and sustained notes that fall away into nothingness are just too close for comfort. Fortunately, there is much to praise.

Lande is an excellent pianist somewhat in the Bill Evans' tradition whose technique and lyrical sense give his work an admirable free-flowing romantic quality. His fluid efforts in *For Nancy* and *Jaimi's Birthday Song* are especially effective. Bill Douglass shows off remarkable versatility as a fine bassist and outstanding flutist. His resonant flute sound and melodic inventiveness are prominently displayed in *Jaimi's Birthday Song*. Isham, in addition to playing trumpet and flugelhorn, proves himself a fluent soprano saxophonist through his nimble fingering of the catchy *Bulgarian Folk Tune*. Drummer Glenn Cronkhite is a subtle colorist who propels the pulse with a light but sure touch. —berg

## ROY AYERS UBIQUITY

EVERYBODY LOVES THE SUNSHINE—Polydor PD-1-6070: *Hey Uh-What You Say Come On; The Golden Rod; Keep On Walking; You And Me My Love; The Third Eye; It Ain't Your Sign It's Your Mind; People And The World; Everybody Loves The Sunshine; Tongue Power; Lonesome Cowboy.*

Personnel: Ayers, vibes, vocals, keyboards, percussion; Philip Woo, keyboards; Ronald "Head" Drayton, guitar; John "Shaun" Solomon, electric bass; Doug Rhodes, drums; Chano O'Ferral, percussion, vocals; Chicas, vocals.

★ ½

VIBRATIONS—Polydor PD-1-6091: *Domelo (Give It To Me); Baby I Need Your Love; Higher; The Memory; Come Out And Play; Better Days; Searching; One Sweet Love To Remember; Vibrations; Moving; Grooving; Baby You Give Me A Feeling.*

Personnel: Ayers, vibes, vocals, keyboards, percussion; Philip Woo, keyboards, harmonica; Calvin Banks, guitar; William Allen, bass; Steve Cobb, drums; Justo Almarino, tenor sax; John Mosley, trumpet; Chano O'Ferral, percussion; Chicas, vocals, percussion. Additional personnel: Edwin Birdsong, vocals; Ricky Lawson, Bernard Purdy, Dennis Davis, Marvin Sparks, drums; Greg Phillinganes, keyboards; Byron Miller, bass; Lew Soloff, trumpet; Ronald Drayton, Chuck Anthony, guitar; Janice Fletcher, background vocals.

★ ½

There is a strong temptation to quickly dismiss both of these albums with a particularly accurate "no rating," since they are tripping blithely through a terrain that I imagine holds little interest for *db* readers. (In fact, I've been known to walk out of restaurants for no other reason than stuff like this coming over the loudspeaker.) Both records are smooth-flowing assemblages of soul songs and r&b-styled expressions of the most pitifully saccharine jive; both are unredeemed by the slickly unimaginative instrumental competence. Yet even within the chosen genre, Ubiquity's albums don't measure up, either to their host of influences or to the hordes of their current competition (of which War, Rufus and the Three Degrees are only among the most obvious).

Roy Ayers, at one time, was a vibist; he came to public attention in the '60s, when a distinctly modern approach to the instrument was being hammered out by Gary Burton on one hand and Bobby Hutcherson on another. Ayers, noted for his unusually nimble playing, got lost in the

shuffle. Now, though, Ayers is a producer-songwriter first, a passable vocalist second, a pianist-synthesizerist third and finally, for maybe a third of the tunes on both albums, a now rather wan-sounding vibist. He solos on just a few selections—reaching the merest intimations of depth on only *Vibrations'* title tune—and trucks out the woodpile for only a handful more, apparently content to rest on his limited, uneventful piano impersonations.

The rest of this vinylized waste—my word, just *look* at the titles—shuffles and chunks in and out of disco settings and the kind of torrid emotional fervor best exemplified by the Hues Corporation. It reaches out for a touch of Sergio Mendes here, a bit of wanderlust there, and dreams of big bucks everywhere. A good starting point is *Sunshine's* first "tune," which re-

peats the Proustian refrain "Hey uh-what you say come on" for several minutes. Something like the ballad *Keep On Walking*, by current impoverished standards of songwriting, is OK; by any other standards, of course, it's miserable, and as creative music . . . well, we're in another ball park there.

A couple of tracks on *Vibrations* are more promising—you decide which ones—but mostly it's the same old love tripe, doggerel lyrics and somnolent melodies. The entire ubiquitous experience ends with *Baby You Give Me A Feeling*. Man, it gives me a pain.

The name of Ayers' group (Ubiquity) is fine—this muzak is everywhere, dammit, as prevalent as fast-food chains on the national scene. And Ubiquity's LPs are to your mind what a Big Mac is to your belly. You deserve a break. —tesser

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Capitol

## PAT MARTINO

WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN—Muse 5090: *Open Road (Olee, Variations And Song, Open Road); Lament; We'll Be Together Again; You Don't Know What Love Is; Dreamsville; Send In The Clowns; Willow Weep For Me.*

Personnel: Martino, guitar; Gil Goldstein, electric piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Each title here refers to some bluesy aspect of busted love—possessed of a gentle beauty, mournful and unreconciled, unwilling realization, reverie and regret mixed with resistance and a touch of ironic self-pity.

Martino hits critics squarely on the head, asserting in his notes that "True Music, like all true Art/ is an experience to be shared, not judged/for praise cannot make it better/as blame cannot make it worse." Though the musician is no poet, in consideration of his sentiment this album is entirely worthy of experiencing and sharing. It is empathetic and healing, a balm for troubles and a serious complement to stolen moments of sensuality, though the program is unceasingly lovelorn.

And praise is not meant to make the music better, but to alert potential listeners that a dedicated improviser with taut, crystal clear technique has never sounded more involved with his music. His imagination, speed, taste, and time would be nothing without the projection of feeling he achieves.

Gil Goldstein's piano adds harmonic depth to Pat's lonely single note lines. He plays like a shadow, emerging as a presence during the *Road* passages, and Martino all but upstages him by comping simply, brushing out chords. There's no way to judge the pianist's contribution other than to relax and admire his uncluttered performance.

This LP is as close to quiet as music comes. It most certainly was recorded in a hush.

—mandel

## GRAHAM PARKER & THE RUMOUR

HEAT TREATMENT—Mercury SRM 1-1117: *Heat Treatment; That's What They All Say; Turned Up Too Late; Black Honey; Hotel Chambermaid; Pourin' It All Out; Back Door Love; Something You're Going Through; Help Me Shake It; Fools' Gold.*

Personnel: Parker, acoustic and electric guitars, vocals; Bob Andrews, keyboards, background vocals; Brinsley Schwarz, guitar, background vocals; Stephen Goulding, drums, percussion, background vocals; Andrew Bodner, bass; Martin Belmont, guitar, background vocals; John Earle, saxes; Danny Ellis, trombones; Albe Donnelly, saxes; Dick Hanson, trumpet.

★ ★ ★ ★

Graham Parker's first album, *Howlin Wind*, raised more than a few critical eyebrows: It raised a library of comparisons (from Bruce Springsteen and Van Morrison to Bob Dylan and Mick Jagger) and the unavoidable question of whether it was a masterpiece or a fluke. Certainly it was an impressive debut, but then Parker had been writing songs for years, easily enough to skim the cream for a powerhouse first outing. Where, some critics asked, did Parker's *real* loyalty lie, in reggae or rockabilly, swing or soul? Graham barely gave the questions a chance to settle in; he and his band the Rumour toured native England, shipped out for a handful of European and American dates—all stirring a storm of rave reviews—and almost immediately released a followup album, *Heat Treatment*, a gutsy, ram-paging musical punch in the stomach.

As one might expect, *Heat Treatment*'s material is less immediately infectious, less savory, but the performances and overall sound

are more cohesive, more upfront. While Parker's diverse influences are equally apparent, he's tied the loose ends together and presented a more balanced, personalized sound, unified by a common emotive vocal quality. Graham is a soul singer, much in the same way that Jagger and Dylan are: raspy, drawling, insinuating, and expressive. Whether he's raging in his undisguised Dylan apocalyptic vein (*That's What They All Say*) or prowling nastily for sexual prey (*Hotel Chambermaid* and *Back Door Love*), the quality of feeling remains feverish and uncontrived.

The Rumour, comprised principally of alumni from Brinsley Schwarz and Ducks Deluxe, are the rarest of backup bands, supplying respectful supportive ambience while retaining a separate personality all their own. One moment they sound like Dylan's *Highway 61* band, seconds later like the Motown house regulars, but never forfeiting their resiliency for anonymity. Reportedly they have their own album in the offing and plan to tour independently of Parker. Although any permanent separation of the two forces would be a grievous loss, Parker's talents are formidable enough to insure his durability. If he is admittedly derivative, he can hardly be accused of being artificial. His derivation, like the act of emulation, is a process of discovery and revelation. It shines a beneficent, loving light upon his sources while illuminating his own profile. Graham Parker was unquestionably, in my mind, the rock 'n' roll *wunderkind* of 1976. He may not be the next big thing, but he's damn nice to have around. —gilmore

## RALPH MACDONALD

SOUND OF A DRUM—Marlin 2202: *Sound Of A Drum; Where Is The Love; The Only Time You Say You Love Me; Jam On The Groove; Mister Magic; Calypso Breakdown.*

Personnel: MacDonald, conga, bongo, quica, assorted percussion; Grover Washington, Jr., soprano and tenor sax; Chuck Rainey, electric bass; Eric Gale, guitar; Richard Tee, Arthur Jenkins (track 3), piano; Rick Marotta, drums; William Eaton, vocals; Nicholas Marrero, timbales; Dave Friedman, vibes; William Salter, upright bass; Clinton Thobourne, clarinet; Urias Fritz, bottle; Harold Vick, Joe Farrell, Seldon Powell, Kiane Zawadi, Jimmy Owens, Vergil Jones, horn section; Alfred Brown, Sanford Allen, Gene Orloff, Julien Barber, Matthew Raimondi, Selwart Clarke, Papp Gershman, Max Pollikoff, Emanuel Green, Harry Lookofsky, strings; Kermit Moore, Jesse Levy, cello; Patti Austin, Zachary Sanders, Vivian Cherry, Raymond Simpson, Gwen Guthrie, Frank Floyd (track 2), vocals; David Carey, orchestra bells.

★ ★ ★ ★

MacDonald, a master percussionist whose array of rhythmic artifacts has backed up just about every type of singer imaginable, has produced his first solo effort. On seeing this record invade the disco charts immediately upon its release, it was expected that here was another pile of hackneyed clichés with tiresome chord changes, banal chants from chanteuses, and similar abuses.

Yes, there still is something sacred, for MacDonald has proven that it is quite possible to produce an album quite danceable, yet innovative as well. It is no sin to get up on the floor to a toe-tapper like *Calypso Breakdown*, for instance, with its frantic clarinet, jingling cowbells, and pounding congas. The type of music that probably initiated dance to begin with, its infectious tempos are duplicated many times over on this disc.

The title cut, *Sound Of A Drum*, deceives, with its minor chord suspended note intro. Yet that mood is soon swept away by a Washington solo underlaid by a seemingly endless

array of percussive artifacts; bells, spoons, congas, etc. Grover, who in all honesty falls into ruts unless he is inspired, blows his rump off here. In the middle of such reputable company, he gets better.

By means of his sheer virtuosity, MacDonald manages to keep each track constantly changing, bobbing and moving. The South American bell-like quica is used adeptly to underscore *The Only Time You Say You Love Me*, a mellow number; a bout with the spoons rescues a slightly clichéd horn section on *Jam On The Groove*, and the combination of vibes, conga, straight traps and timbales during *Mister Magic* is a joy to behold; the percussion section has as many layers as a chocolate cake. —shaw

## HARRY EDISON

EDISON'S LIGHTS—Pablo 2310 780: *Edison's Lights; Ain't Misbehavin'; Avalon; E; Helena's Theme; Homegrown; Spring Is Here; On The Trail.*

Personnel: Edison, trumpet; Eddie Lockjaw Davis, tenor sax; Count Basie (tracks 1-4), Dolo Coker (tracks 5-8), piano; John Heard, bass; Jimmy Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Two approaches to musical economy are presented here. First, Edison, whose ability to develop a solo as if it was a study in one note is well known. And second, Basie, whose ability to avoid notes altogether is a similarly celebrated trademark.

Edison fills the air with sound. He pounces on his notes with startling suddenness and voices them in a sharp unemotional tone. His phrases are simple and strung together with liberal use of Edison's own patented riffs and connecting devices. His lines avoid the soft curves of more sentimental romantics. They are terse and angular. Basie, of course, lopes quietly and logically along, letting silence speak loudest. Edison frequently appropriates silence himself, but the effect is abrupt. The break which opens his solo on *Avalon* must be the shortest imaginable.

The highlight of the record is a beautiful blues called *E*. It summons up muted memories of the Ellington-Hodges *Weary Blues* of 1958 in which Edison also played. Basie is gentle and perceptive. But the entire piece works superbly. *Avalon* is swift and intense. *Misbehavin'* is slower and more lyrical with Edison muted throughout. *Edison's Lights* opens with a tiresome theme, but is absorbing otherwise.

Side two finds Basie replaced by Dolo Coker, an unfamiliar voice who deftly wins the day for himself on *Spring Is Here*. Edison's counterhorn throughout is Lockjaw. His reliable mastery of the mood makes him an appropriate colleague all the way. Heard and Smith support the session with discretion. —mcdonough

## HERBIE MANN

BIRD IN A SILVER CAGE—Atlantic SD 18209: *Bird In A Silver Cage; Aria; Fly, Robin, Fly; Birdwalk; Years Of Love; The Piper.*

Personnel: Mann, flutes; Sylvester Levay, keyboards; Martin Harrison, drums; Gary Unwin, bass; Nick Woodland, guitar; Joe Spector and Elmer Louis, percussion.

★ ½

Why is disco music so offensive to some people? My personal distaste for the genre stems specifically from the rapid riffing strings and the one-phrase Chinese torture vocals. But overall, the real problem with disco is its extreme stylization. Disco is banal music for people who are trying to affect a "sophisticated" or elegant/decadent image. The real tragedy is that the disco setting tends to negate or trivialize any honest, emotional



# "Nobody has learned how to play the trumpet. It's endless."



Leblanc Duet No. 3, featuring Maynard Ferguson

We're having a beer and bratwurst with Maynard Ferguson at Summerfest, an annual two-week music festival on the shore of Lake Michigan in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Last night, his over-drive band and double-high-C trumpet perfection set an attendance record at the Jazz Oasis here. Now, as he talks, he holds a slide/valve trumpet he recently designed, the M. F. Firebird. Tonight, he'll hold another multitude in awe. And soon, he'll be relaxing pool-side, at his home near Shangri-la.

**Ferguson:** We live ninety miles north of Los Angeles, in Ojai. It's a beautiful valley. It's where they shot the original Shangri-la, for "The Lost Horizon."

**Leblanc:** *It must be hard traveling away from a place like that.*

**Ferguson:** I don't get tired of traveling. I'll go thirteen hard weeks, but then I'll take a month off. Our agent would book us every day of the year, twice, if we'd let him. But I find your band and music becomes stale if you don't take a break.

**Leblanc:** *Your music is anything but stale. How do you describe it?*

**Ferguson:** "Today." That's how I'd describe my band. "Today." I'm a great believer in change. You have to have change in your music . . . because that's where the real artist comes out, when you take a shot, as opposed to playing it safe. Nobody has learned how to play the trumpet. It's endless.

Learning to play something only opens up the challenge to learn to play something else.

**Leblanc:** *Is this what gave you the idea to design new instruments, too? The three that Holton's come out with?*

**Ferguson:** You have a hair of an idea, and from that grows another idea. Then you put it together. What I really admire about the Holton people is that, when I come up with an experimental horn, they realize that we're going to experiment with it until we get a product. And that's what happened with the Superbone. I crushed three Superbones in my bare hands before we figured out the right braces.

**Leblanc:** *Your Bb trumpet — the M.F. Horn — did that take trial and error?*

**Ferguson:** They just didn't pull one off the line and stamp it "M.F. Horn." It was a trial and error thing. I said let's try it larger, let's try a bigger bell on it. Let's try less of a flare, more of a flare. All this takes time and energy.

**Leblanc:** *After all you put into it, what comes out?*

**Ferguson:** It's a large-bore instrument. That bigness gives you a mellow sound. When I play in the upper register I want it to sound beautiful. Screeching high notes — squeaking out high notes — that's a thing of the past.

The M.F. Horn has the size, the dimension, the timbre, the taper. But in the final essence, how does it play? The final decision rests with the players. For me, it's the best horn on the market.

**Leblanc:** *Don't quite a few players think your M.F. Horn is different from the one they buy?*

**Ferguson:** Right. Kids — sometimes — they'll have an M.F. Horn and they'll come up and want to play mine. To see if there's anything special about my horn. I say, "Well, you take my horn and I'll take yours, if you like." They're astounded by that. But, you know, they always take theirs back.

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musical expression within it.

Mann didn't miss a trick with this album. He went so far as to enlist Silver Convention's Frankenstein, Sylvester Levay, for composing, arranging, keyboard and production chores. The result is a bland, faceless background which the soloists escape only occasionally.

Woodland, for instance, is a good rock guitarist; his solo on *Piper* is agile and fairly inventive. His spot is hardly finished, however, when the background vocals inject a stage-whispered "Piper, piper!" The solo becomes a sort of bad joke. (The album's other stellar lyrics include "Birdwalk, birdwalk!" and "Do the Birdwalk!")

Mann's solos consist of his usual well-played blues variations, but they're nothing that would keep you awake. The rhythm section functions quite well, especially on *Bird*. Unwin lends some variety on electric bass, including some Clarkish string snaps. The mix puts Harrison up front and he gets a good chunky sound.

The vocal and string arrangements are disco to the core, including some tasteless Donna Summerish heavy breathing on the syrupy *Aria*.

Many disco fans defend their music by putting down people who don't dance. But I fail to see how anyone could dance to this record (or listen to it, for that matter) without feeling silly and emotionally cheated. It's simply not very strong stuff. —schneekloth

## ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION

A ROCK AND ROLL ALTERNATIVE—Polydor PD 1-6080: *Sky High*; *Hitch-hikers Hero*; *Don't Miss The Message*; *Georgia Rhythm*; *So In To You*; *Outside Woman Blues*; *Everybody Gotta Go*; *Neon Nites*.

Personnel: Barry Bailey, lead guitar; J. R. Cobb, rhythm guitar; Paul Goddard, bass; Dean Daughtry, keyboards; Robert Nix, drums and background vocals; Ronnie Hammond, lead and background vocals.

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Each of the eight songs here is perfectly crafted, honed to shape via the sculpture-like conceptions of Buddy Buie, driven to perfection by a crew of players equalled in virtuosity by a precious few. *Alternative* opens up with *Sky High*, a composition which features some basic yet trippy acoustic keyboard work by Dean Daughtry and a closing coda by Bailey which defines new vistas of lyricism.

This critique should be directed now to a few words about Bailey. While other southern guitarists adorn fan magazine covers, it is the quiet, soft-spoken Bailey who has probably created more legitimately original musical moments than all his regional contemporaries put together. Eschewing cliché, he floats effortlessly around the fretboard, producing tones as clear as Malibu at sunrise, using the pyrotechnics of amplified distortion and balls-brandishing arpeggio only when necessary. He also has a sense for smooth segue rarely seen; his jump from a jazz-type chordal maintenance to a steel-like tuning in the bridge of *Neon Nites* speaketh not the invocations of a roaring, amp-blowing Zeus, but of a picker with a quiet, and well-deserved, confidence.

Indeed, this is one of the key hallmarks of ARS: tempos which flow and ebb so smoothly that no ugly musical crevasses are revealed. Obviously then, such complexity would demand rhythmic accompaniment equal to the task. Thanks to the presence of J. R. Cobb,

drummer Robert Nix and bassist Paul Goddard, the needed precision is gratuitously provided.

Goddard especially needs an introduction. One of the most accomplished bassists in rock today, he's seldom flashy, but is as precise as an atomic clock, adapting to shifts in micro-milliseconds.

It is a pleasure to see more than *deja vu* musical trivia emanating from the south these days. If there is indeed a fresh wind from Dixie, the Atlanta Rhythm Section is almost singularly responsible. —shaw

## WAXING ON . . . .

Arista led from strength with its reissues of the valuable Savoy label: *Charlie Parker, Master Takes*, became the first in the series. But as predictably good as that collection is, Arista has many more goodies in store from the Savoy vaults. Conceding the generally high quality of reproduction and pressings, the only remaining question is one of selection and annotation—the actual documentation process that makes reissues a historically viable product.

*Black California* comes from an area and an era when no single artist was so dominant as to merit a full retrospective of his work. Hence, what emerges is a two-record sampler of jazz activity in the L.A. region from the mid-'40s to the early '50s, portrayed as "a hotbed of black musical creativity" with "both artists and audience in abundance." Unfortunately, Patricia Willard's liner notes tend to ignore both artists and audience, concentrating instead on period clubs, their after-hours counterparts, radio stations, and DJ's. True, this music's historical setting is well covered, but there are musicians involved who deserve more than the mention of their names and a choice anecdote or two. Mingus, Bird, and Benny Carter are all treated warmly in Ms. Willard's notes, but they do not appear on the records at all. Such namedropping does nothing to enhance the set, and all but obliterates the critical perspective that can help a jazz neophyte introduce himself to the music inside the slick cover.

The music inside is well chosen, giving the listener a good look at L.A.'s postwar musical spectrum. The Al Killian-Sonny Criss-Wardell Gray *Backbreaker* kicks things off with some straightforward bebop. Slim Gaillard is next up with a trio of living scat offerings; these are zoot-suited novelties, period pieces at best.

Roy Porter's big band in 1949 included Art Farmer, Jimmy Knepper, and a young Eric Dolphy. The band reflects the advances of bop, taking its cue from the Billy Eckstine band before it, as well as bearing the marks of such West Coast contemporaries as the Benny Carter unit. Dolphy's three solos show him searching for the way to get beyond Bird; it is not yet in his grasp.

From this point, the album picks up nicely. Helen Humes has four fine numbers (with Dexter Gordon riffing behind her), and Harold Land contributes four more. Art Pepper looks forward to the cool dilution of bop, with Hampton Hawes playing in fine style. Hawes closes out the album with a quartet of trio selections, including the very fine *Jumpin' Jacques*, a stop-and-go number with surprising rhythmic continuity.

*The Red Norvo Trio With Tal Farlow And Charles Mingus* represents an interesting conception of the jazz ensemble, surely one of the most intriguing developments of the cool school.

Recorded in 1950 and '51, this two-pocket set is fascinating for the way the trio reassigns the responsibilities of pianist and drummer among themselves, similar in this respect to some of Jimmy Giuffre's trios. Norvo's touch on the vibes is melodically and harmonically strong, but the rhythmic burden falls almost entirely to Farlow and Mingus. The guitarist contributes some rather original effects, even discounting his bongo-like slapping on the guitar's body. But it is the burgeoning talent of Mingus that bears the brunt, and his remarkable time is more than up to the task.

Mingus, for instance, is the rock solid center of *Cheek To Cheek*, as the staggered pace (note Farlow's 3/4 interpolations) hangs on his steady, precisely intoned pulse. *I've Got You Under My Skin* opens with an impressionistically spaced introduction reminiscent of the contemporaneous strides being taken in the East by the MJQ, in which Ray Brown was playing a similarly important part. And while these arrangements are by and large collaborations, the Mingus touch seems evident in places. The two Ellington offerings, *Prelude To A Kiss* and *In A Sentimental Mood*, get very similar treatments: Mingus' arco lines are prominent in the initial theme statements of both, while he walks solidly through the remainder, suggesting that the bassist's reverence for the Duke may have motivated the charts.

Don Byas is one of those jazzmen who chose the expatriate route to a more appreciative audience; that he found that audience in Europe reflects the universal appeal of his music. The voluptuous sound and sure melodies of Byas' tenor fill *Savoy Jam Party*, making it a swinging exemplar of saxophone mastery. Whether playing the blues or surging soulfully through a ballad, Byas is always in control, guided by a keen harmonic ear and an unerring intuition for the emotional dynamics of each tune.

The collection at hand features Byas in a number of settings, all wonderfully annotated by Dan Morgenstern, who slips but once, switching *September Song* and *September In The Rain* in the lineup. The trumpet of Charlie Shavers spurs Byas on 11 selections, taken from a session that included Clyde Hart on piano and Slam Stewart on bass—Stewart's distinctive solo stylings do get a bit wearisome after a while, despite their fluidity and swing. Rudy Williams adds a boppish flair to several of these 1944 selections; his fine alto goes generally unrecognized today, despite his reign with the Savoy Sultans.

Byas is such a consistent player here that it is hard to single out specific cuts; Morgenstern's commentary brings the high spots into greater relief. *How High The Moon* is an easy pick: great Byas choruses, trumpeter Benny Harris getting into a bit of *Ornithology* somewhat before the fact, all laid over Jimmy Jones' fine piano. *Cherokee* shows Byas in peak form, outstripping his rhythm section and proving conclusively his technical and inventive powers. His harmonic sense comes through loud and clear on *Living My Life*, presaging Monk's *Brilliant Corners* with its chromatically descending chord pattern. All told, a fine collection by an important stylist.

The bop explosion was generated by the nuclear decay of the Swing Era chartoppers; the transitional thrust came from a few forward-looking big bands. Probably the most important of these was Billy Eckstine's, a vital, driving unit captured in fine form on *Mr. B. And The Band*. At a time when big bands were already becoming economically unfeasible, Eckstine's popular

successes kept the band alive. And while B.'s ballads and blues were necessarily the focus of the band's activities, its preeminent personnel produced some startlingly fine jazz.

The band evolved directly from Earl Hines' band, and at one time or another included such greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro, Art Blakey, Dexter Gordon... the list is incredible. The Savoy collection covers the years 1945-47, after Bird and Diz had left to follow their revolutionary destinies, but more than enough talent remains to keep things interesting. There is some good Navarro, a touch of Kenny Dorham, and excellent Ammons; Blakey is superb throughout, and, of course, there's Mr. B. and his voice, both in their prime at the time.

Some items of particular interest: Budd Johnson's chart for *I'm In The Mood For Love* is a marvel, maintaining an ambiguous, bitonal

stance through the first four bars, then driving home under B.'s attack of the second line. Jug Ammons' break and solo on *Oo Bop Sh'bam*, take 1, is first rate; note also B.'s adroit handling of the lyrical "a-klook-a-mop." *It Ain't Like That* has a short but fascinating coda, and Fats Navarro's solo on *Tell Me Pretty Baby* leads to a seemingly spontaneous double-time stretch by the band, then back to tempo for the final four bars and close. Jerry Valentine's arrangements, as characterized by Ira Gitler's excellent notes, were "not terribly avant garde," but were "direct bebop reflectors." Well said, Ira; well written, Jerry; well done, Mr. B.

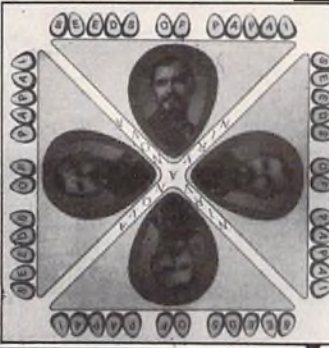
Gene Ammons' single-disc Savoy recap, *Red Top*, is something of a disappointment. The first four cuts come from a Leo Parker date, with the emphasis on the leader's baritone sax honkings; the bright spot on these tracks is Howard Mc-

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Ghee, whose dancing lines almost offset Parker's r&b effects. That was 1947; the remainder of the album comes from '52-53, and finds Jug sounding strange. Liner scribe Bob Porter mentions the "unusual properties" of that recording studio, though the in-and-out treble quality sounds as if it might derive from a primitive reverb unit. Despite this audio flaw, Ammons is somewhat better here than on the earlier session.

*Just Chips* has Jug dueling with drummer George Brown; their interplay reminds of the Goodman-Krupa relationship. *Good Time Blues* is just what the title suggests, a rocking 12-bar that clearly shows Ammons' paternal boogie-woogie heritage. *Big Slam* is an uptempo, bop-pish chase number, with Mack Easton lost in Sonny Stitt's shoes. *Travellin' Light*, the Billie Holiday classic, is the best cut on the album, but even the richness of Ammons' tenor here doesn't reach the pinnacles he achieves on the Eckstine set.

The last item in this latest Savoy release highlights the collaboration of Lee Morgan and Hank Mobley. The band they front on *A-1* makes good on the title's claim: Doug Watkins on bass, Art Taylor on drums, and the masterful Hank Jones on piano. Jones did a great deal of work for Savoy as the "house" pianist; the crystalline quality of his playing here serves to remind us that he also did a couple of sessions as leader—including a solo piano L.P.—that are ripe for reissue. His support is perfect: for example, during Morgan's solo on *Nostalgia*, the trumpeter quotes from Grofe's *Grand Canyon Suite*, and by the time Lee hits the fourth note, Jones is right behind him.

These tracks were laid in November, 1956, when Lee Morgan was a mere 18 years old—a very precocious 18, mind you, but still understandably germinal. His performances herein are spotty, ranging from exceptional, as on *Hank's Shout*, to incomplete, as on the title cut, where his prodigious technique outstrips invention. With the exception of *Shout* and the fine balladry of *P.S. I Love You*, Morgan gets himself in trouble on almost every solo, usually at the ends of phrases—he had yet to develop the inflectional tools to defuse those overloaded situations.

Mobley contributes sophisticated smoothness to the hard bop charts, using an occasional bebop lick as the starting point for a phrase. Watkins is superb in teaming with Taylor to drive the band and his solos show a remarkably graceful concept of phrase. And then, of course, there is Hank Jones, who is nothing but a beautiful blend of Tatum and taste.

There are no out and out classics among these collections. But there are a couple of close calls on the Byas and Eckstine sets, and a great deal of interesting music—the general quality is definitely above average. Production approach and perspective are usually in tune with the material at hand (*Black California* being the lone exception), giving them a historical presence that more than justifies their existence. —bennett

Red Norvo, *The Red Norvo Trio With Tal Farlow And Charles Mingus* (Savoy SJL 2212): \*\*\* 1/2  
Don Byas, *Savoy Jam Party* (Savoy SJL 2213): \*\*\*\* 1/2  
Billy Eckstine, *Mr. B. And The Band* (Savoy SJL 2214): \*\*\*\*  
Various Artists, *Black California* (Savoy SJL 2215): \*\* 1/2  
Gene Ammons, *Red Top* (Savoy SJL 1103): \*\*\*  
Lee Morgan-Hank Mobley, *A-1* (SJL 1104): \*\*\*\*

# BLINDFOLD

# TEST



## Shelly Manne

by Leonard Feather

When Shelly's Manne Hole closed down in April of 1974, for many it seemed like the end of an era. For Shelly, however, who gained an additional identity through the original Hollywood club (1960-72) and its Los Angeles successor (1973-4), the decision to quit the night club business merely left him free to continue working in the several other areas that have kept him continuously active as a West Coast-based musician since he settled in Southern California in 1952.

"I loved the club, and I still miss it for the music," he says, "but I sure don't miss the hassle and the business end of it. It just took my mind off playing."

Currently, in addition to his studio work and occasional concerts with the L.A. Four (Laurindo Almeida, Bud Shank, Ray Brown and himself), Shelly is beginning to play gigs with a new quartet of his own that recorded an album for Bob Thiele, with Lew Tabackin on flute and tenor, Mike Wolff on piano, and Chuck Domanico on bass.

This was Manne's first Blindfold Test since 7/27/67. He was given no information about the records played.

**1. JAKE HANNA.** *Doggin' Around* (from *Kansas City Express*, Concord Jazz). Hanna, drums; Nat Pierce, piano; Bill Berry, trumpet; Monty Budwig, bass; Richard Kamuca, sax; Herschel Evans-Edgar Battle, composers.

Well, the tune originally came out the same time as *Swingin' The Blues*; it's called *Doggin' Around* and it's an old Basie tune—I don't mean that he wrote it, but he recorded it and that's how I remember it. Just from the way the players played I'd say it was Jake Hanna's group with Jake on drums, Monty Budwig on bass, and Nat Pierce—you can identify Nat; he's definitely in that Basie groove. And I'd say Richie Kamuca was on tenor saxophone, because Richie was in my group for so many years and I think I'm familiar with his playing—I hope I am. I wasn't sure of the trumpet player, but I think it might have been Bill Berry.

I think this is the album Jake made recently of all the old Basie charts. And of course these guys play these things really well, because they're very devoted to the music and they believe in the music. It shows in their playing, I think—it's their groove and they really do groove with it.

I like this record. I think it's a very happy record and I'll give it four stars.

**2. HARVEY MASON.** *The Mase* (from *Earth Mover*, Arista). Mason, drums, arranger, composer.

I wouldn't dare to guess who that is. When you start getting into phase shifters and just ensemble playing with all electronic instruments, you lose the individuality for me, and I can't pick players out of the scramble. This record, for me, is just not a jazz record. Although it has a good feeling, and I'm sure the musicians are all very capable and very good craftsmen and very good musicians, this kind of record absolutely leaves me cold. It sounds like the cues we play, only maybe a little better done, because there might be overdubs or it's done in a recording studio—but it sounds like the cues we play in the movie studios or television studios for source music. At the end of the day they'll bring in some lead sheets on blues or a tune somebody

wrote and it's supposed to be a band in a nightclub—while the guy is strangling the chick, you know.

It's not jazz to me and I wouldn't care to rate it. I'd just have to give it a half star for knowing that the players can play, but the music means nothing to me.

**Feather:** How do you explain the fact that records like this, or similar to it, appear on the charts in the trade papers and are considered by some to be jazz?

**Manne:** Well, I think too many people tell them they're jazz. Victor Feldman and I had a long discussion about this. He's on the NARAS Board of Governors for screening the jazz records. It's difficult because of the crossover music now—you know, with Herbie's band and with Freddie Hubbard's new records, with Stanley Turrentine's new records. There's a definite crossover, where you take a guy who's a great jazz musician and put him in a formula background, a manufactured background with a lot of overdubs and try to make pop records out of them—and they do make pop records out of them. For me they lose their beauty—their identity as jazz. For them to have to screen and say which is jazz and which isn't jazz—it's very difficult to do.

I have a certain feeling about it, and when I hear somebody like Sonny Rollins play, I don't want to hear him play a manufactured background. The beauty of Sonny Rollins is that he plays so open and free and with such great feeling. I don't want to hear him playing background music—it destroys it for me.

I'd say that it might be the drummer's album. It could be Harvey Mason—I know Harvey's into that bag now. I'd say the feeling is great and Harvey is a marvelous drummer—he's fantastic—and besides that, he's a very good jazz drummer. The things he's done with Gerry Mulligan are marvelous—the live concert at Carnegie Hall and those things. I'm not putting down the musicians. That's not what I want to do, because I can hear that the musicians can play. But the record is meaningless to me—it's like a rhythm machine. A bionic record.

**3. NAT ADDERLEY.** *Hummin'* (from *Hummin'*, Little David). Adderley, cornet, composer.

I had a clue from the trumpet chorus—I think it's Nat Adderley and it might be his new group. I haven't heard the new group. I know he hasn't recorded lately, but this is probably a new recording of Nat's. And of course he's got that feeling going—that rock, that crossover feeling, rhythm and blues or whatever you want to call it. It's a nice feeling; they get a good groove on this track.

Of course, I feel this is more of a jazz record than the last one we heard because, naturally, of Nat's presence and the way he blows on this. I don't know who the other players are. It's very hard to identify drummers and bass players any more, with the exception of a few—the giants in the idiom. The drummers . . . nearly all of them have the front head off their bass drum with a pillow stuffed inside and tom-toms all padded and snare drums with wallets on them. And consequently—with the exception, as I say, of a few very distinctive players—it's very difficult to tell anymore by sound who the artist is.

I keep going back to jazz records, because that's what I do and what I care about—I find that in a jazz record, sometimes a Fender bass . . . when this group went into four, away from the rock beat, they didn't have a good rhythm section blend. And it's very difficult to get with a loud Fender bass and the drums tuned that way. They used acoustic piano, which I appreciated. But to get a blend . . . we used to spend hours just rehearsing to get a blend in a rhythm section, so the rhythm section moved as one and sounded as a section—just the way the saxophones sound as a section and the trumpets sound as a section.

I'd give the record three stars.

**4. DOM UM ROMAO.** *Cisco Two* (from *Hotmosphere*, Pablo). Romao, drums; Celia Vaz, composer, conductor, arranger; flute, unidentified.

I like it, as music, very much. There's a strong Brazilian influence and it almost sounds like it might have been written by a composer from a Latin country. I don't have the slightest idea who it could be. I heard some flute and I'm not sure who it would be. It might have been Herbie Mann—I can't even guess.

But musically I liked very much what I heard. It was very interesting writing and it had a lot of colors going on in the rhythm section which I enjoyed, and a nice feeling of the whole thing. I'd give this three and a half stars.

**5. HARRY EDISON.** *Helena's Theme* (from *Edison's Lights*, Pablo). Edison, trumpet, composer; Eddie Lockjaw Davis, tenor sax; Jimmie Smith, drums; John Heard, bass; Dolo Coker, piano.

Obviously it's Harry Sweets Edison. He's one of the things we were talking about earlier, about being distinctive in your sound and the way you play, and of course Sweets is a master at that. You always know when Sweets is playing. And Sweets has the ability to swing a whole band by himself, although in this case he had good support. I would say it's his group, and it sounded like Dolo Coker, piano . . . the bass player I'm not sure of. It sounded a little like Monty Budwig, but I'm not positive. The tenor player sounded a little like Jaws to me—Eddie Lockjaw Davis, but I'm not sure of that either.

But I liked the record. Of course, this is an out and out jazz record. The drummer could be Earl Palmer, and then again it could not. It's strange—I know I'm a drummer, and I end up listening to the music as a whole. I don't try to listen to see if the drummer's doing good or bad, but if the whole thing feels good, then I'm happy with what's been going down. Of course some instrumentalists are so individual you immediately know who they are. It could be Nick Ceroli. But I'd give this record four and a half stars.

db

# Profile

## HAROLD DANKO

by arnold jay smith



ROB MISEUR

Harold Danko, at 29, is more than a neophyte, but not quite a journeyman. His gigs with Chet Baker and Woody Herman have been well documented on concert tours, in clubs and overseas, both on the Continent and the Orient. He has recorded with Herman (*The Raven Speaks on Fantasy*) and has a new release as a leader (*Antiquanova on Jazz*). He is currently the pianist in the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra.

"There's not much jazz happening in Youngstown, Ohio. I went to the Dana School Of Music there, a pretty old music school that is now part of the state university. The teachers are the important thing, and I had three good ones. One was Robert Hopkins from whom I learned a lot about touch. I also played a little bass. That was fascinating to me because while standing over some pianists I learned a few things. I got some gigs in Ohio because I knew the changes, even though I didn't know much about the bass. A whole lot of bass players there just don't know tunes. So I put the root under some of the tunes and I got to check out some piano players."

That was a decade ago and much has come down in the interim. The bass days are still evident in his strong left hand work, a tradition with Thad and Mel.

"Secretly, I wanted to play jazz from the start, but I really didn't think I'd end up a player. The chain of events that landed me in New York started with college and an education degree. So I did just what everybody told me to do—I got the degree, did my student teaching and I was gone, out of there. But I *cannot* teach. Okay, that's a four year lesson and I hope I never have to use the degree. I decided that I wanted to be a player, but I still didn't know how to begin. That was 1969 and the draft thing was heavy then. I auditioned with an army band in Indianapolis and I got some good advice. 'The army can't offer you anything from the way you are playing,' they told me. 'The only thing they might be able to offer you, if you have to go in,

is a location. If you can go to New York or another big city, it would be advisable to enlist.'"

Luckily, there was an opening in a Staten Island band, from which some excellent players graduated.

"It was Viet Nam time and I was kind of embarrassed to walk around with all my hair cut off. It kind of branded you. Consequently, I couldn't do any sitting in, or any playing at all. Joe LaBarbera was at Fort Dix, New Jersey at about the same time, so we played together a few times. Right before I got out of the army (1972) I had gotten a call from Woody Herman's people, who had recently lost the services of Alan Broadbent. They asked me when I was getting out. I told them April 3. They said, 'Can you join us April 4?'

"Later I found out that it was Joe who had recommended me to the band. I had lost track of him after he got out and then I realized that he was on the band. I stayed with them through '72. I dug that band. Looking back, I can honestly say that I learned a good deal. It's one of the only outlets for a young musician. It's still the way to learn—the road. It's a hard way to go, but, man, you *learn*. I was fortunate that there were enough seasoned players on that band to keep my interest. There was Frank Tiberi, Al Porcino, Bobby Burgess. The combination of the fire of the young cats and the older cats' knowledge made the band *not* sound like a college band.

"And Woody's a great leader. He can really hear what he wants out of a band and what a soloist has to offer. The rhythm section was Al (Alphonso) Johnson, me and Joe. Nice. It was probably Al's first gig on walking bass. The rhythm section had a certain kind of fire that Woody caught onto and adjusted certain arrangements to fit what we were playing. Little things, like giving us space to blow."

Before his next association, Harold just moved around the Apple trying to make his name better known. He almost gave it up and moved out.

"I am an experienced woodwind repairman. I apprenticed with Saul Fromkin, who does work for Sonny Rollins and Lee Konitz. I was thinking of doing that for a living. I was working with saxophonist Turk Mauro when I met Chet Baker. I was working the Half Note at the time Chet came to New York.

"He is a great natural musician. Chet has an instinctive melodic sense and a sophistication. The problem with the group was that things were never organized. I was with them off and on for three years. Chet's approach to music is very disciplined, but he is free within that. To hear a cat so consistently inventive, even when he had no chops, physically, was a lesson to me. It taught me that I had a lot more to learn about playing on tunes."

While working a steady Tuesday night at Stryker's with Baker, Danko met Lee Konitz, who was working Thursdays at the same club. Harold was soon holding down the piano chair in Konitz's quartet as well.

"The Stryker's quartet revolved around Lee, of course. Dave Shapiro and Jimmy Madison and I were the rhythm section. Later, we started the nonet. With Lee I got to talk about music a lot, so that became a learning experience as well. It was a great period for me, working with Chet and Lee at the same time. They both basically worked from tunes, but their approaches were entirely different. The model for a good pianist with Chet would be someone like Bud Powell or Wynton Kelly. I would use those examples when I played with him. With Lee, there was a much more open outlook as to what could happen with those tunes. I would try to play out or in, whatever suited the moment."

A tour of Europe with Chet followed ("The bread was real good and we worked all the time."). Returning home, Danko received a call from Mel Lewis.

"I had worked a quartet date with Mel, Thad, and

Sam Jones on bass. The time felt so good that they couldn't *not* hire me, man.

"Soloing with that band is a great responsibility. At first I didn't know what to do with all of that space. I'm gaining more confidence with Thad than with any other musician I've ever played with. As far as playing what is *me*, I feel he's really going to get it out of me, and within the context of that band, too. In the past, I've been stylistically self-conscious, trying to play what will fit the situation. Thad's mind is so broad, he'll go anywhere the music goes, anywhere the musicians go. I mean, when you're living in the shadow of Roland Hanna or Walter Norris, you've just got to be awed. When the band comes off a screaming ensemble break, and then there's me, I know I've got to do something exciting to keep it up there. It scared me off at first. I get my strength from Thad. I know he's in favor of improvising. In that regard it's impossible to make a mistake. In the quartet, I can play any note and he'll hear it and play around it. He's great to accompany. One of the first things he said to me was, 'It's about time you got your ass in here so somebody can do something with you.' We did a gig recently where I started strumming the strings while Rufus Reid (the band's bassist) was playing double stops. It sounded like Freddie Green playing the banjo. It was a quartet date and Thad went right with it. It was on a standard too. *But Not For Me*. Old time trumpet to match the sounds we were getting. Man, can he teach me things."

Teaching, albeit not in the formal sense, will once again become a part of Harold's life. He intends to start rhythm section workshops under the aegis of Charles Colin Studios, "who is big in brass and I felt he needed some rhythm section. Which brings up a point I want to make.

"There are a lot of guys my age, Greg Herbert, Tom Harrell, who really should get a chance to record. There should be some label somewhere that's interested in making records where all the young, enthusiastic cats can blow a bit. Too many companies wanted to make a production, or change what I had for my Jazz release. There's no company that is serving that position like Prestige and Blue Note did. Not everything was outstanding, not all good. But it did afford a place where some fine musicians did get off. And they got gigs from it. We need more. I'm ready again, since that first album was done a year and a half ago. There is a resurgence in what I can only refer to as bebop influence and I gear myself in that direction."

## JOANNE BRACKEEN

by arnold jay smith

"It's getting to the point where I can't keep a piano player to myself." The speaker was Stan Getz and he was referring to the recent ascension of his current keyboard wizard, JoAnne Brackeen. "She certainly has created some stir lately, hasn't she?" Getz went on.

"Some stir" is one way of describing JoAnne's rising star. "Talent will out," might be another. A self-taught pianist, JoAnne didn't much care for the methods of her childhood teacher. "All she wanted me to play were those silly tunes from the piano books," she recalls. "I guess in Ventura, California, that's all they knew how to do."

At age nine JoAnne was washed up, a has been. Her teacher gave up on her. "I heard a certain kind of music in my head," JoAnne says. "And in a couple of years I was copying solos off records, mostly Frankie Carle's.

"Within six months I had learned how to play, and that was from a standing start, nothing. In Ventura no one had heard of jazz so we had to be content with Carle. All that copying stood me in good stead. Some friends of mine had some recordings of Bird and when I heard them (and later on Trane) it took me all the way out. I loved music before

then, but from that point on . . . heaven, another direction at 17."

The Los Angeles Conservatory Of Music had her for three days when, "I realized that all they were doing was putting names to what I already knew. I felt that I was wasting my time. There is so much to know that I felt I was going backwards was wasting time. I already knew how to write notes and what they were called and where they should be placed. I transcribed by listening to a few notes and writing them down. I don't have perfect pitch—relative pitch is more like it. I'll hear one note and hear where the others are. I was way ahead of the students in class. All I wanted to do was play. I had no career in mind, nothing like that. I knew I had to come to New York; living in LA was not all that inspiring. . . ."

She arrived in New York City in 1965 having scant few gigs under her belt. In '66 vibist Freddie McCoy hired her for some jazz/pop gigs, but there was no stretching out involved. Calvin Hill passed through as did Paul Chambers, among others. Then in 1969 things started to pop.

"There was a club in Raleigh, North Carolina called The Frog In The Nightgown, where I was in a rhythm section that backed people like Joe Henderson, Woody Shaw, Eddie Harris. I began to meet a lot of people."

Toward the end of the decade, Art Blakey happened into her life. They immediately went to Japan, a tour which produced an album on Catalyst. The personnel of that Messengers group included Bill Hardman on trumpet, Carlos Garnett, trombone and Jon Arnet, bass.

"I learned so much from just listening while I was playing in the band. It was my music education. When we first went over there, there was nothing available but things to drink, so we drank, heavily at that. Somebody bought us a bottle of Hennessy, very expensive in Japan, and inside of ten minutes the bottle was emptied. The session was a blur to me. I haven't heard it yet."

In five months the group changed, but in '72 JoAnne was back with Art in Europe. Later that year she joined Joe Henderson, who kept cropping up and dropping out at important times in her life. They worked for the next three years, through October, 1975, when Stan Getz began calling

"We were at Ratso's in Chicago when it started and I told Stan then that I had an obligation to Joe. Ironically, the tour that Stan wanted me for was to start at that same club. Even more ironic is the fact that the prospective jobs Joe had lined up fell through. So I ended up with Stan."

Before "stardom" with Stan Getz, Clint Houston and Billy Hart, JoAnne paid some New York City piano bar dues. Her first appearance was at the Surf Maid in Greenwich Village in 1974.

"Joe was on the verge of moving to San Francisco and I was being left with no gigs at all, so I started at the Surf Maid when Nina Sheldon, their regular pianist, got a better paying job. I began the gig where she had left it off, very commercial. Now remember, I had no idea how to play popular tunes. While I was learning standards real quick, it seemed like the patrons were coming in to hear what I played naturally. That's how the club changed from a sing-along place to what it is now—a showcase for new talent."

While JoAnne was playing the Surf Maid and another piano bar, the Boondocks, magic happened in the form of a friendship with Choice Records president, Gerry MacDonald.

"I met Toots Thielemans while I was doing a date in midtown. He knew he was going to record for Choice, but he had no idea who he was going to use. Gerry was with Toots that night and when we played together it clicked. They left it up to me to get the rhythm section together. I tried for Billy Hart and Cecil McBee. Billy was out of town so we got Freddie Waits."

The name of the album is *Captured Alive* and two of JoAnne's originals are on it: *Images* and *Snooze*. The latter tune was recreated as the title track of her first solo album, also on Choice. The album's other tunes reflect the depth of her talents: *Nefertiti*, by Wayne Shorter, and *Circles*, by Miles Davis, as well as three new Brackeen tunes and a standard.

"I just try to play what I feel. That may change from day to day, but it all comes out in the music. I think of what I am doing, but not in the form of thought. It's like an invisible image, but a definite one. It has a content but it can't be seen. I am being filled with nothing, but the nothing feels like it's filled with something. It's not a feeling, but a se-

quence of feelings moving in a certain way.

"Everything that I have done on records and all that I do with Stan has structure. It all has a certain amount of measures, and with Stan you have to stick with the harmonic structure as well. I prefer less and less structure. My next album will be freer.

"If all of those energy factors reaching me are in balance, then I feel right. It's sort of like the way Tony Williams plays. You know what you are doing, but it doesn't matter if you know or not. I never think of anything. When I go on the stand with Stan, I just walk on and sit down."

JoAnne's immediate predecessor in Getz's group was Albert Dailey, whose total pianistic ran from rapping on the case to plucking the strings. One assumes that would be a tough act to follow. "I don't feel like I have replaced anyone," JoAnne says. "I just play the piano."

"Now that I am playing with them, I know what it means to listen to everything at once. I don't hear Clint, or Stan, or the chords; it's all one. I don't know who else thinks that way. Maybe everyone. I have never discussed it with other musicians. I feel that music is here and we merely all partake of it. There are no individuals, just what we do in common. Oh, there's individual touch, but I mean music is like eating and breathing—it's out there. Especially jazz—it's an expression of our humanity, the feelings all combined into music, making humanity spiritual.

"Sitting there and improvising is enjoyable, but not all that exciting. I know as a jazz pianist I am creating, but I like more space and fewer chords. I heard Cedar Walton do *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* at Bradley's and the chords he used did excite me, so much so that I remembered consciously to use them the next time I played that tune. I didn't know what chords they were by name. I only knew that I liked them. I won't often do that. Eventually, I would like to play melody, whatever that is, a little entity, a creation of definite form, and just play off that, whatever I want to play, intuitively. It's much more difficult to do that than play tunes and chords. Why do you have to play off somebody else's tune? Why not make one up and play off it? Why go to school from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. if you no longer need that discipline? You're a musical adult now." db

## caught...

Lookout Farm's Arizona Farewell . . .

Scott-Heron At The Gate . . .

### LOOKOUT FARM Arcosanti Festival Cordes Junction, Arizona

**Personnel:** David Liebman, tenor and soprano sax, flute; Richard Beirach, acoustic piano; Badal Roy, tabla, misc. perc.; Frank Tusa, acoustic bass; Jeff Williams, drums.

What? You might ask. Where? One-horse Cordes Junction is not, after all, the crossroads of international jazz hipness, and Arcosanti is not exactly on the tip of everyone's tongue. Nevertheless, Arizona *has* succeeded in making occasional contact with the outside world, and here, right smack dab in the middle of Goldwater Land and Sun Cityism, is a straight shot of pure future—a freaky, model metropolis that already makes Moon Base Alpha look like a fast food restaurant. Moreover, concert director Bruce Joseph knows where to go for harmonious jazz, classical and folk talent.

Arcosanti is the architectural-ecological brainstorm of Paolo Soleri, an Italian draftsman who has been reblueprinting the desert for more than a decade. Although his underfi-



ELLEN BARNES

nanced utopia is rising painfully slowly, and his venturesome ideas still function more as art than a working, practical solution to urban sprawl, Soleri's concept of a self-contained, non-polluting city inspires almost everyone who comes in contact with it. Unanimously, the musicians who played the second annual Arcosanti Festival were knocked out by this enormous burst of creativity in the middle, some might say, of nowhere. Paul Winter, Shawn Phillips, classical pianist Stewart Gordon, the Louis Falco Dancers, drummer Bernard Purdie and Gato Barbieri . . . all responded to the unique environ, and despite disappointingly small crowds (five or six thousand for the weekend), all the artists turned in exciting performances.

Dave Liebman, speaking backstage prior to one of his two sets, echoed a newcomer's typical reaction to Arcosanti: "When we saw this place it was as much of an experience for us as it is for anybody who sees it for the first time . . . a feeling of empathy towards a project like this. It's heavy. Beautiful. And Paolo . . . we met him and talked to him for awhile. I think his book is really something. I wish him luck, you know?"



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Well, it's appropriate to wish luck for Dave and other members of Lookout Farm too; Arcosanti may have been one of their last gigs together. Liebman is moving to San Francisco to front a new group with Pee Wee Ellis, Richie Beirach will expand on his ECM trio work. Jeff Williams is searching, and Frank Tusa and Badal Roy have cut a demo tape with John Abercrombie, Williams, and an Indian songstress named Radha.

The Lookout Farm split, in fact, was already in evidence at Arcosanti. On Saturday afternoon, sandwiched between crowd pleasers Paul Winter Consort and Shawn Phillips, Badal Roy and Frank Tusa played their first public tabla-bass duets. Five long pieces, including *Gypsy Song* in 7, revolved about Roy's vocal chants and Indian drums, with Tusa plucking, strumming, or bowing his way through difficult meters. The compositions were instantaneous and unrehearsed. Frank worked in a humorous allusion to the *Stars And Stripes* march, Badal crossed over from Eastern to r&b, and they developed a Spanish mood. The instrumental pairing was a difficult challenge for both players and audience, but by their final selection (where the Consort's percussionist Tigger Benford joined in), Tusa and Roy had established a rapport. I later asked Badal if that final piece had been pre-structured, and he laughed with delight: "Ha! Last piece was totally improvised! *Totally* improvised!"

Early on Sunday, Liebman and Beirach performed their duo set, starting with superb versions of *October 10th* and *Repeat Performance* from *Forgotten Fantasies*. The beautiful morning melded perfectly with Richie's involved, semi-classical intro to *Repeat Performance*, as the straggling crowd began to assemble, and the first whiffs of frying tortillas wafted toward the outdoor stage from nearby vendors. Beirach built up to a high note balladry, countering with a non-chording left hand, and eventually played his way back to the cautious, mysterious theme. Liebman entered on soprano, crouched in suffering over his sax, and then, subtly, Richie initiated a sneaky bass line that would soon attain gospel-funk proportions. As the pace increased, Dave simply wailed, twisting his body into new contortions, shifting positions with each new statement, and delivering incredible runs with progressive passion. After peaking, the piece mellowed again, and Liebman moaned to a slowing close.

Beirach seasawed into the familiar groove of *All Blues*, and Liebman's tenor soon took the Trane to outer reaches. After double and triple timing, overblowing, and screeching to a halt, Dave sat down and let Richie proceed alone with the thumping beat. Beirach's *Leaving* was an appropriate finale. Liebman began alone on tenor, rooting his explorations in lower register phrases, answering them at the high end, then trailing into evocative, gesturing voicings as he took half-steps away from the microphone stand, fading and fluttering. Richie took over for two minutes of profoundly beautiful introspection, and then Dave re-entered, swirling gently on soprano. Beirach guided his companion toward a Spanish groove, which developed bolero-like until the saxophonist was wailing again. At one point, he broke off suddenly for a breath, continued, and then relaxed to a rich close. Both musicians are terrific alone, and work equally well as a twosome.

Berberi's broiling afternoon set, which had

hundreds of people up and dancing, was something of a climax for Arcosanti. This, and the fact that the evening was certain to be cold, sent many listeners home prematurely. Lookout Farm came onstage just as the sun went down, and as the evening began to chill, Badal's tabla introduced *The Iguana's Ritual*, with percussion soon joined by drums, bass, and piano. Roy's chant dueted briefly with Liebman's soprano, but soon Dave was into a devastating solo, twisting completely backwards, playing virtually under his right arm to the mike! Badal's Indian-funk groove got the soloist off, a piano trio section interrupted peacefully, and then Roy instigated a percussive tussle with Williams. When the chant-tabla theme was at last restated, Dave returned with a wild, Mid-Eastern development that wrapped up the piece.

*Mitsuku* followed, and *Napanoch*... about a New York town that Liebman called "the East Coast counterpart of this beautiful scene." On the latter, Jeff Williams was left alone to flutter-kick his way through a periodically exploding drum solo, maintaining the final blast so Liebman could enter on tenor for a very outside duet. *Satyu Dhwani* (True Sound) was loosely rendered, with Badal experimenting among the canyon echoes, Liebman on flute, everyone on percussion, and Beirach plucking his piano strings... all ending up Latin and hot. Coltrane's *Your Lady* was a strong vehicle for Dave's soprano on the head and for his tenor on the upbeat middle and finale.

Despite rapidly falling temperatures, an enthusiastic crowd demanded, and got, an encore. Shawn Phillips, who had been "trying to get here for three years," wasn't about to leave without sitting in with some jazzers. To be sure, Shawn's 5-octave vocal range has done some commendable scatting in years past, and he was highly enthused about the impromptu jamming... but his upper register howling wasn't too successful here. Liebman (soprano and flute) and Beirach, however, really got going on the bluesy freewheeler, and the communal bash attained yet another peak before grinding to a pitch black halt. Awesome talent in a unique setting... the vibes were good from start to finish of the Arcosanti Festival.

—bob henschen

## GIL SCOTT-HERON AND THE MIDNIGHT BAND

The Village Gate, New York City

**Personnel:** Scott-Heron, vocals and electric piano; Victor Brown, vocals; Brian Jackson, acoustic and electric keyboards, flute; Danny Bowers, electric bass; Reggie Brisbane, drums and percussion; Tony Duncanson, Barnett (Dock) Williams, percussion; Bilal Sunni Ali, tenor; Delbert Taylor, trumpet.

In his brilliant liner notes for the recent Rahsaan Roland Kirk LP *Other Folks' Music*, Stanley Crouch notes: "Some years ago, (Rahsaan) was put down for spinning a bass on his head while he soloed, many seeing this as no more than minstrel activity, another form of



tomming or entertaining massa on his bar room veranda. They were wrong. (It) has roots in traditional black audacity such as the sort Jelly Roll Morton described when he told Alan Lomax how the black drummers in the New Orleans marching bands would throw their sticks to the ground, let them bounce and catch them in rhythm to the cadence! Morton went on to say, 'And they better not miss 'em, 'cause if they did, boy, the crowd would really razz 'em! . . . it is the accuracy of this audacity that makes it important, not its mere unconventionality. . . .'

At times, Scott-Heron showed a need to understand that assessment. Typical of the tenor



of much of his show was its front-center stage opening: three hand drummers on their knees, one later on his back, playing dully for what seemed an eternity, with no evident purpose save rabble-raising the audience. Considering Scott-Heron's flair for cultural/political statement, I expected a more incisive look at African roots. Similarly, Taylor's crudely essayed Freddie Hubbard gloss and Ali's inept aping of Coltrane—in painfully long solos—even bordered on the offensive. Since one of Scott-Heron's songs invokes both Trane and Lady Day, and the music for his *Tomorrow's Trane* is Alice Coltrane's, he ought to at least validate such sentiments by hiring some cats who can play jazz. But the worst transgression along all these lines was also the simplest—the Midnight Band drowned out many of Scott-Heron's lyrics.

On the plus side, there were moments when music alone generated something of the "black audacity" that Scott-Heron's stance predicated. Brisbane, Duncanson and Williams were most responsible for the show's feel, forming a Mandrill-like, popping rhythm section. They brought the set to a high-gear finish with the killer riff *Johannesburg* (how did this tune miss AM hitdom?) and a long, percussive takeoff on *The Bottle*.

But though Scott-Heron's feet were moving through all of this, I didn't catch the pace of his mind. It was overtly overshadowed by the show's setup and covertly missing from most of its music.

—michael rozek

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around and shouting "Boogie, boogie, boogie," he wants a respect that you can't get from a rock audience. It seems to me that he regards his artistry as being separate from the celebration of the vices. He regards music not as indulgence, decadence and escape, but as a matter of revelation and self-transcendence.

**Duke:** Music is more than just one thing. It is all things. Music comprises everything from a tap at the door to the most outside Ornette Coleman you can play. I myself do not want to insist that my audience conform to my idea of what music should be. That's like the critic who says, "I want you to perform like I view music." I like to give people the freedom to do what they want, so long as they don't infringe on me.

If somebody in the audience hassles me, I deal with him. I don't say, "I'm not going to play." That's giving up the ship. That's like saying, "Because you won't play my game, I'm not going to play at all."

**Underwood:** By the same token, there are some artists who shoot for immortality, not just for a heated swimming pool and a house in the Hollywood hills.

**Duke:** I'm not going just for commercial success, but there's nothing wrong with having some fun along the way, either. And I realize I can't go around trying to control other people's lives.

If an artist can't play without total silence and concentration from his audience, he shouldn't be playing in front of people. He's just going to aggravate himself. There are always going to be people walking around; there are always going to be people who upset the water. And if you let that upset you, then you can't play. It destroys your flow. I can't let that one guy in the audience bug me to the point where I can't perform for the other thousands of people who came to hear me play. It just seems to me to be a waste of time to try to get everybody to shut up.

**Underwood:** Keith and others like him are committed to a vision. You will play with Airto, Billy Cobham, Cannonball, Sweets Edison, Zappa or anybody else who pays you, is that not true?

**Duke:** Yes. But I also feel like I'm receiving as well as giving when I play with these people. I'm broadening my horizons. I don't want to be mono-thematic.

What I'm talking about is infringing on somebody else's basic freedom. By telling others how to behave at a concert means that somebody is going to disrupt his flow. He's letting them control him! One guy out there can then destroy what's beautiful.

**Underwood:** Segovia makes the same demands. When the music reaches a certain indefinable point, there is no room for childish pranks, or ignorant or conscious disrespect. And for improvisation, you've got to be able to be vulnerable and concentrated in order to tap your creative resources. You simply cannot have somebody tromping through your music wearing hobnail boots.

**Duke:** I can hear that. But that's polarizing things. All I'm saying is that dealing with an audience arrogantly is a little out. In Keith Jarrett's case, I think he's too great a musician to let himself be bothered by one guy in the hall walking to his seat. I mean, the night I saw him, he told people, "If you can't get to my concert on time, don't come at all." Well, sometimes it's not your fault being late.

34 □ down beat

**Underwood:** Might he not say that you are too great a musician to be pointlessly rapping about space ladies in alleys, and awarding onion rolls and salami prizes to winners of Billy Cobham dance contests?

**Duke:** Maybe there's no end to the circle. That's what I choose to do, and that's what he chooses to do.

**Underwood:** And I am trying to get at what fundamental purpose your humor serves.

**Duke:** Sometimes it doesn't work. I do it, however, to break the show up. I don't want them to get too comfortable.

That's the problem, see. People like to latch on to one thing. They'll say, "I know Oscar Peterson. I know that ten years from now, Oscar Peterson is going to be playing the same basic thing he's playing today." They latch on, become attached, and as they grow older, they don't want to give it up.

But suppose Oscar changed? These same people would say, "Oh, oh—I've lost my ground. What am I gonna do? I was comfortable; I could relax; I understood. Now, do I have to learn how to understand all over again?"

People are always behind. So I keep them a little on edge. I want them to be aware that they are not always going to see the same thing from me all the time. Miles changed; and Dizzy Gillespie has an incredible sense of humor.

Some people, of course, don't like humor. They think of it as "clowning around," and they feel it degrades the integrity of the music. They come to hear only instrumental revelations.

They are not able to flow with the situation. They come to the concert expecting a certain thing, and they are necessarily disappointed if they don't get it.

If, however, you come to the concert with an open mind, expecting nothing more than listening to the music and having a good time, then you won't be disappointed. The attitude there is, "I don't know what I'm going to hear, but I am going to try to absorb it for what it is. Then, if I don't like it, I don't like it."

**Underwood:** In January of 1974, you recorded Zappa's *Apostrophe*, Cobham's *Crosswinds*, Edison's *Soft Shoes*, Airto's *Virgin Land*, and your own *Faces In Reflection*. All of that in one month. The styles embrace rock, jazz/rock, straight jazz, Latin, and your own material.

How can you possibly maintain the point of view of George Duke when you are constantly going out and necessarily watering down this or that element of your own personality so you can effectively complement and support the points of view of Edisons and Zappas?

**Duke:** I don't know. I just do it. For some people, it's very difficult. However, I find it fairly easy, because I've studied those styles of music. I enjoy them, and I think each style has validity. I can play most of those styles of music reasonably well, and I gain invaluable experience with each one.

While most people get involved with only one style of music, becoming mono-thematic, I've studied all of those styles and learned what makes them work. I consider myself comprehensive. In other words, I can play in various settings and still be myself. I'm still gonna be me, even though I may have different hats on. And I'm very sincere with all of it.

**Underwood:** You played with Zappa in 1970, then again from '73-'75. What was that first rehearsal like?

**Duke:** I almost quit right there. He had me playing 1950s rock 'n' roll triplets. I hated that music in the '50s, and I hated it when he made me play it, but he was paying me all that money, so I stayed, even though I knew it wasn't going to be for very long.

A lot of that problem had to do with my own growing up, with my own ego. I had come through listening to Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson. I had been playing classical piano. And I thought it was really degrading to be playing '50s triplets.

Then I realized where Frank was coming from, and I asked myself, "Why was it beneath me to play triplets? Who am I? Why am I above everybody else? Why is it so important to play all of those multitudes of other notes?" I decided I was being ridiculous. I stopped being so serious, and I said, "Live with it, have fun, flow with life." There is no sense in being ridiculous.

That first year, 1970, was rough in terms of Zappa's one-man domination of the group, but after I came back from Cannonball, which is where I grew up, Zappa didn't tell me what to play. He would give a direction, then let me do it. It was that way in the studio, and on live gigs. Once I understood the musical area to work in, I was free to do what I liked.

**Underwood:** What about coping with criticism? That is often a musician's downfall—and the critics have not been all that kind to you recently.

**Duke:** Critics don't bother me. They can say whatever they want, because I want to be able to do the same thing.

As long as I was in the jazz trip exclusively, nobody put me down. The jazz critics thought I was the next jazz star, and the rock critics never bothered with me.

Once I joined Zappa's band, however, people began to turn left. But the money was good, and I saw a chance to expand my own horizons. I'm glad I did it, because I learned a lot, including the use of humor, which I never would have done if I hadn't worked with Frank.

I am not going to impose my standards on a critic, telling him what he can or can't write, but I want the same respect. I am glad that critics today have less influence than they used to, however. Years ago, a bad review stopped people from coming to the club.

But now if a Leonard Feather or a Lee Underwood writes something negative about me, it doesn't matter, because the place is still packed every night. As long as it doesn't affect my living, they can say anything they want.

**Underwood:** At your recent Roxy performance, it seemed to me that many of the tunes lacked a central point of view, a central passion, a central reason for being.

**Duke:** I wouldn't say no to that. It was a problem, because there were four strong personalities up there. Our viewpoints were very much different, and sometimes things got strange.

Most of the material was basically Billy's. We brought in material, and it underwent changes as we molded it to the personalities of the guys involved.

Billy's personality, drumwise, is so strong that it was very, very difficult to bring in a piece of music and not have it come out sounding like Billy Cobham. It was very difficult to shine through yourself. His thing was so strong that it was incredible what I had to go through to make a personal statement. He's tremendously forceful. I went out and just



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## DUKE

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tried. I played what I heard, and sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't.

But it was a band that, for some reason, a lot of people came to see. It could have been a group that nobody cared about, like a masterpiece painting going unnoticed in the corner of the museum, but we weren't that way. People enjoyed us.

**Underwood:** Betty Carter, one of the best and least appreciated improvisational singers ever to emerge out of the bebop '50s, hates your music, Stanley Clarke's music, Chick Corea's music—this entire so-called jazz/rock fusion area. She feels that this music completely negates the dignity, the substance, and the pride of the black culture.

**Duke:** She's entitled to her opinion. I just don't agree. Jazz came about as a result of black/white coordination. I won't get into history, but everybody knows about European chordal and melodic structures merging with black rhythms.

I myself have not turned my back on the black culture. As a matter of fact, I'm probably more into it now than I was before. Much of our audience is white, but in certain areas, like Detroit, for example, most of our audience is black. In New York, it's probably half-and-half. It varies, and people have a good time, and that's what I want.

I would say there is a lot of black funk in the music we're playing, and I don't consider funk as being disco. I love to play funk. I will *never* do a disco record. The funkiness of my playing is the blackness of my playing.

I believe funk is more blues-oriented, and the blues is not simply a 12-bar form. It's a feeling. Disco is just beat-oriented. It's more superficial, but it definitely serves a purpose. I am glad disco is happening, because it gives people something to do. They want to be on stage; they don't want to just sit there and listen.

That's one of the problems with jazz, especially in larger halls. The younger kids start getting fidgety, because there is nothing going on *except* the music. After they've seen Earth, Wind & Fire, Genesis, and Led Zeppelin, they want to also be overwhelmed by what they *see*. When they're sitting way in the back of a 20,000-seat hall, you've got to do more than just play music, or they are not going to come.

I envision for myself a situation in which I am doing something that is musically sophisticated, that is fun to play and to hear, and which allows audience participation. I would like to have dancers, singers, music—a show. I want to involve *all* the arts—drama, dance, singing, and good instrumental music. That is why I have been writing my opera, because I want the challenge of doing a total artistic thing, rather than just limiting myself to playing the piano.

The basic opera was my Master's thesis, but it's not yet finished. Rather than the orchestra, I have used the synthesizer. It's called *Tzina*, some of which I have already recorded on *Feel*, *Liberated Fantasy*, and *I Love The Blues* (on *Blues*, it's only a very small segment, entitled, *Giant Child Within Us—Ego*). The longest segment so far will be out soon on *The Dream*, an MPS album that's been in the can for awhile.

But that is what I want to do: Music, singing, theater and dance, all wrapped into one total comprehensive work. That is my goal.

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the feeling you try to get with an audience?

**Criss:** No, that's a different kind of thing. When I'm in the studio, I'm playing similar to how I'd play for an audience, and hope they like it when it comes out. My approach is the same wherever I am, whether playing in the studio or in a club. It all comes from my heart and I have to feel what I'm doing. Sometimes I'll play better in a club, sometimes vice versa. But the basic thing is that it comes from my heart, so I don't have time to think about the difference.

**Mandel:** Has the West Coast community been slighted in recording?

**Criss:** Well, there's a lot about California that people don't know, and there's a lot of interest right now. There are writers approaching me, trying to find out what happened in the '40s. There are books coming out about jazz on the West Coast back then because people in the Midwest, South and East don't know what went down. In 1950, something called West Coast jazz came in, so everybody thought all the musicians that came from California played the same way. Even today—some guy did it just the other night. He sat down and said, "Hey man, I don't believe you are from California, you don't play like the California cats." I asked him how they play. He says, "You know how they play. You don't play like that, you play like the guys from the East." I told him, "Well, I come from California, baby."

It's really a shame. There's a lot of information people need to know. West Coast jazz was a false picture, up to a point. There were only a few guys who played "that way."

But then, I don't know what "bebop"

means. I don't separate one era of jazz from another because I listen to everybody. I was playing before I came to California from Memphis, when I was 15 years old. I played in school there, in the marching band, playing for the football games, proms, all that. Wearing those little funny uniforms, the little funny hats, the gold braid—that was fun. I was a kid, just learning how to play.

But I don't like that term "bebop" because I don't know what it means. Art Tatum played as fast as any musician I've ever heard, but would you call him a bop piano player? I can hear some of Roy Eldridge in Diz, and I hear a lot of saxophone players in Charlie Parker. Everybody takes from everybody else and adds their own thing and goes on from there.

**Mandel:** Did you listen to blues when you grew up?

**Criss:** Sure. The blues is part of my style of playing. Memphis is very much like Kansas City—a very fast town, and cosmopolitan. There were sophisticated places where you heard good music. I heard Basie very young. Anyone you can think of came through town. It was a center for black music. Phineas Newborn, Charles Lloyd, George Coleman, Hank Crawford, Frank Strozier, Hank Crawford, the old drummer, you don't know about him, a lot of blues singers, like Memphis Slim and B.B. King all came from Memphis. I've played with most of the guys from there at one time or another. Then, the first time I went on the road, it was Johnny Otis who sent for me to come to Chicago. We played the South Side.

**Mandel:** What about coming up in California?

**Criss:** The first group I worked with was a school group, made up of students—among

them, Hampton Hawes. Then I played with a number of people nobody knows. Then with Howard McGhee. We organized a band with four saxophones and one trumpeter. McGhee was the trumpeter; the saxes were Charlie Parker, Teddy Edwards, Gene Montgomery, and myself. This was '45, '46. This was during the recording ban, and no one had the sense to record us except a few guys with tape recorders who were around then, and no one knows where they are now. We played in the Finale Club. Roy Porter was playing drums. Dodo Marmarosa might have been in that band at some time.

My first national recognition was with Jazz at the Philharmonic. They had been going three or four years. Norman Granz sent Charlie Parker on tour and wanted another alto player to go along; he decided I was the guy. Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Flip Phillips, myself, Shelly Manne, Ray Brown, Howard McGhee, Fats Navarro. Pres was on one of those tours.

The concert scene was the thing at that time. From '50 to '66 I made five albums under my own name—in 16 years! None are available now. There were four for Imperial, and one recorded in Chicago for a guy from Texas who had the Peacock label. A guy heard me with Buddy Rich and asked if I wanted to record. I wasn't doing any recording then, so I jumped at the chance. They weren't a jazz label—Imperial was into rhythm and blues, or rock, or something, and Peacock was into gospel. I think they did it for tax purposes, or just because the owner liked jazz. They didn't push my records, they couldn't get the kind of sales they were used to, and they weren't that interested.

I met Don Schlitten in '66, when I came

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back from Europe. He was producing for Prestige, and he'd been around a long time. He's an unusual guy. At the time I recorded for him, I couldn't buy a record date. But he had the foresight and the love of music and the knowledge of who could do what. Through Schlitten and Bob Porter I got back on records.

**Mandel:** How did you get *Sonny's Dream* together? (This LP puts Criss in a context he dubbed "Birth of the New Cool," an orchestra including Teddy Edwards, Conte Candoli, Ray Draper, Al McKibbin, and Tommy Flanagan playing the compositions of Horace Tapscott).

**Criss:** That was a completely different sort of direction. It was pretty satisfying, because I fought hard for that one. Tapscott was an unknown writer, and not in very good graces with the California musicians union. The music and band grew out of a rehearsal thing I got involved with in Watts. I had a really hip teacher in high school—Samuel Browne. Tapscott had him, too. Dexter Gordon came up under him. He was fantastic—he taught everything serious about music—theory, instrumentation.

In school it depends upon the professor and the student. Study is tricky. Some teachers I haven't been able to learn anything from, some teachers have taught me everything. I've taught in the past, and lectured, and played in schools. I'm still involved in community orchestra: you've got to have musicians who are trying to see the music kept alive. You can't get along without support, help from people. At least, I can't.

For example, the first time I went to Paris, I just went. I got on a plane and said I'm going to see if I can do it and took off. I didn't even know how to say "no" in French—or "yes" either.

When I got there I took a room and waited for something to happen. A week went by and nothing happened. I thought maybe somebody would offer me a job. Another week, nothing happened. I'd been in Paris two weeks, and nobody offered me a job. A third week, still nothing. I couldn't go home a failure. The thing was, I'd been waiting for someone to call me, sitting in my room. I decided to go to the club where they play jazz, Le Chat Qui Se Peche.

Now, French musicians are scared about American jazz musicians, and with good reason. The Americans get all the raves and everybody forgets the Frenchmen. I went up to the stage and showed them my horn case and asked if I could play. "No," they said, "you can't play." Well, I started to walk out but I thought, the hell with them. I took out my horn and just walked up to the stage and played. There wasn't anything they could do, without getting violent. They tried to do different things, like throw the rhythm around and trip me up, but I figured I'd just stay up there and play. I played my heart out. I was desperate. They knew what was happening—I was looking for work.

The lady who owned the club heard me and asked if I wanted to work, and I said, "Yeah, I guess so." That's how it started. After a while the other musicians thought I wasn't such a bad guy, personally, and we got along fine.

Now, what was I saying all this for? To show you need help, but you've got to start for yourself. Now, I got lots of support from the first, from my family and from guys who wrote what they could—not rich writers from the *Times* or anything like that, but from people doing what they could for jazz. In Europe I'm

continued on page 46

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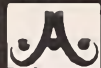
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# HOW TO visualize keyboard chords Part I

by Dr. William L. Fowler

All those kinds of chords to construct. . . All those black and white keys to construct them over. . . All those inversions and voicings to manipulate them into. . . All those thousands of visual patterns to memorize! It's enough to discourage any keyboard beginner. And it's more than enough to dismay a non-keyboarder!

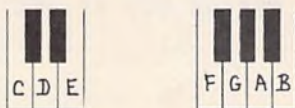
But keyboard harmonic knowledge, despite its difficulty of acquisition, remains too valuable a tool for any musician to neglect.

In the interests, then, of saving time and avoiding frustration for keyboard learners, this multi-installment article aims toward minimizing individual chord memorization and maximizing systematic chord visualization by showing how all common-practice chords can be built from five easily identified intervals—major and minor thirds, perfect fourths, and perfect and diminished fifths.

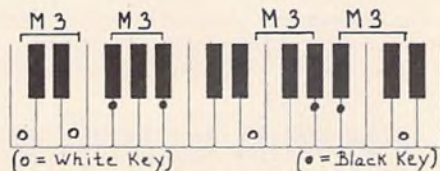
## The full piano Keyboard



All along the keyboard, the same octave pattern of black and white keys repeats itself. Each octave pattern contains two segments, each bounded by white keys. The lower, from C up to E, inserts two black keys among its three white keys while the upper, from F up to B, inserts three black keys among its four white keys:

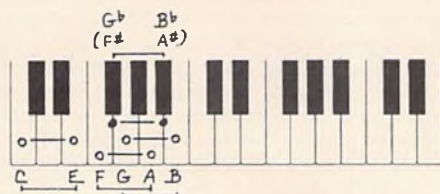


Because of the irregular distribution of black and white keys within the octave pattern, each type of interval appears in up to four visual versions—white above white, black above black, black above white, and white above black:

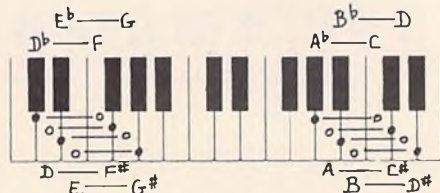


Although the above four versions of the major third look different, they all sound alike harmonically, for each contains three black and white keys tucked between its extremities.

The three white-over-white major thirds enclose two black keys plus a white symmetrically, just as the black-over-black encloses two white keys plus a black symmetrically:



All the other major thirds, whether black-over-white or white-over-black, contain somewhere between their extremities one pair of adjacent white keys, either B-C or E-F:



(Readers who don't already know keyboard major thirds backwards and forwards should now take a break to practice them up and down chromatically and around the cycle of fifths.)

Two conjoined major thirds equal an augmented triad:



Augmented triads always consist of two whites plus a black or two blacks plus a white. And any component can be the root, for no matter which is on the bottom, the other two can be arranged as conjoined major thirds above it. For example: C-E-G# equals E-G#-C equals Ab-C-E. (The four augmented triads shown above should be practiced in root position, then in their inversions by moving the root up one octave then the third up one octave. Every one of the twelve augmented triads will then have been visualized.)

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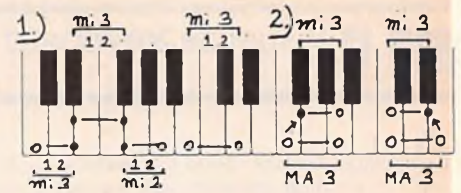
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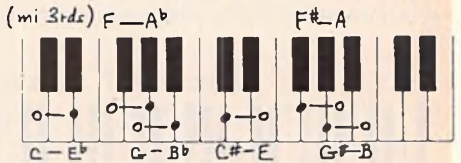
The minor third, a half step smaller than the major third, also appears four ways. Two easy visualization methods consist of: (1) separating its extremities by only two internal keys and (2) shrinking known major thirds by one key:



The four white-over-white and the two black-over-black minor thirds always contain the B-C or the E-F white key combinations:

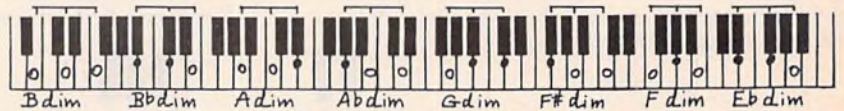


The other six always enclose one black and one white key:



(Again, those not thoroughly conversant with minor thirds should now take a practice break—chromatically and around the cycle.)

Two conjoined minor thirds equal a diminished triad:



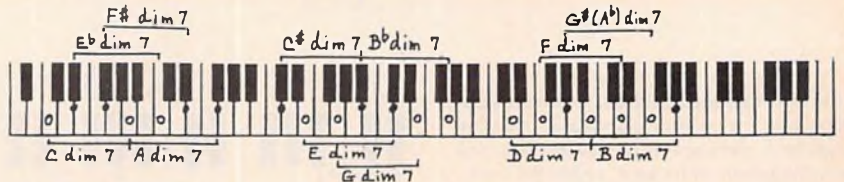
Except for the all-white B diminished and the black-between-two-whites F diminished, all these triads consist of two adjacent keys of the same color and one of the other color. And again, except for the B and F diminished, the top and bottom notes differ in color.

The importance of visualizing diminished triads lies in their later use as units within larger chords. (Practice time. . . . Same procedure.)

Three conjoined minor thirds equal a diminished seventh chord:

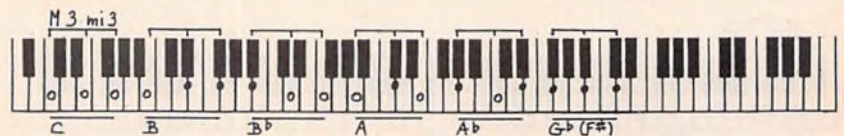


Exactly as in the augmented triad, any component of the diminished seventh chord can be its root, for no matter which is on the bottom, the other three can be arranged as conjoined minor thirds above. Each of the three diminished seventh chords in the above example, therefore, represents four possible root notes: together, the three chords represent all twelve possible roots. While the eye visualizes the keyboard pattern of each diminished seventh, the mind can memorize its four different names. (An efficient practice routine consists of shifting along successive four-note groups in a visualized arpeggio. When done on each of the three different diminished seventh arpeggios, this routine covers all possible close position diminished seventh patterns):



As has been seen, making the top note of one third also the bottom note of another (conjoined) automatically erects a triad. Though hardly the most-used triads, both augmented and diminished made the ideal starting examples for this article because each combines similar-type thirds. The most-used triads, major and minor, though, contain mixed-type thirds, the lower naming the triad.

A bottom major third conjoined to a top minor third erects a major triad:



Major triad look-alikes include:

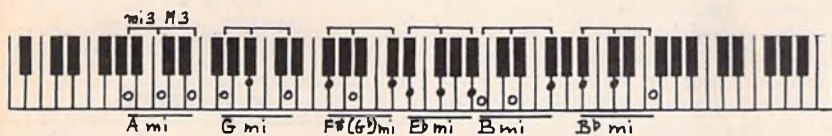
- C, F and G—three white keys
- A, D and E—black between two whites
- Ab, Db and Eb—white between two blacks

The other three major triads visualize as individual patterns:

- F#—three blacks; B—one white below two blacks
- Bb—one black below two whites

(Time for another practice break, chromatically and around the cycle.)

A bottom minor third conjoined to a top major third erects a minor triad:



The look-alikes include:

A mi, D mi and E mi—three white keys

C mi, F mi and G mi—black between two whites

C# mi, F# mi and G# (Ab) mi—white between two blacks

The other three minor triads visualize as individual patterns:

Eb mi—three blacks: B mi—two whites below one black

Bb mi—two blacks below one white

(Plenty of practice time now. . . . The break before Part II appears in the next issue gives two weeks for review, and for visual consolidation.) Part II will get into visualization of fourths and fifths, disjunct interval-combinations, extended chords, and inversions.

## PIANO

continued from page 19

On electric, some of the more imaginative players are Joe Zawinul and George Duke. The last time I heard George live, I was really excited by the sounds he was getting, which is something you could only get in a studio before. I should say, though, that I don't really think of the electric piano as a piano. Of course, I haven't played the Yamaha yet, but of the ones I've played, they all are electric keyboards, but not pianos. From what I've heard, I don't think the pianists who play them think of them as pianos either. I don't think either the acoustic or electric has reached a plateau, but it might seem that way. This is because the recording industry requires that the musicians record within certain prescribed boundaries. Not many guys can record wherever they happen to be musically, so there's a lot of experimenting going on that's not commercially available.

**JOHN LEWIS:** No, I don't think it's stagnant. In the future there may be more solo playing, and it already seems to be going in that direction. The piano won't necessarily be as functional as it has been in the past. As an accompaniment, it's had to supply the harmonic background, help with the time, and supply some interest to support the total sound. The trumpet doesn't act as a functional instrument. It doesn't supply the time or harmony to other instruments. I don't think it's necessary for the piano to continue doing so. The electric, though, is another instrument to me, like the organ, so I can't really compare them. It seems too limited to become a major instrument; it doesn't have the range or dynamics.

**HAMPTON HAWES:** One reason the electric piano is not further along is that all the players started out on acoustic. They're two different instruments—you have to phrase differently because of the action—and I don't

think the electric has been around long enough to be developed fully. It's been used as a second instrument or added sound. Notice, nobody has put out an album of solo electric piano. It's basically been used like a synthesizer or even a wah-wah pedal—for effect.

I don't think the instruments are stagnant so much as the musicians who have reached a plateau and stopped there because they've found something interesting and something the public will pay to hear. I wouldn't say things are stagnant. Let's just say it's a rest stop. The electric players are great, especially Chick, Joe Zawinul, and Herbie. So are McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans, and Oscar Peterson on acoustic. But who's gonna bust out of the cocoon next, I don't know. Who knows? It could be me! **db**

## HILL

continued from page 17

Everybody makes money off jazz musicians. The musicians aren't making any money. It's set up just like it was with the race music records. It's a cheap commodity. The record companies say I can get you for little or nothing so you should be grateful for what you get. To make it worse, the musicians too often develop a mentality which causes them to go along. That's stupid.

**Berg:** Is this still the prevailing situation?

**Hill:** Well, I don't know the entire scene. From what I hear, there are some beautiful individuals out there who are really trying to do something. But I haven't signed with anyone.

**Berg:** Some musicians get upset about having to listen to things they recorded in the past. Are you glad that most of the Blue Note material is still in the catalog and available?

**Hill:** It doesn't bother me because it's good music. A lot of it has stood the test of time.

**Berg:** What's the next project?

**Hill:** A performance in Japan of my new concerto with orchestra. I'll be playing spontaneous piano. It's something I hope gets recorded.

. . . .

**T**oward the end of our conversation Andrew talked about his early days in Chicago. "One of my first professional jobs was with Charlie Parker at the Greystone Ballroom. He told me, 'you're the keeper of the flame.' At the time I didn't know what he meant by that. But now I'm beginning to understand." To check out Bird's insight, drop the needle on any of Hill's recorded work for Blue Note, Inner City or Arista/Freedom. **db**



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I haven't really pushed. When I got ready to go on the road, I'd go to Europe. Even now, I'm not doing that much. It's okay, I have a good time when I go out, but I don't know if I could get into that really heavy traveling. It's

hard to understand how guys like Ellington and Basie, old as they got and are, still are at one nighters. That's weird. 500 miles, 1000 mile jumps, sleeping in different beds, eating different food every night. You get into that groove and it's your life, but I don't think I'd like that. When I get to be 60, I don't want to be playing one nighters. I did most of that when I was very young and raring to go. It was mean. I'd have to be a nut to want to do that again. A lot of people have accused me and some other people of being crazy, but I've never felt crazy.

I've been recording since 1948. I've been reading lately that I'm an underground musician—no, that's not how it goes—it's that I used to be an underground musician, but I'm not anymore! Well, maybe it's true. I really couldn't care less. I know I'm here. **db**



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**Oceanus:** Joe Marillo Quartet (Wed.-Sun.).  
**Fat Fingers:** Kirk Bates & house band (nightly).  
**Folk Arts:** Record swap (2/27).  
**Safety:** Jazz jam (Sunday).  
**Sports Arena:** Steve Miller (2/5); Foghat/Rick Derringer (2/10); Jethro Tull (2/23); Fleetwood Mac (3/1); Queen/Thin Lizzy (3/5).  
**U.C.S.D.:** Ronnie Laws (tent.); Gospel-jazz concert (2/12); Atomic Cafe (2/22).

## BUFFALO

**Mulligan's** (Hertal): Big name jazz; Jean-Luc Ponty (2/24).  
**University of Buffalo** (Fillmore Room): Stuff (Eric Gale, Steve Gadd, Cornell Dupree, Richard Tee) with guest Miroslav Vitous (2/5).  
**Anchor Bar:** Jazz Fri. through Sun. with the Johnny Gibson Trio.  
**Pierce Arrow:** Live jazz with Jon Weiss Quintet every Thursday.  
**Statler Hilton Downtown room:** Live jazz Tues. through Sun.; Phil Woods, (2/1-2/13); Mary Lou Williams, (2/15-2/27); Glen Covington, (3/1-3/13); Grady Tate/Milt Hinton/Hank Jones, (3/15-3/27). Every opening night is broadcast live on public radio in Buffalo, WBFO.  
**Odyssey:** Live and recorded jazz on weekends.  
**Trafalmore Cafe:** Live jazz Wed. through Sat. Open jam sessions Sun. 5-8 pm. Anthony Braxton/Dave Holland (2/25-27); call (716) 836-9678 for info.  
**Jack Daniel's:** Live jazz Tues. and Sun. with Spyro Gyra.

## DENVER

**Macky Auditorium** (Boulder): Toshiko Akiyoshi and Pandamonium (2/23).  
**Zeno's:** Dr. Jazz (Tues.-Thurs.); Queen City Jazz Band (Fri.-Sat.).  
**Global Village:** Jazz and contemporary music on weekends.  
**Ebbets Field:** George Duke (3/3-5).  
**Broadway:** Occasional jazz; for information call: 534-9390.  
**Oxford Hotel:** Michael Murphy (2/23-24); Tracy Nelson (2/25-26); Steve Fromholtz (3/4-5); Tanglefoot (3/18-19).

## ST. LOUIS

**Plantation Dinner Theatre:** Dave Brubeck (3/7-8).  
**American Theatre:** Jean-Luc Ponty (2/24).  
**Kiel Opera House:** Jeff Beck (2/24).  
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## CLEVELAND

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**El Charro:** The Crewmen Bit Band w/ Polly Zaremba (Fri.).  
**Agora New World of Jazz:** Name acts Tues. nights.  
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(CYMBALSMITH)



Into the romance of cymbals is inextricably woven the colorful story of the Zildjian family and the secrets of cymbal craftsmanship it has held for more than three and one half centuries.

True, before the Zildjian destiny had been written, cymbals had been used in the highly rhythmic music of Byzantine civilization and down through the Middle Ages to the era when Turkish armies marched to the beat of drums and the crash of cymbals. But the modern history of cymbals did not begin until 1623, when an alchemist of Constantinople, named Avedis, discovered a still secret process for treating alloys and applied his knowledge to the manufacture of cymbals. As his fame spread, patrons and guildsmen gave Avedis the name "Zildjian," which meant "cymbal smith."

Beyond the borders of Turkey, cymbals were hardly exploited for other than their exotic effect until 1680, when the German composer Strungk introduced the instruments into opera. By 1779, when Glück wrote a cymbal part into one of his scores, the instruments of the Turks were gaining great popularity, especially with the Prussian military bands. The latter began to import their cymbals from the Zildjians of Constantinople because of the brilliant crash that only a Zildjian cymbal could produce. Soon the Zildjians were shipping their product to every part of the globe.

It was the custom of the Zildjian family for hundreds of years to pass along the family secrets to the senior male member next in line. Under a continuation of this system, the Zildjian family has kept its secret of cymbal making since the alchemist's discovery of 1623.

In 1851, the second Avedis Zildjian built a 25-foot schooner and sailed it from Constantinople to Marseilles, thence to London, where he displayed his cymbals at the world trade fair. At the fairs of

London and Paris in 1851, and again in London in 1862, cymbals bearing the name Avedis Zildjian won all prizes and awards for excellence.

In 1865, K. Zildjian succeeded Avedis, placed his name on the product and maintained the family's fine tradition of cymbal craftsmanship. In his advanced years, K. Zildjian conveyed the family secrets to Aram Zildjian, but because of chaotic political conditions in Europe, Aram was able to produce only a small number of cymbals before 1926. Failing in health, in 1929, Aram Zildjian came to the United States expressly to reveal the secrets of the Zildjian process to his nephew, the third Avedis Zildjian and present head of the family, who was senior male member next in line.

Today, assisted by sons Armand and Robert, Avedis is crafting cymbals in Norwell, Massachusetts. Their factory is considered to be one of the most modern in New England.

Just as the Zildjians have carefully guarded the secret of their own process through the ages they have unceasingly studied and evaluated technical advancements in the formulation, processing and fabrication of metals as applied to all branches of industry. In the process they have quietly, but thoroughly, researched the metals, methods and finished products of countless competitors who have, for centuries, sought the answer to the Zildjian secret in vain.

Certain phases of making Avedis Zildjian cymbals employ use of the most advanced techniques and equipment in the world. The Zildjian family is convinced however, that a large degree of hand artanship and conscientious personal inspection is absolutely essential in creating cymbals of Avedis Zildjian quality. It is impossible to produce cymbals with completely individual voices by precision machinery and mass production alone.

*For a fascinating free booklet on drummers, drums and cymbals from the swinging 30's and 40's through the Be-Bop and Progressive Jazz years to Rock Music of the 70's write for a copy of "The Avedis Zildjian Story" The Avedis Zildjian Company, Box 198, Accord, Massachusetts 02018.*

