NOVEMBER 3, 1977 60c

the contemporary music magazine

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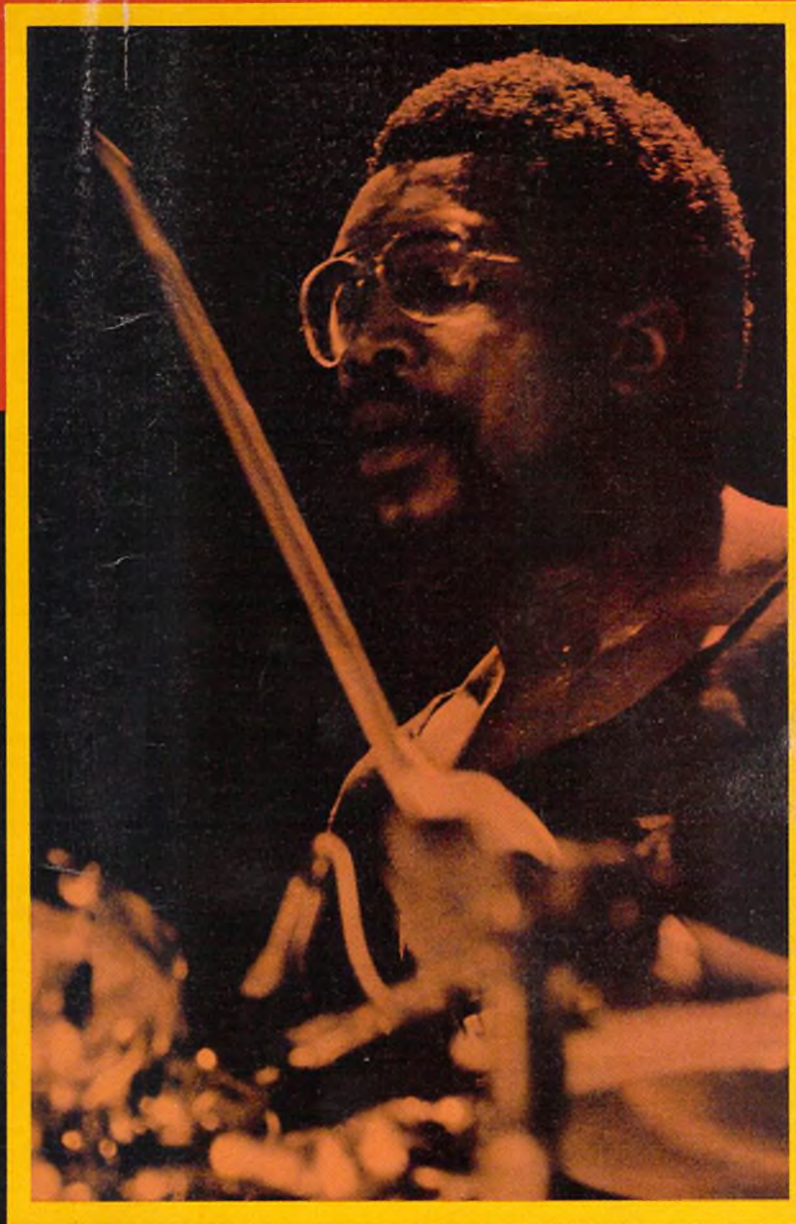

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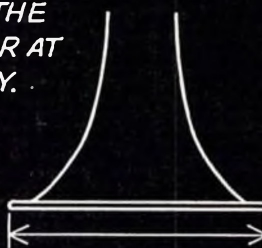

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down beat

November 3, 1977 Vol. 44, No. 18

(on sale October 20, 1977)

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the first chorus

By Charles Suber

Consider the following quiz a self check on just how carefully you read . . . and remember. As is our custom, we offer no prizes; virtue is its own reward. But if you insist on ratings, score yourself thusly: all correct makes you either Perfect or an Over Achiever; eleven to thirteen right makes you Well-Nigh-Perfect; six to ten less-than-perfect; less than six right and you better go back to A.

1. What does Bach and dixieland have in common? (a) Barrett Deems; (b) steady beat; (c) counterpoint; (d) Lydian Concept of Tonal Organisation.

2. Which instrument best combines harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic experience? (a) flute; (b) violin; (c) guitar; (d) piano.

3. Which trombonist does Frank Rosolino consider to a master of playing fourths and fifths? (a) Raul de Souza; (b) Glenn Ferris; (c) Albert Mangelsdorff; (d) J. J. Johnson.

4. With whom did the late George Barnes collaborate? (a) Eddie Lang; (b) Carl Kress; (c) Charlie Christian; (d) Bucky Pizzarelli; (e) Wes Montgomery.

5. What instrument other than baritone sax does Pepper Adams play? (a) trumpet; (b) clarinet; (c) alto; (d) tenor; (e) trombone.

6. With whom has Pepper Adams not recorded? (a) Hank Jones; (b) Jonah Jones; (c) Elvin Jones; (d) Thad Jones.

7. Of the musicians featured in this issue, which one did not play with Benny Goodman? (a) Pepper Adams; (b) Louis Bellson; (c) Frank Rosolino; (d) Red Norvo.

8. Who's playing bass with Jim Hall these days? (a) Jaco Pastorius; (b) Mike Moore; (c) Larry Ridley; (d) Wayne Darling.

9. Match the following cymbal sounds and uses with the proper type of cymbal. (a) brass accentuation; (b) fast response; (c) "chick"; (d) old funk; (e) bass; (f) "ping"; (g) recording . . . (t) hi-hat cymbal; (u) mini-cup cymbal; (v) 22-inch cymbal with rivets and turned up edges; (w) thin cymbal; (x) 18-21 inch cymbal, normal cup; (y) 18-inch medium-thin crash cymbal; (z) gong.

10. Who are the co-founders of Dr. Jazz?

11. Who are not regular members of Oregon? (a) David Earl Johnson; (b) Bennie Lee Wallace; (c) Larry Karush; (d) Paul McCandless; (e) Ralph Towner.

12. Whom does record reviewer Gilmore consider "*the* poised jazz singer of our time?"

13. Which instrument does David Liebman not play on his latest album? (a) electric piano; (b) alto sax; (c) alto flute; (d) tenor sax.

14. Whom does McCoy Tyner use in his rhythm sections on his most recently reviewed album? (a) Ron Carter/Tony Williams; (b) Richard Davis/Steve Gadd; (c) Eddie Gomez/Jack DeJohnette.

Answers: 1. (c); 2. (d); 3. (c); 4. (a,b,d); 5. all except alto, Art Pepper's instrument; 6. (b); 7. (c); 8. (b); 9. (a-y), (b-w), (c-t), (d-v), (c-z), (f-x), (g-u); 10. Stan Aycroff and Jan Threlkeld; 11. (b,c); 12. Helen Merrill; 13. (b); 14. (a,c).

Next issue's major topics include laconic Benny Goodman, lydian Jan Garbarek and lyrical Frank Rosolino; plus bassist Richard Davis and drummer Ed Graham; and sundries galore. db

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Canadian Heat Wave

Contrary to popular belief, jazz *does* exist north of the 49th parallel (or whatever). As a matter of fact, Canada's jazz industry could almost be described as thriving. With the slow but steady migration of jazz musicians into Canada, and especially with homegrown talent, the future looks good for those of us with an ear for it. Keep it up, guys! It's not always cold up here!

John D. Bennett — Boucherville, Quebec

Everything Must Change

After reading Mikal Gilmore's review of the Brecker Brothers' *Don't Stop The Music* (**db**, 10/6) I couldn't help but think back on my more than 20 years of reading **down beat.** J.A.T.P. records would be consistently put down. Now they are praised. Webster, Jacquet, Phillips, etc. were called honkers. Any record reviewed that had a percussionist was put down for "muddling up the rhythm section."

How many records today are made without a percussionist? The contradictions could go on and on. By the way, this isn't a plug for the Breckers, Hubbard, Hancock, etc. I personally don't care for what they are presently doing. It is just nice to see good musicians making a decent living. Bunky Green's interview (10/6) really hits home.

Gary Conte — Brookfield, Wis.

Conversion

A word on Maynard Ferguson. . . . I started blowing trumpet in sixth grade. I didn't know anything about jazz, and I didn't really care. Eighteen months ago, I heard one or two cuts from *Chameleon*. I ran out and bought it. I started listening to more and more jazz and now, I, a freshman in high school, have my first subscription to **down beat.**

If Maynard Ferguson has done nothing else with his double high C's, he's turned millions of high school-age musicians on to jazz.

Thanks Maynard!

Jonathan Santore — Greeneville, Tenn.

Crossover Challenge

I want to thank you for your interview with Jeff Beck. It has been almost a year to the day that I attended a concert in Albany to see and hear Beck with the Jan Hammer group, and it was one of the most exciting performances I've ever witnessed.

I do agree that Beck is "the most intelligent and tasteful" rock guitarist ever. His change of direction from rock to fusion jazz is indeed a progressive step forward, and may he continue to grow and develop.

I wish now that other intelligent and skillful rock guitarists such as Alvin Lee, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Mick Taylor would follow Beck's example and cross over into the more challenging and demanding fusion of jazz with rock.

John Emerson — Andes, N.Y.

L.A. Defender

As an expatriate Los Angeleno, I was delighted to see the interesting feature article on the L.A. Four (10/8). I enjoyed their unique brand of "sophisticated, swinging, classical jazz" during their first gig at the Manne-hole and later on at the Lighthouse. The sounds coming from this group of dedicated artisans are like a refreshing rainshower on a parched desert wasteland.

However, I must take issue with a couple of Mr. Manne's remarks. He said the kids he meets at his clinics don't know who Sonny Rollins is. The high school kids I come in contact with definitely "know who Sonny Rollins is", and also Coltrane and Carney!

Manne also said that KBCA doesn't play much jazz. Sure, the station plays plenty of the current commercialized mediocrities, crossover vocals, and electronic wizardries, but their generous dose of acoustic and mainstream, including plenty of vintage and down home blues, is enough to satisfy almost any purist. KBCA is what turned me on to jazz four years ago, and I'll be forever indebted. It's the best thing about L.A. (besides the clubs). The jazz community here in Houston would be grateful to have *half* as much radio coverage! Long live KBCA!

Lee Anderson — Houston, Tex.

Hornman's Complaint

I've played trumpet for Buddy Rich for over two years and I really love the guy. However, I would like to say something about our new album and the carelessness of its packaging. Not to sound overly vain, I am proud of my solo on *Lush Life* and was not given credit for it on the album. *Time Out* and *Tales Of Rhoda Rat* were reversed in the album notes also. If a musician displayed this kind of incompetence, he would not last five minutes with any band. With a band as great as Buddy's, he should have a production staff to match.

Ross Konikoff — Elmhurst, N.Y.

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Improvisational Bluegrass

ARNOLD JAY SMITH

Players tune up at Berkshire pickathon

ANCRAM, N.Y.—Improvisation comes in many flavors. Jazz is merely the most obvious because it has been hyped as such. But there is another American musical idiom that has a wider audience than jazz and is every bit as improvisational.

During the summer months, bluegrass festivals dot the maps of every area of the country, especially the northeast and midwest. The Berkshire Mountain Bluegrass Festival at Ancram, N.Y., is one of a series produced mostly in the New England area. Many of the artists remarked that they had never been "this far south," or "this far north," or "this far east." In other words, New York State is close to virgin bluegrass country.

The setting was a mountainside on a working farm. (Watching your footing was of major importance to the thousands who trammeled the cow pastures,.) There were day outers and overnight campers, as well as those who brought sleeping bags in the event that they should desire to sleep over. The weekend began with an icy wind coming over the crest of the hill. From that crest you could see for many miles. With music wafting up at you against the breeze it made for some eerie noises.

All manner of instrumental groupings appeared, mostly made up of stringed instruments: banjo, electric and acoustic guitar, string and electric bass, mandolin and the everpresent fiddle. Missing was the harmonica. There was not one group that featured the mouth organ, a mainstay of bluegrass country and its music.

While jazz is based on African motifs, bluegrass stems from middle European gypsy music with some Scandinavian influences thrown in. But the improvisations touch all bases. Boone Creek, one of the 17 groups which performed over 54 hours, drew from what the leader called "swing music." His instrumentation for *Sweet Georgia Brown* emphasized the violin of Stephane Grappelli and the guitar of Django Reinhardt. But that's not what made the difference. The time signature went from a cut-time (2/4) with its one beat per bar accent, to 4/4 and the traditional jazz accent on two and four.

There was good pickin' all night long, with jam sessions continuing far into the night and early morn. Mandolinist Frank Wakefield and five-string banjoist Tony Trishka showed a group of late-night listeners what could be done with those two instruments. Wakefield, the acknowledged master of the bluegrass mandolin, dazzled the crown with amazingly fleetfingered dexterity, while Trishka, noted for his innovations and experimentation with electricity and such, was exciting.

Most players use steel-tipped fingers for single line picking while some use strumming techniques as rhythm support. The dobro players (a guitar on a stand) use a slide in the manner of the blues guitarists of the early '30s.

The fine line between bluegrass and country and western was crossed over only once and the difference was readily apparent. Wilma Lee Cooper was the culprit and her set ran overtime at that. Buck White utilized an all-girl front line, providing a break from the male voicings heard all weekend.

New Grass Revival was the outstanding group for improvisation and innovation, as they interposed electric bass guitar, rock harmonies and modal patterns over the traditional bluegrass instrumentation.

D.C. Jazz Extensions

WASHINGTON—Listener sponsored radio is not new. Pacifica Broadcasting has been doing it in four cities across the nation, the most notable being KPFA in Berkeley, California and WBAI in New York. Other stations are in Los Angeles and Houston.

WFPW, 89.3mHz, the Pacifica outlet in the Capitol, is doing a "jazz and jazz extensions" format almost exclusively. The first station to do so, it has been on the air less than a year.

"Our feeling was that there was no station in Washington doing a heavy concentration on jazz," station manager Greg Millard said. "It's an American classical music and deserves greater understanding and respect from listeners."

But are there enough listeners to support such a venture? "All we need is a mere 12,000 subscribers contributing an average of eight cents daily and we are home free," another spokesperson for the station said. At this writing there are 4000 subscribers enlisted.

Briefly, the broadcasting consists of straightahead jazz in all its forms and the "extensions", which include blues, gospel, salsa and reggae. The on air personalities include music director Sigidi Braudy; former **db** contributor A.B. Spellman; U.S. Representative from Detroit John Conyers; former bassist Ron Clark; program director Denise Oliver; Renee Gravatt, drummer Eric Gravatt's former wife; and others who are as close to the jazz scene as managing a local pub, being a newspaper reporter, or through some other association that lends itself to the jazz lifestyle.

The extensions area is covered by Bill Harris, owner of the Pigfoot, a local club (from which Ms. Gravatt broadcasts a weekly live show), Betty Diaz, a migrated New Yorker, and Von Martin, whose "Caribbeana" introduces new forms of Island music to the air waves.

Live guest appearances are frequent and have included the likes of Andrew White, Mongo Santamaria, Eddie Palmieri, Gil Scott-Heron, Art Blakey, Marva Josie, Dexter Gordon, Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Eddie Jefferson, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry and **db** New York Correspondent Arnold Jay Smith, who presented tapes and records made on his recent Cuban excursion.

Storyville Energy

NEW YORK—Can a 20-year-old big band leader without a record contract, an agent, or a p.r. man book himself into a New York jazz club?

Yes! The David Chesky Band featuring Lillias, a 14-piece high energy jazz-rock aggregation, has begun a series of Monday night appearances at Storyville. Comprised of young studio players, most of whom have worked with the Rich and Ferguson bands, the group is led by 20-year-old David Chesky, a former student of John Lewis. In addition to writing and arranging, Chesky plays keyboards.

potpourri

Northern Illinois University has what they believe to be the only collegiate steel band program in existence. Directed by **Al O'Connor,** the band's repertoire ranges from explorations of West African drumming to Bab-mu-Tambu orchestration (the historic predecessor of Trinidad's steel drum development). The NIU Steel Band recently played before 58,000 fans at a New York Cosmos soccer game in Yankee Stadium.

•

Blue Note recording artists **Bobby Hutcherson, Earl Klugh,** and **Noel Pointer** performed with the **L.A. Philharmonic** at the Hollywood Bowl recently, and the concert will be released later as an LP. Philharmonic assistant conductor **Calvin Simmons** presided. **Carmen McRae** and **Sarah Vaughan** were also on hand.

Singer **David Allyn** did a recent gig at L.A.'s Donte's backed by **Terry Gibbs.** Allyn, some may remember, sang with **Jack Teagarden** and **Boyd Raeburn** in the '40s, as well as **Stan Kenton** and **Count Basie** in the '60s.

•

Rock group **Foghat** gave a New York benefit concert for the public library's purchase and preservation of rare blues records. The albums will be stored at the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at Lincoln Center.

•

Drummer **Steve Smith,** erroneously referred to in the Oct. 6 *Potpourri* as **Jean-Luc Ponty's** former drummer, reports that he will continue touring with Jean-Luc in addition to his activities with the regrouped Dutch band **Focus.** **db**

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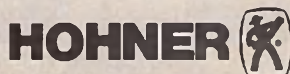

M. Hohner, Inc., Hicksville, N.Y.

GRANT COLLINGWOOD

Ethel Waters, the singer-entertainer-actress whose nearly six-decade professional career embraced vaudeville, cabaret, musical comedy, drama, motion pictures, radio, television and recording, died recently in Los Angeles. The 76-year-old entertainer had been in poor health for some years, suffering from diabetes, heart trouble and a cataract condition that had resulted in near-blindness.

Born Oct. 31, 1900, in the Philadelphia suburb of Chester, Pa., Ms. Waters made her vaudeville debut at 17 when she appeared at the Lincoln Theatre in Baltimore, Md. She was one of the first performers to sing W.C. Handy's *St. Louis Blues.* A tour of the black vaudeville circuit of the South followed, the singer then being billed, as was the fashion of the day, as "Sweet Mama Stringbean." A two-week stint at Harlem's Lincoln Theatre during World War I signaled her arrival in New York, following which she moved to Edmond's Cellar, remaining at the fashionable speakeasy for several years during which her singing gradually drew the attention of the top black entertainers of the time.

In 1921 Ms. Waters made the first of her many recordings, two sides for the short-lived Cardinal label. These were succeeded by 31 titles recorded over the next two years for the Black Swan firm operated by Handy and Harry Pace, many of which featured pianist Fletcher Henderson and cornetist Joe Smith. These were later reissued by Paramount Records, a label the singer made several sides for.

In 1925, Ms. Waters began a seven-year association with Columbia Records, performing blues, risque songs and popular music of the day, often in the company of such leading jazz instrumentalists as Smith, Henderson, Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey, James P. Johnson, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Muggsy Spanier, Adrian Rollini, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang and many others.

In the summer of 1925 the singer replaced Florence Mills at the popular Plantation Club on Broadway, scoring greatly with her rendition of *Dinah*, written by Harry Akst, the club's staff composer, and which became a huge international hit. In mid-1927 she made a successful Broadway debut in *Africana*, which led to headline engagements at the Palace and other top vaudeville houses. In 1929 she made her initial screen appearance in *On With The Show*, the first sound film made entirely in color. She then starred in the musical revues *Blackbirds Of 1930* and *Rhapsody In Black* the following year, but neither was very successful and she returned to cabaret performing, her most notable engagement occurring in 1933 when, backed by the Duke Ellington Orchestra, she introduced Harold Arlen's *Stormy Weather* at the Cotton Club. This led directly to a featured role in Irving Berlin's satiric revue *As Thousands Cheer* later that same year. In September, 1935, she co-starred with Beatrice Lillie in the Howard Dietz-Arthur Schwartz revue *At Home Abroad.*

Through the 1930s the singer was a frequent radio performer whose intimate, personable singing style became familiar to millions of listeners. In November, 1938, she made her concert debut with a highly acclaimed Carnegie Hall recital, and in January of the following year was lauded for her dramatic role in *Mamba's Daughters*, the first of many such non-singing parts she undertook.

Though continuing to perform in cabarets and night spots, as well as for the U.S.O. during World War II, Ms. Waters was increasingly active in motion pictures through the 1940s. One of her most successful performances occurred in the 1949 film *Pinky*, for which she received an Academy Award nomination. Early the following year she achieved one of her greatest successes in *A Member Of The Wedding*, in which she performed the spiritual that provided the title of her outspoken, best-selling autobiography *His Eye Is On The Sparrow*, published in 1951. For two years she starred in the television series *Beulah*, and through the 1950s made numerous appearances on television variety and dramatic shows.

Following her Columbia Records affiliation, the singer had continued to record throughout the 1930s, for Brunswick, Columbia, Decca, Bluebird and Liberty Music Shops, most often in the company of top-flight jazz instrumentalists, although she herself never claimed to be a jazz singer. She recorded again, in 1946, for Continental Records, and the following year for Mary Howard and, later, Mercury Records. The singer did no recording through the 1950s but over the last decade-and-a-half had made a number of albums of hymns, spirituals and other religious material for Word Records.

From the mid-1950s Ms. Waters' career as a popular entertainer suffered a number of reverses. Her singing voice had become progressively more uncertain from the late 1940s until finally it was, in her words, "completely gone." She received few film offers, her last screen appearance being in *The Sound And The Fury*, made in 1958. Attending a Billy Graham Crusade meeting in 1959, she experienced a religious awakening, and, although raised a Catholic, over the next 15 years appeared frequently, both in the U.S. and abroad, as a member of the popular evangelist's troupe. It was with the Graham Crusade, in fact, that Ms. Waters made her final public appearance in San Diego a year ago.

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George Barnes, guitarist and co-leader of guitar duos and a major quartet, recently died in Concord, Cal. of a heart attack. He was 56.

Barnes teamed first with Carl Kress and later with Bucky Pizzarelli in spectacular guitar duos which featured exchanges that elicited spontaneous applause from audiences throughout the country. He was most at home when playing with other guitarists. When he formed a quartet with cornetist Ruby Braff, he had a rhythm guitarist as his accompanist. He usually played bright, single lines as opposed to strummed chords as most would do in a cappella moments.

George Barnes was not given to fireworks during his solo performances, but when aroused he could mount a strong attack on his instrument. His sound had a happy effervescence to it that brightened any group he played with.

He played with a trio at age 12 in Hammond, Ind. and at 15 he had become a favorite accompanist to blues singers on recording dates in his native Chicago. (He was born in Chicago Heights on July 17, 1921.) In 1940 he became staff guitarist at NBC in Chicago where he played on the *Plantation Party* show until 1943.

In 1951 Barnes moved to New York where he took up his studio work at the then thriving scene for radio, television and recordings. The Kress/Barnes guitar collaboration began in 1963 and was patterned after the duo Kress had formed with Eddie Lang in the '30s. When Kress passed away in 1965, Barnes kept his duo idea alive with the substitution of Bucky Pizzarelli in 1969. They played together until 1972.

The collaboration was an extremely lithe one. Bucky would sit and strum, talking via his rhythmic solos which were often laced with an exercise on a seventh string. George would be his usual melodic self with his foot perched on a foot rest to raise his guitar up to the level he was most comfortable with. Both men were slightly more demonstrative than, say, Wes Montgomery.

In 1973 the Braff/Barnes Quartet was born and was an immediate critical success. The drummerless foursome played familiar music with a "businessman's swing" behind all of it. Their appearance on a bill with the reunited Benny Goodman Quartet (Goodman, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa and Lionel Hampton, with Slam Stewart added) at the 1973 Newport Jazz Festival/New York stole the verbal accolades if not the musical plaudits of audience and critics alike.

Barnes/Braff eventually split up and George moved to Concord to teach and freelance in a climate more conducive to his health. He played at the Concord Summer Jazz Festivals and recorded for Concord records. He and Braff recorded an album of Fred Astaire associated tunes for RCA, as well as a series of Rodgers & Hart tunes with Tony Bennett, some of which were released on Improv.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.

CYMBALS—A SONIC GALAXY

BILLY COBHAM AND LOUIE BELLSON

by
Lee Underwood

Virtually every band revolves about the heartbeat provided by the drums, and yet for years the drums occupied perhaps the lowest rung on the status-ladder of musical instruments. "They used to say, 'Yeah, we got 16 guys in the band—and a drummer,'" laughed Louie Bellson. "And in concert bands, when the vocalist finished, he or she was put back playing cymbals, as if the cymbals were the least important instrument of all.

"Today, however, percussion has finally reached the place where it is given the same respect as the brass, the reeds, or any other instrument. And you hit the key word when you said the cymbal is an *instrument*. In fact, the cymbal is perhaps the most crucial instrument in the entire orchestra."

Louie Bellson, designer of the twin bass drum setup, has long been known for his outstanding work with Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Harry James, the Dorsey brothers, and his own big band, the Louie Bellson Explosion. Billy Cobham propelled the Mahavishnu Orchestra to fame and fortune and has since become a household word among musicians for his spirited percussion work with his own electric, high-volume jazz/rock groups. Both play Zildjian cymbals exclusively. (The Zildjians are an Armenian family, located in the Boston area. The name Zildjian means "cymbal maker.")

"There are two kinds of Zildjian cymbals, the A. or Avedis cymbal, and the K.," said Bellson. "The K. Zildjian is the cymbal that comes from Constantinople. It is hammered, whereas the A. is hammered and spun through a more modern process. The K. is used mostly in marching bands, concert bands and symphony orchestras, but Mel Lewis and Tony Williams also use a wide variety of K.'s, because they want that dark, beautiful sound. Those of us who play contemporary jazz use mostly A. Zildjians, people like Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello and Steve Gadd. The A. gives small and big band jazz that brilliance of sound."

"Mostly, I use the A. Zildjian," said Cobham. "The K.'s give a darker, cooler sound than the A.'s. The A.'s ring out more. They remind me of somebody's telephone ringing. It's the frequency they put out."

VERYL OAKLAND

"Both the K. and A. cymbals command the respect of being probably the best cymbals in the world," Bellson said. "They come in all sizes and weights."

Underwood: Which particular cymbals do you use in your set?

Bellson: On my regular set, I use five suspended cymbals, but on my special set, built specifically for symphonic work, I use seven.

On the hi-hats, I use 14-inch cymbals. The top cymbal is medium-weight; the bottom is extra-heavy and gives me a good spread in sound when I use my foot to get the "chick"

sound. If I'm playing jazz, I can get that good hi-hat sound that Jo Jones got with the Basie band. If I want to play some contemporary Billy Cobham or Harvey Mason sounds with the sticks, I can get those too.

The first suspended cymbal is a 17-inch crash, medium-thin. You wouldn't hit on the tip of the cymbal with the stick or play ride cymbal. It's not designed for that. It's strictly a quick-response crash cymbal.

The one next to that is what we call an 18-inch mini-cup ride cymbal. The reason for the mini-cup is when you diminish the size of the bell, that diminishes the overtones in the cymbal. You don't hear any spread of the cymbal. You hear more of the stick sound. It's good to record with, because you don't get those splashing overtones, that constant cymbal ring.

The cymbal after that is a 16-inch medium-thin crash cymbal. It's very much like the 17-inch, where I want a fast crash sound. The one next to that is another 18-inch mini-cup cymbal, which I use for the pure stick sound, the ride sound, without the overriding ring.

The other two cymbals are both 18-inch thin crash cymbals. Even though they are the same size, they have a different tonality. I use those strictly for getting a fast response.

Another cymbal I use, which I helped develop, I call my 22-inch swish-knocker cymbal. It's built like the old Chinese cymbals with the turned-up ends. It's got rivets in it. It's tremendous for effects. I used to use that cymbal in Duke Ellington's band when we had a medium-ensemble sound, like on *Satin Doll*. You can get on that big 22-inch and just ride it. Mel Lewis uses that cymbal quite a bit. It's got an old funk sound to it, and a lot of the rock players are getting into that now, too.

I'm also working with the new Z flat top cymbals now. There is no bell, which gives great clarity of stick sound. There is no over-ring, and no vibrations set in. You can put the microphone right on top of it, which makes it excellent for recording. If you want greater vibrating power, you can put three or four rivets in it.

Cobham: On my set, I use a big granddaddy gong, about 48 inches, made in Taiwan and distributed through Zildjian. I use it mostly for effects, for depth, splash, and volume. That's my "bass" cymbal.

I have a 22 to 24-inch swish-knocker cymbal, and I play it upside down, the opposite way from, say, Zutty Singleton or Mel Lewis. I use it that way to cut through the high volume connected with the electric music I play. That cymbal keeps my set acoustically battened down, because it's the loudest thing on stage, no matter what's going down electrically. The swish-knocker projects over and above everything else.

Then there's a 22-inch ride cymbal, heavier than the other cymbals, except for the gong. It gives a definite stick sound, and the ride cuts through.

Then we get into crash and splash cymbals. A crash cymbal sounds like it's crashing, and it sustains the ring. The splash is of short duration. There's a 20-inch crash cymbal, which has a particular middle tone to it. I use it to accentuate rhythmic patterns. I have a 17-inch crash cymbal, and a 19-inch crash used for similar accents.

I also have a little splash cymbal, about six inches, very thin, with a very high pitch to it. As the cymbals get smaller, they get thinner. They have a higher pitch, shorter sound duration, and there is a kind of scale connected to them. I therefore choose my cymbals in relation to the overall intonation of the band.

Underwood: Is it possible to tune the cymbals the way you might tune a drum?

Cobham: No. To actually tune a cymbal, you would have to shave it, and once you do that, you can't do anything else with it. I just try to pick a cymbal that coincides with the overall harmonics of the drum kit.

Bellson: You can't tune a cymbal in terms of pitch, but you can in terms of overtones and clarity of sound.

If the drummer uses enormously thick, splashy cymbals with lots of overtones, the trumpet players have to play a lot harder. If the drummer has taste and clarity with his crash and ride, the trumpet players can relax and play their trumpets the way they want to. The drummer isn't overpowering them.

So you "tune" and play the cymbals in relation to how much the sound spreads, and in relation to volume.

Underwood: Which bell and cup sizes do you use for which musics?

Bellson: There are various degrees of sizes. If I'm going to back up a trumpet player, say Bobby Shew or Blue Mitchell or Cat Anderson, I know that they are going to want to hear a certain stick sound, as well as a cymbal sound. In order to get that kind of sound, the Zildjian people make what we call a *ping* cymbal. The ping, or ride cymbal, is 18-21 inches and has a normal cup. It gives you a clear stick sound, and you don't get too much over-ring. Those players are going to feel comfortable with it.

When you deal with a smaller cup cymbal, you'll get *more* clarity in the stick sound, because the smaller the cup, the less the ringing sound of the cymbal. That's not the type of cymbal you hit to get a crash sound, because it's too heavy. It's designed just for that stick work. A lot of players use a mini-cup when they're recording, because you get a lot of stick, and you don't kill the engineers with the droning over-ring.

I just finished a tour with Oscar Peterson, Joe Pass, and, on bass, Niels Pedersen. With that quartet, I used my two mini-cup cymbals. I used the 20-inch mini-cup ride for Oscar, the 18-inch mini-cup ride for Joe on guitar. It was a small group, and with those two cymbals I got a good clear stick sound.

Besides those two cymbals, I had my outer crash cymbals for when I just wanted to make a remark, like a fast crash. I had my hi-hats, and I had my 22-inch swish-knocker, which I didn't use too much until Roy Eldridge and other guys came up.

With my big band, I don't use my mini-cup that much, because I need a little more carrying power. I use the bigger bell, but the "ping" sound, because I have to go through 18 guys. I need cymbals that have more volume to them.

Cobham: I use a full bell size on all cymbals. I rarely use anything else, no mini-cups or flat cymbals. For my work, any cymbal without a bell will not project. A mini-cup gives less overtone and shorter duration, but it also gives a lot of stick, which might be perfect behind a singer or in soft situations where you want to hear the stick on the cymbal, but not too loud.

Underwood: It has been said that 75% of drumming is cymbals. Does that statement fit you?

Cobham: No. Cymbals are a major part of drumming, but it depends on the concept of the individual. The cymbals are as important as the music and the player wants them to be. There are no rules. It depends on what you are playing and what you want to do with what you are playing. You gotta be flexible. In some places the cymbals are going to be heavy; in other places, the drums are going to be more important.

Bellson: When I get a call for a date, I may say, "I play Pearl drums. Do you have a Pearl set there?" They do—but you can bet that when I show up, I'll bring my own sticks and my own set of cymbals, especially the cymbals, because they are the most important part of the set, crucial. You have to have your own texture in your cymbals, your own colors, your own sound. A huge percentage of drumming is cymbals.

Underwood: There is a considerable difference between performing live, and recording in a studio. What do you do in a studio to make your cymbals sound "live"?

Cobham: That depends on where I record, who the engineer is, what kind of instrumentation is being used, what the place feels like, etc. Studios vary a great deal in sensitivity. And when you get the sound that you want, and you mix it, you now have to put it on the record, where you can lose high end in the mastering, and you can lose more high end in the plating of the disc. The recording, as opposed to live performance, can be affected in many different ways, just as your live performance can be affected by what you hear in the monitors as opposed to what is heard out front. There are a lot of variables.

I don't get into taping the cymbals in studios. They record my cymbals bright, live, straight off. I record pretty much the same way as I play live. I don't change anything except possibly my snare drum, which I'll sometimes mute a little bit.

I don't run the risk of leakage when I don't tape, because everybody else in my band goes directly through the board. Since they are not going through any microphones live in the room, we don't run into leakage problems. That way, I can really play.

Bellson: First, you adjust to the studio (and to the conductor, the producer, and to the other musicians) by changing the cymbals. Then, if that doesn't work, you use tape on the cymbals.

It isn't like it used to be, where they had one mike for the whole band. Now, when you go into the studio they might put seven or ten mikes on just the drums. It's so sensitive that they can hear you breathing. I might have to put tape even on a mini-cup cymbal, which is designed for recording: in a sensitive studio, that cymbal might be too hot. That's why players bring two or three sets of drums and two or three sets of cymbals to every studio job. Then you use the tape on the drums and cymbals, muffling them until you get the equivalent of a live sound.

Underwood: Acoustical settings vary—recording studios, small halls, large halls, etc. Which cymbals do you use in various settings to get which sounds?

Bellson: If I was playing with a trio here in my home studio, which is all wood, I would lean heavily on my mini-cup cymbals, because with all the wood around, the cymbals would be very vibrant. I would want clarity.

If I was playing with a heavy metal rock group, where I really needed some volume, I would stay off the mini-cups because I've got electricity to fight. In order to cut through

that, even though I'm heavily miked. I've got to use bigger-cupped cymbals that really speak, and maybe bigger cymbals, too.

On a recording date, I might use heavily taped cymbals, but in live performance for a large audience, I might take the tape off, because I need the guts of the cymbals to be heard.

Cobham: I use the same cymbals all the time. I never change anything. I focus on my ride cymbal all the time, depending on who I'm playing with. If I'm playing with a big band, I know I'm going to use a 22-inch ride, because it's the main cymbal in the set for me, and it's pretty much what everybody's geared to.

I may use another secondary ride cymbal for a change of tone quality on a particular solo. But that's it. Everything else is a crash cymbal or a cymbal used for effect.

Nor do I do any special changing for different soloists. I work on the assumption that I am hired because of my particular sound, my concept. The reason I'm there is because they want me to play the way I play. I might change my sticks, but most of whatever adjustments are necessary I make inside my own head.

Underwood: Is there a difference in sound between wood-tipped and plastic-tipped sticks?

Bellson: Yes. Buddy Rich uses just a wood stick. He doesn't like to use a plastic-tipped stick. The wooden bead gives him what he wants on both the cymbals and the drums.

I use a completely all-wood stick when I'm playing a drum solo, but I use the plastic bead when I'm playing a lot of time on cymbals, or recording, because to me the plastic bead gives a more brilliant sound on the cymbals—brilliance and clarity.

Sometimes, however, that particular band leader or composer or producer doesn't want that brilliance in sound. He may want a flat, funky sound. There, you may want to use a stick that Tony Williams came up with. It doesn't have a bead on it. It's just cut off there at the end, and it's all wood. When he plays that flat, dull, wood sound against a K. Zildjian, he gets an old, flat, funky sound that is beautiful. It works in its context just as well as a plastic tip works in a different context.

Mel Lewis will play a wood stick against that old Chinese cymbal, and that works in his context just right.

Cobham: I don't use a plastic tip at all. I use just straight wood. Instead of using my own Pro Mark 808's, I may go to an Ed Shaughnessy 747, which is a lighter stick. For me, the wood tip is mellow, whereas a plastic tip is very sharp. And with wood, I get a better control over the bounce of the stick on the cymbals.

Underwood: Can you get the same variation of sound and dynamics on cymbals that you get on drums?

Cobham: Sure. It depends on the amount of pressure projected onto the cymbal. I vary the sound and dynamics in relation to what the soloist is playing, helping him build, feeding him ideas, getting ideas from him, working together as a team.

Underwood: How hard do you hit the cymbals to get different sounds?

Cobham: As hard as you can. Or as lightly as you can. It also depends on whether you hit the bell, the middle, or the edge of the cymbal, and which parts of the stick you use, the bead or the flat part.

Bellson: If you want to get a really big sound out of a cymbal, even with a big band, you don't have to hit that cymbal like you want to kill it. When Hank Aaron hits a home run, his swing is easy, not teeth-gritting hard. Sure, you need power, but it comes with one little flick of the wrist, and the ball goes sailing. It's the same thing with a cymbal.

Underwood: Do you use different positions?

Bellson: You never hit a cymbal straightaway, just slamming it vertically. You always hit it with a glancing blow, a glance to the right or a glance to the left, and you never hit it hard to get the volume you want.

For different colors, you strike the cymbal in different places with different parts of the stick. You might strike the bell with the shoulder of the stick. Or you might hit the 18-inch crash a glancing blow with the force of the whole stick—it will crash and it will ring. Other times, you might hit the cymbal with the bead of the stick and just let it ring. Another color might be using the circular metal piece at the end of a brush; you start at the bell of the cymbal and scrape the metal down the grooves to the end of the cymbal, usually used on a high-sounding cymbal to match the high sounds of harps or celestes; if you want a lower texture, then you use a bigger cymbal.

Cobham: For me, the different positions depend on how I sit and how the cymbal is angled in—it depends on how the set is set up. Many times I'll hit the cymbal and then snap the stick back off it at the edge. I go through a lot of sticks that way, but I'm getting a lot more tone and a more even distribution of the impact, thus making it reverberate more, as opposed to getting a lot of overtones and frequencies in the way of the main tone of the cymbal.

Underwood: Contrast, volume, and musical sound are three important distinctions. What do these terms mean to you?

Bellson: If you use only one cymbal, you have only the same droning sound. But by using different cymbals behind different players, you get contrast—the beautiful colors.

Behind Oscar Peterson, for example, I might use a 20-inch dry cymbal; Dizzy Gillespie likes the Chinese-effect of the swish cymbal; Milt Jackson likes a mini-cup cymbal, not bigger than 18 inches, with three rivets in it.

With volume, a great player will play dynamically. He can bash, but he can also get way down soft, playing delicate things with the tip of the stick, like Buddy Rich does all around the cymbals.

Musical sound means using those cymbals which are sympathetic with the chords that the rest of the band is playing. If the drone of the cymbal is just in between the notes of the chord, it will cause friction, tension, and it will strain the brass section. You don't want the pitch of the cymbal to rub against what's happening with the band.

Cobham: To me, contrast means using the available alternatives, varying them depending upon the context.

Volume means getting a lot of duration of tone, which means you have to hit it hard.

Musical sound is going for tone rather than just every frequency the cymbal can project.

Underwood: Does the choice and use of the cymbals reflect your personal style?

Bellson: Definitely. Whatever the record date, a great player, like Steve Gadd, for example, or Harvey Mason, will carry one, maybe two, cymbal bags. Whether he's playing Duke Ellington, Count Basie or rock, he'll have the cymbals to match it.

If one cymbal is not working right, he'll hear it, take it off, and put another one on. That's how sensitive he has to be. Very personal.

Cobham: Every day something is different, all of which affects the way I play the set—where I sit, what shoes I'm wearing, etc.—so when I come to the set, I don't know for sure what's going to happen. Therefore, my cymbals are going to be played only the way I play them when I play them.

Underwood: There is a thin sound and a thick sound that can be derived from cymbals. How does a thin or thick sound fit reaction time?

Bellson: Let's take two real good bands—Buddy Rich and Count Basie. Those are two straightahead, hard-swinging bands, where the drummer is required to play a lot of brass figures, short, staccato, and loud phrases that need to be punctuated not only with rim shots, but with cymbals. Buddy Rich and Butch Miles (Basie's drummer) both have 18-inch medium-thin crash cymbals, perfectly designed for these brass accentuations. They would not use those 18-inch cymbals for ride cymbals. For that, they would use the 20-inch ping cymbal.

A thin cymbal gives you a fast response. When you get into medium and heavy cymbals, the response is more delayed. You use that heavier cymbal for riding, using the tip of the stick for more clarity.

With a gong, you have to warm it up before you hit it. You don't just take a mallet and hit the gong straight away, because you crack it. You take the mallet, start sub-audibly setting the vibrations in motion while the orchestra plays, so that when it comes time to play it, it's ready and it can be heard *on* the down beat, not after it.

Underwood: Who were some of your major influences in learning how to play the cymbals?

Cobham: On a subconscious level I've gotten a little bit from everybody. Other than that, I've just gone ahead and done what I felt was best for me.

Bellson: All of the drummers I listened to had something to say, but if I had to pinpoint one player, it would have to be Jo Jones when he was with Basie's band.

Before him the players played great, but it was a choppy kind of playing. Jo was the first player I heard who played drums with a fluidity in sound combined with intensity. That was because of the way he played the hihats.

There's another very important point I'd like to make. I may hit a cymbal at the factory, and it might sound great, but when I hit that same cymbal in my band, it might not be right. Conversely, when I hit a cymbal alone it might sound weird, but it may be absolutely perfect in the band.

It's just as important to select a cymbal with as much care as Benny Goodman would use in selecting a new clarinet. And try them out in the band first, before finalizing your selection!

The whole drum set is a choir—the snare is the soprano, the small tom is the alto, the larger tom is the tenor, and the bass drum is the bass. You have that same choir with the cymbals. The whole set should be selected with care, and you should play it not only rhythmically, but melodically and dynamically as well. **db**

Red Norvo

A Man For All Eras

by john mcdonough

This is an article about three remarkable men. The first one worked in the last great Paul Whiteman band of the early 1930s alongside Whiteman's final contingent of major stars to be: Johnny Mercer, Jack Teagarden, Mildred Bailey and Frank Trumbauer, who somewhere along the line managed to get promoted to the rank of minor legend without ever serving an apprenticeship of stardom. It's rare, but it sometimes happens that way.

The second man was an innovative bandleader of the swing era who accomplished with taste and elegance what others managed to achieve with sheer volume: musical excitement.

And the third man was a rare fellow indeed: a charter member of the swing fraternity who not only listened to the new jazz of the post-War era very early on but played it and helped it grow, both as sideman and leader.

All three men were recently packing in record crowds at Rick's Cafe American in Chicago under the name Red Norvo.

Norvo today is a unique chap as elder statesmen go. At 68, he's remarkably unencumbered in the web of nostalgia that holds so many others of his generation. Probably the main reason is that Norvo never achieved that sudden, all-pervading mass acceptance that blinks on the favored few, freezing their creative stance of the moment into an eternal pose as unchanging as a daguerreotype.

Success can be a tyrant in the life of a performer. For thousands who saw Duke Ellington over the years, the high point of the concert came in those moments when he recreated the spell of *Mood Indigo* or the frenzy of *Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue*. Norvo has never been stunted by such success. There is no automated medley of hits in his sets these days. Just the fresh, bracing breezes of the present.

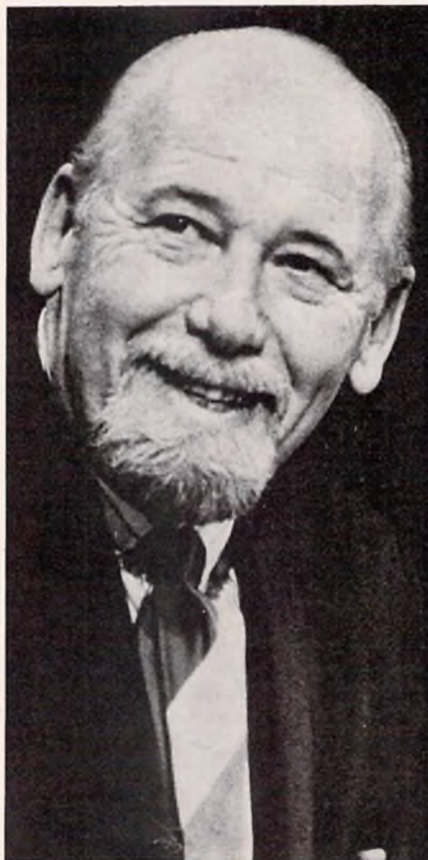
Red is also an individualist, although you wouldn't guess it to look at him. Or even to speak with him. His individualism is manifest only in his music. You have to listen to it to sense it. It comes naturally, not as a contrivance.

Everybody wants to be different from everybody else. But it's not easy to set one's self apart from others and not appear anti-social at best or affected at worst. It's easy to proclaim your individuality to the world through your dress or personal style and hope your audience will simply assume that your music is equally individualistic. You'll probably get away with it.

Norvo has become distinct the hard way—from the inside. He's done it by building and polishing an approach to music that has sustained with enormous integrity. He achieved something of a head start, one must admit, by selecting the most singular of instruments as his alter-ego: the xylophone.

The xylophone is part of an ancient family of instruments starting with the lyre in Greek times. In the 18th and 19th century the lyre developed into the glockenspiel, marimba and xylophone. Somewhere along the line, it acquired an electric motor, but its ringing was out of control as layer upon layer of notes and chords sank into one another. Finally, in the late '20s, the Deagan Company put a foot pedal on it, and the vibraphone was born. For the next decade the xylophone and vibes waged a quiet battle for dominance.

Although Lionel Hampton had recorded some remote accompaniments on vibraphone with Louis Armstrong in the fall of 1930, it



GIUSEPPE G. PINO

was Norvo who first demonstrated the unique intimacy possible on the mallet family of instruments in a pair of remarkable sessions in 1933. Such instruments had no tradition in jazz at that time. Their Munchkin-like tinkle and the delicate spun-glass lines Norvo wove from them ran completely against the hardy, masculine voicings musicians thought of as jazz.

Moreover, mallet instruments had been nothing more than novelty gadgets through the '20s. During his days in vaudeville, Norvo was a case in point, when he tap danced and played *Poet And Peasant* on xylophone. Adrian Rollini had tried to bring vibes to the jazz community after 1930. But in Rollini's hands, it was only an off-beat sound. He never seemed able to give it any larger significance.

This was Norvo's triumph. Through a pair of recording sessions in 1933, he produced four recordings which still remain among the most unique specimens of chamber jazz ever created. The first, *Knockin' On Wood*, is the weakest, sounding something like a film score that might accompany a cartoon of animated match sticks. *Hole In The Wall* is a good deal more interesting with its jazz influenced phrasing and loping, easy-going tremolos.

On the second session, in November, Norvo switched to an even more exotic instrument, the marimba, an instrument hitherto associated with South America and occasionally Africa. Two pieces were selected, and they couldn't have been more perfect. Both were as iconoclastic in their chord changes and overall shape as the instrumentalists who played them. There was Beiderbecke's *In A Mist*, an odd composition far removed from the established logic of its time in popular and jazz idioms. Its moods shift at peculiar points, and its construction defies anticipation. On the Epic LP version cited in the discography, the remastering engineer, George Engfer, fell into a subtle trap that would have delighted Beiderbecke. As the middle portion concludes, Engfer assumes the end has come and slides into a fade. Suddenly the major theme returns and the fade skids to a sudden halt and returns to normal. (It is odd that such a spoiled take should have found its way on to the finished LP.) The second selection is Norvo's own and proceeds through an interlude of brooding impressionism before Benny Goodman intrudes with a bass clarinet figure that brings comparative symmetry to the unusual abstraction.

Progress is difficult when one is born to perfection. Such was Norvo's dilemma as musicians heard these early performances. Perhaps they were stirred by the sheer courage of such a totally uncommercial and uncompromising approach. They are to the main body of jazz as Bartok is to the romantic classical tradition.

All this happened during what might be called the Paul Whiteman period of Norvo's career. It was during these years 1933-34 that he met and married Mildred Bailey, whom Al Rinker (Mildred's brother and one of the Original Whiteman Rhythm Boys) had brought to Pops in 1931 as a singer. Although Norvo was part of the Whiteman aggregation he left little evidence of his presence on the various Whiteman records of the period. Teagarden, Tram and Mercer got most of the action, not to mention Mildred, whose original *Rockin' Chair* was made under the Whiteman banner. So on to better times.

Norvo's bandleading days began on 52nd Street in the middle '30s. Along the way there were a number of pick-up record dates featuring various musicians whose greatest days lay ahead: Artie Shaw, Bunny Berigan, Chu Berry, Gene Krupa and Charlie Barnet. Then in 1936, Willard Alexander, a young booker with the MCA organization, prevailed upon Red to assemble a band for the Commodore Hotel during the summer. The result was one of the most striking swing ensembles of the period, perhaps because it proved that a group of musicians didn't have to burst a single blood vessel in pursuit of power and volume to swing. It got results by whispering and stroking. It was among the most purely sensual orchestras of all time.

Nobody has heard more bands than George T. Simon. A lot of them probably sound pretty much alike, even to an alert ear like his. Here's what Simon says about that original Norvo band in retrospect: "Unlike swing bands that overpowered its listeners, this one underplayed. . . . It would swing so subtly and

"I don't understand why everybody wants to label music of different periods. If you're a musician, you're not going to be thrown by what you're playing or who you're playing with. . . . I was completely comfortable working with Tal Farlow and Charlie Mingus in the early '50s. . . ."

so softly and so charmingly through chorus after chorus of exquisite solos and light, moving ensembles, always threatening to erupt while holding the listener mesmerized, until at long last, when he was about to scream 'Let me up!' it would charge off into one of its exhilarating musical climaxes. There was never a band like it."

At summer's end, the Norvo Ten liked what they had wrought. They decided it was worth keeping together. So a series of one-nighters were booked until the band secured a stand at the Syracuse Hotel. Leading a band then wasn't the big deal it is today. Red's payroll was about $75 a man, and on the road decent accommodations could be had for $1.00 or $1.50 a night. "It was a simple affair," Red recalls. "I managed the business of the band and signed the checks myself. It was profitable then. You didn't have to be in the top ten or the top 40 list of bands then to make good money. There were territory groups that never left Wisconsin or Minnesota that did well."

There were radio shots in Syracuse, and Don Roth came in and signed the band to the Blackhawk in Chicago where station WGN continued the broadcasts.

By now the band had a clear identity, due mostly to a young trumpet player Norvo hired in the fall of 1936 who also had a distinctive touch as an arranger. It was Eddie Sauter.

"When we reached Chicago," says Red, "I pulled Eddie out of the trumpet section altogether. I wanted him to concentrate on arranging exclusively, so I had him study with Dr. Wesley Lovulette. Jimmy Giuffre and Shorty Rogers would later work with Lovulette, who is now retired in San Diego. Our idea for the ensemble was rather unique. Most bands would stick to the standard arranging technique of writing a lead line for the section and filling in the other parts harmonically. We were after a more linear style; that is, to write a line for each instrument that could make sense on its own as well as in harmony. Every part was as interesting and logical as the lead part. Eddie absorbed like a sieve.

"And our personnel was stable too. Eddie could write for specific styles and sounds. That's why we developed."

Many of the records Red made with his orchestra were in partnership with his wife and professional colleague, Mildred Bailey. Mr. and Mrs. Swing they were called. She was an overweight and emotional woman who had already been through two marriages by the time she and Red began their 12-year relationship at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. It was an often rugged marriage.

"Red was and is one of the warmest and most wonderful human beings I know," says Al Rinker, "a truly gentle man. Mildred, on the other hand, was a mercurial and tempestuous woman. She was my sister, and I loved her. But I have to say I really didn't get along with her well. And I always had great sympathy for Red. He loved her too, but she was absolutely impossible to live with. Mildred was once a very slim woman, back in Seattle, but I think she was psychologically bent on destroying herself—like Billie Holiday, in a way. Except Billie did it with the needle and syringe. Mildred did it with a knife and fork."

In 1939 Red had a disagreement with MCA over some business matters and decided to break up the band. There would be two other bands before the war, and good ones (e.g. *Jersey Bounce* on LP 112 from 1942), but he would never again have the full service of Eddie Sauter. Benny Goodman had always wanted to have Sauter after hearing the extraordinary things he did for Norvo. So Red phoned Benny and told him he was free to make Sauter an offer, which he did. Eddie promptly went on to produce the finest work of his career.

"One of the reasons Eddie's writing for Benny sounds so very different from what he did for me was due to the fact that he was then writing for a much larger ensemble," Red observes. "Its the difference between writing for a chamber orchestra and a symphony. We had three reeds and four brass. Benny had six reeds and six brass. It was a brilliant band, and Eddie gave it a completely original approach."

Meanwhile Red studied at Julliard and put together several flexible and innovative small groups which settled into the 52nd Street scene. Between 1942 and 1944 these groups became the first important stepping stones in the careers of Milton (Shorty) Rogers, Flip Phillips, Eddie Bert, Ralph Burns and Conrad Gozzo. The recording ban blacked out any chance for commercial recordings (George Simon recorded the group privately, leaving open the chance of an LP), and by the end of 1944 Red had teamed with his old pal Goodman in a revitalized and innovative sextet. But Red wouldn't forget about those youngsters.

Of the many superb and groundbreaking sextets Goodman has assembled over the years, the 1944-45 version could not possibly rank below number three. Some might put it at the top. It was in some ways a more intricate mechanism than the Charlie Christian units with Lionel Hampton and Cootie Williams. The group also marked something of a milestone in Norvo's musical path. It was at this point that he finally switched from xylophone to vibes, the electronic first cousin to the classic mallet instruments capable of holding a sound and producing a vibrato. "The xylophone was just not right for that group," explains Red. "It couldn't properly counterbalance Benny's crisp aggressiveness. We were rehearsing at Columbia one day, and I tried the vibes. It blended much better with Benny and Teddy Wilson's piano."

But there was more to the sextet than just that. It had a unique ensemble sound that was ahead of even the bop insurgency in its collective voicing.

"At first we played regular unison lines, just like in the original sextet of 1939," Norvo recalls. "But we decided to fool around with some different combinations and see what happened. Teddy, Benny and I wanted a three-part line, so we voiced it in perfect thirds and fifths. Benny played lead, I played a third above him and Teddy a third above me. Most guys play below Benny. That's why it doesn't sound quite the same. The pieces like *Rachel's Dream* (SB 142) and *Slipped Disc* (SB 142, CL 500) moved so fast that we decided to keep the lines parallel. Even today it sounds much more interesting than the unison trumpet-tenor lines that characterize so much jazz."

With the war over a lot of the fellows who had worked with Red during the '42-'44 period in those little groups came out of the service and contacted Red, who promptly referred many of them to Woody Herman. In September of '45, while still with the Goodman Sextet, Red sat in with the Herman band for the *Father's Moustache* session. Finally, after much experience with the First Herd, direct and indirect, Norvo joined up formally in January 1946. Red was actually supposed to lead a band within a band, the Woodchoppers. But with so much theater work, the small band concept grew slowly. So Red became a frequent soloist with the full band instead. The brilliant March concert at Carnegie Hall (English Verve 2317 031) reveals a roaring, buoyant Norvo seldom glimpsed even in the Goodman period. Finally, in May, the band reached Chicago for a stay at the Sherman House, and Woody decided he wanted to record a Woodchoppers album. Red insisted he needed time to develop new material. Woody insisted harder.

So Red and Shorty Rogers huddled together to see if they could remember some of the pieces they did in Red's small band on 52nd Street, the ones that were actually behind Herman's basic Woodchopper concept. Rogers sketched it together as best he could, and the result was a dazzling quintet of originals that are among the most energetic and arresting blasts of chamber jazz to hit the post war scene: *Igor, Steps, Nero's Conception, Pam* and *Fan It* (Columbia C3L 25). They fully established Norvo's credentials as a "modernist."

Actually, his credentials were well certified before the Herman period. And that came about with the famous Comet date of June, 1945, in which Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Teddy Wilson, Flip Phillips, Slam Stewart and Specs Powell coalesced into a totally balanced unit under Norvo's leadership. A Cleveland jazz buff called Les Shreiber approached Red earlier in the year, giving him a free hand

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SELECTED NORVO DISCOGRAPHY

RED NORVO AND HIS ALL-STARS—Epic EE 22010
RED NORVO AND HIS BIG BAND FEATURING MILDRED BAILEY—Sounds Of Swing LP 112
MILDRED BAILEY: HER GREATEST PERFORMANCES—Columbia C3L 22
BENNY GOODMAN V-DISCS, Vol. 1—Sunbeam SB 142
BENNY GOODMAN V-DISCS, Vol. 2—Sunbeam SB 143
BENNY GOODMAN COMBOS—Columbia CL 500 (out of print)
RED NORVO—Spotlite 107
WOODY HERMAN: THE THUNDERING HERDS—Columbia C3L 25
WOODY HERMAN: THE GREAT HERD—Swing Treasury 102
ONE NIGHT STAND: WOODY HERMAN—Joyce LP-1021
WOODY HERMAN AT CARNEGIE HALL, 1946—English Verve 2317 031
THE RED NORVO TRIO: SAVOY SESSIONS—Savoy SJL 2212
THE GREATEST OF THE SMALL BANDS: RED NORVO—French RCA Black & White 741 089
RED NORVO: HI-FIVE—RCA Victory LPM 1420 (out of print)
HELEN HUMES WITH RED NORVO ORCHESTRA—French RCA FPM 17018
BENNY GOODMAN SWINGS AGAIN—Columbia Special Products CS 8379
VIBES A LA RED—Famous Door HL 105
SECOND TIME AROUND—Famous Door HL 108

Pepper Adams

The Essence Of Spice

by arnold jay smith

Urbane, witty, cosmopolitan, a connoisseur of fine ales, and a perennial runner-up in all the polls on his instrument—that could describe Park "Pepper" Adams. But there's more to this Fu Manchu-mustachioed gentleman from Detroit via Rochester.

Pepper recently left the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, a band he has played with since its inception. "Oh, before that," he interrupted. "Thad and I had a working unit for about two years. I've been with that band not from its inception, but from its *conception*."

The Pepper Adams humor, punny and sometimes biting, is ever-present. "Yes, I have been one of the foundling members . . . er . . . floundering members?"

But who is Pepper Adams? Little has been written about the great baritone saxophonist but much has been spoken.

"Oh yeah? Just what are they saying?" he retorted in mock pugilistic fashion. "Who *is* Pepper Adams? I give up; now you have three guesses."

Adams is basically a shy person who avoids any form of braggadocio. He keeps at arm's length from the press. During the band breaks at those now-famous Monday night Village Vanguard sessions, when most musicians retired to the kitchen for chatter and greetings from admiring friends from many lands, Pepper could be found at the bar, or in a corner with his lone bottle of ale, perhaps chatting with an admirer.

If you are touring foreign record shops you are likely to find more records featuring his visage and horn in Italy, Japan, Germany, Scandinavia and Switzerland than you would here in the U.S. "But word must be coming into the U.S." he said, "because I am still getting all those votes in the polls."

Yes, the polls. One would think that Gerry Mulligan invented the bari category the way he continually wins the plaques. Pepper has never won a **db** Readers Poll, but has copped the Talent Deserving Wider Recognition category in the 1957 and 1974 Critics Polls. There was a period when Mulligan had seemingly dropped out of sight completely, yet he came in just ahead of Pepper.

"I don't know what to do about that," Pepper stated as he chain-smoked another cigarette. "Maybe it's bad press. Maybe it's no press."

• • • •

Smith: What are your immediate plans?

Adams: As you read this, I hope to be recording in Europe with some of the better musicians, although that is not always possible. I find it interesting—no, as a matter of fact, I find it damned dull—that because of all the years I have spent with Thad and Mel, so many people consider me a big band musician. I have never thought that way; I consider myself a saxophone soloist. I have, on occasion during this period with Thad and Mel's band, had opportunities as a soloist, primarily working as a single with pickup rhythm sections, but almost entirely in Europe. I was able to take a leave of abcess . . . er, absence, I beg your pardon, so I could play the way I wanted to. I stayed over there and played for a while.

Again, by the time you read this, I hope to be actively engaged in the pursuit of an independent career. Hopefully, I'll be able to contact an agent or personal manager who will be able to look after my interests, sufficiently, and I'll play enough to get along. I would also like to pursue the idea of a recording contract in the U.S.

can start thinking about the art involved. The art is being able to be totally expressive as a soloist. I'd like to have the opportunity to present it on this side of the pond for a change.

Smith: In the past, you have said that you couldn't keep a steady rhythm section together. Do you still feel that way?

Adams: In the past, I have felt that it was not economically viable to maintain a steady group. Hell, there's nothing I'd like more than having a steady bunch of people to play with.

ARNOLD JAY SMITH

[An album called *Encounter* was issued on Prestige in 1969. It was recorded by an independent producer and sold to Prestige. The last set recorded under his name directly for an American company was for Motown and is long out of print. It contained the music of Charles Mingus.]

Adams: That record is available all over the world with Japanese album notes. People keep coming up asking me who the piano player is. It's Hank (Jones): make note of that, please, out there.

Smith: What kinds of settings do you prefer to play in?

Adams: Frankly, the thing I enjoy most is just playing, and playing as a soloist. I enjoy working with a quartet, or quintet, because I am able to do my best playing when I have the most time to stretch out as a soloist. Playing is an art and a craft. Playing in a big band is an exploitation of the craft side of it and you've got to have the craft fully together before you

At this point I don't know about the business part. But it strikes me that I would be more likely to achieve success working as a single and playing with pickup rhythm sections, which is basically what I have done in Europe and occasionally in Toronto.

One thing about playing with pickup rhythm sections: there are certain ways of doing it and getting the most out of what is available to you. That involves rehearsal techniques and not asking a rhythm section to do more than it's capable of, while still challenging them and making them play to their full capabilities. Most of all, you should make the gig something they will enjoy so they'll play their best. I have been blessed with exceptional rhythm sections. I've been able to get a great deal out of them. On the occasions that I've had a below-par one, we have worked things out so that none of us would be embarrassed on the gig.

The one fault of American soloists who visit

Europe is that they try to rehearse too much. If the rhythm section is not *au courant*, Americans tend ot push too far and become angry when things don't work out. They don't stop to realize that it might be more the fault of the visiting musician than the rhythm section. You cannot train a group overnight. If you try to do that, the results can be disastrous.

Smith: Is there a solution?

Adams: I carry a certain amount of written music with me when I travel about. I will rehearse some of the easier things first and see how they go. If those present difficulties, the rest of the music doesn't get unpacked. Then I ask the members of the rhythm section what they like to play, what they feel comfortable with. I might be more adaptable than they are. It might make for a more unified performance.

Smith: On the other hand, I assume there are rhythm sections that are itching to play the complicated charts.

Adams: Oh yes. Certainly in Toronto. Recently I was there with Jerry Fuller, drums; Michel Donato, bass; and Bernie Senensky, piano. They're all excellent and they welcomed the opportunity to play different music. Except for a few specific charts, we didn't repeat the same tunes.

I also had a very good rhythm section in Paris recently. It's quite conceivable to get fine rhythm sections in Copenhagen, too, but the musicians there are so busy.

• • • •

Pepper Adams was born 47 years ago in Detroit and moved to Rochester, N.Y. with his parents soon afterward. By the time he returned to the Motor City, he was 15 and a veteran of a six-night-a-week, 18-month gig in Rochester. Upon his reappearance in Detroit, he found a number of good musicians playing there—contemporaries like Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Kenny Burrell and others.

Adams' grade school had a policy of lending instruments to deserving students, and Pepper was one of the lucky recipients. "There was no instruction included, but if you learned to play, you could join the school band. I might never have had access to an instrument if it weren't for that policy. I played trumpet and trombone for a while, until I settled on clarinet and saxophone. I played tenor and soprano. Sopranos weren't easy to find then—all instruments were scarce during World War II."

After the equivalent of two years at Wayne University (now Wayne State), Adams left school for a two-year hitch in Korea.

Smith: When did things start to happen for you after the army?

Adams: When I got back to Detroit, I worked a steady six nights a week, mostly with Tommy Flanagan and Elvin Jones, some with Paul Chambers—places like the Bluebird, Klein's. My first recordings were done in '55. But this kind of history bores me. Can we move on?

Smith: How would you describe the way you play?

Adams: Idosyncratic. It's certainly not like the playing of the most famous baritone players, stylistically speaking. In Europe they know me and my style and I get to play a lot. In this country it's rare for anybody to hear me play, and yet they know my playing.

Smith: What kind of music do you like to play best?

Adams: As I have said, basically I just enjoy playing. I like to play some of my original pieces, certainly. Some of them are cast in such a way that they present a challenge. But I also like to play a lot of standards. Unlike many people who go on a gig and play exactly the same tunes night after night (which is more orderly and good for the rhythm section) I like to keep playing different tunes all the time. Now *that's* a challenge.

There should be a certain feeling between the players in any group. In the quintet I had with Thad, there was that string rapport. Thad has been a good friend for about 25 years. We had a working unit for two and a half or three years. And what a rhythm section we had! At first Hank (Jones) was the piano player, later it was Duke Pearson. Ron Carter was the bassist. John Dentz was our drummer, then Mel (Lewis) joined and stayed. Not only did I have more opportunity to play, but Thad did, as well. He was a monster to listen to. He played just the way I like to play—playing the surprises frequently. He was using chord changes not just as changes, but as alternatives to what the soloist would be doing at the time. He would play melodic lines that didn't match the chord changes. He got away from the changes and used them only as a reference point. There was humor, too. We made one record which the record company did not like. It was a comedy version of *Yes Sir, That's My Baby* which horrified the company.

Smith: To change the topic for a minute, what kind of instrument do you play?

Adams: A very old Selmer. Some instruments as old as mine are playing well, but I may have to replace mine pretty soon. Mine has had so much hard usage over so many years that the tolerance of the machined parts is starting to give away. I'm a bit wary of what the composition of the metal is going to be on a new one.

I would like to mention that I play a baritone without the low A, which is really a low concert C. My horn projects a warmer sound. The sound of the instrument is low-pitched enough that if you play a fast passage the notes might tend to run together. You don't get the differentiation of the notes. So I try to use a light tonguing, like a legato tonguing, so it sounds like a series of notes and not like a rumbling sound.

Smith: What about mouthpieces? Someone like Bruce Johnstone uses a big mouthpiece.

Adams: I use a very old Berg Larsen. I can't really talk about mouthpieces because I haven't shopped for one in 28 years. Wardell Gray was in England with Benny Goodman's band around '48 and bought a Berg Larsen. Wardell and I used to work together switching horns for fun. When he got back home (Detroit) and I played his tenor, I liked the way the mouthpiece felt. I liked it so much that I ordered one by mail and had to go over to Windsor, Ontario, to pick it up and pay duty on it.

The opening would today be considered to be of medium size. In those days it was considered a radically wide opening. I'm sure that the chamber of my mouthpiece itself has changed, although it is stainless steel. Can you imagine having all that whiskey poured over you for 25, 28 years? You're bound to change!

Basically, there's a mouthpiece and reed setup that would work for one person only. There are so many other factors involved. The size of the air column you project will make more difference than the type of mouthpiece and reed. The air column involves the size of the throat, which determines the size of the column of air which is going to strike into your mouthpiece. And it is the air column vibrating back and forth down the instrument which makes the sound. That, of course, is altered by the size and shape in the mouthpiece chamber. So what works for me is not necessarily going to work for anyone else in this world. It depends on what you are putting into it, and that's different for each individual. The same thing goes for reeds, and that's what we tell young people at clinics.

I use a strong reed, a #5. An army buddy of mine in Chicago plays a #2 and gets a marvelous sound on baritone. And he doesn't work half as hard as I do. He uses a rubber mouthpiece which has been worked on. I don't think it would work on a metal mouthpiece.

Smith: With technicalities out of the way, let's go back to Pepper Adams, player. Do you mind the road?

Adams: I love to travel. I'm an inveterate tourist. I don't always wear dark glasses but I invariably carry a camera. I was in Japan on my way to Korea, and it has been fascinating to go back with the band and have the opportunity to see it again.

Smith: What about the adulation of the fans? Why are they so much more avid there than here?

Adams: I don't think that's necessarily the case. That's been exaggerated. When an American jazz "star" visits Europe, he has an audience prepared for him. People have been waiting to hear him for a long time. The people he meets are those who are avidly interested in his music. In the U.S. the people he meets are the butcher on the corner and the old ladies who work in the bakery. They are not necessarily that interested.

Smith: An example of that happening here would be the latest "triumphant" return of Dexter Gordon.

Adams: Yeah, good one. One thing that is noticeable in Japan as well as in Europe is meeting people with scholarly interests who can name all the records you have been on. They will come up with some you barely remember yourself. They even have them ready to be autographed. You see that more often overseas than in the States.

The remarks about the people in Europe really loving jazz and Americans not knowing where it's at is a conclusion being drawn from slanted evidence. People on tour in Europe associate with those already prepared to meet them on their own terms. It's an enjoyable and ego-building experience, though.

Smith: Do you have a preference for certain sound combinations in your small groups?

Adams: I have played with Toots Thielemans' harmonica (*Man Bites Harmonica*) and I enjoyed playing with a trombone, Jimmy

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"The one fault of American soloists who visit Europe is that they try to rehearse too much. If the rhythm section is not* au courant, *Americans tend to push too far and become angry when things don't work out. They don't stop to realize that it might be more the fault of the visiting musician than the rhythm section. . . . "

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★★★ good, ★★ fair, ★ poor

OREGON

FRIENDS—Vanguard VSD 79370: *Interstate; Gospel Song; Grazing Dreams; Slumber Song; Time Remembered; First Thing In The Morning; Love Over Time; Timeless.*

Personnel: Ralph Towner, piano, classical and 12-string guitars, percussion, french horn on track 8; Paul McCandless, oboe, bass clarinet, english horn; Collin Walcott, tabla, sitar, percussion; Glen Moore, bass, flute, lower piano on track 7; David Earl Johnson, congas and timbales on 1, congas on 3; Bennie Lee Wallace, tenor sax (tracks 2 and 6); Larry Karush, piano on 4, upper piano on 7.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Something tastefully odd, slightly inexplicable has happened here. In a jazz age when unit integration and longevity matter little, Oregon has been a remarkably consistent and insular group (the obvious exception, last year's venture with Elvin Jones, was a high-minded but incongruous attempt), relying greatly on resident composer-guitarist Ralph Towner for most of their thematic direction. But Towner, who has been stunningly prolific in the past, only contributed one track to *Friends*, their seventh collective effort, and it's not even the best one.

Although one would expect that Oregon's most democratic work to date—also the first to feature outside melodicists, pianist Larry Karush and saxophonist Bennie Lee Wallace, as full partners in the creative process—would also be their most diversified, such is not the case. Instead, it's a vibrant, cohesive body, a definitive study in texture and theme, and simply one of the most celebratory works of the year by one of our best groups.

The key to Oregon's success is their ability to meld their disparate tonal personalities into a consonant whole—even in the most malleable or playful of settings—the classical voicings of which never undermine their jazz foundations. In fact, their intonation has grown bluer and wilder, like the pinched, upturned oboe lines Paul McCandless plays on *Interstate* with a more urgent inflection than most polished sopranoists are capable of. Partially, the consonance derives from Towner's broad piano bedding, which threatens to replace guitar as his principle instrument. He swings with greater assurance than before, his punctuatory chords falling between beats in a towing fashion, providing momentum as much as symmetry.

Even when giving vent to their wildest impulses, Oregon's impact remains an inviting one, as in the teasing fragment of *First Thing In The Morning*, which pits guest saxophonist Bennie Lee Wallace's alternately furious and soothing tenor against Collin Walcott's bubbling tablas. Wallace also guests on the album's most compelling track, Paul McCandless' *Gospel Song*. It's a rich marriage of the former's tenor and the latter's bass clarinet, opening in unison on an effusive gospel line, then progressing to a moderately outside, soulful swordplay. Like the rest of *Friends*, it is as touching as it is cerebral, squeezing an ocean of humanity and mellifluent dreams into a one inch vinyl span. The time has come to expand that vision. Gentlemen, show us your sonatas. —*gilmore*

JOHN KLEMMER

LIFESTYLE (LIVING & LOVING)—ABC AB 1007: *Lifestyle; Caress; Quiet Afternoon; Tough And Tender; Pure Love; Purity; Forever; Lovin' Feelings.*

Personnel: Klemmer, tenor sax, echoplex, phaser; Milcho Leviev, piano; Chuck Domanico, bass; Harvey Mason, drums; Chino Valdez, percussion; Bernie Fleischer, flutes.

★ ★ ½

John Klemmer's career has always been marred with flashes of brilliance amid schlockridden arrangements. His early records on Cadet showed promise of a musical personality which embraced both pop and jazz idioms alike. It is his seemingly sincere love of both forms that make him a leader in a field which has just recently encompassed jazz stalwarts Gato Barbieri and George Benson.

While his playing has matured somewhat from those early days, unfortunately his musical perception has not. His tone is very full and lush but his arrangements and choice of material suffers from the same naivete that compelled him to write the poem on the back cover. This problem is probably best exemplified by *Purity* with its all too familiar string arrangements and floating melodic lines. The tune is so predictable that it's a wonder the musicians maintained their interest long enough to record it.

A major contributor to the jejune nature of the worst selections is pianist Milcho Leviev. His solos never seem headed anywhere and consequently never arrive. Again this may in part be the lack of substantial material, but Domanico and Mason are able to work well within the framework of the tunes. Mason's melodic drumming is, in fact, the most sensible aspect of the album. He and Domanico have the taste and experience to extract solid musical ideas from mediocre compositions.

Still, despite its flaws the album does have moments that make up for the insipid material. Particularly strong cuts include *Quiet Afternoon, Tough And Tender* and *Lovin' Feelings*. Although Klemmer still shows the same promise of his earlier works, he now seems too affected by the success of his recent ABC records. He appears more concerned with the way things should sound than with the way they might sound. —*less*

JAN GARBAREK

DIS—ECM 1-1093: *Vandrere; Krusning; Viddene; Skygger; Yr; Dis.*

Personnel: Garbarek, tenor and soprano saxes, wood flute; Ralph Towner, 12-string and classical guitars; Den Norske Messingsekstett, brass; wind off the North Sea, windharp.

★ ★ ★ ★

The chief ethereal instigator here is a windharp, described in the liner notes as "... an instrument with strings that are brought to vibrate by the wind, thereby creating tones and overtones, which in turn are enhanced in a resonant body." Strategically placed on the the North Sea coast off Norway, the device captures the blustery breezes in an eerie, sustained, lower-register continuum not very much unlike a series of cellos tuning up at the start of a symphonic presentation.

Against that backdrop, Garbarek and Towner produce some familiar sounds. *Vandrere* is imbued with all the familiar characteristics of the Garbarek attack: a series of lengthy, single-note bleats of lung-taxing might. Underneath this Towner explores, tickling the strings with sparse little filagrees.

The sheer beauty of the Garbarek style insures that his approach will never be tiresome. Yet the increasing amount of predictability creeping into his product is another matter. Despite its lush, stirring mystique, *Viddene* is eminently chartable: you know that on the next bar, the sax will play a higher note until the inevitable apex is reached. Happily though, this track is saved by an active Towner, punctuating the frequent silence with some strum picking that resembles folk guitarist John Fahey.

The only new and intriguing thing here is *Dis*, which finds the solitary wood flute of Garbarek embellishing the windharp. There is a semblance of moods—the cold, bleak sound of the gustcatcher, as opposed to the inquisitive, airy pose of the flute. Happily though, these eight minutes are enough to recommend the disk to those who think that Gato Barbieri represents the ultimate in sensual saxophone playing and that Herbie Mann stands for the same on flute. It's a new language, but one well worth learning. —*shaw*

DAVID LIEBMAN

LIGHT'N UP, PLEASE!—A&M SP-721: *Light'n Up, Please!; Children Of The Ghetto; Tranquility Of The Protective Aura; The Fonz's Strut; Got To Work; Chicken Soup; Exquisite Torture; Win Your Love; Slow Dance On The Killing Ground.*

Personnel: Liebman, tenor and soprano saxes, alto and C flutes, electric piano, backing vocals and percussion; Pee Wee Ellis, tenor sax, electric piano and backing vocals; Leon Thomas, vocals on tracks 2, 5 and 6; Link Chamberland, electric guitar on 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 & 9; Tony Saunders, electric bass on 2, 4, 5 & 6; Chris Hayes, electric guitar on 2, 4, 5 & 6; Jimmy Strassburg, drums and percussion on 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9; Jumma Santos, congas on 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 & 9; Harold Williams, synthesizer on 1, 3, 7 & 9; Al Foster, drums on 1, 4, 7 & 9; Jeff Berlin, electric bass on 1, 4, 7 & 9; Sonny Brown, percussion on 9; Richard Beirach, acoustic piano on 8.

★ ★ ½

These are hard times, David Liebman and Pee Wee Ellis seem to be telling us in the course of their first joint effort (why doesn't Ellis get co-billing?), *Light'n Up, Please!*, a back-to-the-streets album that adheres to that most streetworthy of '70s denominators, funk. Funk certainly isn't an incongruous medium for their message—a metaphorically confused plea for preserving the innate innocence of ghetto children while admonishing the household "bitch" to back off so the virile provider can find peace of mind in his dirty work—but then neither is it always a musically congruous marriage. Which isn't to imply that their talents are incompatible, but simply to assert that they fail to catalyze one another. While Ellis focuses in every solo he blows—be it free or romantic—Liebman is quickly making his lack of focus a debilitating trademark.

Maybe Liebman simply wants to make trade in the coin of the realm, to exploit the universal and commercial appeal of funk, but with the excess of fractured vocals and dull-tipped hooks here, it's a far cry from the prowess and vision that distinguished *Drum Ode* of two years ago. Like David Sanborn, even in his most heated moments Liebman proffers an imperturbable tone, one that wags a slender thread between dispassion and reserve. In a track like *The Fonz's Strut*, which features

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Liebman weaving a keen winding line from fluid legato notes, that restraint can be charming (What is the Fonz's strut if not cool?), while elsewhere, most notably in the title track, his vapid offhandedness is merely enervating. And as well-meaning or comically intentioned as his vocal and lyrical attempts may be, it just doesn't justify their inclusion here. Nor does Leon Thomas, with his indulgent scat-yodel schtick, help to make lines like "Well I've got to work/You know I ain't no jerk" anymore palatable.

Not surprisingly, Pee Wee Ellis is a more probing soloist in the funk idiom, playing with a gruff sensuality and shivering warmth that surmounts the plotted structures and plodding backing. Unlike his comrades, he's not afraid to sweat in order to funk. Tellingly, though, the best track here, *Slow Dance On The Killing Ground*, is a rhythmically self-inventive affair, composed of halting underlayers and tonal crossfires. Liebman's lone soprano line, relying on some private inner dictate for its cadence and profile, is both random and riveting. It is the only performance that shirks an otherwise pervasive metric ambivalence—one given to shifting irresolutely between four-square dance pulses and pushy neo-bop tempos—and, as a result, it's the one moment that commands. Give us more luminescence such as this, Dave, and we'll have something to light'n up on. *—gilmore*

STUFF

MORE STUFF—Warner Brothers BS 3061: *This One's For You; And Here You Are; Subway; Love Of Mine; Honey Coral Rock; Sometimes Bubba Gets Down; As; Need Somebody.*

Personnel: Cornell Dupree, Eric Gale, guitars; Gordon Edwards, bass, vocals (tracks 4 and 8); Steven Gadd, Christopher Parker, drums and percussion; Richard Tee, piano, electric piano, organ; Gene Orloff, violin (track 2).

★ ★ ½

Stuff is the band of studio musicians who created the vacuums filled by Aretha Franklin and King Curtis on some of the great sessions for Atlantic. Naturally, the sextet plays as neat as can be, tapping all the right tempii, guitar textures and timeless chord progressions in an attempt to woo the sophisticated, if slightly older, soul market.

In other words, Stuff isn't after the maggot-brains who boogie to Parliament-Funkadelic-Bootsy. Stuff is a California funk band now, and man, are they mellow. As soon as the stylus hits the first grooves, their music slips into the background.

No less than their first album, this second effort feels like it is missing a track. Try waiting through the tasty, faster guitar features for a gritty sax to break out. But not even Gale or Dupree cuts loose (their mock ax battle on *Rock* barely sparks; considering the material, it's like they are using wooden swords). *And Here You Are* might be a pretty setting for an emotional ballad songstress, but the only singing comes from the violin lead. Gordon Edwards' two vocal turns are friendly and bearish, but not something you build an album around.

These guys work together well, and structurally the album is alright. The hooks are pleasant, Tee's gospel piano rings clearly, and the bottom is coordinated, not mushy (if you want to try out your speakers' bass response, slip on *Bubba*). *As*, the Stevie Wonder tune, nearly gets going—but if it sends you to the original, you won't come back to this version.

Matter of fact, the only reason to put this disc on again is to remember what Stuff has just played, because the music makes such little lasting impression. Maybe you have moments when you want to hear something undistinguished and inoffensive. Then, this is it. Everything fits, and it won't shake you up at all. *—mandel*

ARILD ANDERSEN

SHIMRI—ECM-1-1082: *Shimri; No Tears; Ways Of Days; Wood Song; Vaggvisa For Hanna Dedication.*

Personnel: Andersen, bass; Juhani Aaltonen, tenor and soprano saxes, flutes, percussion; Lars Jansson, piano; Pal Thowsen, drums and percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

This Norwegian bassist first came to light via his work with his countryman Jan Garbarek. On the 1973 ECM release *Triptykon*, Andersen displayed a solid command of the standard experimental jazz bass devices: oblique, angry counter melodies, odd interval double stops, cello-like effects. But this bassist's current bent is far from being overly-outside Lydian Chromatical, for Andersen's prior expressionism evidently has taken a decidely introverted, impressionistic tack, a posture characterized by diffuse statements of meter and melody, tones heard through a fog, pleasingly.

The result is well-mannered lyricism, a resurfacing of chamber jazz, delicate and introspective. *No Tears*, for example, a flowing bit of understatement, recalls the Getz/Corea version of *Sweet Rain* (as, in fact, do several other pieces here). In the equally lyrical *Wood Song*, a pastoral tone poem, a percussion ensemble of wood blocks, scrapers, ratchets and tambourines successfully accompanies a meandering rustic flute: evocative program music.

A second, more placid pastoral is *Shimri*. Here Lars Jansson, whose style blends Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans and Steve Kuhn in roughly equal parts, gets into one of the many dialogues he holds with Andersen. These two throughout exchange many a thoughtful aside.

Dedication, an exception to this group's subdued, impressionistic stance, features tenorist Aaltonen using a brittle, compressed tone. Taken forcefully at a medium pace (in which the quarter note pulse is actually explicit) this tune highlights the fascinating, subtle gradations of mood and style evoked by these musicians. *—balleras*

McCOY TYNER

SUPERTRIOS—Milestone M-55003: *Waves; Blues On The Corner; I Mean You; The Greeting; Prelude To A Kiss; Moment's Notice; Hymn-Song; Consensus; Four By Five; Stella By Starlight; Lush Life; Blues For Ball.*

Personnel: Tyner, piano, all tracks; Ron Carter, bass, and Tony Williams, drums (tracks 1 through 6); Eddie Gomez, bass and Jack De Johnette, drums (all remaining tracks).

★ ★ ★ ★

In a sense, McCoy Tyner cut his teeth in the trio format, producing some of his most compelling work as a result of its intimate, confrontive demands. While the Coltrane Quartet was an exceptionally integrated and responsive unit, the Tyner-Garrison-Jones triad was a canvas to Coltrane's brush, the malleable means by which the saxophonist codified his colors. But the challenge of a straightahead trio is more demanding: it falls incumbent upon the pianist, with no contrasting instruments of melody other than his own, to infuse a performance with both its texture and line, while keeping the distinctions sharp and exciting. In *Supertrios*, Tyner's second trio set in

as many years, he provides us with greater evidence of his genius and an insight into his fallibility, the latter resulting from his penchant for overstatement.

In formulating *Supertrios*, producer Orrin Keepnews decided to pair Tyner with two diverse and potentially heady rhythm sections, the teams of Ron Carter/Tony Williams and Eddie Gomez/Jack DeJohnette. The trouble with such makeshift meetings is that they are not seasoned, integrated trios, but conditional ones. Like the act of engaging in sex with someone other than one's regular partner, such matings can yield memorable peaks, but nothing beats familiarity for ecstasy.

In particular, the Tyner-Williams-Carter sessions are effusively expressive without being thoughtfully reactive. Tyner is typically romantic and dramatic, his percussive left hand ostinatos melding effectively with his lucid right hand exercises, an always interesting blend of bluster and blues. But Williams is equally lush, making big crosscurrent statements that, in tandem with Tyner's forays, creates an effect more notable for its static than dynamic quality. And the characteristically understated Carter is simply overpowered. Still, tracks like *Waves* and *The Greeting* are undeniably visceral, fully realized fusions of muscular passion with form, which was probably the worthy intent behind this session all along.

By comparison, the sides with Gomez and DeJohnette are more resilient and pensive. DeJohnette makes the notable difference, opting to play in a tight spectrum, as concisely as possible, only occasionally reaching for flourishes of color and depth. Also, Tyner's solo imagination is seemingly more involved here, playing translucent melodic lines, wider and brighter. We hear a gentler style of tension at work here, evident in McCoy's mutable temperament and deft chord transpositions. Gomez favors high staccato streams, just a shade more aggressive than his work with the Bill Evans trio of recent years. These are consummate performances from a trio that we could stand to hear more of and a style that favors Tyner's ultimately introspective brand of romanticism. He remains a boundless magus, willing to diversify his craft and even take a chance at weaving an unknown spell or two.

—*gilmore*

BROTHERS JOHNSON

RIGHT ON TIME—A&M SP 4644: *Runnin' For Your Lovin'; Free Yourself, Be Yourself; "Q"; Right On Time; Strawberry Letter 23; Brother Man; Never Leave You Lonely; Love Is.*

Personnel: George Johnson, guitar, lead and backing vocals; Louis Johnson, bass, backing, lead vocals (tracks 7,8); Dave Grusin, keyboards and synthesizers; Harvey Mason, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Greg Adams, trumpet; Emilio Castillo, tenor sax; Mick Gilette, trumpet and trombone; Stephen Kupka, baritone sax; Lenny Pickett, alto sax; Denside Trammell, Alexandra Brown, Stephanie Spruill, Oren Waters, Jim Gilstrap, Alex Weir, Richard Heath, background vocals.

★ ★ ★

No, this writer is not a bubble gum music aficionado, but much of this record is quite good. Admittedly, the last Brothers Johnson record was quite a turkey, as the guys had too much funk on the brain. Now, the approach seems to be to establish some type of an identity as a black Bread, with occasional quasi-improvisatory overtones. To a large extent, it works.

Surprisingly, the two instrumental tracks are not the highlight; they suffer from the plebian obsessions of bassist Louis Johnson, and the repetitive vamps of hack keyboard man Dave Grusin. What is admirable, however, is the maturation of George and Louis as songwriters in an MOR vein.

Despite the banal lyrics, *Love Is* is a nice little tune. Louis Johnson is dubbed in on about six different guitars, all of which he plays representatively well. His skill on the instrument, while virtuosic by no means, is sufficiently adept to get him through the simplistic demands of a *"Q"*, one of the instrumentals previously mentioned.

The best piece, however, is not a self-scribed item, but a Shuggie Otis song, the enrapturing *Strawberry Letter 23*. One of the most hypnotizing singles to be released in recent years, it concerns the writing of a missive in response to "strawberry letter 22," obviously written on like stationery by his girlfriend far away. Sounds ludicrous, but the lyrical images are a bit Baudelairish, and the effects are largely provided by one Ian Underwood, whose work with Zappa has prepped him for verbally adventuresome circumstances such as this. That little musical figure in the hook line is one of those precious riffs which infrequently make hit singles mental keepsakes.

To an extent, the flow here goes around and through the Brothers. Their contributions are mostly in the vocal and songwriting area: Louis' chops especially are quite modest. Yet under the production tutelage of Quincy Jones, enough heavyweights have jelled here to mold a disc which is quite pleasant, and at times, modestly creative.

—*shaw*

DEXTER GORDON

SWISS NIGHTS—Inner City IC 2050: *Tenor Madness; Wave; You've Changed; Days Of Wine and Roses.*

Personnel: Gordon, tenor sax; Kenny Drew, piano; Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, acoustic bass; Alex Riel, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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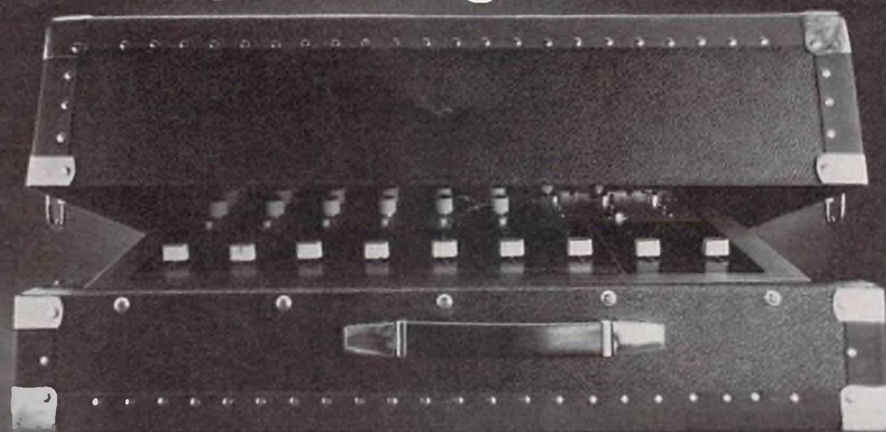

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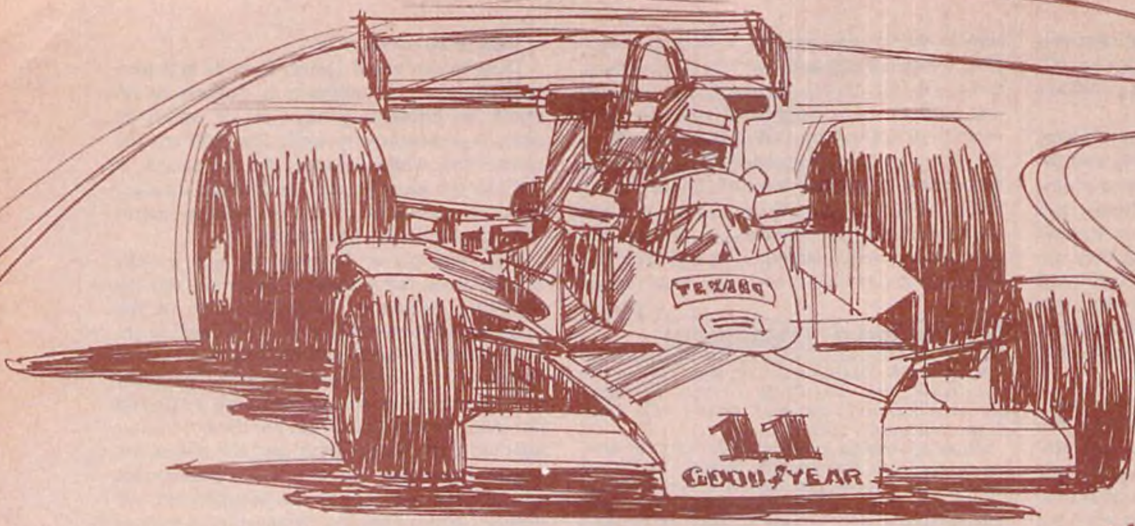

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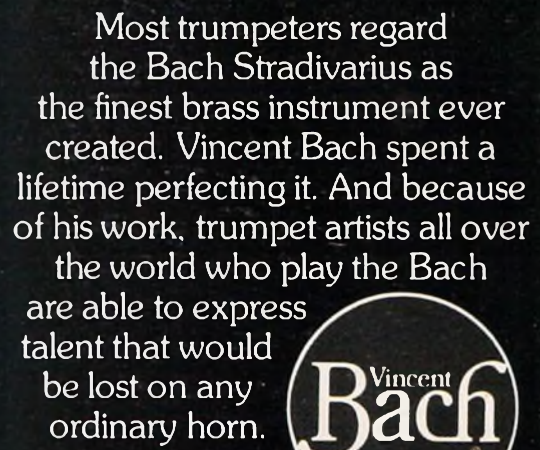
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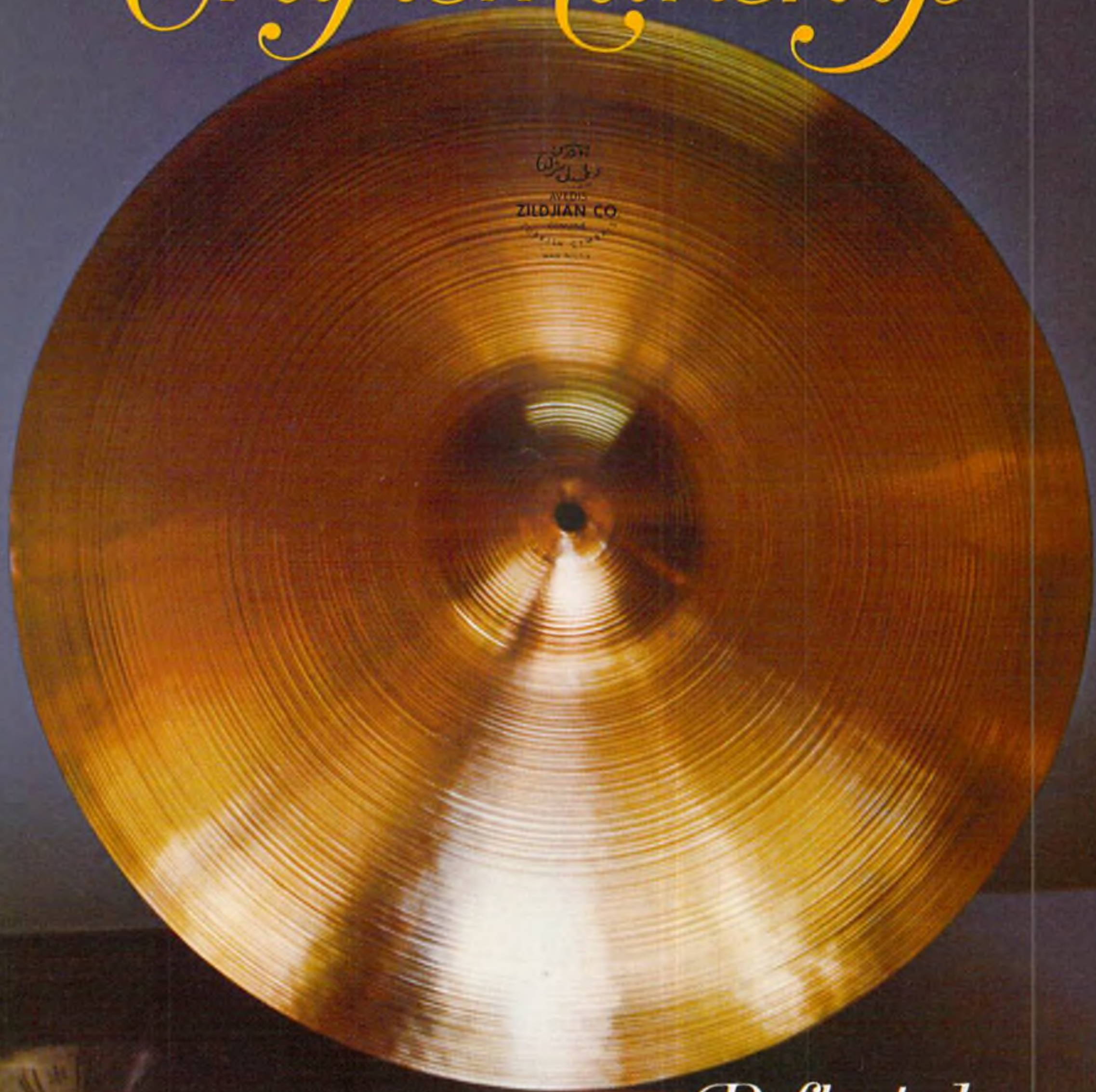

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Borgia Tea Room: *Tom Laughlin* (Tues.); *Andy Kahn/Vince Fay* (Wed.); *Howard Hess* (Thurs.); *Bob Cohen Trio w/Donna Jean Glasgow* (Fri.-Sat.).

Cafe Society: *Ted Greike* (Tues.-Sat.).

Ethical Society: Occasional jazz; call PE5-3456 for schedule.

Carroll's: Opening October; local and national jazz pianists nightly (except Sun.); call 545-9301 for information.

Benny The Bum's: Weekend jazz; call for details.

Long March Coffeehouse: Jazz (Fri.-Sat.); call WA5-1256.

Main Point: Contemporary music regularly; call LA5-5825.

Spectrum: *Frank Zappa* (10/24); *Earth, Wind and Fire/Deniece Williams* (11/14-15).

PHOENIX

Scottsdale Center: *Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin Big Band* (11/4); *Gato Barbieri* (11/9).

Dooley's: *Spirit* (10/10); *Taj Mahal/Flora Purim & Airto* (10/17); *Ronnie Laws* (10/20); *Ben Sidran* (10/23 or 30); *Stanley Turrentine* (11/7); *John Mayall* (11/13); *Bob Weir* (11/20).

State Fair: *Temptations* (10/22).

Top Shelf: *Grant Wolf's Big Band* (10/10, 10/24, 11/7, 11/21).

Boojum Tree: *Mickey Lynn Trio* (to 10/30); *Margo Reed/Buddy Weed Trio* (11/28-12/31).

Celebrity Theatre: *George Benson* (10/7); *John Stewart* (10/21); *Randy Newman* (11/11); *Jesse Winchester* (11/12, tent.); *Firefall* (11/26, tent.).

Joshua's: *Charles Lewis Quintet* (Sat.-Mon.).

A.S.U.: *Jazz Band #2* (10/18, 11/22); Jazz combos (10/25, 11/1); *Jazz Band #1* (11/8).

Marvin Gardens: *Prince Shell & Monopoly.*

Phoenix College: Jazz ensemble (11/7).

ATLANTA

Great Southeast Music Hall: *Jean-Luc Ponty* (10/25-26).

Georgia State University: *Georgia State Jazz Ensemble* in concert (11/13, 5 PM, Recital Hall).

E.J.'s: *Dan Wall Trio* featuring *Ike Isaacs* and *Al Nicholson* (Wed.-Sun.).

Lark And The Dove: *Jerry Farber Quartet;* musicians sit in every Wed.

Paschal's La Carousel: *Toby Boone Trio.*

Midtown Pub: Contemporary jazz (Mon.-Sat.).

Dante's Down The Hatch: *Paul Mitchell Trio.*

Jazz Forum Hotline: (404) 921-3478.

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1. Title of publication: Down Beat Magazine; 2. Date of filing: September 20, 1977; 3. Frequency of issue: Biweekly except monthly during July, August and September. A. Number of issues published annually: 21. B Annual subscription price: $11.00 4. Location of known office of publication: 222 W. Adams Street, Chicago, Cook, Illinois 60606. 5. Location of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers: 222 W. Adams Street, Chicago, Cook, Illinois 60606.

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Managing editor: None.

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include *Joe Turner, Dorothy Donegan, Seawind, Ernie Andrews* and *Jack Wilson*; call 996-6620 for schedule.

Baked Potato: *Don Ellis* (Mon.); *Lee Ritenour* (Tues.); Don Randi *(Wed.-Sat.)*; Plas Johnson *(Sun.)*.

White House (W. L.A.): *John Wood, Henry Franklin* often; call 553-9625 for information.

Donte's: Jazz all week; call 769-1566.

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Parisian Room: Name jazz artists all week; call 936-0678 for details.

Redondo Lounge: Jazz nightly; regulars include *Sam Most, Art Pepper, Don Menza*; call 372-1420.

Roxy: Rock, occasional jazz; call 878-2222.

Hong Kong Bar (Century Plaza Hotel): Name jazz regularly; call 277-2000.

Emanuel United Church (85th and Holmes): *Horace Tapscott and Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra* (last Sun. of month).

Cellar Theatre: *Les DeMerle Transfusion* (Mon.); call 487-0419.

Jimmy Smith's Supper Club: *Jimmy Smith* regularly plus special guests (Fri.-Sun); open jam session Mon.

CHICAGO

Jazz Showcase: *Dizzy Gillespie* (10/19-23); *Yusef Lateef* (10/26-30); *Phil Woods* (11/2-6); *Jimmy Smith* (11/9-13); *Howard Roberts* and *Ernestine Anderson w/John Young Trio* (11/16-20); *Harry "Sweets" Edison/Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis* (11/23-27); *Max Roach* (11/30-12/4); *Art Pepper* (12/7-11); *Matteson/Phillips TUBAJAZZ Consort* (12/14-18); *Zoot Sims/Al Cohn* (12/28-1/1); call 337-1000 for further information.

Ivanhoe Theatre: Name jazz and contemporary music regularly; call 348-4060 for details.

Uptown Theatre: *Frank Zappa* (11/4); *Thin Lizzy/Graham Parker and the Rumour* (11/5).

Orphan's: *Joe Daley Jazz Quorum* (Mon.); *Ears* (Tues.); call 929-2677.

Amazingrace (Evanston): Folk and jazz regularly; call 328-2489 for listings.

Ratso's: Music nightly; call 935-1506 for information.

Wise Fools Pub: *Roger Pemberton Big Band* (Mon.); *Streetdancer* (Tues.); blues regularly; call 929-1510 for details.

Colette's: Jazz nightly; call 477-5022.

Backroom: *Eddie Higgins* (through 10/29).

Durty Nellie's Pub (Palatine): Jazz Consortium Big Band (Sun.).

Rick's Cafe Americain: Jazz nightly; call 943-9200.

Elsewhere: Blues nightly; *Sunnyland Slim, Lee Jackson, Homesick James, John Brim, Eddie Taylor* often; call 929-8000.

Astro Club: *Von Freeman* (Sun.).

Jazz Institute Hotline: 312-421-6394.

SAN FRANCISCO

Keystone Korner: *Roy Ayers & Ubiquity* (10/18-23); *Idris Ackamoor Trio* (10/24); *New York Jazz Quartet w/Roland Hanna and Frank Wess* (10/25-30); *Snakepit* (10/31); *Max Roach Quartet* (11/1-6, 11/8-13); *Paul Nash* (11/14); *Freddie Hubbard* (tent. 11/15-20, 11/22-27); open jam sessions w/ rhythm section provided (Saturdays, 3-7 PM); call 781-0697 for further information.

Great American Music Hall: *Eddie Harris* (10/20); *Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra* (10/21-22); *Ralph Stanley* (10/27); *Blossom Dearie, Bob Dorough* (10/28-29); *Mose Allison* (11/8-9); *David Grisman Quintet, Vassar Clements* (11/11-13); *Steve Goodman* (11/14-15); *Gerry Niewood* (11/16); *Chuck Mangione* (11/25-27); call 885-0750 for details.

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NORVO

continued from page 39

be thrown by what you're playing or who you're playing with. I can say I think Bix would have found common ground with the bop musicians and beyond, because he had an ear, good technique and the capacity to grow. Take Bud Powell. His favorite piano player was Billy Kyle, who I used with John Kirby on some of Mildred's records in the '30s. And I was completely comfortable working with Tal Farlow and Charlie Mingus in the early '50s. Made some pretty good records, if I do say so."

Pretty good, indeed. Now available on the Arista/Savoy series (SJL 2212), the Norvo trio sides, sans piano and drums, are really the spiritual descendents of the equally classic 1933 records (particularly the marimba pieces) that originally launched not only Norvo but the mallet concept in jazz. Although he plays vibes throughout, the sound remains closer to the xylophone timbre than that achieved by any other vibist, particularly in the lack of vibrato. Norvo was, in fact, perhaps the first jazz musician in history to successfully eliminate the vibrato concept from his style, begining in 1933.

Through the '50s and '60s and down to the present time, Norvo has continued (between reunions with Benny Goodman, CS 8379) to lead highly musical and musicianly small groups that are soft, subtle and courageously free from the corrosive compromises pressed on lesser men by trends. One superb example folds Norvo and Ben Webster together in a fragile blend of cries and whispers (French RCA 741 089).

His latest, *The Second Time Around* (Famous Door HL 108), finds Red still the complete musician after a professional career stretching across half a century. With Mousey Alexander sounding exceptionally propulsive on drums and hitting just the right rests with a choked cymbal, Red is given little time to coast. And pianist Dave McKenna nearly pulls the rug from underneath the leader (many will say he does) with some of the most intensely driving and hard-edged piano since Mel Powell at his height. His quote of Toselli's *Serenade* in *When You're Smiling* is carried off with striking logic and aplomb.

Although Norvo rarely plays the xylophone in public ("A very singular instrument. It doesn't blend with anything."), he has one at home and, along with his marimba, still works out on it.

"There is a great difference between vibes and xylophone," he observes. "The xylophone has a very short note. If you don't play even, it doesn't sound even. On vibes you can manipulate the note. You can cheat. My technique gets lazy on vibes in fact. I work out on the xylophone to keep evenness in my playing. I even play scales. The hardest thing in the world is to play legato on the xylophone. But you can't use xylophone technique on the vibes unless you pull off and use a light touch."

The light touch is a basic Norvo trademark. He uses a short stroke, but more importantly he uses only his wrist, never his arms. It's a fundamental rule of the xylophone discipline. Because all his control is in his wrist he uses only straight, rigid sticks. Some musicians like a little whip in the mallet. Norvo doesn't. Moreover, he chokes the stick at about the middle for even firmer control. Using relatively heavy hammers, Norvo instinctively knows where the precise balance point is as soon as he hoists the mallet. The brittle xylophone technique Red continues to cultivate is particularly at home on his new amplified vibraphone, which the Deagan Company supplied him with late in 1975. "The amplification is in each bar," he points out. "You get a wonderful evenness, particularly in concerts and on recordings."

So at 68, Red remains a master craftsman of his trade, admired by serious musicians everywhere and beyond the grasp of the less-than-serious. Like most of the major figures in jazz who have remained fresh, Norvo is not the product of any single popular period or style. He's the product of his own integrity. A few such musicians seem to be produced by each musical generation. It's no coincidence that, regardless of age, when they come together they find little difficulty in understanding each other.

That being true, Red Norvo should never have any shortage of friends. db

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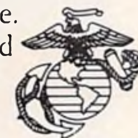

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ADAMS

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Knepper (*The Pepper-Knepper Quintet*). That was only one record date and was never a working group. One does seem to hold up rather well, an Oliver Nelson date called *More Blues And The Abstract Truth*. Thaddeus was on that as well as Benny Webster. Both played marvelously well.

Smith: You were on that historic Thelonious Monk Town Hall date (1959).

Adams: I certainly was! Hall Overton put that one together and he did a marvelous job on the charts as well. Rehearsals were so much fun. I was rehearsing with Goodman for a band tour at the same time and frequently would go from one to the other, which was interesting to say the least.

The Monk band showed a lot of enthusiasm and the music was fun to play. As I remember it, there were plans for that band to do a series of concerts including a college tour. After the Town Hall concert the reviews came back devastating. We were very disappointed because all of us were excited about staying together and doing more. The journalists queered that tour.

Smith: I think we are ahead of ourselves as far as your developmental situation is concerned. I'm interested in how the "New York Sound" was infused into your playing.

Adams: I don't know if there is such a thing or not, but when I came to New York I was greeted by many friends, Oscar Pettiford in particular. He was extremely helpful in introducing me to people, taking me to jam sessions, using me when he could on dates. Finally he got me a job with Stan Kenton, which I was totally unsuited for. I hadn't read music since I left the army. The five months I spent with Stan got me past the waiting period for my union card in N.Y.

Smith: You then did all-star dates and studio sessions, including an extended period in the Los Angeles scene.

Adams: It's interesting that the number of dates I did on the coast gave people the idea that that's where I came from. Which brings us back to the point of "New York Sound" versus "Los Angeles Sound." The ironic thing is that all of those records were done in a very short span of time and are apropos of absolutely nothing. For the record: I am *not* from California and have never spent any length of time there other than that. My name is not "Art" and my horn is bigger!

Smith: We're coming closer to Thad and Mel. Want to talk about that?

Adams: I have read versions of the origins of the band that are so much at variance with my recollections that I don't want to mention what I remember of it. It might destroy an image that is being built.

I do remember this much. Thad had some big band charts he wanted to rehearse. We got together with some friends and we enjoyed the experience. So we decided to do it again the following week. This time a mob showed up and we were off. Alan Grant (a local DJ) and Dan Morgenstern and Max Gordon and people like that followed. That's all history; let's talk about stylistics.

Smith: Great! Let's do it. Where are you coming from?

Adams: That's very difficult to say. I have always managed not to be fashionable at any given point. I think that's one of my strengths. Except during my Coleman Hawkins soundalike days (when I was 13 or 14), I decided that's where I wanted to go. Nobody I heard was saying anything on baritone. (Harry) Carney played the instruments marvelously, but I could see whole areas there for different styles of improvisation. It looked like a wide open field. When I first started playing baritone it could be referred to as the bebop era, and I wasn't really a bebop style player. I did not play the cliches.

Smith: You mean like Bill Graham, Serge Chaloff. . . .

Adams: Gee, I never did listen to them. I always tried to avoid cliches of any school, including bebop. So if people considered themselves bebop players, I was not about to play like them. I was playing a lot of advanced harmonies, outside the harmony, when it was frowned upon by a number of other people. To bebop players I am not a bebopper. I have seen myself associated with a school called "hard bop" which is something I know nothing about. I don't know that such a school exists or existed. If so, I was never consciously part of it. I feel that if I am a part of any school it is a school of one . . . me. I play like me. I have played long enough to have lived through a number of styles without ever being involved with any one of them. Again, if I have any strength as a player, that is it.

Smith: Do you have that urge to "swing"?

Adams: Swing. To define that is to verbalize a feeling. Many have tried; few have succeeded. What swings to me might not swing to you, or to your Aunt Martha. However, being able to "swing" is necessary. On the other hand, I also find that a player who does nothing but think of swing all the time is going to get dull to me. Playing across the feeling, doing all kinds of tricks (that's not to denigrate anyone), playing in various ways to break up feelings, having different approaches, different sounds on the instrument, like playing a lyrical phrase with a lyrical sound and then being able to alter your sound to play something else. That's something I learned from Wardell Gray 20 or 30 years ago, and it's important.

Smith: Would you place yourself anywhere in the spectrum of musical tastes?

Adams: Not categorically. I was certainly influenced by Charlie Parker—weren't we all?—mostly in terms of the whole approach to playing. You don't have to play like someone else. You can go on and make up your own rules. That's what jazz really is. I have met tenor players who have refused to listen to Coleman Hawkins. "He's old fashioned," they say. "I don't want to hear him." A trumpet player once said to me, "I want to study the whole history of my instrument. I'm going to go all the way back to Clifford Brown!"

I do think that jazz has a continuing history and knowing everything is certainly helpful. I mean, there's Charlie Parker making references to Louis Armstrong. I like to use satire in my playing sometimes, too. I'll make fun of styles I don't like. There's another thing: setting up a challenge and finding a way to resolve it. The dullest players are the predictable ones, harmonically, melodically or both. Those who sound like someone else are also dull. My favorite players are those who, within eight bars, you know who is playing. The valuable players are the ones you can recognize very quickly. And much of it is the swing feeling. How they feel about time, where they lay the note in relation to where "one" is, goes a long way in telling you who a particular player is. **db**

OONPLATRICON.) The musical equivalent of this mental hearing, however, stems from remembered tunes and chords and instrumental tones, sound patterns which have been heard before and stored in musical memory banks within the brain. Recalling those patterns directly activates mental musical hearing. (For a test of this phenomenon, try hearing within the mind anything really familiar, from song to symphony) Constant exercise of such tonal memory provides more than enjoyment: it helps train the mind's ear to hear original tunes, original chord progressions, original timbre mixes. Composing then can become an activity of the mind rather than a hunt-and-find session at the keyboard.

IV. Investigating every style and phase of music.

The shortest cut to comprehending any particular in music is to catch it in concentrated form. Basie furnishes a model to cultivate a steady beat. Both Bach and dixieland concentrate counterpoint. Django and Jimi and Joe and Johnny—and Andres—illuminate the plectrum spectrum.

V. Associating intervals and chords with tunes.

Certain tunes start with certain intervals. *Chopsticks* hits a harmonic major second six times in a row. *Sentimental Journey* outlines a melodic major third five successive times in the first phrase. Bugle calls start with a perfect fourth. There's probably a tune for each interval already notched into every musician's ear. Associating each interval with the right tune therefore makes interval recognition automatic. And the same thing works for many chords. *The Star Spangled Banner* and *On Top Of Old Smoky* both outline major triads. *Water Boy* and the *Moonlight Sonata* both outline minor triads. *Fascination* and *Getting Sentimental Over You* both outline major seventh chords. The list goes on for so long that the choice of associative songs becomes a matter of personal preference.

VI. Playing along.

Using a familiar instrument to find exactly what is in unfamiliar music might well be the most valuable activity in training an ear, for it eventually connects the ear directly to physical action as well as to mental comprehension.

Because they can be repeated and slowed down, records make the best source of play-along material. And their use goes beyond duplicating the melody. Using the focusing powers of the ear, the players-along can single out countermelodies, rhythms, bass lines, harmonic progressions, phrasing, or anything else on the record for duplication. And what a way to get together with musical giants! Again thanks for the idea, Gerald. And if your formal ear-training class ever seems to be a retread of what you already can do, better make your motto, "Any time I'm actually using my ear, I'm bound to be improving it." **db**

NORVO

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to put together a session. Busy with other things, Red wasn't terribly interested. Later on, Shreiber was back in New York, this time with the cash to actually underwrite musicians' fees. The complete session is on Spotlite 107.

"Bird and Diz were the bad boys of 52nd Street then," recalls Red today, "probably because they were saying new things in a startling way. I had met Parker back in Kansas City in 1936, and got to know him a little. When he came to New York with Earl Hines, we renewed acquaintances. God knows our lives were lived differently. But the music really transcended our differences in lifestyle. And I think that's good. Music gave me something in common with a man I otherwise would never have had any basis for communication with.

"Here's a story that may surprise some of his fans. After the Comet date I ran into him and we talked about how well the record came out. Then he asked me if I'd do him a really big favor. I didn't know what to expect. I asked him what it was. 'Do you think you could get me in to see Benny at the 400 Club?' he asked. I laughed and said, 'You got it.' It was my greatest gift to him, I think. He was positively enthralled by Benny Goodman's sound."

Norvo says that story always surprises critics and fans, but it rarely surprises musicians.

"I don't understand why everybody wants to label music of different periods," he points out. "If you're a musician, you're not going to

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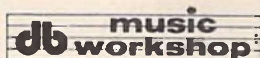

HOW TO augment your aural assets

by Dr. William L. Fowler

"Since my major is music . . ., I would like to request one article on ear training."
—Gerald Ward, Washington, Pa. (**db**, Sept. 8)

"Since you've suggested such a vital subject, I'm happy to respond."
—Bill Fowler, Denver, Colo.

Sound begins its life-long ear-drum impingement at birth. By pre-toddler days, normal ears and brains have begun their sorting of sound, their unscrambling of the wave-forms through which all sound reaches the ear, their recognition that particular sounds carry particular meanings. At least in discerning the sounds of nature, of machine, and of human language, if not of music's pleasurable orderly processes, ear training starts early in life.

While responding to language, even ears without musical talent utilize many of the sound-manipulations common in music:

Changes in dynamic level: "Don't eat my PIE!" "Don't eat MY pie!"

Changes in pitch inflection: "Really?" "Really!"

Changes in tempo: "Come inside." (Moderato = pleasant call to dinner; Presto = Mommy's getting irritated; Lento = portent of possible punishment)

Similarly, changes in rhythm and tone quality and pitch register add dimensions to spoken-word meanings. And by the time a language has been learned, the ear has been through some intensive on-the-job training.

Many people possessing that mystery of hearing, musical talent, seek further development of their hearing skills by becoming music majors, as you, Gerald, have done. As part of their curriculum, they take a course variously titled *Solfege* or *Solfeggio* or *Harmonic Dictation* or *Sight Singing And Ear Training* or whatever a particular school chooses to call it. This course aims mainly to develop its members' pitch and rhythmic accuracy as they sight-sing written intervals, scales, arpeggios and melodic lines and as they write from dictation all the above plus chords and chorales.

Although such visual-audio hookups remain essential to complete musicianship, they can't by themselves serve every aural need of the present-day pro. Many an improvisor, for example, fed unorthodox chord changes by an also-improvising accompaniment, needs to assimilate those changes instantly by ear. Many an arranger, mixing instrumental colors into new timbre combinations via the manuscript pen, needs to imagine accurately how they sound. Many a composer needs to prejudge the results of every melodic line, every chord, every timbre—every new effect, separately and collectively, upon future listeners.

Such skills, though found in many musicians, develop within the individual in different ways, at different ages, in subjective solitude. No two senses of music are exactly alike: No one musician can know exactly how music sounds to any other musician.

If ear development is so personal, then, can there be any single training program effective for all? A rigid program applied to all would probably fail to correct deficiencies in some hearing areas, such as rhythm or pitch discrimination or interval recognition, for some people. But a program flexible enough to allow special work on weaknesses ought to help most. Such a program of ear development can work at home as well as at school, privately as well as publicly, individually as well as collectively. Here's a lineup of several ear-training aids which you, Gerald, and others wanting to expand their aural resources might find helpful. They don't constitute a course of study, but they can cure weaknesses:

I. Investigation of the physical and psychological workings of the ear.

When musicians understand their own aural equipment, they can better cope with their own talents. They need to know, for example, that increased volume can shift perceived pitch away from actual pitch (as much as a whole step way down low!); that certain pitches and certain instruments can mask the sound of certain other pitches and instruments; that so-called absolute (perfect) pitch is a form of tonal memory rather than a mystic guarantee of extraordinary talent in all musical areas; that two notes sounding together produce by their frequency interaction certain other notes; that high-frequency hearing loss is both normal and inevitable; that pitch perception is easier in the middle register than in the extreme registers and largely vanishes outside the piano's range; that the ear hears logarithmically rather than arithmetically; that the ear can select individual sounds from complex textures, then focus on them. (If the Helmholtz or the Harvey Fletcher writings on aural behavior seem too scientific, WAVES AND THE EAR, by Van Bergeijk, Pierce and David (Doubleday) clarifies that subject in layman's terms)

II. Identifying deficiencies in practical experience and taking corrective action.

Flutists might be deficient in harmonic experience, drummers in melodic experience, pipe organists in rhythmic experience. Studying more than one instrument guards against such deficiencies, especially when one of those instruments combines experience in several musical skills. Playing piano, for example, can require keeping the beat straight and the dynamics and phrasing under control while running countermelodies against melodies amid chord changes over bass lines.

III. Imagining sound.

When someone looks at some strange group of letters and hears in the mind how it would sound if pronounced, sound is being imagined. (For a test of this phenomenon, try imagining

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swers with their unique approach to indigenous American music. By cutting across many musical lines, the quintet offered an accessible yet involving amalgam of swing, bluegrass and gypsy music, seated in a solid foundation of jazz improvisation; they call it "Dawg Music."

The show opened with Grisman's *E.M.D.*, a swinging showcase for guitarist Tony Rice and Grisman himself, undercut with syncopated comping by second mandolinist Todd Phillips. The quintet's flawless sense of timing and dynamics became apparent from the first number on, as solos were passed effortlessly from Grisman to Rice to violinist Darol Anger and back again. *Minor Swing* and Rice's *Swing '51* (presumably the year of his birth, judging from his youthful appearance) followed, and swing they did. Again, Rice was highlighted, sparking the crowd with his rapid-fire flat-picking. Though his technique can't be faulted, Rice's playing seemed a bit stiff through the first half of the program, relying on well-performed but somewhat cliched bluegrass runs.

Here, and throughout the evening, Darol Anger provided fluid gypsy-like solos, bowing to Grappelli and Venuti while exhibiting his own distinct stylings. Anger utilized the rhythmic potential of his instrument to its fullest, and his work reflected a light, humorous touch. Darol's interplay with Grisman—following the mandolinist's lead into marvelous harmonic meldings, playing unisons and harmonics to fine effect—shone brightly on *Japan* in particular.

While the quintet's version of *Spain* didn't quite live up to Chick's sprightly original, the instrumentation of the band made the tune startlingly fresh if not entirely satisfying. It appeared that this was a recent addition to their repertoire.

But all the elements that make Grisman's music so exciting came together with gusto on the last two pieces of the set. Artie Traum's *Fish Scale* opened with twin mandolins strumming a clipped rhythm, establishing a dynamic tension that held throughout the tune. Next to enter was Amatneek's upright, adding bottom to the halting motion. In came Rice, stating the gypsy theme with authority and a freedom I'd been waiting for all evening. Darol Anger completed the ensemble, adding a wistful, bluesy component to the melody. After subtle flourishes from Rice and Anger, Grisman took off on a solo that ranked with the best of the night—rhythmically adventurous with hints of bop and the blues.

In the middle of *Fish Scale*, as in *Dawg's Rag* that was to follow, Grisman and Anger extended the theme far beyond its original structure, working up dissonances and unearthly call and response. Just as they got about as outside as one might think possible on acoustic stringed instruments, the group magically jumped back together into that halting rhythm, soon restating the theme with a mandolin/violin/guitar harmony that couldn't help but make us smile in appreciation.

In an era when "crossover" music has come to imply a compromise between two or more styles—where the whole becomes something less than the sum of its parts—David Grisman's "Dawg Music" works as a healthy and refreshing vitalization of forms old and new. I understand the quintet is working on arrangements of Ellington and Coltrane compositions; imagine *"A" Train* on two mandolins and a fiddle! —*michael zipkin*

again, that Hall is one of our most potent musical forces. —*chuck berg*

DAVID GRISMAN QUINTET

Great American Music Hall
San Francisco

Personnel: Grisman, mandolin; Tony Rice, guitar; Darol Anger, violin; Todd Phillips, mandolin; Bill Amatneek, bass.

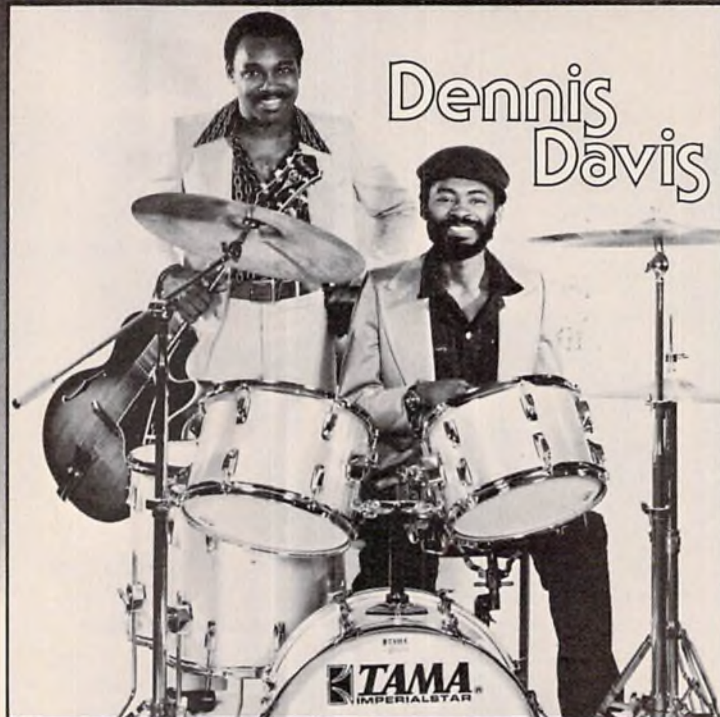
"Tonight's show is being broadcast over KJAZ, 92.7 FM; hope y'all out there in radioland enjoy it." That's the way David Grisman opened a near-sold-out performance by his quintet at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall.

David Grisman? On Northern California's 24-hour jazz station? Isn't he the down-home mandolin virtuoso whose bluegrass picking has graced the work of Bonnie Raitt, Maria Muldaur, Martin Mull, the Grateful Dead, and countless other rock/folk/pop artists over the past decade? Who, along with the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia on banjo, and fiddle master Vassar Clements, played in a bluegrass band called Old And In The Way? Whose first solo album paid homage to Flatt & Scruggs and Bill Monroe with such traditional tunes as *I Ain't Broke But I'm Badly Bent*?

The answer to all of the above is yes. Yet, if one were asked to describe just what kind of music Grisman and Co. play, the answer would not be as easily unraveled. With their string band instrumentation (minus banjo) and folksy, good-time manner, the casual listener might lump them into the traditional/old timey/bluegrass category. But whoever heard of a bluegrass band performing Corea's *Spain*? Playing modern renditions of Django's *Swing '42* and *Minor Swing*? Doing original tunes that midway evolve into strange dissonant exchanges between mandolin, violin and guitar?

Well, enough questions. At the Music Hall that night, the Grisman quintet provided an-

KEN EISNER



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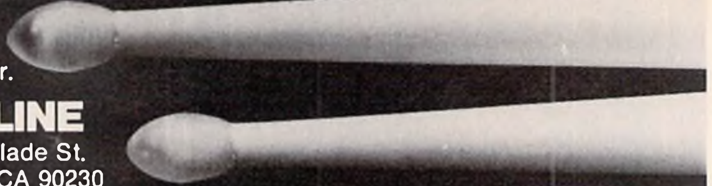

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"A lot of what is coming down is economically and politically motivated. Certain music and lyrics keep the people in a certain level of consciousness; it doesn't raise their awareness. Music should give energy, not drain it from you. I feel drained after hearing some music. Some artists write good lyrics, which is commendable. But if the music isn't happening, a great message gets lost as the people dance into oblivion and miss it. Music in this society is very sick. By being myself, I try to change it. If what I do becomes commercially feasible and people dig it, beautiful. But I have to be me first."

Jones' ideas about the relationships of life and music carry over to his instrumental techniques.

"I approach the instrument by listening to all music and trying to absorb things in each type of music that are relevant to me. Guys that try to imitate others can never pull it off. We may fall into a pattern you have heard, but that's not intentional. You can take those personal things that you hear and relate to, and incorporate them into yourself. A cat with a mastery of his instrument is commendable, but that's it. My approach to the guitar is limitless. I don't believe that it has to be limited. Guitar players are abused; people don't give them proper respect. Because of electronics you might hear me one time and I sound good; another time, the amp might be garbage and I come off awful. I tend to be a little bit inconsistent because I am always trying to play something differently. I try to understand everything conceptually, but I don't try to perfect it to the letter. Dizzy says that it is better to incorporate one thing and obtain a wider understanding than to try to incorporate everything at once. He has done it himself. He has perfected his thing; it's flawless. John Coltrane perfected a way of playing *Giant Steps*, but he didn't stop there. Some reach a point where they say 'this is me' and stop, I guess. I haven't been around long enough to know. Had Coltrane lived, who knows? He might still be playing what he was playing then.

"I approach my instrument from a feeling standpoint, but I also approach it from a technical one. I can play as fast as anybody, but it ain't about that. That's not an ego statement, because once you are in tune with yourself, the rest comes easy. There are ways of playing the guitar that most cats don't know. There is a certain way to play that frees you. Black Arthur Blythe, alto player with Chico, has reached another level; he's extending the musical horizon, I think. Bruce Johnson, of course, is another. There's a musical revolution happening and Bruce is in the forefront. I think, like bebop came as another form of jazz, this new form will be just another expression of what life is about. Everything that is meaningless will fall behind. New things will be seen that could never be played on the instrument, certain intervallic things. Electronics will not play an important part in the revolution. It's not going to be acoustic for acoustic's sake. If you feel you should be playing the wah-wah, then you will. All it is is being in tune with yourself. It's a way of approaching the instrument that forces you to be in tune with yourself. It will greatly expand the technical horizons of guitar players—new ways of picking, incorporating chord work, utilizing chords to a greater extent than ever before.

"I love Dizzy; I love John Lewis. They have played an integral part in everything I know, but they are not my end-all. The 'revolution' will be another way of approaching improvisation, especially on guitar."

A guitar in the Gillespie quintet has a dual function. Rodney holds down the harmonic as well as the rhythmic aspects of the group. It is a heavy responsibility and Jones handles it with ease.

"Playing with Dizzy, because of the level of musicianship in the band, is quite easy. It is easier than playing with Chico. It's easier because, first of all, Mickey Roker is incredible. I don't have to worry about whether the drums are going to be right. That frees my mind. The bass player [Ben Brown] knows, he just *knows*. When I'm playing I play what I want to play. Dizzy doesn't restrict me because he is open to ideas. When I play I can tell anyone I want to lay out or to play. That's what makes for a good group. It's a freedom I can deal with and learn from." **db**

caught... Stretching the Strings . . .

JIM HALL

Sweet Basil
New York City

Personnel: Hall, guitar; Mike Moore, acoustic bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

The name Jim Hall, like an ink blot test, brings to mind a multitude of responses. Unlike a Rorshach stimulus, the reactions evoked by the guitarist center along defined dimensions, all having to do with excellence.

Taste, finesse, technique—these are among the guitarist's Hall-marks. It isn't surprising, then, that SRO crowds squeezed together to savor each of Hall's sets during his recent stint at Sweet Basil.

Hall's current approach involves retrospective re-examinations of work associated with the giants of improvised music. The set I caught focused on material and methods linked to Charlie Parker.

Scrapple From The Apple and *All The Things You Are* put the trio in a medium-tempo boppish groove. Combining his inimitable mellow tone, crisp articulations and flowing lyricism, Hall built carefully crafted solos from perfectly intermeshed chordal and single line passages. Mike Moore's bubbling bass figures and Bill Goodwin's faultless brush and stick work provided just the right accents and support. The group's concentrated swingingness pulled the audience into the unfolding dramas with tapping toes and tabletop timekeeping.

Embraceable You was Hall's ballad vehicle. Opening with a mood-setting rhapsodic solo, the guitarist was joined at the head by Moore's subterranean counterpoint and Goodwin's tightly coiled brushwork. A master of extended developmental improvisation, Hall carved out a basic set of motifs from the tune's melodic and rhythmic contours. These, in turn, were subtly varied in logically fluid sequences of ever-increasing emotional intensity. After the last note, there was a long silent pause. Finally, the rapt audience emerged from its trance with thunderous applause.

To release the reservoirs of energy stored up by the ballad, Jim next called *Yardbird Suite*. Snapped off at a brisk tempo, the Parker classic proved an effective cathartic agent. Shimmering, spider-like lines crisscrossed in a dazzling boppish web springboarding the crowd's inner spirits like an explosion in a trampoline factory.

Hall finished up with an easy-going blues that helped the audience rejuvenate its collectively exhausted nerves. While returning his listeners to familiar ground, Hall imprinted the conventional form with his personal stamp through pungent off-centered phrasings and daring stretches of uncluttered space. Robust applause and cries of "more" proved,

"Rhythmically, '20s and '30s music was straightahead four-to-the-bar and two-beat tempos. Also, the vocals were not the main feature of the band the way they are today. The vocalist just came on, sang maybe one chorus, and sat down.

"The music of that day is much less dated than the campy-sounding pop vocals were. So even though we're using old harmonies, we update and expand the lyrics on our originals so they have a more contemporary impact.

"People just haven't been exposed to a lot of things that were happening back in those early stages of jazz that we focus on.

"Many people have heard the Charleston, of course. Old Bing Crosby movies have a lot of this music in them. But almost nobody has ever just sat down and really paid close attention to this music. They may have seen a Benny Goodman film, but hardly anyone has actually seen or heard a clarinet played right in front of them.

"The energy of this music is incredible. You can feel it, and, happily, people are more open today to jazz in all forms than they were, say, in the '60s. That's one reason we have had such incredible acceptance wherever we've played.

"At first, some people thought we were musical mavericks, but as soon as they listened to us they heard what it is we ourselves like in it. The thing that is so appealing about the music of the pre-War period was its innocence. It is bright, optimistic, happy music, which does not in any way mean superficial. People just come in and hear us, and they leave feeling really good.

"To be compared to the Pointer Sisters or Manhattan Transfer is offensive to us, because they are pop groups, while we are a much more versatile and flexible jazz group with some heavy roots and some very strong improvising. Leon Redbone is a purist, while we are not.

"I myself like Tom Waits," continued Stan. "He expresses contemporary ideas in a '50s small combo setting, and he's synthesized his funk with Louis Armstrong.

"I also like Maria Muldaur. She's very contemporary and she expresses herself, but you can also hear 50 years of music in what she's doing.

"Our immediate goal is to make sure our record deal is a good one. We already have a live product. We dress in tuxes, play the music, and people everywhere have loved us. Now we're working so we don't sound on record like just a series of '20s reruns.

"Part of what we do is use electricity, and we have a good deal of original material that is directly relevant to today. A good song is a good song, and, being contemporary people, we write about things that affect us directly. And, too, certain things are timeless, no matter when they are written, like love songs.

"Whatever happens, we know that if our music gets a chance to be exposed, it will go over, because it has such energy and good feeling, and because we've already successfully tested it many times on a wide cross-section of people. This music is definitely not just for people who lived in that time. It's today, it's happy, and it makes you feel good. I guess that's why they called it good-time music." **db**

RODNEY JONES

by arnold jay smith

Take one 20-year-old guitarist; add experience born of some earlier space and time; combine with Dizzy Gillespie and you have Rodney Jones. In Dizzy's new guitarist one might find some hard rock. Check again and there's Wes Montgomery. But there's also a hard single-line stroke reminiscent of no one in particular.

Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Rodney moved with his family to New York where his father became a minister at Union Theological Seminary. He began on cello but moved to guitar early. He doesn't remember when. ("There was some piano sandwiched in between there somewhere.") When he was a young teen he played jobs, but his idols were Jimi Hendrix, Kool and the Gang and James Brown. "I made an album when I was 13 with folksinger Tom Glazer. I also played with Pete Seeger. I didn't take formal lessons until I was 15. That's when I met Bruce Johnson, bass player with Chico Hamilton, who was one of the best guitar players I had ever heard."

ARNOLD JAY SMITH

After private elementary school, Rodney entered City College, "playing all the while." He studied with John Lewis when he was 18. Then Chico Hamilton had an opening and Rodney got the gig. He worked for Chico for about eight or nine months and appeared on Chico's recent album, *The Players*.

"That helped me get my professional experience together," Rodney said. "Chico knows what he wants and he expects a certain thing. He can't always explain what he wants, but he knows when you are not playing it.

"I went to see Dizzy perform and I was talking to Al Gafa, his former guitarist, and I joked about wishing I had his gig, ha ha. About two weeks later Dizzy called me."

At 19, Rodney Jones became the regular guitarist with the famed Dizzy Gillespie. Was he awed?

"Well, Diz is a regular person. He's real. I try to deal only with people who are real. And he's open to show you anything he knows. He doesn't hold back anything. If you do your job and are professional and play, he's no problem. I wouldn't say that he is an idol. I don't believe in idols. I admire him more than idolize him, as a person above music. I was shocked when he first called, but I wasn't starstruck. I took it as an opportunity to learn. I don't practice playing music. If it's within, it will come out. And that's what Diz says too. I believe in learning the technique of the instrument so that you can play instantaneously whatever you think of, rather than having preconceived ideas about what you're going to play. True improvisation is true improvisation in everything. In music, you can only play what you live.

"In 90% of the music that is out here, there is nothing happening. There are two kinds of music, good and bad. Music is either sincere and comes from the true desire to express something, or it's contrived for promotional reasons, or whatever. If the sincerity isn't there, I don't even want to deal with it. I understand the economics of it all, but there is a higher authority that you have to answer to. And I don't mean God; it's what you believe."

To Rodney, music is a reflection of life, improvisatory or not. "I don't want to get metaphysical, but life on this level has been set up so that people are conditioned to react in certain ways. People they don't know if they like most of what they hear. People don't know what they like at all. They are conditioned to like certain things. There are only certain things you are going to hear on the radio. I say, give the people a chance to choose. And if they choose what they have now, they brought it upon themselves.

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Profile

DR. JAZZ

by lee underwood

Our name came from a tune written by King Oliver. Then Jelly Roll Morton had a famous recording of it. Woody Herman recorded it later, singing, "Hello, Central, get me Dr. Jazz . . ."

Those listeners who can't tolerate the oftimes frenetic banjo-janglings, clarinet squealings, and trombone swoopings of traditional ragtime music might find that in the hands of today's Dr. Jazz, ragtime kicks the blues out the door, sparkles the eyes with smiles, and sets all ten toes a-tapping. Dr. Jazz puts the good-time back in good-time.

They are an as-yet unrecorded Los Angeles aggregation of highly accomplished musical anachronisms. However, by also composing original material in the Dixie styles of the '20s, '30s and pre-War '40s, they have successfully dazzled such diverse contemporary audiences as the jaded, Beverly Hills set, the recent (and left over) rock 'n' roll dropouts of Venice, the elementary school kids of Borego Springs (an isolated desert village, population 1000), and the more intellectually fastidious folkies that attended a recent Dr. Jazz concert at McCabe's Guitar Shop on Pico Boulevard.

"We are not on a nostalgia or a novelty trip," said Stan Ayeroff, the guitarist and one of the composers and arrangers of the group. "We are not looking at the past and saying, 'Oh, isn't that cute!' This is positive, unpretentious music that is just as vital now as it was then. Our intent is not to recreate a bygone era, but to present good music that we enjoy, as naturally and as energetically as we know how."

Members of Dr. Jazz include trombonist Glenn Ferris, who is widely respected for his work with Don Ellis, Billy Cobham, Tim Buckley, Frank Zappa, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. In the context of Dr. Jazz, Glenn plays in the time-honored muted wah-wah slide traditions of Jimmy Harrison, Dicky Wells, Trummy Young and Jack Teagarden. He always enhances the familiar, however, by infusing it with the personal originality that again prompted voters in the recent **down beat** Critics Poll to include him in the Talent Deserving Wider Recognition category.

Guitarist Stan Ayeroff, 27, and clarinetist Jan Threlkeld, 32, co-founded Dr. Jazz in mid-1974. Stan teaches at the Eighth Note Music store in L.A., where he and Jan met over a common interest—guitarist Django Reinhardt. He does studio work for Capitol, Takoma, Warners, and is the author of two books, one on Django, the other on John Fahey. He lists Django, Teagarden and Fats Waller as major influences, as well as Tom Waits, Ry Cooder and Randy Newman.

As a boy, Jan Threlkeld taught himself how to play the clarinet by digging into his father's extensive collection of jazz 78s. He was heavily influenced by Duke Ellington, Ellington's clarinetist, Barney Bigard, and Django, Billie Holiday, Billy Strayhorn, and Bix Beiderbecke.

Other Dr. Jazz members include Keith B. Powe, saxophones, flute, vocals; Suzanne Wallach, vocals; Jimbo Vincent Ross, violin; Jeffrey Lee Breeh, electric bass; and Gene Haggerty, drums and vocals.

"A lot of our stuff is very early '20s, Paul Whiteman/Bix Beiderbecke types of sounds and arrangements," said Stan. "We once orchestrated Bix's *In A Mist* for clarinet, bass, viola. We're into Django, of course, Stephane Grappelli, and the Hot Club of France—*Minor Swing* has always been our opening number. We also do tunes like *Limehouse Blues*, *Hot Lips*, *Blue Drag* and *Avalon*. And we like the early Duke Ellington Orchestra, the things he did in the '20s, like *Jubilee Stomp*. We do his *It Don't Mean A Thing*, *Koko*, and Strayhorn's ballad, *Dream*, which we do as a vocal.

"Sometimes we use more than one influence to decide our arrangements. In *It Don't Mean A Thing*, for example, certain elements are Django, certain things are Ellington, and certain things are from Ella Fitzgerald's recent version. We put all these different elements together and add our own feeling.

"The thrust of our music the last year or so has been to contemporize all of our material, to inject some of the feeling of the '70s into it.

"Like Ellington, in a way, we tend to customize our tunes to fit the strong points of the people in the band. At one point in our evolution, we had two strings. Then we dropped one string and added Glenn Ferris on trombone, and that meant we had to rewrite our arrangements. It also opened up a whole new sound spectrum for us.

"Part of the key to the sound is the instrumentation—when you hear the clarinet, you immediately think of that period of time. The violin in conjunction with the trombone is distinctive, and Glenn's muted wah-wah sound is also a characteristic of that period. We do the intricate, spirited ensemble arrangements of that day as well.

BLINDFOLD TEST

Frank Rosolino

by lee underwood

For over 30 years, Frank Rosolino has been world famous as one of the most musically thrilling and technically accomplished jazz soloists the slide trombone has ever known.

In the '40s, he played with Gene Krupa, Herbie Fields and Georgie Auld, moving on to Stan Kenton's Orchestra from 1952 to 1955. After playing with the Lighthouse All Stars in the late '50s, he became one of Hollywood's most in-demand studio musicians. His most recent popularity is the result of two brief solos he took on two of Quincy Jones' albums, *Body Heat (Everything Must Change)* and *Mellow Madness (Bluesette)*.

Born in Detroit August 20, 1926, Rosolino began playing at age 13, already developing a fast single-tongue by emulating on the trombone what he heard his virtuoso older brother Russell playing on the violin.

Along with Bill Harris and J. J. Johnson, Frank Rosolino is a key figure in technically liberating the trombone to the point where it can be played with nearly the speed and flexibility of a tenor saxophone.

Some of his latest recordings include *Conversation*, on which he is co-leader with Conte Candoli; *I Remember Bird*, Sonny Stitt; *Chasin' The Bird*, Supersax; *First Flight*, Don Menza; *Collage*, Luis Gasca; and *Agora*, Paulinho da Costa.

On this Blindfold Test, we journeyed from the past, to the present, and back again. He was given no prior information regarding the records played.

1. FLETCHER HENDERSON. *St. Louis Shuffle* (from *The Complete Fletcher Henderson, 1927-1936*, Bluebird/RCA). Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Jimmy Harrison, trombone. Recorded 1927.

Was the tenor player Bud Freeman? It sounds like his kind of approach. Whether we call it dixieland or ragtime music, it was played well. The cats were cooking. I'm sure the trombone player wasn't Jack Teagarden. This fellow doesn't sound as flexible as Jack is, but I liked him. His lines were good and his way of thinking was fine. His ears were in the right place. The clarinet player sounded real good. That wasn't Pee Wee Russell, was it? I'd give it three and a half stars.

2. JACK TEAGARDEN. *If I Could Be With You* (from *Sessions, Live*, Calliope). Teagarden, trombone, vocals.

That is definitely Jack Teagarden. I love his singing. I love his trombone playing. He had a lot of soul to this piece. I've always respected Jack Teagarden very much throughout the years. In my early days, I used to mimic Jack a lot from old 78s. He was a major influence. I'd give him four stars on that one, for sure.

3. J. J. JOHNSON. *Elysee* (from *Early Bones*, Prestige). Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Johnson, trombone; Sonny Rollins, tenor; John Lewis, piano, composer; Max Roach, drums. Recorded May 26, 1949.

Well! A little tricky! Sounds like George Wallington on piano, I'm not sure. Early J.J.? I'm not sure about the trumpet player—Howard McGhee? I'm sure it was not Miles. The drummer sounds like it could have been Max Roach. The tenor player sounds very familiar but I can't pinpoint him.

It's a nice chart, early bebop when they were trying to get it together. It should have been rehearsed a bit more, but the idea and the feeling was great. I'll give it three stars.

I've always liked J.J.'s approach and his ears. He's very tasty on his solos, not overdone, and his sound is fantastic. If this is J.J., it's in his very early stages when he was just getting into it. He became a lot more flexible in years after, but even this early he's got his approach, his sound, his distinct style. J.J. has always been one of my favorite players, above all other trombone players.

4. J. J. JOHNSON/KAI WINDING. *Bag's Groove* (from *Early Bones*, Prestige). Johnson and Winding, trombones; Dick Katz, piano. Recorded Dec. 3, 1954.

I've played that tune a thousand times! *Walkin'*? No, no, that's not it.

Anyway, it was Kai and J.J. At the time they did this, it was new and refreshing, because no two trombonists had ever recorded together like that. Two great players. I remember Kai from when he used to do all the solo work in Stan Kenton's band. He's another one that's got a style all his own. I can't say who the piano player was.

The recording itself sounded a little weak to me. The rhythm section didn't come across in proportion to the two front lines. And the performance could have been livelier, more spontaneous. This sounds perfunctory, it needs more fire. I'd say three and a half stars.

5. JIMMY GIUFFRE. *Saturday Night Dance* (from *Western Suite*, Atlantic). Giuffre, clarinet; Bob Brookmeyer, trombone; Jim Hall, guitar.

That sounds like Bobby Brookmeyer on trombone and Jimmy Giuffre on clarinet. Was the guitar player Jimmy Raney? I'm not sure about the guitar player.

I like Brookmeyer very much, but this particular track doesn't go anywhere. It's like fragmented march time. I'd rather hear Bob stretching out.

I'll give it one star. I don't see why Bob would want to do this trio context and this piece anyway. As a jazz player, I'd never play something like that. I don't think it has anything to do with jazz music at all. If they'd done a straightahead jazz thing on it then I could understand it. It's not like Bob to do that.

6. ALBERT MANGELSDORFF. *Mood Indigo* (from *The Wide Point*, (MPS/BASF). Mangelsdorff, trombone; Palle Danielson, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

That was *Mood Indigo*, played by Albert Mangelsdorff on the trombone. I know him and admire him very much. He's an individual.

What he's doing here is creating three or four different sounds—the blown tone, the hummed tone and the resultant overtones. He has control. He can play in fifths and fourths and you just don't do that overnight. Albert's been working on that for a long time. He does it well. He's the master. Billy Watrous has been into that for awhile, too, and he's starting to get some things going with it.

I've also heard Albert play some straightahead things and he sounds beautiful. I think he gets the biggest sound out of his horn I've ever heard. He has feel, conception, great chops, and I like what he did on this piece. Five stars. I don't know who the drummer was or the bass, although I liked the bass very much, great feel, great sound.

7. RAUL DE SOUZA. *Festival* (from *Colors*, Milestone). de Souza, trombone.

That was Raul de Souza on trombone. We've played together. He's a very warm person and it comes out in his playing. He's a good musician, really gets around the horn in his own way. I feel at times, however, that he could develop a bit more flexibility in his playing. He's already got the ears and he plays beautifully. Flexibility would make him that much greater.

I like Brazilian music very much and I like the feeling on that record. I'm not one to say, "Bebop is it, and that's all I want to hear." I respect music as long as it's played well and the sound is not jive. I love playing Brazilian music myself, love the rhythms. I'd give this performance four stars.

8. BILLY COBHAM. *Tenth Pinn* (from *Shabazz*, Atlantic). Cobham, drums, composer, arranger; Glenn Ferris, trombone.

That's not the Zappa group, is it? No, there's a famous drummer—Billy Cobham. He's a great technician. He's got a fine pair of hands, and I know he can play. Whoever wrote the chart itself put a lot of creativity into it.

As far as the trombone playing, I didn't care for it. It sounds like a bunch of smeared clusters of non-musical notes, just a bunch of sound effects. I don't think that's where music should be. It could have been the opposite way around, a very creative solo in relation to everything else. He was trying to get as far out as he could. I just don't care for that type of playing. It means nothing to me. Three and a half stars.

9. DJANGO REINHARDT. *Japanese Sandman* (from *The Best Of Django Reinhardt*, Capitol). Reinhardt, guitar; Bill Coleman, trumpet; Dicky Wells, trombone. Recorded July 7, 1937.

Old ragtime, dixieland happy-sounding music! Could it go that far back? Is that Django Reinhardt on guitar? I know it's not Harry James on the trumpet, but this guy has almost a Harry James sound and feel when he plays. Reinhardt sounds beautiful on this.

I liked the trombone player. Was that Miff Mole? No. Vic Dickenson? He was very tasty in his choice of notes and the way he played, nothing cluttered. Actually, I got so wound up in the trumpet player that I didn't listen that hard to the trombone player. I'd give that four stars. It seems like you always get a happy feeling out of dixieland, no matter what age you are. **db**

Life, Woman and *Occapella,* among others) Toussaint is also one of the major rock producers of the day. Oddly, though, his own recordings have always sounded thwarted, beached by a deficient voice and self-conscious production. Anyone familiar with Toussaint's recent Warner Bros. recordings will simply find themselves unprepared for the gripping, masterful quality of his performances here. Playing an expansive, restless style of piano in front of a wonderfully ragged band, Toussaint imparts an invigorating, sensually confronting temperament to his vocals, which sound as reflective as they do spontaneous. He is coy, charging and uncontrived in a way that he never allows himself to be in the studio. He sings with an unsuspected command and in an equally disarmingly broad range, both emotionally and tonally. Finally, his version of *Freedom For The Stallion*—one of his finest songs—is definitive. Boz Scaggs has nothing on this man.

None of the subsequent performers attain that sustained level of slyness. But then neither can this be considered their finest hour, as is the case with Toussaint. Lee Dorsey, a fine, if somewhat inconsistent, drunkenly sassy singer, resurrects his greatest hit, *Working In A Coal Mine,* but while he still has the voice, his work here is perfunctory. Apparently he is contracted to Epic, and hopefully is due for an album shortly. Like Robert Parker (who barely walks through *Barefootin'*) and the eruptive Earl King, Dorsey's vocals were actually recorded in the studio due to a recorder malfunction, which could account for the failure of all three gentlemen to ignite the blue spark that is their specialty.

Irma Thomas, however, needed no flicks of the Bic to fan her flames. This pacesetting soul singer, whose gospel-tempered style developed contemporaneously with Aretha Franklin's in the '60s, has remarkably diverse and uniformly believable singing talents, woven into a common emotional idiom by virtue of her guileless urgency. Where Aretha will bluff her way with a pyrotechnical tour de force when she can't feel the essence of a song, Irma aims directly for the melodic heart, a predilection that renders *Cry On* one of the most stirring soul performances I've had the pleasure to hear all year. Similarly, the raw blues testimony of Ernie K-Doe steals the second side from Dorsey and Parker.

The inclusion of Lightnin' Hopkins' performance in this set is, with all due respect—and much is rightfully due this relentless purveyor of boogie—ill-considered. What were once sexually tortured, insinuating nuances have been replaced by an undiscerning gruffness and the effect is disquieting. He has made more potent music than this. So, for that matter, has Professor Longhair, but time seems to have been more gracious to this senior catalyst of New Orleans r&b, without whom we probably would never have had a Fats Domino, and that would be sad indeed. While the 58-year-old pianist's digital command was still resourceful and riveting at the time of these recordings, his vocals are hypnotically jarring, sounding like a trance-induced howling yodel. Suffice it to say that of all the artists documented herein, Longhair has the greatest body of work worthy of exploration, a wonderful legacy that can offer more insights into the derivations of New Orleans r&b than a carton of texts.

According to the jacket's "courtesy" credits, Thomas, K-Doe and Parker are all presently signed to Island, the sponsors of this collection. So where are the rest of the goods?

—gilmore

JOHN WOOD

UNTIL GOODBYE—Los Angeles LAPR-1002: *Until Goodbye; Cole Porter; Tim Buckley; In A Sense; Until Hello.*

Personnel: Wood, piano; Tony Dumas, bass (side 2).

★ ★

If Rod McKuen could play piano he might sound something like John Wood. Wood lists his main influences as Bill Evans and Tim Buckley, and his forte is supposed to be "naked vulnerability"—some might call it cloying sentimentality. While one can admire Wood's pluck in choosing to debut with an album of solo improvisations, his music simply lacks the substance to justify such a venture. Reminiscent in style of Corea's ECM solos, Wood's playing replicates Chick's weakest qualities without his compensating strengths.

Wood maintains a mood of "tender introspection" from beginning to end, rhapsodizing ethereally up and down with right-hand arpeggios and embellishments while chording rather woodenly with his left hand. Ironically the best piece is the only written tune, *Cole Porter,* a seven-year-old composition by Wood and his former piano teacher, Ernie Hughes. By contrast the following cut, *Tim Buckley,* reveals a debt to Debussy and the romantic impressionists that all but overshadows Wood's claims to jazz roots.

Wood may be baring his soul, but soul is precisely what's missing. *—birnbaum*

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from it. They work with the melodies. Hutcherson's sound is rich and ringing with vibrato, lingering over a touch of drums and bass on *Later*, or flat and percussive, rolling on a single key until one long, smooth tone results.

Reedman, drummer, bassist and pianist contribute as soloists, unit members and composers. Boyd's soprano on *Afternoon* dwells on carefully placed and held whole notes; on both horns, he's more inventive than many a scalerunner. Bottoming out on tenor on *Shame*, he leaps to the top of his range before you realize those blasts were turning points.

On *Shame*, too, Marshall's bass drum figure spurs a rhythmic regularity that balances the fleet line. Leary slides, walks or plucks as required. His execution is commendable—there are few near hits—and his presence is complementary. Nash receives little solo space, but provides a soft bed through his comping which frees Hutcherson to overlay his odd patterns or slick runs without requiring he maintain the harmonic context himself.

Love and *Laugh* are Leary's writing, both unassuming but pretty tunes. They, and Boyd's dedication to *Annie*, and Hutcherson's arrangement of *Sake* all get the same detailed attention and evince the same warmth of nuance heard on side one. Boyd carries on for all of six minutes over *Annie* with singleness of purpose, though his lyricism suggests a variety of reminiscence.

Hutcherson's view is take it slow and easy, roll with the surges of passion and despair. He phrases his view gracefully, and stops short of lugubrious sentimentality or self-pity. The listener is touched and perhaps persuaded by the music's sadness, but hears strength in the creativity and cooperation of this sensitive quintet. *—mandel*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL 1976—Island ISLD 9424: *Highlife; Sweet Touch of Love; Play Something Sweet; Shoorah, Shoorah; Freedom For The Stallion; Workin' In A Coal Mine; Holy Cow; Ain't It The Truth; Mother-In-Law; Barefootin'; Country Side Of Life; You Can Have My Husband, But Please Don't Mess With My Man; Cry On; I Done My Part; Mama & Papa; Trick Bag; Mojo Hand; Baby Please Don't Go; All Night Long; Tipitina; Mardi Gras In New Orleans.*

Personnel: Allen Toussaint, vocals and piano (tracks 1-6); Lee Dorsey, vocals (tracks 7 & 8); Ernie K-Doe, vocals (tracks 9 & 10); Robert Parker, vocals (tracks 11 & 12); Irma Thomas, vocals (tracks 13-15); Earl King, guitar and vocal (tracks 16 & 17); Lightnin' Sam Hopkins, vocal and guitar (tracks 18-20); Professor Longhair, piano and vocal (tracks 20 & 21). Band members on all tracks are unspecified.

★ ★ ★

The *New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 1976* is the first in what will hopefully be a series documenting this little-heralded annual event. The festival itself is of wide musical berth, showcasing artists (of both national and local interest) in the jazz, Cajun, dixieland, rock, blues, gospel, folk, country and rhythm and blues idioms. This two record set focuses on the r&b side, and while it is rather myopically selective and dismally recorded, it's nonetheless vibrant and refreshing, a nice cross-section of living history.

The entire first side is occupied by the present-day reigning prince of New Orleans pop, Allen Toussaint, who, interestingly, produced this project in conjunction with Marshall Sehorn. In addition to writing some of the greatest r&b songs of the last 15 years (including *Working In A Coal Mine, From A Whisper To A Scream, On Your Way Down, Get Out Of My*

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articulation would seem to belie the emotional undercurrent generally associated with jazz singing. Simply, she sounds as white as polished porcelain and as coy as a precocious child. But she is never aloof, never farther away than the crook of one's arm or the private cushion of one's eager neck. If her breathy sensuality recalls anyone, then it would be Peggy Lee and her quality for converting the crowded space of a dance floor into quarters more intimate than a bedroom. In the technical sense, Merrill is a literal singer, rarely taking liberty with a melody—*never* with a lyric—nor screaming to convey an emotion. She is exacting and subtle, but you would have to be catatonic to mistake her moods; she may smile and agonize in even inflections, but some weight inside, some guileless identity with the lyrics, colors her disposition indelibly and unmistakably.

Helen Merrill is not a blues singer, but she can surely get blue. Witness her haunting, dazed reading of *Angel Eyes*. Contrary to the song's usual drunken delivery, Helen's is a sober one, and its implied loneliness all the more potent for it. When she urges everybody to "drink up" while her glass remains full, she reserves her pain as a private, raw affair. And when she whispers "Excuse me while I disappear," you can't help wondering where or into what somebody like that *can* disappear.

Throughout, Lewis, too, is characteristically understated and blue. In his most unadorned and revealing moments, it seems that his whole style, more than attempting an adroit fusion of jazz sensibilities and classical techniques, strives to distill the human spirit at its most aspiringly blue instants into a simple musical phrase, one that with just the slightest turn of heart can squeeze a major into a minor chord, a hope into a memory. We're fortunate to have caretakers like Helen Merrill and John Lewis looking after our memories. Together, they have created a lasting and stirring work that plumbs the spectrum of reflection. —*gilmore*

BOBBY HUTCHERSON

THE VIEW FROM THE INSIDE—Blue Note LA710-G: *Later, Even; Houston St., Thursday Afternoon; Same Shame; Love Can Be Many Things; Song For Annie; Laugh, Laugh Again; For Heaven's Sake.*

Personnel: Hutcherson, vibes; Manny Boyd, tenor and soprano saxes; James Leary, bass; Eddie Marshall, drums; Larry Nash, acoustic and electric pianos.

* * * *

Hutcherson's success is a gratifyingly lush album created by a simply amplified quintet. This is nearly the same personnel as on Hutch's previous LP, *Waiting*, and the band the vibist led through a lengthy spring European tour, though he gigged with others in New York upon their return.

View represents a kind of jazz classicism. Hutcherson admits his early influence was Milt Jackson—who else?—and some of the restraint here recalls the Modern Jazz Quartet's concept rather than the edgy Blue Note sessions (like Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*) to which Hutcherson contributed in his relative youth. What makes this album particularly striking is the calm depth of its blue feeling.

The three Hutcherson compositions comprising side one begin with easily remembered melodies that bead over precise and smoothly working rhythmic arrangements. They move steadily towards more complete statements, including qualification and resolve—neither Hutch nor his sidemen state a theme then run

with release, the band riffs on the A parts in chorus one, the bridge on two, sits out three and comes back for the A parts on four. After three Kamuca choruses, the chart starts building layer upon layer over four orchestral choruses. Figures are introduced in various juxtapositions, and it all produces a pleasant enough effect. But it lacks a soul that swings.

Compare this for example to *Cotton Tail*, heard here in basically the same chart Ellington used. From Blue Mitchell's opening choruses through the famous sax ensemble, this seems the only track where things really spring to life. Menza's tenor is among the best solo work on the LP. An assortment of other Ellington tunes fail to display the band as anything more than commonplace, however.

Perhaps it's Nat Pierce and his sensitivity to the Basie sound that makes *Juggernaut* a vastly superior big band case study. *Avenue C*, a Buck Clayton chart from the Basie book of the '40s, is the classic big band riff style in action. No formula lends itself to the idea of collective big band swing better than a simple formula. Which is why this still works so well. It is a traditional swing sound, but without any nostalgic pretentions to get in the way.

An easygoing *Moten Swing* weds the simplicity of the riff style to a particularly interesting set of chord changes. Kamuca and Berry are soloists. *Dickie's Dream*, originally recorded by a Basie small group, was expanded to orchestral dimensions for the classic *Sound Of Jazz* TV special in 1957 by Pierce, and the same arrangement is used here. It provides a perfect loom over which Kamuca, Cooper, Mitchell, Green, Kaplan, Berry Johnson and Woodman weave punchy solo patterns. *Basie's Back In Town* is an Ernie Wilkins chart from the '50s, featuring the contrasting sound of Kamuca and Johnson.

What could have been a thoroughly exceptional LP, however, is seriously compromised by the shouting of bluesman Ernie Andrews in the last three tracks. The band does exciting things behind him, however, on *Roll 'em, Pete*, and then goes on to score impressive solo points via Johnson and Mitchell. But his work on *A Train* and *Wee Baby* is boring and banal.
—*mcdonough*

HELEN MERRILL & JOHN LEWIS

HELEN MERRILL/JOHN LEWIS—Mercury SRM-1-1150: *Django; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Angel Eyes; Close Your Eyes; Alone Together; Yesterdays; The Singer; How Long Has This Been Going On?; Mad About The Boy.*

Personnel: Merrill, vocals, and Lewis, piano, all tracks. Richard Davis, bass, Hubert Laws, flute, and Connie Kay, drums on tracks 1, 4 & 7.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A few months back I had the pleasure of reviewing three vocal-piano duel albums, including one by Helen Merrill and Teddy Wilson. I remember remarking at the time that although Wilson's sprightliness is always uplifting, it tended to overpower Merrill's essentially sedate stance. In MJQ leader John Lewis, Merrill has found her musical soul mate, a transcendently blue artisan whose capacity for emphathetic, responsive support is equalled only by his unaffected temperance and reflective poise. With the exception of Tony Bennett and Bill Evans, one couldn't reasonably ask for a better modern-day pairing of jazz romanticists.

Merrill, in fact, is probably *the* poised jazz singer of our time. Her wide open, bell-like intonation, terribly proper phrasing and crisp

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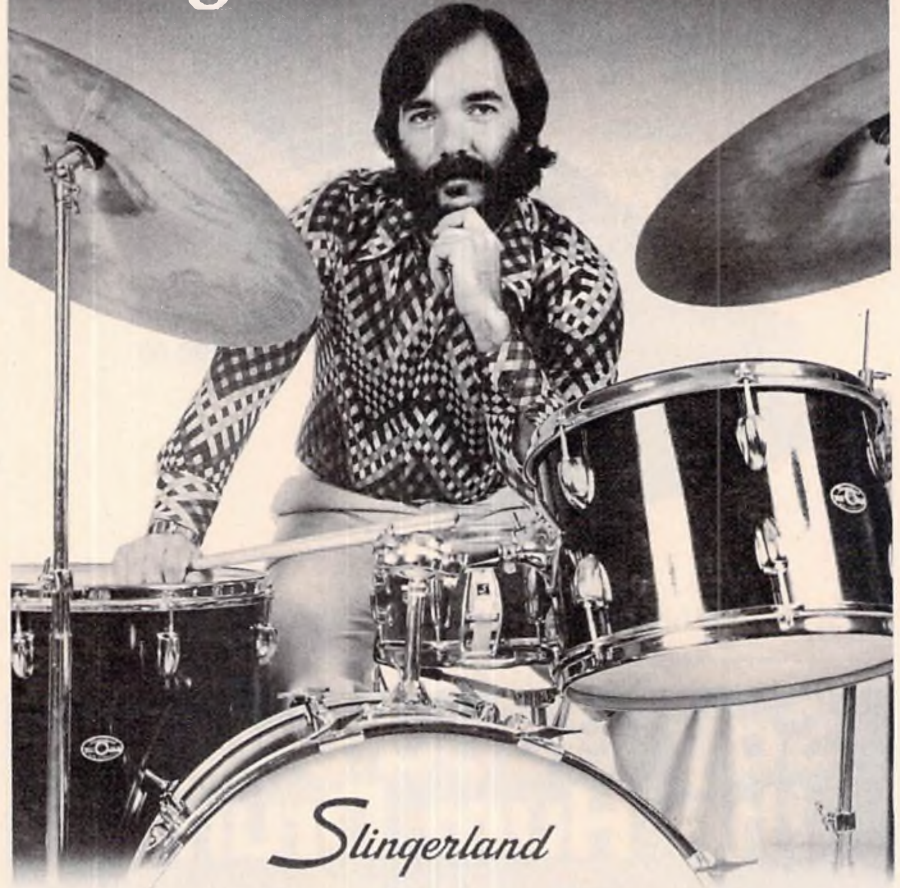

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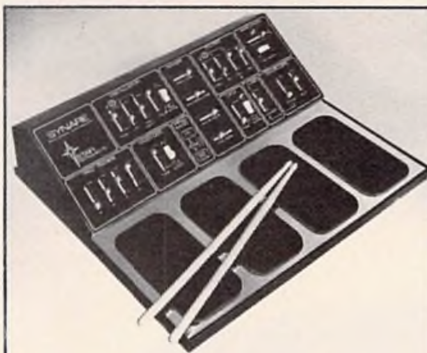

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Dextermania. In spite of huge doses of the legendary tenorist at clubs, on records and in print, the collective appetite of the American jazz public for Gordon continues to grow.

Recognizing a good thing, the record companies have flooded record stores' "G" bins with Gordon products both past and present. Amazingly, virtually every one of his efforts has an integrity and set of virtues worth recommending. Of these, however, *Swiss Nights* stands out.

Recorded at the 1975 Zürich Jazz Festival by SteepleChase and released here by Inner City, Dexter is perfectly matched with a rhythm section that fully understands and appreciates the saxophonist's approach. Drew, Pedersen and Riel really listen and respond with faultless supportive commentary. Combined with the warm encouragement of the Festival goers, *Swiss Nights* emerges as one of the truly magical efforts in the Gordon discography.

Opening with Sonny Rollins' manic *Tenor Madness*, the classic Gordon style is immediately evident. The big robust sound, quotations (check his references to *Alice Blue Gown* and *Let's Fall In Love*) and, most important, the infallible sense of swing are all there. Also present are Drew's pianistic prestidigitations, Pedersen's plucky pizzicato and Riel's percussive powerings. It's a rollicking, freewheeling session that epitomizes the essence of improvised music cast in the mainstream mold.

Jobim's *Wave* brings out Dexter's provocatively gritty yet lyrical attack. His dark rich pungent sound compares to other players' as full-bodied espresso does to mere regular grind. Victor Young's *You've Changed* is a showcase for Dexter's ballad style. After limning the line in charcoal, he then traces over it with complimentary shades of purple and blue. Concluding the set is a medium bright version of *Days Of Wine And Roses*. Ambling along with his customarily wide stride and relaxed gait, Dexter transforms the melancholy Mancini tune into a brisk, jaunty stroll.

Thanks to the special chemistry of Gordon, Drew, Pedersen, Riel and their Zürich audience, *Swiss Nights* comes as close to being the definitive Dexter as anything else released over the last year. *—berg*

BUNKY GREEN

TRANSFORMATION—Vanguard VSD 79387: *I Won't Last A Day Without You; Europa; Feelings; The Lady From Ancona; Chillon; Funk Ain't A Word.*

Personnel: Green, alto sax; Al Dailey, piano; Billy Butler, Carl Lynch, guitars; Wilbur Bascomb, bass; Jimmy Johnson, drums; Al Chalk, percussion; Jeff Bova, ARP string ensemble and ARP 2600.

★ ★ ★ ★

Bunky Green hadn't cut an album of his own in almost 10 years before signing with Vanguard and recording *Transformation*. A highly regarded musician with a derivative Bird-bop style, he had decided to take himself out of the performing music scene to concentrate on studying his art rather than playing.

Now Green has returned with an album obviously designed to flaunt a certain amount of commercial accessibility—without being gimmicky—and yet provide Green with as much room within the confines of his chosen musical environment as possible. Consequently, his highly rhythmic support is simple, clean and functional, with the supporting players content to stay subtle and out of the way.

Green performs in this setting with a highly organized and confident style, one that moves as easily within the melodic and rhythmic structure of tune as it does outside that structure. This is what Green does quite easily: he plays the melody, keeps very close to the changes, often building dramatic effects, and then quite smoothly he slips outside briefly, returning to the changes without disturbing the continuity. It all feels very logical.

His tone has a controlled hardness and roguish strength that can sound as classical as it does funky; it lends itself well to Green's tendency to build to dramatic peaks and hesitate momentarily on key melodic phrases, giving them a kind of emotional emphasis.

All of the six tracks on *Transformation* have strong melody lines, with Green electing not to drift too far from the basic themes on each tune. Side one features material from other writers—Paul Williams, Carlos Santana, Morris Albert—while the second side is devoted to Green's writing, which is direct and incisive. Especially nice is his short ballad *The Lady From Ancona*.

For his first recording in a number of years, Bunky has produced a highly listenable recording that is accessible without being contrived, one that proves that he has been out of circulation far too long. *—nolan*

BILL BERRY'S L.A. BIG BAND

HELLO REV—Concord CJ 27: *Hello Rev; Star Crossed Lovers; The Bink/And How; Earl; A Little Song For Mex; Be Your Own Best Friend; Tulip Or Turnip; Boy Meets Horn; Cotton Tail.*

Personnel: Berry, Cat Anderson, Gene Goe, Blue Mitchell, Jack Sheldon, trumpets; Britt Woodman, Jimmy Cleveland, Benny Powell, Tricky Lofton, trombones; Marshall Royal, Lanny Morgan, Richie Kamuca, Don Menza, Jack Nimitz, saxes; Monty Budwig, bass; Dave Frishberg, piano; Frank Capp, drums.

★ ★ ★

FRANKIE CAPP/ NAT PIERCE

JUGGERNAUT—Concord CJ 40: *Avenue C; All Heart; Moten Swing; Basie's Back In Town; Dickie's Dream; Take The A Train; Wee Baby Blues; Roll 'em Pete.*

Personnel: Bill Berry, Gary Grant, Blue Mitchell, Bobby Shew, trumpets; Buster Cooper, Alan Kaplan, Britt Woodman, trombones; Bill Green, Plas Johnson, Richie Kamuca, Marshall Royal, Quinn Davis, saxes; Pierce, piano; Al Hendrickson, guitar; Chuck Berghofer, bass; Capp, drums; Ernie Andrews, vocals. Andrews, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

To Concord's considerable repertoire company of small group combinations, producer Carl Jefferson has now added a sort of repertoire big band. Although the personnels of these two ad hoc rehearsal groups are not identical man for man, the central cores remain pretty much the same.

The Berry LP is almost too loosely strung together to be called a big band date. The men are all there, to be sure—five trumpets and four trombones, no less—but the writing just isn't. It's like a Friars testimonial without an honored guest.

Hello Rev starts with some riffs from *Spinning Wheel* by the band, which promptly withdraws after a chorus in favor of little more than trombone-plus-rhythm interludes by Jimmy Cleveland and Tricky Lofton.

Dave Frishberg's Dukish piano opens *Bink* in a jaunty way, paving the way for some relaxed ensemble lines from the reeds. Berry builds effectively through four choruses, during which his scoring manipulates the band resourcefully. Using a standard 32-bar chorus

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