

MARCH 22, 1979

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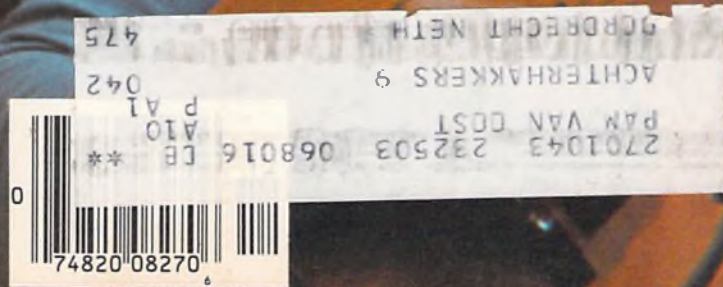
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## the first chorus

BY CHARLES SUBER

Neil Tesser makes an interesting observation in his interview with Pat Metheny in this issue. Tesser believes that Metheny is one of a growing number of young, talented white musicians who "have felt more free about incorporating their separate roots into improvisational music."

Tesser includes Gary Burton and Lyle Mays in this growing group of musicians who speak "directly to a large audience of young, white, upper middle class people that share Metheny's influences." This brings to mind the 1973 Wichita Jazz Festival when Burton and I were standing in the wings watching and listening to 18-year-old Pat Metheny playing solo jazz guitar. Burton remarked that "Pat reminds me of myself at that age, staying up all night learning jazz changes and managing to get them all in one performance." Two years later in Wichita, Burton was one of the judges—with Max Roach, Clark Terry and Dizzy Gillespie—who awarded first place honors to a quartet of North Texas State University students. The pianist-composer for this quartet was Lyle Mays. Mays explained to me, at that time, why the group pooled their pennies to pay their own way to the festival. They wanted to show the judges, the audience and the press that—win, lose or draw—there were young jazz players at North Texas who believed in small group improvisation despite the emphasis on big bands which has long been NTSU's hallmark.

Mays' advocacy of small jazz ensembles was enhanced by his attendance at one of the Combo/Improvisation clinics organized by the Summer Jazz Clinics. When Metheny (at 14) and Burton (at 16) first attended the Summer Jazz Clinics, the only curriculum emphasized big band jazz, with one hour a day devoted to improvisation. The desire of young musicians—very few of whom are players on the level of Burton, Metheny or Mays—to learn and participate in small group jazz is evidenced in the fact that last summer the attendance at the Combo/Improvisation clinics exceeded the Big Band clinics by a third. This also means that aspiring young jazz players have to go outside of their school music program to learn and participate in small group improvisation. This inability of most school jazz programs to satisfy their students is a subject worth exploring.

Jimmy and Percy Heath also comment on the need for young people to learn jazz in school, not only for their sakes, but as Percy Heath says, "... in order to have an audience as broad as this manufactured audience of today."

Those readers who have been following the one star appassionata in our recent issues will find Sam Rivers' *Blindfold Test* especially interesting. He justifies giving every record five stars because, "There is nothing bad." (Does it follow that there is also nothing good?)

The next issue emphasizes blues and soul music by way of soul singer Al Green, a photo/essay on the Chicago blues scene, and a look at funkmaster George Clinton. Profiled are guitarist Al Viola and woodwind player Becky Friend.

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# CHORDS AND DISCORDS

## Final Weather Report Letters

Because of the volume of mail received over our review of Mr. Gone (1/11/79) and the Weather Report interview (2/8/79), these will be the last letters on the subject of WR—at least until our next issue.

I would be the last person in the world to deny that everyone, even a db record reviewer,

is entitled to his or her opinion, and if David Less honestly believes that Mr. Gone is a "poor" album, which is what one star means, so be it. But I would be remiss—not simply in my professional capacity but as an admirer of Weather Report's music—if I didn't point out that many of the reasons Mr. Less gives in his review for assigning the album one star are just a touch spurious.

Some sample quotes: "Zawinul's insistent multi-tracking distorts the sound—it's impossible to distinguish the bass contributions of his co-producer, Pastorius, amid the overbearing mix." It's not impossible for me to distinguish Pastorius' bass playing anywhere on Mr. Gone—it shines through very clearly to my ears. "The playful Weather Report melodic lines are all but gone from this LP. Young And Fine possesses a pleasantly lyrical melody, but

it is never developed, merely repeated." I hear a number of melodies on the album that are not just "playful" but quite memorable, and the melody of Young And Fine is not "merely repeated." There is certainly as much melodic development here—as well as outstanding improvisation by both Zawinul and Shorter—as on any of the earlier WR melodies Mr. Less cites. "The Elders . . . becomes too predictable as solo follows solo . . ." This is, to me, the most revealing passage in the entire review. Whatever one thinks of this track, the most cursory listening should make it obvious that there are no solos on The Elders, simply a series of variations on Shorter's eerie theme. How can Mr. Less not have realized this—unless he really wasn't listening very closely?

It is not so much the one star rating that troubles me as the fact that Mr. Less' review seems more a diatribe against Joe Zawinul's alleged sins as an over-orchestrator and stifler of creativity than a reasoned analysis of the music itself. I can stomach such sweeping indictments as "Much freedom of improvisation is removed"; "the members now seem out of touch with their basic responsibility as musicians: to communicate"; and "Weather Report's status has shifted over the years from a combo of premier jazz-rock innovators to a super-hip rock band with jazz overtones" only if they are supported by considerably more substantial elaboration than Mr. Less offers.

It's very easy to write a negative review of anything: it's a lot harder to really listen. It seems to me that every album db reviews deserves a careful listening; this is especially true of a group like WR, whose music is thickly textured, much of its beauty becoming apparent only after repeated listenings. Mr. Less has apparently decided that the very fact that Mr. Gone's music is thickly textured is reason enough to dismiss it without giving it the kind of attention which it—or any album—is entitled. WR, db, and its readers all deserve better.

Peter Keepnews  
New York City  
Manager, Jazz/Progressive Publicity, CBS Records

Neil Lusby's letter (Chords, 12/21/78), urging db to concentrate on jazz, and then asking for a definition of jazz, is answered in Johnny Griffin's Blindfold Test in the same issue. Among Mr. Griffin's comments: "That was jazz . . . when the cats just go in and play the music, and express themselves for the moment. This is the fun; to me, this is the heart and core of this music called jazz. . . Jazz to me is a philosophy for living, it is a man's life, a totality of your being up until the present and your ability to express yourself at that particular time. Not what you played on a record . . . but what you're playing now . . . Jazz is this floating triplet, this African 6/8, the feeling of three that makes jazz float."

To agree with Mr. Lusby, I do not think Weather Report or the Stanley Clarke of School Days can be classified as jazz. I am a musician myself and try to live and play up to some of the principles which Griff (who I have had the honor to play with on a four-day tour) kindly reminds us of.

In db you get this fantastic coverage of the star groups, and you think you might be missing something. I asked the man in the record store to play Mr. Gone, WR's latest album. Well, I had to cut it short halfway through the title track. I do not think much of it as music; the jazz content is nil. How can WR win the db Readers Poll as jazz group of the year,

continued on page 42

The advent of the electronic age has opened up a whole new world for drummers—synthesized percussion. And now, from Tama, the strongest new name in drums, comes the latest in electronics—The Snyder Percussion Synthesizer.



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# NEWS

## Critic Crouch Books A Hip Palace

NEW YORK—The Tin Palace is following in the tradition of its Lower East Side predecessors, the Five Spot and the Jazz Gallery—all unadulterated jazz clubs. Thanks to the efforts of writer, musician, and now house booker Stanley Crouch, the Tin Palace is featuring musical excitement seven nights a week. Although the bar has been through several incarnations (including, in 1976, the first New York club appearances of Air and Arthur Blythe) the present model, with Crouch at the helm, has been the most successful, garnering highly favorable critical reaction and enthusiastic audiences.

Crouch, the L.A. born drummer and critic, has been running the show since August, 1978. With a free hand Crouch has booked groups into one through four day engagements. The Tin Palace has presented the New York debut of saxophonist Andrew White, the return of trumpeter Dizzy Reece, Jerome Cooper's solo drum debut, a week with drummer Billy Higgins, bebop vocalist Roberta Baum, Steve McCall and Fred Hopkins jam-

ming with pianist Hilton Ruiz and tenorman Clifford Jordan, and a fiery weekend with Beaver Harris' 360° Ensemble, featuring saxophonists Ricky Ford and Ken McIntyre.

"I think the scene is extremely vital right now," Crouch told *db*. "By hearing so many musicians so often, I'm able to see certain things players are doing, developing and evolving. I see a synthesis taking place of a whole lot of music that's been happening in the past 15 years. What's also been really interesting has been being in the club from the first set to the last and hearing how well certain players play. You really get a chance to find out what they can do. Some people get more impressive after you hear them a lot. Like saxophonists Rene McLean and Ricky Ford and pianists Harry Whitaker and John Hicks, to name a few."

In addition to his drumming (he's worked with David Murray and James Newton) and scheduling duties, Crouch is hard at work on a book, *Outlaws And Gladiators*, scheduled for publication in '80 by Harcourt Brace.



B. McMILLEN

Don Cherry, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell are the Old And New Dreams Band (named after their Italian Black Saint LP), on tour after a knockout New Year's Eve broadcast over NPR. They start March 23-24 at New York's Public Theatre, then play (3/25) Baltimore's Left Bank Jazz Society; (3/30-31) the Star Tavern, Philadelphia; (4/1) Gilly's in Dayton; (4/2) Jazz Showcase, Chicago; (4/5) Punch and Judy, Grosse Point, Mich.; (4/6-7) Michigan State U., East Lansing; (4/8) Blue Onion, Norman, Okla.; (4/9) Armadillo, Austin, Tex.; (4/11) Rosy's, New Orleans; (4/12) Tempe, Ariz.; (4/13) U. of California, Davis; (4/17) The Earth, Portland, Ore.; and (4/18-19) Keystone Korner, San Francisco.

## FINAL BAR

Guitarist **Grant Green**, whose energized single note lines fired the organ bands of Jack McDuff and Sam Lazar, as well as numerous '60s Blue Note recordings and his own discs on that label, Muse, Verve, and Cobblestone, died January 31 of a heart attack in New York City. Green, 48 years old, had been ill since a summer bout with pneumonia, but kept gigging rather than convalesce. He last worked at the Lighthouse in Los Angeles, and had returned to New York to play the Breezin' Lounge (co-owned by his friend George Benson) when he collapsed in his automobile.

Green broke into jazz with saxophonist Jimmy Forrest in the early '50s. His most recent LP, *Easy* (Versatile), was picking up airplay at the time of his death. The Reverend John Gensel presided over a memorial service, and Green was buried in St. Louis, his birthplace. Survivors include his wife, six children and his father.

**Henry J. Normile, Jr.**, 34, owner of Detroit's Cobb's Corner Bar—"Home of the Detroit Jazz Artists"—and a force in the city's jazz renaissance, was shot to death January 27 in a hallway outside his club.

In addition to providing a showcase for local talent such as organist Lyman Woodard and trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, Normile was a frequent patron of jazz benefits and other events, including sponsorship of the "Detroit Jazz Artists Calendar 1979". He had recently formed, in partnership with Woodard, Belgrave and enthusiast John Sinclair, a company to record local artists live at Cobb's.

Cobb's remains open, its policies unchanged. A memorial wake/jam was held, and scholarships to Detroit's Jazz Development Workshop arranged. (Contributions may be sent to the Henry J. Normile Scholarship Fund c/o Allied Artists Association, 15 E. Kirby, Suite 207, Detroit, Michigan 48202.)

Police had no leads to the murder, which was not a robbery. Normile's survivors include his brother and mother.

Drummer **Sonny Payne**, 53, died January 29 in Los Angeles of double pneumonia. He was Count Basie's rhythm man for 10 years from 1955; he worked with Erskine Hawkins' orchestra, Tiny Grimes, bassist Lucille Dixon's combo, Earl Bostic, Hot Lips Page, Frank Sinatra and Harry James (with whom he played on New Year's '79) besides leading his own quintet. He was survived by his mother, father, and son.

## NEW RELEASES

*Sleep Dirt* is more previously unreleased **Frank Zappa** sound from **Warner Bros.**, sans vocals.

**Barry Altschul** drums behind configurations of basses and cello, and more conventional instrumentations (altoist **Arthur Blythe** and pianist **Anthony Davis** contribute) on *Another Time/Another Place* (**Muse**). New, too, from Muse is Cajun guitarist **Ron Eschete's** *To Let You Know I Care*, a particularly eclectic event with **Tom Ranier** on keyboards and soprano sax.

Reedman **Noel Jewkes** and his Dr. Legato Express (of San Francisco) are *Just Passin' Thru* on **Revelation Records**. The label's owner, **J. W. Hardy**, is in search of former L.A. based saxophonist **Jeff Laskey**, who appears on some 1964 tapes with guitarist **Dennis Budimir** and the late **Albert Stinson**. Contact Hardy at 1615 N.W. 14th Ave., Gainesville, Fla. 32605.

**Euroclass Record Distributors, LTD.**, of New York, are now making available Swedish **Tax Jazz Society** LPs, late '30s to mid '40s wax of **Lester Young, Count Basie, Harry James, Teddy Wilson, Benny Carter** and **Benny Goodman**.

Chicago swingers **Warren Kline** (cornetist) and **Sid Dawson** (trombonist) lead bands on **Claremont Records'** releases, entitled *Jazz* and *Super Swing*, respectively.

**Muddy "Mississippi" Waters Live** (produced and abetted by **Johnny Winter** with **James Cotton** on harp) comes from **Blue Sky**; Ronn Records offers **Little Johnny Taylor, L.J.T.**, and **Jewel Spotlights The Blues**—volume one includes hits by **Joe Turner, Lightnin' Hopkins, Lowell Fulson, "Wild Child" Butler, "Elmo" (Dust My Broom) James, Frank Frost**, and others.

# POTPOURRI

Hard bopping trumpeter **Toru "Tiger" Okoshi** stole the show from vibist **Gary Burton** at a late January gig at Boston's **Paradise Club**. Okoshi, the first hornman Burton's played with regularly since leaving Stan Getz, has been with the quartet for a year, and has built a sizable local following for his fusion band, **Tiger's Baku**, featuring **Mike Stearn** on guitar, **Tony Campbell** on drums, **Wayne Pedviwair** on bass, and **Frank Wilkins**, keyboards. (A baku is an Eastern mythological animal, a bad dream eater. Says Okoshi, "I play music and try to eat people's bad dreams." The fantasies are frequently swallowed at **Pooh's Pub**.)

His close friends continue writing on behalf of saxophonist **Bobby Jones**, who remains gravely ill, on medication, and hardly able to pursue his career as player or follow up studies of arranging or the guitar. Jones is

really in need of regular financial assistance, and since we goofed (slightly) on the addresses accepting donations in our last mention, here they are again: **First National City Bank** or **CITIBANK** account no. 0270777397 or **Deutsche Bank Munich**, BLZ 700 700 10 account no. 3620911.

The **Vancouver Jazz Society's** spring concert series progresses apace; **Dollar Brand**, **Lee Konitz-Martial Solal**, **Betty Carter** and **Don Cherry-Charlie Haden** have made the Northwest passage. The **Art Ensemble of Chicago** performs there April 15, and **Marlon Brown** appears May 3.

**Sharon Freeman/Janice Robinson Quintet**, **Evelyn Blakey**, **Peter Yellin 5** with **Mike Nock**, **Ron McClure**, **Tom Harrell** and **Billy Hart**, and **Bill and Mary Buchen** perform in March for New York's **Universal Jazz Coalition**.

**Kool Jazz Festivals** is sponsoring **Sarah Vaughan**, **Mel Torme** and **Gerry Mulligan** with his orchestra on tour starting March 13 in Denver and ending March 30 in New York's **Carnegie Hall** where Vaughan will sing

twice more within ten days—with **Betty Carter** and **Eddie Jefferson**, then **Count Basie**. Stops in between include Cincinnati, Cleveland, Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, and Milwaukee.



**Malachi Favors** (l.), **Wallace McMillan** and **Douglas Ewart** played in **Muhai Richard Abrams'** band at the **Chicago Jazz Institute's Fair** in early February, celebrating the organization's tenth anniversary. **Drummers Wilbur Campbell** and **Hal Russell** led combos; bopping tenorist **E. Parker MacDougal**, pianist **Art Hodes**, and the trad **Chicago Footwarmers** performed for over 600 members, while jazz-oriented businesses displayed their wares and talked up their services.

## Public Monies A Solution To This Musician's Job Needs



CHICAGO—As a pianist and composer here, I find playing in public in conditions that lend a healthy attitude to both audience and listener has become very difficult. The concept of a smoky, lower level jazz club, sunglasses, and an untuned, upright piano has become opposed by the commercial slickness that seems still eons away from the essence and raw beauty of the jazz sound.

About five years ago I played a job in a large hotel near O'Hare airport. My trio spelled a 16 piece funk band; in the middle of one tune the agent in charge jumped up on stage, grabbed my arm and screamed, "Play something funky!" This strange experience pressed my limits, and since then I have turned to other

outlets for my ideas.

Currently I work with various agencies that receive money from the federal budget. A teacher friend from a nearby university told me about positions with the **Chicago Council on Fine Art's Artist-In-Residence** program and I called for an application and details. A resume was required (and usually is for employment of this sort, so keep track of all your concerts, commissions, and teaching workshops) and an audition.

There is not one general listing of government and local agencies offering musicians employment. Most large, not-for-profit agencies have monthly newsletters that list grant-fellowship programs; visit their offices in person and get on mailing lists. Information as to large grants from the **National Endowment for the Arts** can be obtained by writing directly to 2401 E. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. The **NEA** has provisions for classical and jazz, individual and group funding.

A great majority of public grant money comes from the **Comprehensive Educational Training Act**, and these funds are endangered. Most large **CETA** grants have covered one or two year programs, but there are still sums for immediate functions, so don't lose hope.

There are also thousands of private institutions and corporations that donate funds to various art-oriented projects. Persistence pays off here, too. The art to receiving these monies is all in the grant proposal, and many art groups have a team of people spending all their time writing agencies for future funding. Make contact with these individuals and ask for a copy of their successfully submitted proposals. Study them and design yours in a similar way.

Chicago's **AIR** program operates with over \$1 million from **CETA**, designated to bringing art back into city communities. The program is in its second year, employing 14 musicians performing public services in relation to their individual skills and the communities' needs. Workshops and performers tour city sites, including high schools, drug abuse centers, housing projects, senior citizen centers and public performance areas. A concert in memory of **John Coltrane** and **Bud Powell** last September at the **Grant Park bandshell** was attended by about 4,500 people.

In the past year and a half I have written several compositions for the **AIR** program, including *Bud-weiser* (in memory of Powell), *Monk* (to T. Monk), *Density Infinity* (for six flutes), 15

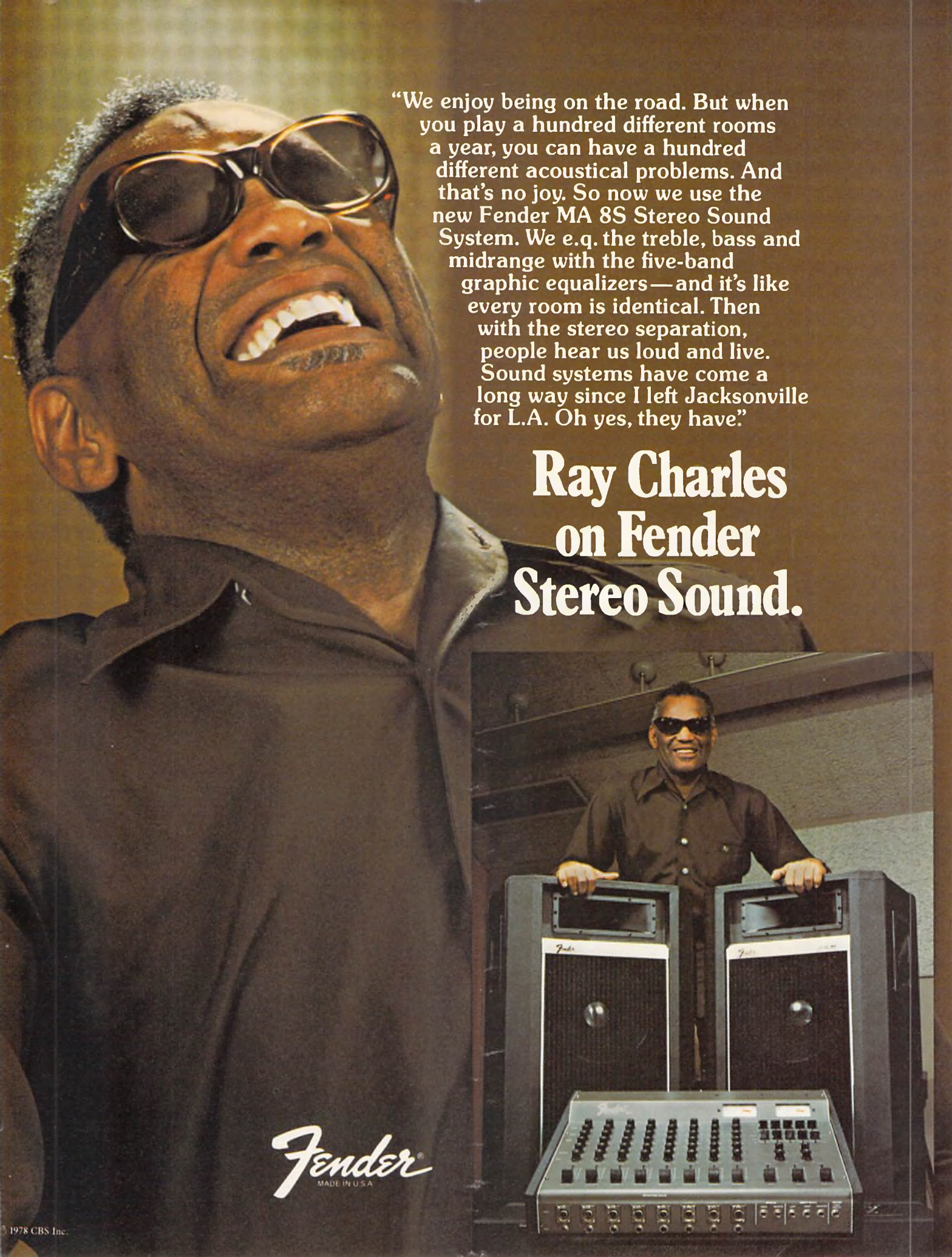
songs for pre-schoolers, and most recently (as composer-in-residence for Chicago) *A Chicago Sonata*. The work is for solo piano, and will eventually be voiced for string orchestra. These compositions, commissioned by the **AIR** program, are now property of the city and people of Chicago.

The emphasis of my artist-in-residence post recognizes art from the community, too, and educating youth about traditions that have been lost or forgotten. Last year I taught at several housing complexes, mostly for pre-schoolers. Children at this level were fresh and full of the positive energy that I experience creating jazz.

There are similar programs in many cities across the nation and some states have their own **Arts Councils**. Each, however, has its own rules and guidelines. Contact as many agencies as possible for their requirements.

I can remember two years ago when I drove my cab up to **Orchestra Hall** and went in for my audition for the **AIR** program. I gave them my resume, my score, and played their **Baldwin**. They liked what they heard and hired me; it hasn't proved to be a bed of roses, but nevertheless I am playing, and people are listening.

—bradley parker-sparrow



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## Ray Charles on Fender Stereo Sound.



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# PAT METHENY:

ANALYSIS by NEIL TESSER

Let's go back two years. If you, a follower of contemporary music, had at that time admitted to nothing more than a vague recognition of the name Pat Metheny, few eyebrows might have been raised. It probably wouldn't have caused that much of a stir if the name had rung no bell at all.

At that time Pat Metheny was just 22; he had already quit teaching guitar at that Mecca of jazz education, the Berklee College of Music in Boston, which had hired him three years earlier (although he held no degrees and had never even attended Berklee as a student). He had a lot of hair, a lot of teeth, talked a lot like a farm boy, and played a lot of guitar; in fact, he was well on his way to establishing the most distinctive voice on that instrument since the twin breakthroughs of John McLaughlin and Larry Coryell at the turn of the decade. Still, you could well have been excused for not knowing that: Metheny had been featured on only two albums by his employer, vibes virtuoso Gary Burton; one strangely overlooked (but nonetheless superb) album of his own; and an obscure and confused session released on leader Paul Bley's *Improvising Artists*, Inc. label. Metheny was certainly a comer, but he hadn't yet arrived.

In 1979, however, if the name Pat Metheny elicits a blank stare, you're no follower of contemporary music at all. Either that, or you missed your last space shuttle home.

In the last 20 months since leaving Burton (under conditions best described as "strained"), Metheny's achievement has been remarkable. For one, he has assembled and polished a band with a verve and vision quite unexpected in someone of such tender years. More important, he has constructed a jazz-based music that draws with noteworthy ease on several other musical traditions—rock, country, and American folk music of the '60s—and that straddles the diverse popular audience with unnerving integrity.

Metheny may never sell as many records as Chuck Mangione, but neither will he pay the price in currencies ranging from lost respect to abandoned innovation. For while his 1978 LP, *Pat Metheny Group*, was becoming one of the "most added" albums of the year for scores of FM progressive rockers, it was also scaling the jazz charts—and the group itself was proving responsible for several of the most vibrant, explosive, good-humored, and satisfyingly adventuresome concert performances of the year.

The term "jazz-based" is not used lightly; its ambiguity reflects the confusion and occasional controversy accompanying the music it describes. On one hand, Metheny's striking brand of improvisation would seem to evidence some of the earmarks of a full-fledged 12 □ down beat

jazz development. For instance: in addition to a growing body of handsome compositions that help codify its theoretical underpinnings, Metheny's music features a strongly defined, idiosyncratic style of performance. Both Metheny and pianist Lyle Mays, whose importance to the band's success rivals Metheny's own, strive for a clean, uncluttered solo style buoyed by a pure and ripe sound quality; Metheny uses two amps and a digital delay unit to effect this sound, while Mays counts on well-conditioned pianos and a strong, crisp touch.

Metheny's music also utilizes its creator's personal background, and indeed has begun a re-evaluation of basic tenets of the jazz experience in terms of these personal roots—another sign of a solid development *within jazz*. And he is not unmindful of past jazz accomplishments, even as he is promulgating a new, if minor, form.

A good name for this form might be neo-fusion (even though fusion was a largely electronic phenomenon, and Metheny's singular sound uses electronics to effect an enhanced acousticism). The name suggests the generational gap between Metheny and such musicians as Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and even Joe Zawinul; all of these were earlier involved in self-consciously fusing various musical elements, but for Metheny—growing up with the music of the Beatles, Coltrane, Waylon Jennings, Burton, and Bob Dylan all at once—the fusing of disparate elements has been a far more organic process.

Yet one persistent criticism in the last year or so has come from the stalwarts who perceive Metheny's work as that of a sophisticated rocker or—odd as this may seem to those who've experienced the band's inarguable fire in live performance—merely a bland, homogenized, and (some feel) suburbanized shadow of jazz. Why such a conflict in viewpoints? And what importance does it have not only for Metheny, but for the whole of jazz as it escapes these transitional late '70s and begins seeking new structures in the next decade?

Part of the answer concerns Metheny's label, ECM, and its emergence as an esthetically respectful environment for white improvisers. There is no racism intended here—merely the recognition that there are white and black schools of musical thought; sometimes they overlap, and in any case, players of either color can develop into gifted practitioners of either school. There is no racism, either, in the simple statement that an unusually large amount of this decade's jazz developments—including fusion, selected aspects of the avant garde, and the "new cool school" healthily represented on ECM—have been the

work of white musicians. It is a matter, I think, *not* of white musicians asserting their paleness or some such nonsense; rather, it is a matter of no longer apologizing for this background, as white musicians have felt more free about incorporating their separate roots into improvisational music.

This is the context in which Metheny's music is best understood. Some of his earlier compositions, such as *April Joy* (written when he was 16), bubble along with a strong, light pop drive; others, like *Bright Size Life*, are wonderful jazz pieces with elusive overtones of country-western twang. Some—*River Quay*, for a good example—seem designed to exploit the breezy, slurry chording that Metheny once agreed was "that oasis sound" (after Amos Garrett's memorable guitar lead on Maria Muldaur's hit single *Midnight At The Oasis*); and the ballads bask in the sweeping, often bittersweet romanticism established by Keith Jarrett. These compositions (through 1977) are perhaps best defined by the title of one of them, *Midwestern Night's Dream*; Metheny's music springs directly from the American heartland in which he was raised (Lee's Summit, Mo., to be precise).

More recently, Metheny has veered simultaneously toward two poles in his choice of material. A piece like *San Lorenzo*, the Metheny-Mays nod to Weather Report, falls within the now-conventional concept of fusion; at the same time, in concert the band often jams, and very convincingly, on standard changes, such as *All The Things You Are* or *There Will Never Be Another You*. In both cases, of course, white compositional traditions are involved; again, jazz meets the All American boy.

And it is within this context, perhaps, that those genuinely puzzled by Metheny's meteoric success story can relieve some of their anxieties. It is not only that Metheny and cohorts present a fresh-faced, ingenuously unaffected image to go along with the music; nor is it the consistently high energy level, nor the nearly tangible feeling that, despite a grueling tour schedule, these guys are still enjoying every performance for the simple reason that they believe that strongly in the music. All these contribute, but the heart of Metheny's success is the music. For here is a sound that is unquestionably, and nonthreateningly, jazz, a sound that at the same time speaks directly to a large audience of young, white, upper middle class people that share Metheny's influences. (I find it significant that the Metheny Group rang in the new year at a sold out Carnegie Hall concert, sharing the bill with pop/jazz songster Al Jarreau and the Akron-spawned New Wave rockers Devo. Had Metheny not been playing, he might well

# Musings On Neo-Fusion

INTERVIEW by FRED BOURQUE

**P**at Metheny happened in 1978. *The Pat Metheny Group*, his band's first record, became a jazz best seller. The group was recognized in all of the major magazine polls, made an appearance on national television, and worked 300 nights of the year. Pat Metheny's band is now one of the most popular units playing jazz, and their appeal is something of a puzzle to folks who would balkanize the music and those who make it. The Pat Metheny Group doesn't fit neatly into any of the categories and the people who pay to see them form a diverse and refreshing group, encom-

We started at the beginning.

**Bourque:** When did you get started in jazz?

**Metheny:** 1968, when I was 14. I got a scholarship from *down beat* to go to the summer jazz clinics the first year I played the guitar, and I went again the next year. Those first two years I was a total Wes Montgomery fanatic. I played in octaves, played with my thumb, had literally every record Wes made and could play or sing along with virtually every cut on every record at one point. I still hear his stuff, and it's awesome to me how great he was. He's so clear, and his time feel is

**Metheny:** Well, I realized at a pretty young age, 15, that there was no future in being another Wes Montgomery, and that's when I made that decision. Really, if you hear a tape of me playing when I was 16 you can hear *me*. It's basically the same way I play now, evolved from that point forward. When I was 14 and 15 I just sounded like somebody trying to sound like Wes Montgomery.

**Bourque:** Were you listening to anyone else at that time?

**Metheny:** Yes, and another good thing happened to me that year. I went out and spent a week in New York with Attila Zoller, who was the guitar teacher at those summer clinics I went to. That week in New York was really a turning point for me because I got to hear Jim Hall every night, and I heard Freddie Hubbard play and got to see all those guys that I'd heard on records. Plus just hanging around with Attila, who was very inspiring to me as a player. We're still good friends.

**Bourque:** Were there things happening for you back home then?

**Metheny:** Sure, and also there were two players there in Kansas City that I played with constantly when I was 14, 15, 16 and 17 that I'd like to mention. The older I get the more I appreciate the things I learned from these guys. One is a trumpet player named Gary Sivils who I played with all through high school. I just sort of assumed that every trumpet player was as good as Gary, because I had nothing else to compare him to. He's one of the most soulful trumpet players I ever heard in my life. That Kansas City tradition comes through him because he's from the Lester Young approach of playing really melodically. Gary got that, and I sort of got it from him. Even today I think of what I'm playing as sort of a Kansas City style, evolved or modernized. It's that melodic, lyrical thing.

Another guy that I still play with every time I go home, who just kills me, is a drummer named Tommy Ruskin, who's one of the best bebop drummers ever. This guy literally taught me how to play time. Also, both Gary and Tommy taught me one real important thing about playing, which is to try to tell a story rather than just play licks up and down the instrument. It really comes from that Lester Young thing.

**Bourque:** I know Lyle Mays did not enjoy his involvement with jazz education at North Texas State University, and he's not happy with the entire jazz education thing. What about you?

**Metheny:** Well, neither am I. In a lot of ways, my background and Lyle's are similar in that we really didn't learn jazz from schools, and in most cases we were the teachers.

Jazz education in America is a confusing



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

passing the full range of jazz and contemporary music appreciators. It's not unusual to see men and women who danced to Glenn Miller 40 years ago sitting with rockers whose parents never saw a swing band; the Metheny group communicates something to them all.

I spent several afternoons and evenings talking with Metheny about his music and found him to be open, friendly and articulate. Above all, he's a man with a purpose and, like the great musicians he admires, he straddles the contemporary scene with an eye on the future and an unflinching devotion to tradition.

incredible. To me, that's been too ignored by younger players. There's a wealth of information in his playing that's still relevant, and I'm consistently amazed at how few people see Wes' influence on me.

I've done my best to cover it up, in terms of the sound and stylistic things; but melodically and rhythmically Wes Montgomery was the main cat for me as far as learning how to play the guitar.

**Bourque:** I confess I hear very little of Wes in your playing. When did you begin to develop your own sound?

# "I WORKED 22 YEARS FOR THIS GUITAR."

“Over the past twenty-two years, I have built and rebuilt many guitars. When I started playing back in 1956, I couldn't afford a "decent" guitar because they were too expensive. Today, "decent" guitars have become outrageously more expensive and, in many cases, totally out of reach of the working musician. Unfortunately for the player, prices of guitars have gone up tremendously while quality has not improved and, in some instances, has gone backward considerably.

A few years back, we at Peavey decided that if we were going to live up to our goal of "answering the needs of the working musician", we must bring to the market a quality guitar at a fair and reasonable price. Our guitar would have to be a versatile and attractive "no nonsense" guitar with frets and playing action second to none, equipped with pickups and associated electronics equal to or better than the best on the market. Further, this instrument must be produced using the latest metal and wood-working technology. We felt we could accomplish this goal since most of us are musicians, as well as engineers and craftsmen... and especially since we do not have a bunch of "corporate sugar daddies" or investment bankers monitoring every move we make.

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and guitar design "savvy" of the folks here at Peavey. Our instruments are not "flashy" or "spacey" and are not covered with "gingerbread" as are some recent models from the competition. They are, in fact, quality instruments that play, sound, and look as good or better than any, regardless of price. The tonal versatility is unmatched by anything without the "crutch" of a built-in battery powered preamp and frankly, we feel it's better than most that do have active circuitry. It's the opinion of many dealers and players that our instruments have the finest fret job of any instrument made today.

For over twenty-two years, I have been searching and this is the first guitar that has satisfied me and the other players here. Its unique variable single coil/humbucking tone circuitry gives the "biting" single coil sound, as well as the "balsy" and guttural humbucking sound so full of punch, harmonics, and overtones. The standard 25½-inch scale length over a 12-inch radius neck enables easy string bending and massive 18% nickel-silver frets give a touch that must be played to be appreciated.

These days it's "fashionable" to bitch about high prices and the marginal quality of most "name brand" guitars, but "snob appeal" and lack of a viable alternative have enabled the "great corporate ripoff" to continue. Now, if you are a player who's interested in a unique blend of craftsmanship, caring, technology and are daring enough to actually pay less to get more of what you want, then I earnestly ask that you try our "labor of love". We're proud of our instruments and we think you owe it to yourself to check them out.”

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Meridian, MS 39301



have been in the audience.)

Furthermore, Metheny's listeners apparently have broken down categories, as various writers and musicians have been advocating for years. This is an audience well suited to the neo-fusion mentioned above. And the ease with which they accept this comparatively guileless form—and the ease with which the Metheny band *creates* it—may be a clue to at least one aspect of jazz in the '80s.

At this juncture, the temptation to say that 1978 was "the year" for Pat Metheny is strong; but in a way, that's like closing the book on at least part of his career, which may not be a good idea. Metheny is moving now at a stunning clip; he is sure to be an important force in the next decade, as his still embryonic career is opening up at a geometrically progressing pace. He and Mays have recently finished scoring a series of short documentary films collectively titled *Search For Solutions*; his solo guitar LP (on ECM, of course) is upcoming; his group stays active, having just toured California and Japan; and he is constantly pushing toward new areas of instrumentation, planning ahead for the day guitar synthesizers are perfected, experimenting with odd tunings, and awaiting the delivery of a 48-string harp-guitar being constructed in Chicago. He has even weathered the band's first major artistic crisis with admirable maturity: to balance the heavily arranged, solo-deficient epics he and Mays have been tending to (such as *San Lorenzo*), he has added a couple wide open stompers to the show. It is a move appreciated by listeners and band members alike.

A comment going around the down beat office not long ago suggested that Pat Metheny might be the Dave Brubeck of the '80s. It's an attractive concept, one not without its merits. Like Brubeck, Metheny leads a strong quartet without any individual holes, a quartet that espouses a clear combination of jazz with other forms (as Brubeck championed a blend of jazz and his classical roots). Right now, Metheny is hardly as popular as Brubeck—Pat hasn't even made the cover of *Time* yet—but his position is not unlike that occupied by Brubeck early in his career. Like Brubeck, Metheny offers a driving, valid, and determinedly white music; like Brubeck, he has counted on college audiences as a major constituency in the early part of his journey, and has already begun to exert considerable influence on developing guitarists and composers.

But I wonder if the analogy doesn't drift a little too far from home. The parallels with another jazz innovator loom up far more convincingly. Like Metheny, he's a Midwesterner, and like Metheny, he's no stranger to the rock, folk, and especially country idioms, having molded them into the first self-consciously "fusion" effort in the middle '60s. Metheny's band benefits from the exceptional performance tools of Lyle Mays; Mays is a strong composer who has been vital in shaping that aspect of the music, too. My not-so-mysterious analogy points to a similar role in the band of this *other* innovator, filled until recently by his bassist. Furthermore, listening to this unnamed jazzman inspired Metheny to enter the field, and to bring things full circle, it wasn't long before Metheny joined his band.

Wouldn't it be interesting if Pat Metheny turned out to be the Gary Burton of the '80s?

db

thing; I can't think of one example of anyone who became a good player by going to school. You've either got it or you don't. I'm definitely not an advocate of the way things are going with jazz education. Lyle has had more contact with it, being at North Texas. I went to the University of Miami for a very short time, but it was kind of a rebellious school, not big band oriented.

**Bourque:** Didn't you later study at Berklee?

**Metheny:** No. I never went there. I taught there for a year and a half when I was 19 and 20, '74 and '75.

**Bourque:** Having been both a student and teacher in school, and now a successful player out of school, what do you think, very generally, that jazz education as we know it can accomplish?

**Metheny:** Well, not much. It's done something in terms of developing appreciation. Band camps get a lot of younger people used to hearing names like Miles Davis and John Coltrane at a very young age. But as far as jazz training goes, in my opinion there's probably .0000001 percent of the population that can ever become musicians at the level I'm interested in. But there are about 700 guitar students at Berklee this semester—hundreds want to be me or want to be Al DiMeola or whoever. They want to have their own bands and travel around the country and do this and do that, and it's just not going to happen. In a way, that's the saddest thing of all about jazz education—seeing these guys. They want to

**"The [players] who stand out aren't the ones who play the instrument well, but those who can find their own special way of saying whatever they want to say."**

do it more than I do. They would give anything to be in the position I'm in, but it's just never going to happen.

**Bourque:** Is that merely because there's not enough room?

**Metheny:** Well, there's not enough room; but more importantly, there are so few people that have that extra ability of not only being able to play an instrument but to find their own voice in the music. To me, that's what it all boils down to, especially now in the days when every instrument is glutted with millions of players. The ones who stand out aren't the ones who play the instrument well, but those who can find their own special way of saying whatever they want to say. There are hundreds and hundreds of people that can play the guitar much better than I can, but there are very few people who have something extra to say through it.

**Bourque:** What did you tell your students, and what advice do you now have for those guitarists at Berklee?

**Metheny:** Well, I can't give general advice. But I can hear it in a musician within about six notes whether or not that other thing is there. If I don't hear it I tell them to consider something else. I told a lot of people at Berklee that, and I made a lot of enemies; but I won't lie. If somebody's coming on to me with "I'm going to be the greatest guitar player the world has ever seen," and he can't play *Louie Louie* in time, I'm not about to encourage him.

**Bourque:** You're not talking now about people who simply lack that kernel of originality.

**Metheny:** No, I'm talking about people who

don't have the basic elements of being a good musician, people who can't tap four beats in a row.

**Bourque:** Some of them must make it through. There are many new guitarists on the scene, and they must be coming from somewhere. Do you feel the pressure from the other guys?

**Metheny:** Well, it shocks me to go around and hear players in every city playing my tunes with my guitar and my amp setup and that sound. It's a real killer. It's a very strange feeling for someone my age. I feel like I'm just beginning; it's just starting to make sense to me. But there are people that hang on every note. It's a funny feeling.

**Bourque:** Are you at the top of the heap?

**Metheny:** No. I'm not seen in that light by most people. I think most people see me as a guy who's got his own style and his own music, tunes, band. I don't think that I'm taken seriously as being the next Mahavishnu, Al DiMeola—fastest guy. I find that attitude to be a very negative thing, though some of the music that's come from it has obviously been good. But I'm not drawn to the athletic approach to the music. I've been more interested in the feeling behind it than to the actual notes or techniques involved.

**Bourque:** Is that also the way you think your audience sees you?

**Metheny:** You know, everyone sees it differently. I'm just amazed at what people say when they come up to me. People say everything from, "Boy, you sound just like Jeff Beck" to "Wasn't Django Reinhardt the

greatest thing that ever happened?" Obviously, what I'm playing from night to night isn't nearly that extreme, but people perceive it in these incredibly "out" ways. That's also represented by the unbelievable diversity of people that come to see us, and for every possible reason. Some people come to get melo- lowed out. Some people come to get energized. I mean, on a completely different level, some people come because I'm supposedly cute or because Mark is this little guy that plays the bass and jumps around. People come for the most superficial reasons . . . and for the deepest reasons.

**Bourque:** Can you describe your music?

**Metheny:** Well, that's hard. I could either say it's beyond description, or I can talk about it for an hour. I describe it differently depending on whom I'm describing it to, and we play differently for different people, too. Even though it's a very subtle difference I definitely aim for an audience. But I guess I'd say the number one defining quality of our music or Weather Report's or the Dixie Dregs' is that it's music that's dealing with right now. We've grown up in these times, and we're using that information to make music for what's going on today.

**Bourque:** A lot of what's going on today, both in the music and elsewhere, is in the area of technology. Does technology have much to do with your music?

**Metheny:** There are certain aspects of technology that are making it possible for certain things to be clearer in the music. My guitar sound is an example of that. If I played the

# THE HEATH BROTHERS

by BRET PRIMACK

I'm sick of reading about Studio 54. So what if people dance naked? So what if they snort cocaine to a disco beat? I'm not impressed; disco decadence is not for me. What really bothers me is that millions seek escape via disco. Why can't they listen to bebop?

Most Americans don't even know bebop exists. After all, how many jazz musicians even play bebop in 1979? Except for college stations, bebop is rarely on radio. Outside of our larger cities, it's even harder to catch in person. But there are still a few members of the tribe who haven't plugged in or gone out, believers willing to carry on the tradition, no matter what the obstacles.

Like the Heath Brothers. They've maintained the standard of excellence for more than 30 years. (Don't get me wrong, readers of **down beat**. I have nothing against dance music. You wanna dance, fine with me. But, gee whiz, radio stations and TV networks, how 'bout giving this bebop music a play?) Now that the Heath Brothers have joined Bruce Lundvall and company (Columbia), they're more than ready for the big time. In January, Jimmy and Percy appeared on the *Dick Cavett* show. Were you listening, Johnny Carson?

Although the three Heath brothers, Percy, the bassist and eldest brother, middle brother Jimmy, the composer and saxophonist, and youngest brother Albert, also known as "Tootie," the drummer, have always played together, it wasn't until 1975, after the Modern Jazz Quartet broke up, that the brothers formed their own group.

"My involvement with the MJQ was the reason Jimmy and I didn't get together sooner," Percy recently told **db**. But even though they finally got a chance to make beautiful music together, brother Albert decided to pursue his own musical directions.

Today, the Heath Brothers Quintet, in addition to Percy and Jimmy, includes pianist Stanley Cowell, young Tony Purrone on guitar and Keith Copeland on drums.

Jimmy was the first brother to get deeply involved with music. "Little Bird" was an important part of the Philadelphia late '40s scene, with such contemporaries as John Coltrane and Ray Bryant. After two years with Howard McGhee, Jimmy joined Dizzy Gillespie's group, working in big bands and combos alongside Coltrane (they were both playing alto then). Since leaving Dizzy, he has continued to freelance, concentrating on flute, soprano, and tenor saxes, traveling to Europe with his own groups, writing and performing with European radio big bands, and instructing through the Jazzmobile and City Colleges of New York.



PERCY, TOOTIE and JIMMY HEATH

"I've also been collecting royalties on some of my tunes," he says. There are 80 Jimmy Heath compositions at last count, with *CTA*, *Gemini*, *Gingerbread Boy* and *The Quota* among the most recorded. A work of larger scope, *The Afro-American Suite Of Evolution* (for 40 pieces) has been performed at Town Hall and the Monterey Jazz Festival. ("It covers the whole evolution of Afro-American music from field hollers up to avant garde, past rhythm and blues and bebop. It's got ragtime, a choir, strings, everything.") A monumental work, it took Heath two years to complete, with the help of a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts CAPS program.

Brother Percy early distinguished himself as one of the first black men to serve as an Air Force fighter pilot in WW II. After his discharge, he studied bass at the Granoff School of Music in Philadelphia and within six months was working gigs. He played with Miles, Fats Navarro and, following two years with Dizzy, joined his Gillespie rhythm section mates in forming the MJQ. Since the quartet broke up in summer of '74, Percy has been able to devote more time to his second love, fishing. Most summers you can find him on his boat, the *Boston Whaler*, docked off Montauk Point, surf casting.

Before returning to the studio to record a followup to their Columbia debut, *Passin' Thru . . .*, Percy and Jimmy stopped to chat. Jimmy voiced strong feelings about the overabundance of repetition in today's music.

**Jimmy:** These vamps been out here for 20 years. You hear me! We've been vamping on one chord for 20 years!

**Percy:** Not quite that long, James.

**Jimmy:** It goes back to 1960, sometime around there, in Philly; I played on some shows and they were vamping. I played behind James Brown and them kind of people, with one of my students who had the house band in the rock and roll theater there. They vamp, boy, they vamp. It's almost 1980—they been vamping a long time.

**Percy:** I vamped in '47, but we didn't lay on it too much. With Joe Morris, we vamped while Johnny Griffin was marching up and down the aisles and playing. But now they got this hypnotic disco thing. If people sit down and listen to that music for listening pleasure, there's something wrong with them . . .

**Jimmy:** . . . something lacking in their musical appreciation . . .

**Percy:** . . . in their understanding of what music is and what it's supposed to do. But anybody can use it to dance; that's what it's for.

**Jimmy:** I played in a dance band in Omaha,

## Bebop Above And Beyond The Fads



JIMMY HEATH





PERCY HEATH

Nebraska, in 1946. I was 18 and I went on the road and played for dances, so I've played dance band music before. But when Charlie Parker and the beboppers came along and played concert music where people sat down and *listened*, well, that was the highest peak of creativity in my lifetime, because it elevated people and took them out. The music was so fantastically technical, it had the blues and all the elements of black life, then it began to leak over and the white people accepted it from an intellectual standpoint and otherwise. Yes, that music was and is the greatest creativity of my lifetime.

**Percy:** Period!

**Jimmy:** Since that time, the post-bop and the electronic and funk era we are in now. . . . To me, they are repeating the same licks we played in the bebop era but now they play them over and over and over again.

**Percy:** They grab one and hold it.

**Jimmy:** Meanwhile, that march beat is going on under it. Now it's all about parading and looking at yourself in the mirror at a disco. Bret, we're trying to turn that around so people go to a concert and listen again.

**Primack:** How do you do that?

**Jimmy:** By continuing to play what we've been playing all along. The main problem has been exposure. Now people like Dexter come back and everybody has warmed up to them.

Johnny Griffin comes back—"Oh yeah, dig Johnny Griffin." Something else is going on besides playing on a one chord vamp. This re-emergence of bebop is beginning to make younger people listen; it's going to take a while, they've been hearing rock and roll on electronic instruments all their lives. Whatever you play, if you play it on those instruments, you are still accepted more commercially, and that's why people like Joe Zawinul and Herbie and Chick succeed; they play those instruments that communicate to the youth who buy most of the records. They're coming out of a thing where it's all dance and a little Bartok and a little science in there; a little nervousness and a little over-energizing, such as the people *are* of this time. This fusion music has been overly forced on the people by big controlling forces; it's a financial thing.

**Percy:** I hate all these labels 'cause what I call jazz is probably different than somebody else, but it seems from talking to Bruce Lundvall and George Butler at Columbia that they're ready to atone for some of their sins and put some energy in where it has been lacking. But what we *really* need is for this music to be in the educational system. Most of the things that really get over in pop music are vocal: the word, they teach them to *speak* the language from childhood. If they taught the children of America the language of music, how to listen to all music, with less emphasis on European and more on the American contribution to the world. . . . It would be something if they taught this music in the schools from the beginning.

This music is American, it's the life and times of people in America. It has to be taught in order to have an audience as broad as this manufactured audience of today. In order to have an audience for the main cultural advancement, this music, they have to start with kids, so when a kid gets to be 12 or 13 he knows everybody connected with it from the beginning on down. Just like he knows the life of Beethoven—he studies that now. They would know about every person in the development of jazz from the blues, Leadbelly, all of them, and look up to these people as having created and contributed to the society.

Another thing about this music—I heard somebody say—it makes you think.

**Jimmy:** A guy up in Montreal at a club where we played, Lulu's Place, came to hear the music and he told us, "Man, I sure like this music. This music sure sounds good and I would have brought my old lady but she says that she don't like no jazz because it makes you think too much."

**Percy:** Maybe that's why they don't foster it so much because all the workers can turn on the disco station and work vigorously and produce, but if they turned it to a jazz thing, they might want to sit down and listen and relax, because that's what it does to me.

**Jimmy:** My brother Tootie told me about when he was with Yusef Lateef playing in St. Louis. The woman who owned the tavern they were playing in told Yusef, "Would you please play some music that will make them drink? They're not drinkin', they're just lookin' at you. Your music is great and everything but please play something that will make them drink." Yusef said, "All right sister," and he played *Trouble In Mind* on the oboe, which is a blues, and then they began to drink.

**Percy:** The blues is drinkin' music, all right.

**Jimmy:** Some blues are smokin' blues.

**Percy:** Yeah, Charlie Parker. Oh yeah, they be movin' out happy, that's the understanding

of the musical language. You can get all the emotions of life suggested by certain phrases and the serious listener who's involved with it and the history of this music and appreciates it for what it is, he gets an awful lot out—at the same time, he gives a little too, he has to investigate because it's not *given* to him. But the serious jazz lover, he's also sacrificed today. He's a minority in this society.

**Jimmy:** Well, the environment is different today. It's more scientific. They got a formula they're using now, they play a certain phrase and then play it on a wah wah, they play a sequence on the wah wah; oh man, I heard a million tunes like that. Everybody's a composer now. I think some of them shouldn't be because they're getting away with writing just anything because of the beat they're using. Tonality doesn't mean anything anymore. Now there are always some good people in every movement, but most of them today are just bullshitting. Their compositions are bullshit.

**Percy:** The whole thing is bullshit to me, James. You tolerate them and I really don't. I don't care who the person is. For example, a very fine trumpet player and a very influential person on my playing, now I was in his early band and very proud to be, but in his later bands I would not have been, I don't care what. I didn't enjoy hearing what he did. It's his choice to make, and I'm not putting him down, but it's not the person that I knew and loved and appreciated, no matter how rich and famous he got after that.

**Primack:** A certain Mr. Davis?

**Jimmy:** What you're saying is that he's not musically the person you knew.

**Percy:** It's still the same person.

**Jimmy:** But he's playing different music, commercialized to make more money.

**Percy:** I guess maybe he got tired of doing the other thing, or maybe it was that feeling of trying to be young, staying young. I'm 55 and I'm going to act 55. And there's no kid going to come up and tell me that he knows more than I do about life. When he lives to be 55, then he can talk to me, experience-wise. After all, I've learned something in 55 years. I love Dave but when I heard that band, when he had on the see-through vest . . . now I love him too, but bending over and hitting a pedal? A bunch of people there were as dissatisfied as I was and he asked me, "What do you think of the band, Percy?" "Well, Dave, I'm tryin'." And that's the last time he asked me my opinion. But I heard one—I finally heard it four or five times and it almost hooked up—a blues, *Red China Blues* [from *Get Up With It*].

**Jimmy:** I think the presentation of the music has gone back to minstrel show time. During the bebop era the guys had pride in what they were doing. They loved that music and they had a lot of pride in it; they didn't make a big show.

**Percy:** They didn't make any money either!

**Jimmy:** It wasn't called a show, it was art. Commercial art and fine art are two different things. What's happening out here now is commercial art, it's not the fine art. The minstrel thing is all the pop tunes, and the thing they're going through now is a kind of return back to giving up that evolutionary black pride that we had a few years ago, giving up and saying, "Well, we might as well show our teeth and buckdance and sing, 'cause that's all we're going to do anyhow; we're just minstrels."

**Percy:** They're only imitating the white minstrels that did it and made it, so they're comelately minstrels, white minstrels on down to

# RECORD REVIEWS

\*\*\*\*\* EXCELLENT / \*\*\*\* VERY GOOD / \*\*\* GOOD / \*\* FAIR / \* POOR

## PAUL DESMOND

PAUL DESMOND—Artists House AH-2: *Too Marvelous For Words*; *Audrey*; *Line For Lyons*; *When Sunny Gets Blue*; *Darn That Dream*.

Personnel: Desmond, alto saxophone; Ed Bickert, guitar; Don Thompson, bass; Jerry Fuller, drums.

\*\*\*\*\*

In his own way, Paul Desmond was a beacon of traditional values, of the classical heritage with its emphasis on balance, shape and form. His improvisations were the product of a sophisticated musical intelligence grappling with the challenge of thematic variation within the Western harmonic framework.

More important, Desmond's alto was a voice of gentleness, warmth and compassion. In an age where points are made by shouting, shoving and hyperbolic distension, Desmond's mode of expressive understatement is still a model of economy and self-control. Though he described himself as "the world's slowest alto player," he really is a perfect illustration of Bucky Fuller's dymaxion principle of doing more with less.

His supposed ascetic coolness seemed a means of establishing distance for the drama he sensed among shifting formal relationships. That made him a romantic classicist. Desmond, though, was moved by more corporeal concerns; his wistful *Audrey* was inspired by the sublime allures of Audrey Hepburn. Desmond, then, was something of a traditional romantic as well.

*Paul Desmond* is a beautiful distillation of the Desmond essence. Recorded live at Toronto's Bourbon Street in October, 1975, these takes are from the sessions that produced the memorable *Paul Desmond Quartet Live* (A&M/Horizon SP 850). The music's special charms come from Desmond's interactions with an audience and group totally in tune with the altoist's approach. The Canadian triumvirate of Bickert, Thompson and Fuller excel in both backup and solo roles.

Aside from music, the album includes an eight page booklet with notes by Dave Brubeck, Nat Hentoff and Don Thompson, a transcription of Desmond's solo on *Line For Lyons* and an exhaustive Desmond discography. Desmond's celebrated article for *Punch* describing a surreal engagement with Brubeck at a New Jersey state fair is here as an example of the altoist's trenchant humor.

Produced by John Snyder's new Artists House label, *Paul Desmond* is a loving tribute to a singular talent who gave us much. —berg

## ROSCOE MITCHELL

DUETS WITH ANTHONY BRAXTON—Sackville ST 3016: *Five Twenty One Equals Eight*; *Line Fine Lyon Seven*; *Seven Behind Nine Ninety-Seven Sixteen Or Seven*; *Cards—Three And Open*; three compositions by Anthony Braxton.

Personnel: Braxton, Mitchell, various saxophones, clarinets, flutes.

\*\*\* 1/2

Just how closely attuned Mitchell and Braxton are to each other's playing is well shown on Braxton's second composition. There is much near-unison playing on this mellow piece for two flutes, with one flute lagging slightly behind the other. Occasionally the lines briefly part, sometimes to weave around each other, other times to go almost entirely separate ways—their rich sound is the only thing that holds them together. Then they rejoin. It's a lovely six and a half minutes. Yet there is nothing to really engage one, to carry the mind and ear, other than the *sound*. And that is what I find lacking on much of this release: most pieces strike me as too loose structurally.

Still, there are some fine successes. Braxton's third piece features closely intertwined playing by soprano (and/or alto) sax and bass clarinet. (Here as elsewhere I am guessing at the instruments played since the album is totally lacking in notes, without even a listing of the instruments played. The reedmen occupy separate channels, however.) The response between the two gets tighter as the work progresses. The reeds alternately play brief phrases, quick bursts of notes, and sustained notes, with large open spaces between the notes and phrases. The piece comes to a conclusion with the bass clarinet playing sustained notes, responding to long notes by the sax just as the sax note begins to fade.

Braxton's other composition is a bouncy, march-like circus tune with a pair of bass saxes shifting back and forth between punchy rhythmic figures and mocking melodic phrases. Near the end of this work one horn lets out a series of deep squawks and high pitched squeaks, with the squeaks finally being repeated as if the sound was coming from a clown walking quickly while wearing shoes with whistles in the soles. The piece ends with the horns marching off playing in unison. It is one of those delightful pieces we have come to expect from Braxton.

Mitchell as composer shines on his first two compositions, each greatly different but very characteristic of his work.

*Five Twenty One Equals Eight* is a light, airy piece on which soft growls from bass clarinet establish a foundation for a floating flute line. Occasionally the bass clarinet reaches into its upper register to blend with the flute. The two instruments then play a descending figure in unison which carries the bass clarinet back down to its bottom register. Near the end the normal Eb clarinet replaces the bass clarinet and with the flute creates a variety of soft, warm breathy tones towards the conclusion.

*Line Fine Lyon Seven* displays Mitchell's love of rhythmic figures played by bass sax. The bass sax repeats, with occasional slight variation, a four note rhythmic figure with the accent on the third note, while the alto sax

plays a twisting, angular line over it.

*Cards*, like Braxton's third piece, makes use of brief phrases, squeals and squawks that seem isolated in the open space that surrounds them. Slowly the interplay between the two musicians, who use a variety of saxes and clarinets, increases. Lines overlap. There is less isolation, briefer and fewer pauses. Horns sometimes are suddenly switched, almost making the piece sound as if there are three voices instead of two. At nearly 11 minutes in length, this is the longest piece on the album and it is too loose for such length. It becomes too fragmented. The lack of development undermines its delicacy.

Finally, Mitchell's *Seven Behind Nine* is one of those series of squeals that goes nowhere, seeming endless despite the mere two-and-a-half minute length.

This, then, is a highly uneven album. But it would be a shame if its strong pieces were neglected because of the weak cuts. Even in balance (which is what the rating represents) it is far from a poor release. —de muth

## CHICK COREA

SECRET AGENT—Polydor PD-1-6176: *The Golden Dawn*; *Slinky*; *Mirage*; *Drifting*; *Glebe St. Blues*; *Fickle Funk*; *Bagatelle #4*; *Hot News Blues*; *Central Park*.

Personnel: Corea, keyboards; Gayle Moran, vocals; Al Jarreau, vocals (cut 8); Joe Farrell, reeds; Aírto Moreira, percussion; Bunny Brunel, electric fretless bass; Tom Brechtlein, drums; Al Vizzutti, trumpet; Bob Zottola, trumpet; Jim Pugh, trombone; Ron Moss, trombone; Charles Veal, violin and viola; Carol Shive, violin; Paula Hochhalter, cello.

\*\*\*\*\*

On the cover of *Secret Agent*, Chick Corea poses mysteriously in trenchcoat and hat. It is an apt image because you never know what lurks within *any* new Chick Corea album. His last album, *Friends*, featured a straightahead jazz quartet. That was a significant departure from his orchestral work of the past few years, which in turn was quite a change from *Return To Forever*. Who knows what's coming next? Chick stares out of the shadows, daring us to guess.

To end the suspense, *Secret Agent* consists of eight Corea compositions and one by Bartok. There are no suites or underlying themes, each piece being independent of the others. There are four driving instrumentals, two lyrical cuts and three vocals. Rhythm is by far the most exciting and prominent element on the album. In fact, several cuts (*Slinky* and *Fickle Funk*, for instance) have very simple changes and almost no melody, although the percussive riffs would keep any joint jumping all night long.

Corea composes from a broad palette of sound on this album. To achieve his effects, he uses a variety of ensembles (ranging from two to 12 pieces), seven different keyboard instruments, and an armful of studio techniques including extensive overdubbing. In *Mirage*, a two minute tone poem, Corea obtains a rich brass choir effect using only himself and trombonist Jim Pugh. On Bartok's *Bagatelle #4* Corea is the only instrumentalist, but sounds like a full orchestra. Bartok's hymn-like piano piece provides the basis for a powerful, mournful cry from the keyboardist. Corea uses a string trio on three cuts—not as a sugary topping on the arrangement but as a main ingredient in it. In *The Golden Dawn* the strings, horns, percussion and electronic instruments all blend together into one explosive orchestral fanfare. In *Central Park* the same instruments become a sizzling Latin band, with

Corea's synthesizer programmed to imitate steel drums.

Vocalist Gayle Moran doesn't move me. Her singing has an unreal, detached quality to it, like she was sleepwalking or hypnotized. Both of Moran's two songs, *Drifting* and *Glebe St. Blues*, have unmemorable lyrics (penned by Moran); on neither does she communicate an emotional involvement. In *Glebe St.* she claims, "I'm just singin' those blues now/Feeling loose and free," but it's not true. She sounds contrived and controlled, not loose and free, and not bluesy at all. Al Jarreau, who sings *Hot News Blues*, is another story. The song contains some heavy-handed lyrics, but Jarreau gives them life. His style is at once more playful and more convincing than Moran's.

Despite its flaws, this album cooks, and good solos abound. Corea and Farrell each have a few; Vizzutti has a nice flugelhorn spot on *Funk* and Bunny Brunel punches out a good chorus on *Park*, as does Airto on timbales. Corea is in control, but his band is with him all the way. —clark

## WOODY HERMAN

CHICK, DONALD, WALTER & WOODROW—*Century 1110: Suite For Hot Band* (three movements); *Green Earrings*; *Kid Charlemagne: I've Got The News*; *Aja*; *FM*.

Personnel: Jay Sollenberger, Allen Vizzutti, Nelson Hatt, Glenn Drewes, Dennis Dotson, Lin Biviano, Bill Byrne, trumpets; Birch Johnson, Larry Farrell, Jim Daniels, trombones; Herman, Frank Tiberi, Gary Anderson, Joe Lovano, Bruce Johnstone, reeds; Pat Coil, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Jeff Hamilton, drums; Tom Scott, tenor sax; Vic Feldman, vibes, synthesizer; Mitch Holder, guitar.

\*\*\*\*\*

Chick Corea has done well indeed by Woody Herman. His *Suite For Hot Band* is full of fine and memorable tunes—the kind you can whistle once you put the record away. While one can't compare it to past Herman epics such as *Summer Sequence*, one must certainly consider it a worthy addition to the Herman body of special semi-concert works.

The first part is full of nervous, staccato flourishes. Corea describes it as a "Stravinsky meets Sousa" sound. And indeed its fidgety turbulence is more than a little reminiscent of the *allegro moderato* portion of Igor Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*, commissioned in 1945 by Herman. Part two is a relaxed, slow burning, blues-like affair with gospel overtones in the down home reed section work. Woody plays clarinet and sings a goodnatured vocal. It's the longest of the three parts, with leisurely, opened-up solos by Pat Coil, Frank Tiberi and Dennis Dotson. The final segment is a string of short solos separated by a familiar Latin theme of Corea's.

The interpretations of the Fagen and Becker (Steely Dan) works seem less impressive by comparison. Thematically, one is left with far less to chew on, and there also is a greater tendency for the pieces to ramble, despite their shorter length. Vic Feldman's vibes work on *Earrings* is busy but boring. The board fade in the middle of his solo suggests the engineer felt the same way. Tiberi plays well on *Charlemagne*, however, and Tom Scott swings furiously on *News* (catch how arranger Feldman works in *String Of Pearls* briefly) in a way you won't hear on his pop packages. And Alan Broadbent has fashioned *Aja* into a lovely orchestration which highlights its sleek, ethereal gleam more radiantly than the original Steely Dan track. Tiberi takes Wayne Shorter's role and plays with warmth and fight.

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—Zan Stewart—

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For those who favor the Herman band at its most contemporary, this album will be a special pleasure. Fans of earlier Herds may also find much to enjoy in the *Corea Suite*. In any case, I find the album a good deal more exciting than the somewhat overrated *Road Father* outing on Century a few months ago.

—mcdonough

## THE SAN FRANCISCO ALL-STAR BAND

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT—Theresa TR 104: *Ape Shape*; *Please Send Me Someone To Love*; *Jomago*; *Giant Steps*; *Time After Time*; *It'll Be All Right*; *Prime Thought*.

Personnel: David Hardiman, trumpet, leader; Bishop Norman Williams, Joe Askew, alto saxophones; Leon Williams, Sonny Lewis, tenor saxophones; Sam Greene, baritone sax; Charles Hamilton, Tricky Lofton, Griggs RoAnc, Al Hasaan, trombones; Frank Fisher, John Hunt, Robert Inglemon, Allen Pittman, trumpets; Willis Kirk, drums; James Leary, bass; Michael Howell, guitar; Randy Randolph, piano; Sweetie Mitchell, vocals (cuts 2, 5); Curtis Shaw, Chuck Reider, trombones (1, 3, 6); Ted Strong, congas (1, 6), Nicolaas Tenbroek, Craig Kilby, trombones (2, 4, 5, 7); Mario Saccheri, baritone sax (2, 4, 5, 7); Curtis Tyler, alto sax (4); Ron Taormina, alto sax (4).

\*\*\*

Trumpeter David Hardiman's San Francisco Big Band is a showcase for Bay area veterans and younger players more often heard in small combo settings. As such it is largely given over to sequential solo blowing rather than ensemble work, reflecting more the unevenness of its personnel than their unity. The stock quality of the bluesy post-Basie charts is underscored by the often sloppy realization of the scored passages, imparting an amateurish, loungey cast to much of the set. Nevertheless, despite raggedy horns and choppy rhythms, Hardiman's group overcomes with sheer verve, swinging with infectious toe-tapping spirit and warmth behind the occasionally lustrious performances of its soloists.

Vamping in stiffly on a funkish bass motif, the band plods woodenly into the stale blues head of *Ape Shape*, warming presently to the heat of a series of boppish solos, notably Hardiman's own incisive trumpet attack and Sam Greene's breathy flutings. Vocalist Sweetie Mitchell gives a genial but uninspired reading to the venerable *Please Send Me Someone To Love* as the band supplies a mellow ambience. *Jomago*, another 12-bar vehicle, finds the group in a loose and swinging groove, with outstanding individual spots by the Websterish tenorman Sonny Lewis and especially the witty and inventive Tricky Lofton on trombone.

Coltrane's *Giant Steps* has begun to replace the customary Parker transcriptions as a compulsory exercise; here Bishop Norman Williams' alto sparks a glossy unison rendition a la Supersax. Mitchell returns for a silky performance of Jule Styne's chestnut *Time After Time* before the ensemble returns to its diluted Kansas City groove on the vigorous but somewhat gimpy title track. Bassist James Leary's *Prime Thought* rounds out the session on its most original note, featuring Bishop Williams in a twisting, driving hop excursion reminiscent of Sonny Criss.

This is one of four offerings on Dr. Allen Pittman's fledgling Theresa Records, a welcome forum for underexposed Bay area talent. Although Hardiman's band does not live up to its all-star billing, it certainly demonstrates that many local San Francisco players are up to the Class A division and a few are ready for the major leagues.

—birnbaum

## GRAHAM COLLIER

SYMPHONY OF SCORPIONS—Mosaic GCM 773: *Symphony Of Scorpions Parts 1-4*; *Forest Path To The Spring*.

Personnel: Collier, bass; Art Themen, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone; Harry Beckett, Henry Lowther, Peter Duncan, trumpets; Malcolm Griffiths, trombone; Tony Roberts, Mike Page, saxophones; Ed Speight, guitar; Roger Dean, piano; John Webb, drums; John Mitchell, percussion.

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THE DAY OF THE DEAD—Mosaic GCM 783/4: *The Day Of The Dead Parts 1-8*; *October Ferry*.

Personnel: John Carberry, narrator; Alan Wakeman, Art Themen, Mike Page, saxophones; Henry Lowther, Harry Beckett, Peter Duncan, trumpets; Malcolm Griffiths, trombone; Ed Speight, guitars; Roger Dean, pianos; Roy Babbington, acoustic and electric bass; Alan Jackson, drums (*Part 6* only); Ashley Brown, drums, percussion; Collier, director.

\*\*\*

Graham Collier, English bassist, composer, and Berklee alumni (via a 1961 down beat scholarship), has spent the last few years immersed in the unique fiction of the English-Canadian writer Malcolm Lowry. Lowry's personal blend of fact and fantasy allowed him to blur the structural parameters of normal narrational chronology and utilize a referential sequence of images, characters, and plots, sometimes piled layer-upon-layer and sometimes juxtaposed through the use of flashback and cyclical repetition. After experiencing Lowry's idiosyncratic sense of design and detail in such books as *Under The Volcano* and *Dark As The Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid*, Collier was able to transfer a number of these techniques to his compositional esthetic, in strictly musical terms, and the initial result was *Symphony Of Scorpions*.

The music has no programmatic intent, since *Symphony* uses only Lowry's structural devices, not his story line. Nor is it a "symphony" per se; despite the fact that it is in four "movements" the nature of saxophonist Art Themen's solo statements in relation to the variegated accompanying orchestral flow makes the work seem more like a saxophone concerto—albeit a la Ellington's similar showcasing of individual instrumentalists.

*Symphony* opens with Themen's tenor, thick and raspy, introducing thematic motives which will pop up later in other instrumental guises. As the rest of the participants add their voices one at a time, the texture thickens until *Part 1* concludes with punch-drunk explosions of polyphony. Themen's soprano seems to be his most fluent horn, and his solo in *Part 2* is full of expressive moans, bluesy bending of pitches, and serpentine phrasing. Collier creates a delicate, slowly evolving, plaintive backdrop which segues into a Kurt Weill-ish two step march, reminiscent of Carla Bley but with a greater sense of ensemble elaboration. In *Part 3* Webb and Mitchell's percussion provides a funkier backbeat for Themen's tenor solo, which suggests the harmonic framework of *Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise*. *Part 4* finds Themen in a Coltrane mood on top of some derivative (though lovely) 1950s Gil Evans moody voicings. As an encore, Themen and guitarist Speight perform a short, pastoral, completely notated duet which will reappear as part of *Day Of The Dead*.

*Day Of The Dead* is a much more ambitious undertaking, taking greater risks and ultimately falling just short of the mark. Twice the length of *Symphony*, it is built upon similar musical techniques but adds the sound of Lowry's words, creating an effect more collage than song. Narrator John Carberry's clear, straightforward, conversational recitation is

meant to coexist on equal footing with the instrumental voices in what Lowry called "the technique of divided attention." One's ears do tend to listen for the meaning of the words before taking note of the parallel musical development, simply because we are trained from birth to do so—and Collier's selection of texts is a fascinating one, focusing upon the protagonist's description of his Mexican surroundings and his battle between booze and love in a dramatic stream-of-consciousness.

Unfortunately, concentration on the musical component reveals that Collier's compositional inspiration is not up to the levels of *Symphony*. There are some interesting *In A Silent Way*-type instrumental voices built around a bass ostinato and pointillistic percussion interjections in *Part 1*, and the four part counterpoint of two voices, trombone, and saxophone in *Part 4* aptly mirrors that section's text concerning the frenzied hallucinations of the protagonist. However, elsewhere the dependence upon thematic reference within a variable timbral palette results in overly subtle, often fragmented flow. The end product again resembles some of the work of Carla Bley and Mike Mantler, however without their melodic distinctiveness or ironic shifts of tone.

The fourth side of *Day Of The Dead* is given over to *October Ferry*, a separate composition having nothing to do with Malcolm Lowry or his techniques outside of the borrowing of the title. The work's typical tripartite structure (slow-fast-slow) instigates a parade of soloists, with only Wakeman's alto, Babbington's bass, and Griffiths' trombone serving above and beyond the call of duty. The rhythm section is supple in the slow sections and simply *burns* uptempo, and Collier's chiaroscuro ensemble colorings indicate an arranging talent even within traditional voicings—one to watch in the future. —art lange

## BRAND X

MASQUES—Passport PB 9829: *The Poke*; *Masques*; *Black Moon*; *Deadly Nightshade*; *Earth Dance*; *Access To Data*; *The Ghost Of Mayfield Lodge*.  
Personnel: Peter Robinson, keyboards; John Goodsall, guitar; Percy Jones, bass; Chuck Burgi, drums; Morris Pert, percussion, Rhodes piano (cut 3).

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By adhering to an arduous schedule of live performances, this English-based fusion unit has finally begun to garner the attention of the record-buying public. With a sound that lies somewhere between Soft Machine and Coryell's defunct Eleventh House, *Masques* finds the group having undergone a personnel realignment. Former X keyboardist Robin Lumley has left the outfit, remaining on as producer. His replacement, Peter Robinson, is a journeyman who has logged time with Stanley Clarke, Stomu Yamashta and the now-defunct Quartermass. The second new member is drummer Chuck Burgi, most recently the thump behind Al Di Meola and Caldera. These personnel changes have worked out well, since this album is a definite improvement on its predecessor, *Livestock*.

Robinson's keyboard arsenal lights the fuse throughout. *Black Moon* is the best showcase for his refined sense of synthesized tricks, with Pert's electric piano also sparkling. *The Poke* features some strident Goodsall power guitar with a barrage of percussive artillery delivered by Burgi and Pert. But the boys get in over their heads on *Deadly Nightshade*, an 11-minute opus filled with a sequence of peaks and valleys that fails to cohere. Good-

sall and Robinson get caught up in a quagmire of furious fusioning and the piece gradually loses impetus as well as interest. Some judicious editing would have helped mightily.

The first two cuts on the flip side share the same deficiencies. *Earth Dance* is derivative to the point of becoming obnoxious, with all that frantic percussion failing to obscure the basic malnutrition of the composition. *Access To Data* features an intriguing riff (underscored by some throbbing Jones basswork), but once the improvisation gets going the excitement quickly ebbs. Goodsall seems hopelessly hung up in the Beck-Coryell school of electric idolatry and whatever voice he has never breaks through.

Another tour de force, *The Ghost Of Mayfield Lodge*, concludes the disc on a better note. Programmatic in its approach (like a modern-day Mussorgsky piece), this phantas-

magoric excursion has moments of charm as well as chill. By far the most compelling cut on *Masques*, it hopefully serves as a harbinger of things to come. For Brand X is definitely still evolving. Now if they can only find the most elusive element, a distinctive voice to set them apart from the mob. —hohman

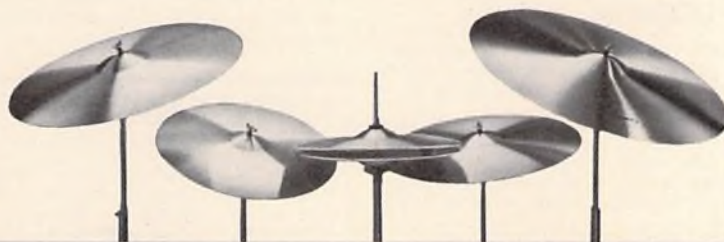
## ANDREW WHITE

ANDREW WHITE LIVE IN NEW YORK AT THE LADIES' FORT—Andrew's Music No. 31, 32: (Vol. 1) *Take The Coltrane*; *Impressions*; *Parker 51*; *Do Y'all Swingin'?*; *Easy Goin' Evening*; *Theme*; (Vol. 2) *You May Be Can't Do It*; *New Blues*; *Giant Steps*; *Pristine*; *Theme*.

Personnel: Andrew White, alto saxophone; Donald Waters, piano; Steve Novosel, bass; Bernard Sweetney, drums.

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total of the music that moves something inside us. Proficiency is often not enough.

All of which is meant to preface my decidedly mixed feelings about these two Andrew White albums, recorded live at New York's Ladies' Fort, one of several lofts that has nurtured creative endeavors. White is a monster saxophonist, whose most obvious reference point is John Coltrane. As you may know, White has transcribed most of Trane's famous solos note for note, which certainly speaks highly of his musical skills.

Unfortunately, (for me anyway), White has overdosed on Coltrane. White is simply too, too prolix. The notes come pouring out at flabbergasting speed, and take good advantage of the alto saxophone's overtone range. But technique aside, these are dull records—which is why I resorted to a double rating. The four stars are for White's prodigious output, and his tart cutting tone. I can't question his musicianship.

But I can express doubts about his taste, which is why I give these records only two stars for overall impact. There is precious little use of space, the rhythm section is just average, and the music is so lacking in variety that what at first is overwhelming, in the end is only enervating.

The performance of *Giant Steps* from volume two is a case in point. The more White plays, the more strident his ideas become, and the rhythm section doesn't even attempt to navigate Coltrane's equestrian changes. No swing, no song, no nothing.

As one of White's titles suggests, *You May Be Can't Do It*. True, very true; I can't, and many others couldn't. But when the means an artist employs are more interesting than the end product, it is time to rethink one's musical goals.

—stern

## RON ODRICH

BLACKSTICK—Classic Jazz 35: *Afro-Disco*; *Espresso*; *Summer Day*; *How Insensitive*; *Line For Lyons*; *Jant*; *Brazilian Wood*; *Bisque-O-Dop*; *Waltz*; *Wood On Wood*; *Idol Gossip*.

Personnel: Odrich, clarinet and bass clarinet; Harry Leahy or Gene Bertonecni, guitar; George Duvivier, bass; Grady Tate or Bobby Rosengarden, drums; Leopoldo Fleming, percussion; David Odrich, guitar (cut 4); Marc Odrich, bass (4); Steven Odrich, drums. (4).

\* \* \* \* \*

Many years ago, the clarinet was replaced by the saxophone as the dominant reed instrument in jazz. In the decades that followed, those who were unwilling to cast aside their hard-earned achievements on the challenging horn found themselves shunted off to smaller and smaller corners of the music. Some dropped out entirely, their stubborn devotion to their first love a poor argument in the face of changing public tastes. As long as Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were at the helm, the clarinet soared triumphantly. But only a few of their younger disciples showed sufficient interest in the new music, bebop, to work at discovering another way of playing. Those who did—Buddy De Franco, Tony Scott, Abe and Sam Most, and the briefly-heard Stan Hasselgard—played surpassingly well, but to increasingly tinier segments of the jazz world.

The reasons for this sudden and historically-unprecedented unpopularity are several: the timbre, which to many still carried with it the "stigma" of earlier forms of jazz; the extraordinary technical requirements of the Gillespie/Parker approach, which tended to discourage many an otherwise proficient player from mastering it; the decreasing use of

clarinets in big band scoring; and, lastly, the unassailable prejudices of other, more "progressive" musicians. The end result of all this, of course, is that the sound of the clarinet virtually disappeared from modern jazz; that is, until the belated resurgence of Ron Odrich.

A peripheral figure on the jazz scene since his early decision not to depend on music for a living, Odrich demonstrates that not only is he still a masterful player, but also one not averse to some well-planned experimentation. On this debut leader date, for which some thirty years were spent in preparation, he has done considerably more than just showcase himself as the stunning instrumentalist that he is. Besides soloing extensively on both clarinet and bass clarinet, Ron also tracked in accompanying woodwind harmony parts tastefully scored by his brother, pianist Jim Odrich. With the exception of Jobim's *How Insensitive* and four Mulligan tunes (*Espresso*, *Line for Lyons*, *Wood On Wood*, and *Idol Gossip*), all of the compositions are Jim's, but the focal interest lies in what Ron does with them.

His influences apparently being late Goodman, De Franco, and Jimmy Hamilton, Odrich commands a deceptively easy-sounding technique, a spring-fresh tone, and a seamless control of the instruments's built-in register breaks. A legato player on both horns, Odrich seemingly experiences no difficulty at all in negotiating passages of incredible challenge; but, fortunately for non-clarinetists, he does not rest his case there. Primarily, he is playing music, and it is a music characterized by crisply-stated danceable rhythms (five of the tempos are Latinized), lilting melodies, and compelling tone colors. With this single release, Odrich will inspire widespread curiosity as to his background and activities all these years. More important, though, is the possibility that he may yet also inspire another generation of jazz clarinetists.

—jack solmer

## STANLEY COWELL

WAITING FOR THE MOMENT—Galaxy GXY-5104: *Ragtime*; *Boogie Woogie*; *Parisian Thoughtfare*; *'Round Midnight*; *Spanish Dancers*; *Sienna: Welcome*; *My Darling*; *Sienna: Waiting For The Moment*; *Coup De Grass*; *Today*; *What A Beautiful Day*.

Personnel: Cowell, acoustic piano, African thumb piano, Yamaha electric grand, Rhodes electric piano, ARP Odyssey synthesizers, Clavinet.

\* \* \* \* \*

TALKIN' 'BOUT LOVE—Galaxy GXY-5111: *The Stoker*; *I Am Waiting*; *If You Let Me*; *What Do I Do?*; *The Stoker*; *Talkin' 'Bout Love*; *(Let Me Love You) Let Me Be Me*; *Here I Am*.

Personnel: Cowell, piano, Rhodes and Yamaha electric pianos, mini-Moog, Serge Tcherepnin Modular synthesizer, African thumb piano; Loretta Devine, Charles B. Fowlkes, Jr., vocals; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Julian Priester, trombone; Clifford Coulter, guitars; Keith Hatchel, electric bass; Albert "Tootie" Heath, drums; Kenneth Nash, percussion.

\* \* \*

Stanley Cowell is a man and musician capable of almost anything, and he's done most of it already. A fine composer and a keyboard performer of considerable range and depth, Cowell has experienced personally almost every phase of the music business from putting the first note on paper to the founding, and presiding over, of an entire record company (Strata-East). Now signed to the predominantly mainstream Galaxy label, Cowell has nabbed the opportunity to concentrate on writing and playing, with none of the bygone administrative and production hassles, and he has already made full use of that freedom. Not only are these two albums strikingly different from past Cowell projects, they are also

worlds apart from each other.

*Waiting For The Moment* was recorded in mid 1977 and released a year ago, a gem of a platter that's been too long overlooked. The only musician herein is Stanley Cowell himself, playing solo piano in a variety of styles (first four cuts), kalimba (cut five), or layering various acoustic and electric keyboards in a melodic, contemporary fashion. The opening *Ragtime* and *Boogie Woogie* are both from Jimmy Heath's *Afro-American Suite Of Evolution* and alternately allow the pianist to display his goofy, cakewalking right hand (on the former) or a mean, smoking left (on *Boogie Woogie*). Continuing his chronology of jazz piano, Stanley gives Bud Powell's *Parisian Thoughtfare* a modern, two-fisted treatment complete with shimmering right hand runs and allusions to Gershwin's *An American In Paris*. Embellished in grand balladic style, *'Round Midnight* evolves into another busy improv, climaxing four tunes' worth of great piano. Side one ends with a catchy thumb piano version of Bill Lee's *Spanish Dancers*, a Cowell facet we've seen before, which is not quite as devastating as the keyboard mini-history just told.

Side two is contemporary jazz, slightly pop, with overdubbed instrumentation solely by Cowell. *Sienna: Welcome*, *My Darling* and *Sienna: Waiting For The Moment* trot out Stanley's entire arsenal of ivories, with Clavinet used for rhythm, synthesizer adding subtle colors, and acoustic piano carrying the accessible melodies and dominating solo time. Very nice tunes. *Coup De Grass* and *Today*, *What A Beautiful Day* play electric and acoustic pianos off against each other, and there's no mechanical animosity at all, just a tasty wrap-up to a light and lively side of buoyant originals.

*Talkin' 'Bout Love* is stranger than any of the modern jazz Cowell played for Strata-East, Freedom, ECM or anybody else, and for a startling reason: this is immediately identifiable as rather straight soul music. With the Henderson-Priester combination and musicians like Coulter and Heath, there are elements of electric soul-jazz to be found throughout, especially on the instrumental overture *The Stoker*. But *Talkin' 'Bout Love* is basically a vocal album, infused with funk, gospel, and r&b. A small print explanation in the liner notes tells us that "All selections are excerpted from the Cowell-Scott musical *Karma*, which was premiered by Hazel Bryant's Afro-American Total Theater, New York City, 1977."

In that light, Cowell's dalliance with the popular song makes more sense. But taken out of their theatrical context, weaker songs like *I Am Waiting* and *(Let Me Love You) Let Me Be Me* are less than sensational. Fowlkes distinguishes himself as an Al Green soundalike on *If You Let Me* and elsewhere, but Devine's voice, while dramatically suitable for some story/songs, is thinner and less impressive. Fortunately, neither singer has that slick crossover sound that would spell trouble for an album concept seemingly bent on love song realism and human alienation. The unusual, free verse blues that Devine sings at album's end (effective lyrics by John Scott) is expressive *because* of its vulnerability.

As material for a musical, parts of *Talkin' 'Bout Love* offer fair to good listening, strongest on the title track or *The Stoker* (both instrumental and vocal versions). Still, the bottom line has to be disappointment for pianist Cowell's longtime fans. They may hear him

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*—Max Roach*



play an occasional riff in the background of this funky album, but the stagefront subject matter is mostly forgettable. Until the chance arrives to see and hear this play in person, you'd do well to pass this one up in favor of the pianistic *Waiting For The Moment*.

—henschen

## BOB JAMES

**TOUCHDOWN**—Columbia Tappan Zee JC 35594: *Angela (Theme From Taxi); Touchdown; I Want To Thank You (Very Much); Sun Runner; Caribbean Nights*.

Personnel: James, keyboards; Eric Gale, electric guitar (cuts 1, 2 and 5); Hiram Bullock, electric guitar (except 1); Ritchie Resnicoff, guitar (3); Gary King, bass (1, 2); Ron Carter, bass (3-5); Steve Gadd, drums (except 1); Idris Muhammad, drums (1); Ralph MacDonald, percussion, (except 5); Mongo Santamaria, percussion (5); Dave Sanborn, alto sax (2); Hubert Laws, flute (3-5); Earl Klugh, acoustic guitar (3-5); Jon Faddis, Mike Lawrence, Randy Brecker, Ron Tooley, trumpets; Wayne Andre, Dave Barger, Alan Raph, trombones; Phil Bodner, Jerry Dodgion, Harvey Estrin, Howard Johnson, George Marge, woodwinds; string ensemble.

★ ★ ★ ½

In the literary world, *Touchdown* would appear in the entertainment category—as a thriller perhaps—and as such be perfectly respectable, sometimes even met with serious criticism. Not so in jazz. In jazz we do not usually display a tolerant attitude towards the “entertainers.” Instead they are vilified, ignored or patronized. The reason, one suspects, is that jazz as an art form is still not broad and established enough to house, without conflict, various subgenres which can be appreciated within their own context and for their own different pleasures. Bob James is no Graham Greene, of course, but lately, along with some brilliant New York session stars, many of whom are called upon again here, he has been tearing down walls between acceptable and not-so-acceptable jazz, and *Touchdown*, his latest bid for our approval as jazz *divertimenti*, is very enjoyable indeed.

The guiding light for *Touchdown* is balance. Working with an inner core of small group stars and relying to a greater degree than before on acoustic instrumentation, Bob James has kept orchestra and string accompaniment to a minimum, thus achieving an intimate and less cloying sound. *Touchdown* may still classify as mood music, but it is not elevator music. Solos are restrained and carefully performed to comply with James' arranging style, which invariably is an even mixture of development and continuity: one solo voice carries over into the next with theme statements and punctuations interspersed now and then as a smoke screen. The transitions between instrumental leads are seamlessly done and the blends with background orchestrations are smoothly obtained.

Bob James, on both acoustic and electric keyboards, is very much in evidence as the leader of the date. Sometimes he acts as an extension to the rhythm section, sometimes he offers contrapuntal contrast to solo voices and ensemble passages, but more than anything his pretty piano decorations serve as the stabilizing force and distinguishing mark in *Touchdown*'s constantly evolving sound pictures.

While there are traces of Henry Mancini in *Angela* and of Quincy Jones in *Caribbean Nights*, it is hard to talk of any specific Jamesian *writing* style. Compositions and arrangements, while catchy and slight, are so subtly developed that one is hard put telling themes and instrumentations apart, a fact which lends credit to the view that Bob James'

24 □ down beat

music possesses not only charm and sophistication, but also integrity. With *Touchdown* James has emerged as the New York studio musicians' Duke Ellington. —gabel

## TOM SCOTT

**INTIMATE STRANGERS**—Columbia JC 35557: *Intimate Strangers (Suite); Hi Steppers, Lost Inside The Love Of You, Getaway Day, Nite Creatures, Lost Inside The Love Of You (reprise), Do You Feel Me Now, Hi Steppers (reprise); Breezin' Easy; You're So Good To Me, Puttin' The Bite On You; Beautiful Music*.

Personnel: Scott, saxophones, flute, Lyricon; Richard Tee, David Paich, keyboards; Steve Porcaro, synthesizers; Eric Gale, guitar; Hugh McCracken, guitar, harmonica; Gary King, bass; Jaco Pastorius, bass (cut 5); Steve Gadd, drums; Rick Marotta, drums (cut 4); Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Chuck Findley, trumpet, flugelhorn; Slyde Hyde, trombone, bass trumpet; Morgan Ames, Maxine Anderson, Maxine Dixon, Paulette McWilliams, Carmel Twillie, background vocals.

★ ★ ½

In Los Angeles, the land of the lotus, where plastic is king, there are striking, even superb musicians who go into the studios. They spend their days there, laying down commercials and soundtracks, providing the lush backing and occasional solo for scores of singers. Sometimes they never come out.

Tom Scott is not one of these: for more than a decade, he's balanced the studios' demands for his facile technique and unerring pop sensibilities against club appearances and concert tours. The archetypal “studio brat,” he's been a phenom since his teens. And in a way, his music espouses existentialism: when you strip away the sophisticated outer layers, you discover there's very little at the core.

*Intimate Strangers*, the first LP designed by Scott in three years, is certainly pleasant, though its lack of conceptual and compositional variety prevents it from being much more than high-rent wallpaper. It's being touted as something special because of the sidelong title suite, which is really quite ordinary: several movements depicting the fantasized one-day romance of a “certain unnamed saxophone player.” Among this collection of pretty pictures, there are a few things to recommend: Scott's limited arrangements encompass some good shifts in texture, and few can touch him for the sort of white soul revue displayed on *Hi Steppers*. His *Getaway Day* solo unreeals an effortless string of riffs that are as old as water, yet seem fresh as a daisy in his able hands. *Lost Inside* benefits from the dependable Eric Gale on guitar (part of the legion of studio vets enlisted for this album); one of his real assets is the ability to sound as sparse and raw as a West Side bluesman, quite welcome amid the studio glitz. *Nite Creatures* is backlit by Scott's undeniable panache, showing that pure disco can be used with intelligence and a dash of wit. But things sink pretty low with Scott's own performance of his own sappy, solipsistic lyrics on *Do You Feel Me Now* (we've had enough songs about the rigors of the road, thank you). And I'm at a complete loss to explain Scott's fascination with the Lyricon, on which he's developed no idiosyncrasy at all; it's just a plugged-in clarinet or sax, depending on his mood.

Side two is mopping up. The names are different, but the tunes remain the same—*Puttin' The Bite* is strictly junk food, and *Beautiful Music* (the record biz's euphemism for Muzak) proves to be a title uncomfortably accurate. The key moment on *Intimate Strangers*, though, comes on *Breezin' Easy*. Scott's tenor break is one of the best examples of his funky, riff-driving style on wax; but the inescapable

reaction to that realization is, “So what?” How long can you polish a shell before you rub through to the empty air inside? I'd have been foolish to expect this music to offer much to *think* about. Unfortunately, there's not much to feel about, either. —tesser

## BURTON GREENE

**VARIATIONS ON A COFFEE MACHINE**—Kharma PK 6: *Variations On A Raga Charukeshi; 63rd & Cottage Grove; Naima; Variations On A Coffee Machine*.

Personnel: Greene, piano (cut 4, add voice); Keshaven Maslak, tenor saxophone, voice (4).

★ ★ ★ ★

It's refreshing that just at the time when the resources of solo acoustic piano seem to have reached a stylistic dead end a thoroughbred iconoclast like Burton Greene should emerge out of the fiery avant garde of the '60s, a Joycian amalgam of Cecil Taylor, Bley, Monk, and Jarrett—a dissident reminder that the spirit of inspired improvisational pandemonium is alive and doing well indeed.

It's tempting to write that Greene's music defies categories; but, in fact, the opposite is true, for he seemingly delights in exploring them, in savoring and reshaping their nuances. A purely conceptual player with functional technique at best, he's a homemade eclectic, as at home exploring the nooks of an Indian raga as paying homage to boogie, stomp and early bebop in the bluesy, sparse *63rd & Cottage Grove* (a Chicago intersection).

*Naima*, hardly a definitive but certainly a unique performance, feels almost free form, unified by Greene's plodding left hand rhythms and morose right hand tinklings. Viable? Almost. Compelling? Yes, emphatically.

Greene is joined on side two by a kindred spirit, tenorist Keshaven Maslak, in a 27 minute free collaboration evoking other happy pairings: Monk and Charlie Rouse, Coleman and Don Cherry. The same tone of wiggly stream-of-consciousness prevails. Greene's role here is largely percussive, an inspirational foil to Maslak's sometimes touching, sometimes bombastic forays. A lyrical interlude balances against brittle, explosive segments; it's the kind of kaleidoscopic music that subtly shifts on each hearing. A finale is a series of travesties of such favorites as the *Stars And Stripes Forever*, *Beer Barrel Polka*, a polytonal (at least) *Dixie*, *Misty*, *Tenderly*: musical Americana meets Lenny Bruce?

A witty, acerbic release. —balleras

## CHARLES OWENS

**THE TWO QUARTETS**—Discovery Records DS-787: *Night Cry; The Key To Life; Eric's Tune; Hit-tin' It; Big Mike; Little Tunk*.

Personnel: Owens, tenor sax; Ted Saunders, piano (cuts 1-3); John Heard, bass (1-3); Carl Burnett, drums (1-3); Dwight Dickerson, piano (4-6); Louis Spears, bass (4-6); Alex Acuna; drums (4-6).

★ ★ ★

The Coltrane legacy continues to cast its spell, and the generation of tenor saxophonists who've come up directly behind him, those now in their late 30s or early 40s, aren't having an easy time escaping the shadow of his influence.

Despite an unusually diverse musical background—including stints with such mainstream performers as Buddy Rich and Mongo Santamaria, pop personalities like Diana Ross and the ever exotic Frank Zappa—Owens' second attempt at establishing his identity as a leader showcases considerable technical prowess but questionable individuality.



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The two quartets concept to a certain extent permits Owens to demonstrate the range of his abilities, but the inescapable conclusion remains that here's yet one more gifted saxophonist chasing the Trane.

Not that Owens entirely misses it. The album's best composition, *Night Cry*, has a lovely piercing quality, but unfortunately none of the five other original songs here manages to build to a similar degree of intensity. Side one's quartet features Ted Saunders, a former pianist for John Klemmer, John Heard, a veteran of Akiyoshi-Tabackin, and Carl Burnett, whose drum credits include the Freddie Hubbard group.

It's an earnest young ensemble, but the group makes obvious its lack of shared performing experiences. Even the impetus of an impassioned solo by Saunders on the slow, waltz-like *The Key To Life* fails to open any new doors for the group as a whole. With this first quartet, Owens fails to establish enough of a clear-cut direction, despite a few promising starts and an interesting exploration of Latin rhythms on *Eric's Tune*.

The second quartet emphasizes Owens' more progressive leanings and here the influence of Coltrane is even more pronounced. *Hitin' It* becomes a kind of academic exercise with its long unaccompanied sax introduction. The Tynesque flourishes of Owens' fellow Berklee alumni Dwight Dickerson lend to the sense of déjà vu, though it's merely a case of players who haven't had time to establish a group identity falling back on their shared listening experiences. The forceful, energetic rhythms of former Weather Report drummer Alex Acuna stand apart from the tepid pace of the proceedings, particularly on *Little Tunk*, the extended minor blues that closes out the album.

Though the supporting musicianship is sympathetic (and in the case of Acuna, inspired), Owens' own playing seems to lack confidence in this context. The idea of the two quartets becomes, in the final analysis, only a gimmick. Developing one wholly successful group setting—preferably Acuna, Heard, and Saunders—would be more than enough to elicit attention to the still developing talents of this skilled saxophonist. And for Owens himself, it might just point the way out of the continuing frustrations of the post-Coltrane impasse.

—simon

## TINY GRIMES

SOME GROOVY FOURS—Classic Jazz CJ 114: *Tiny's Boogie Woogie; Every Day I Have The Blues; Swinging Mama; Some Groovy Fours; I Found A New Baby; Tee-Nine-Sy; Lester Leaps In.*

Personnel: Grimes, guitar; Lloyd Glenn, piano; Roland Lobligeois, bass; Panama Francis, drums.

★ ★ ★

Tiny Grimes is one of a kind. He plays the four string guitar, rather than the usual six string, because that was the first type he ever owned and he has no problem communicating with the smaller instrument. His career has included working with Art Tatum from 1941-44, alongside bassist Slam Stewart, in a combo that the piano giant designated time and again as his favorite, and leading a record date on which Charlie Parker first recorded his own material, that being *Red Cross* (Savoy SJL 2201) in 1944.

Though Grimes has been gigging steadily throughout the East Coast and Europe the last three decades, his notoriety of the 40's hasn't been maintained and he's made only a handful of albums in that time. Yet the work on *Fours* shows that Grimes has plenty to offer fans of blues and jazz, as he utilizes a direct, unfet-

tered approach in a style that hasn't changed much since the times of Parker.

*Fours* is a clean, no-frills quartet date in the blues-jazz genre, with the twelve bar form accounting for five of the album's compositions, each interpreted differently. *Boogie* is rollicking and joyous while *Every* is plaintive, with Grimes staying true to the melody all the way. *Swinging* is that indeed, with the guys all hitting a steady groove. The title track honors drummer Francis, who spends half of it trading those four-bar phrases with the leader. *Tee-Nine* is slow and sultry, a night blues.

The rhythm section, particularly pianist Glenn, who is the perfect foil for Grimes in this context, reinforce the proceedings with their sympathetic accompaniment.

A loose but compact affair, *Fours* will satisfy the needs of those who like a good taste of the blues mixed in with honest swing.

—zan stewart

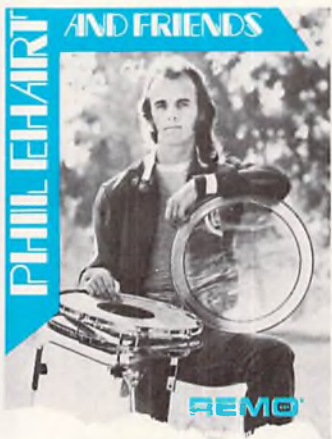
## LESTER BOWIE

THE 5th POWER—Black Saint 0020: *Sardegna Amore (New Is Full Of Lonely People); 3 In 1; BBB; God Has Smiled On Me; The 5th Power.*

Personnel: Bowie, trumpet; Arthur Blythe, alto sax; Amina Myers, piano; Malachi Favors, bass; Philip Wilson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

On the surface a trumpet solo with accompaniment, *3* is actually a trio piece. The immensely articulate Bowie fashions a line that soon discovers a one-note improvisation, then passages of motivic variation, then melodic improvisation sustained to an uncommon extent, often threatening (through Bowie's treasure of inflection) to become dispersed. That he does not succumb to the impulse to try to say everything that he can in this single long solo may well be due his accompaniment—the



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beautifully intoned Favours lines and particularly Wilson's spare complements, as he keeps a quiet, fast tempo atop a cymbal. The drummer's subtlety and control may obscure the quality of technique and sensitivity at the core of his performance here, but he sets the atmosphere for this best track of the LP.

BBB begins as an alto solo with piano accompaniment. After the cold opening solo, Amina solos in Blythe's style, yet adds an indescribable touch of warmth and imagination to make the work persuasive; when Blythe re-enters, she guides him through much of the ensuing duct. The other three tracks are quintet pieces in which Blythe, his obvious technique and sophistication aside, is neither good nor bad, but simply present and active. But Amina's eclecticism, a rather impersonal adaptation of modernist styles to her bop technique, obscures a fleeting but genuinely original romanticism that I hope will be offered on record some day.

Of the quintet pieces, the most interesting is *Sardegna*, just because it sounds like a Tadd Dameron track that was left in the summer sun too long. The odd sound of the two horns together playing the theme, and the strange trumpet solo—Clifford Brown observed through a distorting mirror—combine into a curdled offering in that tetchiest of idioms, the hard bop ballad. Bowie's expressive repertoire and frequent parodic bent may mislead some into anticipating satire or humor here. In fact, the solo is unusually straightforward and rather imaginative, so that only the listeners' previous familiarity with the Dameron-Brown idiom prevent *Sardegna's* immediately being accepted on its own merits.

The other two tracks, side two, finally present that dispersion of resources that often threatens Bowie's performances. The title piece is fast and lightweight, and the greatest share of the blowing is Blythe's. We can be grateful that *God Hus* is not a parody, but Amina's vocal is only ordinary, the trumpet solo that follows fails to project the intended sense of a spiritual, and shortly thereafter, the players abandon the gospel mood in favor of discursive outside playing. At such a time, Bowie's style, for all its originality, seems tentative and fragile at best; the other players also drift during this long track. This LP was recorded in Italy last April; I have not heard the new Horo LP by this group (it must have been recorded about the same time), but the recent Bowie-Wilson duets (on *Improvising Artists*, Inc.) are on the whole more concentrated, and present a more rewarding picture of two of today's outstanding jazz creators.

—litweiler

## ALBERT COLLINS

ICE PICKIN'—Alligator AL 4713: *Honey Hush!*; *When The Welfare Turns Its Back On You*; *Ice Pick*; *Cold, Cold Feeling*; *Too Tired*; *Master Charge*; *Conversation With Collins*; *Avalanche*.

Personnel: Collins, guitar and vocals; Larry Burton, guitar; Aron Burton, bass; Alan Batts, keyboards; Casey Jones, drums; Chuck Smith, baritone sax; A. C. Reed, tenor sax.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

In live performance Albert Collins is by far the most exciting blues artist working today, but until this album he hasn't fared too well on wax. His unique "cool sound," with its biting reverb tone and D-minor tuning, is an important contribution to both the blues and electric guitar technique. His savage attack of repeated notes, sometimes sustained, sometimes followed by dramatic silence, shows an

inimitable sense of dynamics. He's an expressive singer who does some witty spoken monologues. But Collins' storehouse of licks and ideas isn't the most extensive, and three sets will find Albert repeating himself. This doesn't stop him from tearing up a crowd, but it does challenge a producer to come up with two sides of decent variety.

Alligator's top a&r team met this problem head on, and *Ice Pickin'* is definitely Collins' best album to date, putting across his power and charisma without a hint of his repetition. Albert's vocals and guitar are both very strong, and he's consistently pushed by a band that plays everything with skill and feeling. The mix is basically clear and balanced; bass, drums, and keyboards are well recorded and placed behind Albert, who's plainly in command. For some odd reason, though, much of Larry Burton's guitar work can barely be heard, and spoken comments by the band are also just within earshot. But everything else considered, these flubs are minor.

Lowell Fulson's *Honey. Hush!* appears here as medium tempo funk with Albert verbally encouraging his own aggressive solo. *When The Welfare Turns Its Back On You* has gritty phrasing, then Albert grabs an *Ice Pick*, an instrumental with guitar-sax interplay.

*Cold, Cold Feeling* is a slow blues with minor changes and one of Albert's most heartfelt vocals. Alan Batts contributes lively piano on the raucous shuffle *Too Tired*. *Master Charge* features Albert as a falsetto female impersonator, full of charm and humor. The Ice Man talks hip through the long fadeout.

Comedy continues on *Conversation With Collins*, one of Albert's classics. His talking guitar is irresistible, but audience response is a big part of the tune's appeal and it might have worked better recorded live. The LP closes with *Avalanche*, a driving instrumental.

Collins is backed here by some of Chicago's best blues players, most of whom now join him on tour. Horns excluded, the sidemen form a separate established group, the Aron Burton Band. This versatile unit plays its own gigs and has backed Jimmy Witherspoon locally. Aron is a solid, swinging bassist and when he's teamed with Casey Jones, Chicago's most in-demand drummer, the rhythm's always right in the pocket; Aron and Casey are fine singers and showmen as well. Aron's brother Larry, at a partial disadvantage here, has also recorded with Fenton Robinson and Jimmy Johnson. Larry plays a mean lead when he steps out. Ivory-tickler Batts finds time for a steady jazz gig in Milwaukee.

Batts' jazz sets include baritonist Chuck Smith, a veteran of many sessions (including Otis Rush's *Cold Day In Hell*). A. C. Reed is the Windy City's main man for blues tenor; on the scene for years, A. C. has recently recorded with Son Seals and Junior Wells.

Alligator's choice of these sympathetic musicians is a key factor in *Ice Pickin'* success. Effectively sequenced and diverse material was another smart move. Despite a few quirks the album has a rich, full sound, and the spontaneous feeling which an artist like Collins needs to project himself. Past producers haven't let this happen—Tumbleweed Records got a good performance from Albert a few years back but then buried most of it under a sensational horn section. *Ice Pickin'* draws its sensation from Albert himself, and his kind of high energy will even knock out Ted Nugent and George Thorogood fans.

—ben sandmel

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## ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET

CINEMA ROVATE—Metalanguage 101: *New Sheets*; *Trobar Clus #1*; *Trobar Clus #2*; *Ride Upon The Belly Of The Waters*; *Building Your Bouts To Carry All*.

Personnel: Jon Raskin, alto and soprano saxes, Bb clarinet; Larry Ochs, tenor, soprano and alto saxes; Andrew Voigt, alto, soprano and soprano saxes; Bruce Ackley, soprano sax, Bb and alto clarinets.

\*\*\* 1/2

The concept of the multiple saxophone ensemble is one not unique to the San Francisco Bay Area's ROVA Saxophone Quartet, but it is one that they utilize with impressive freedom on this first release on their independent label. Predated by projects like Steve Lacy's *Saxophone Special* and Braxton's World Saxophone Quartet (with Lake, Bluiett and Hemphill), ROVA seems to blend the freer, blowing oriented approach of the former with the latter's more overtly structured conceptualism. With most of the saxophone and clarinet families represented in various solo, duet and group combinations, the tonal variety here is broad enough to hold one's interest fairly consistently. And without a standard rhythm section, ROVA's sense of time is free, with a convoluted yet well-grounded logic of its own.

Contrast plays an important role on *Cinema Rovate*—the contrast between intricately writ-

ten, harmonically adventurous passages and balls-out growls, pops and screams, as evidenced on Ochs' *New Sheets* and Raskin's *Ride Upon The Belly*. As with some of Braxton's scores, parts of *Sheets* sound like monster movie music; the delightfully twisted baroque cartoon music of *Belly*'s midsection is likewise Braxton-influenced. Tonal contrasts surface frequently, too: Raskin's piece opens with a drone-like bari/tenor underpinning, overlaid with a searching, squeaking soprano.

The album's subtitle is "Stories and Studies in Sound," and it is this conceptual approach that is perhaps its most intriguing aspect. *Trobar Clus #2* consists mainly of a series of ten-20 second duets (of which I find the clarinet-clarinet and soprano-bari collaborations the most interesting). #2 utilizes solo statements amidst its thickly improvised surprises.

Aurally most fascinating, however, are the "differential tones" ROVA produces during *Ride Upon The Belly*. Apparently operating in a way similar to the creation of harmonics, these new tones correspond to the difference in vibration between two originally played pitches. The result is an amazing windfall of overtones that create a decidedly electronic ambience.

ROVA's essentially experimental approach doesn't always work, and at their weakest mo-

ments the pieces here seem a hodgepodge of dry atonal and overly intellectual abstractions. This is demanding music that doesn't strike with immediate emotional impact, but most of *Cinema Rovate* comes up startlingly fresh—especially if one takes the time to sit down and really listen.

If you have trouble obtaining this recording (not an unlikely state of affairs) you can order through Metalanguage Records, 2639 Russell St., Berkeley, CA. 94705. —zipkin

## LUCIA DLUGOSZEWSKI/ C. CURTIS-SMITH

CRI 388: *Tender Theatre Flight Nageire*; *Unisonics*; *Music For Handbells*.

Personnel: Gerard Schwarz, Edward Carroll, Norman Smith, trumpets; Robert Rouch, horn; David Langlitz, tenor trombone; David Taylor, bass trombone; Lucia Dlugoszewski, percussion; Gerard Schwarz, conductor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lucia Dlugoszewski has had a long uphill fight to attain respectability as a composer. Though her work was admired by artists and poets during the '50s and '60s, it was not until recently that she began to emerge from her relative obscurity in the music world. The turning point came in 1975, when Pierre Boulez led the New York Philharmonic in a performance of her *Abyss And Caress*, with Gerard Schwarz as the soloist.

Schwarz has established an enviable reputation for himself in trumpet repertoire of every period. Joined here by several other first-rate players, including the composer, he leads a compelling performance of *Tender Theatre Flight Nageire* (1971-78).

Constructed in the form of a dialogue between brass and percussion instruments (including several designed by Dlugoszewski), this work can be compared to a pointillistic painting in which timbres and sonorities provide the subtly contrasted colors. Delicate nuances of phrasing, dynamics and rhythm create little eddies of tension and release, mirroring the work's circular structure. Sometimes the brass instruments are played in counterpoint with one another; in certain passages, trumpets sustain high notes above a bubbling cauldron of percussion; in the third section of the piece, brass glissandi evoke the howling of wolves. Throughout the composition, Dlugoszewski blends the wind and percussion parts by merely suggesting melody and harmony while focusing on coloristic effects that can be achieved equally well on pitched and semi-pitched instruments.

C. Curtis-Smith's *Unisonics* (1976) deals with the problem of making dissimilar instruments sound more like each other. Among the "extended" techniques used to achieve this goal are the bowing of the piano strings and the performance of several simultaneous pitches (multiphonics) on an alto sax. Unfortunately, the piece seems more like a study than a finished composition.

Curtis-Smith's *Music For Handbells* (1976-77), on the other hand, is a masterpiece. Playing a three-octave, 37-pitch set of handbells, ten musicians produce a complex series of overlapping melodies. Dissonances melt into a shimmering, sonorous pool of sounds, pierced at intervals by the abrupt, crystalline music of other handbells being struck. Gleaming like a many-faceted diamond, *Music For Handbells* plunges the listener into a world beyond human passion, where, in Yeats' words, "A golden bird sings upon a golden bough." —terry

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# BLINDFOLD TEST



VERYL OAKLAND

## SAM RIVERS

BY BRET PRIMACK

Samuel Carthorne Rivers, an improvising composer who plays flute, soprano and tenor saxes and acoustic piano, was born in El Reno, Oklahoma on September 25, 1930. A new music leader of both small groups and big bands, he was a fixture on the Boston scene during the '40s, '50s and early '60s, working with such local legends as Jaki Byard, Herb Pomeroy, Joe Gordon, and Gigi Gryce. After moving to New York in '67, he gigged with Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner and Cecil Taylor, in addition to teaching at his own Harlem studio. W. A. Brower interviewed Rivers in *db* 11/16/78.

In 1971 Rivers, with the help of wife Bea, opened Studio Rivbea, a storefront loft and basement that doubled as home and performance space. Rivbea presented a multitude of new music groups in a hassle-free environment; Casablanca/Douglas' *Wildflowers* (in six volumes) was recorded there. But in December '78 Rivbea closed after a landlord-tenant dispute. Rivers continues to tour and search for a new and bigger home base.

Rivers' music doesn't get much radio airplay. But check out his contributions to Cecil Taylor's *Great Concert* (on Prestige) and Tony Williams' early Blue Note dates *Spring* (alongside Wayne Shorter) and *Lifetime*. Rivers' own works include *Involution*, *Fuchsia Swing Song*, and *Contours* (on Blue Note, with sidemen Freddie Hubbard, Herbie Hancock, and Elvin Jones); duets with bassist Dave Holland on *Improvising Artists, Inc.*; trios, *Hues* and *Streams*; *Sizzle* (with electric guitar), and big band charts on *Crystals* (on Impulse).

During February and March, Rivers played some dates with an 18 piece group, and toured in duo with Holland. He'll perform at New Orleans' Jazz and Heritage Festival. He's signed with Tomato Records, and his newest quartet album has just been released. This is Rivers' first Blindfold Test; he was given no information about the music.

**1. MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON.** *A View Of This Life* (from *Clarity*, Bija). Jackson, composer, acoustic guitar; Oliver Lake, flute; David Murray, tenor sax; Leo Smith, trumpet.

That was beautiful but I don't know who it was and I wouldn't want to hazard a guess because there's too many people who play with that kind of feeling. I like the way it sounded. Very beautiful, very mystical. It was very well played. I enjoyed it and thought it was good listening music.

It sounded like most of it was written. To me, it didn't sound improvised except for a few sections. Certain parts were repeated over and over but I didn't try and break it down. It was a well rehearsed piece of music. I would rate it five stars.

**2. ILLINOIS JACQUET.** *Cottontail* (from *Illinois Jacquet With Wild Bill Davis*, Classic Jazz). Jacquet, tenor sax; Davis, organ; Al Bartee, drums.

That was great, too. Really nice, I enjoyed it. It was *Cottontail* and it sounded like Illinois Jacquet, but I'm not sure. Anyway, I'd give it five stars. For myself, I prefer a much looser drummer. But other than that, it was great. The tenor playing, it was hard swing and it felt good. Well played.

**3. GARY BARTZ.** *Giant Steps* (from *Love Affair*, Capitol). Bartz, alto sax and arranger; George Cables, pianos.

That one got me by surprise. The way the opening led to the strings, wow—I was really surprised to hear the strings come in with *Giant Steps*. I hadn't heard that one before! It was beautiful, though. Well played and the orchestration was well done.

It was the standard sort of thing but I'd give it five stars anyway. If I had those same resources I would have done it quite differently. He used quite a few different kinds of styles there—the arrangement was sort of a sponge for everything.

I have no idea who the horn player was, but he sounded good. The pianist, too. What should I say? —it was standard, traditional. I was listening to hear the interplay they had in that particular idiom, and for what they're doing: five stars. I'm not going to bring in anything about creativity or any of those things. I'm talking about what they did. I understand what they did, I can hear what they did, and it came out great and it's five stars.

**4. CHICO FREEMAN.** *Minstrel's Sun Dance* (from *Kings Of Mali*, India Navigation). Freeman, tenor saxophone and composer; Jay Hoggard, vibes; Cecil McBee, bass; Anthony Davis, piano; Don Moyé, percussion.

I haven't heard that record or that track but that's Chico Freeman. Jay Hoggard on vibes. I'm not sure, but maybe Don Moyé on the drums and possibly Fred Hopkins on bass. I'm not sure whether I heard a piano in there or not. But anyway, it was good, very well played.

**Primack:** You seem to like just about everything.  
**Rivers:** Well, you just keep playing me this good music. What do you expect? Five stars for that one, too.

I'm listening for certain things and I hear them. Like how well the piece is played and how the individuals sound. Chico already has his own style. Like on the other record you played, *Cottontail*, the tenor player played so many of Illinois Jacquet's phrases that it reminded me of Illinois. There's a certain identity there and that's what I'm diggin' on this cut.

With that alto player on *Giant Steps*, I couldn't tell who that was. It was really faceless. He played well, but for me there was no real identity there. It was part of the homogenized music. With this cut, there's an identity. I know who it is because he has an individual approach to the music. He can be identified by certain things that will probably be with him for the rest of his career. There are things that you learn and then go on to add to, rather than

dispose of everything. So Chico will be adding on to his playing. He's a hell of a musician now and I think where he's going is very positive. The other musicians on this cut I also recognized and they're also very promising players. They have a great contribution to give to the music. A fresh approach. There is a lot of new music around. Not avant garde but a lot of new music. This cut is new music. Very fresh and exciting. I give it five stars for the performance and five stars for the creativity.

**5. RUDOLPH JOHNSON.** *The Highest Pleasure* (from *The Second Coming*, Black Jazz). Johnson, tenor sax, composer; Kirk Lightsey, piano; Doug Sides, drums; Kent Brinkley, bass.

That was very well played, but I drifted on that one. That doesn't mean anything, though. I just started thinking about other things while I was listening. I found myself wandering from the music, it really didn't hold my attention. But that's because I sort of know what to expect. It was something to think by, improve my concentration, so to speak.

But five stars for what they played and intended. The tenor player was playing the changes really well. I enjoyed it because I'm into that style of tenor playing myself, whenever the spirit moves me. I feel it but not that kind of way, of course.

**6. KEITH JARRETT.** *Sundial* (from *Staircase*, ECM). Jarrett, solo piano, composer.

That was Keith Jarrett. It sounded mostly structured but with some improvisation in the right hand. Well played. Good piano. Nice sound. Five stars.

**Primack:** You know, Sam, five stars indicates a *dynamite* record.

**Rivers:** I would say it is. I'm listening to these records like someone who's been involved with all sorts of different styles of music, and I haven't heard anything where I could say something is wrong. I also listen to enjoy the music and I've enjoyed everything that you've played. I haven't heard any flaws! Everything's been done well.

**7. FRANK STROZIER.** *Neicy* (from *Remember Me*, Inner City). Strozier, flute, composer; Danny Moore, flugelhorn; Howard Johnson, tuba; Harold Mabern, piano; Lisle Atkinson, bass; Michael Carvin, drums.

I don't know who that was either. You know, Bret, I'm sitting here trying to think of a reason why I'm giving everyone five stars, like it's an indiscriminate thing or something. But it's not really an indiscriminate thing at this point because I think most musicians and artists take a real interest in what they do and they do what they can creatively, to the best of their ability. I'm thinking in these kind of terms. There is nothing bad. I don't think any record company is going to release anything they think is bad because it hurts them as a record company and it hurts the artist, too. In a sense, they try to put out the best sounding thing that they can. Everything is pretty well edited and when it comes out it's as close to a flawless piece of music and a good product as possible. I have to think in those terms because they think in those terms. So I judge the music in those terms.

That was another five star record. I didn't recognize the flute player but the playing itself was very good. Very, very good flautist. I also thought I heard a tuba in there at one time but I'm not sure, it was pretty subdued. Nice tune, too. Nice changes.

**8. DON CHERRY.** *Tantra* (from *Relativity Suite*, JCOA). Cherry, composer, arranger, voice, conch and pocket trumpet; Frank Lowe, tenor sax; Carla Bley, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums; members of the Jazz Composers Orchestra.

That was kind of deceptive. The changes went from one period to another which was very good. There was one place where I thought maybe they used a synthesizer, but it could have been violins.

This piece was very well done. Showed a lot of imagination. Nice pulse in a hybrid situation, all kinds of different elements in there. A real fusion kind of thing. Well played.

None of the players sounded familiar. Five stars.

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# PROFILE

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TOM SCHNABEL

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## JOHN STOWELL

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BY TOM SCHNABEL

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When many guitarists are wielding the instrument like some sort of weapon, John Stowell is an anachronism: he plays his amplified guitar as if he were surrounded by fine crystal. People aren't used to the dark sound, the subtle imagery, or the fact that you can play guitar aggressively without being loud.

The truth is that John Stowell cooks, but with a type of energy that's not measured in decibels. Rather, it's the type of slow-burning, sustained energy that you hear in players who practice all the time—Benson, Wes, Jim Hall. It's low-keyed and somewhat deceptive at first, yet one soon realizes just how strong the playing is.

"I know there's a glut of players out now," Stowell began in his laconic yet rapid man-  
30 □ down beat

ner, "but I don't feel threatened because I'm playing in a style that isn't prevalent right now. The prevalent one incorporates more of a rock thing, it sounds more aggressive, the phrasing is different. It grabs people, and many people think it's impressive. Many of the new players seem to be locked into what the electric guitar is, with all the new gadgets, as opposed to just swinging.

"I'm hearing something that's different, something that I think could eventually be an original kind of statement. The sound I like is a romantic sound, one that's darker than most people favor. It comes out of the stylistic niche that Jim Hall has carved, following lines of Charlie Christian and Ben Webster. Most people like a more trebly sound and a more aggressive attack. But if you can tune into Jim Hall's level of subtlety, his use of space, his contrapuntal phrasing, his harmonic and rhythmic imagination, his overall avoidance of preconceived ideas and the tremendous chances Hall takes, well, you'll see just how much this man is saying."

28-year-old Stowell's romance with the gui-

tar started during his early teens in Connecticut, but it was less than love at first sight.

"I chose the guitar because it was just lying around; there was no conscious choice to play it instead of some other instrument. Gradually, however, it got more and more serious and the other interests kept falling away. I got serious when I was about 19 and started studying with Link Chamberlind, who's recorded for Muse and still teaches in Norwalk, Connecticut. After that I studied with John Mehegan. I previously had met John's bassist, then one night went into a little club in Fairfield, Connecticut, and sat in with him. I wound up playing and studying with him on and off for about two years, and that pretty much wraps up my formal training. For the most part, I guess I'm self-taught. Other than Jim Hall I've been influenced mostly by piano players, in terms of phrasing and harmonic sense. Herbie Hancock is a prime example; I don't know many guitarists who can swing with a rhythm section the way Herbie does.

"Many people have come to associate me with David Friesen, with whom I've been doing a nationwide tour. I met him a few years ago at a little bar in the Village called the Surf Maid. There were quite a few good trios playing there—Joanne Brackeen's, to give just one example. I wasn't making a living in music at the time, but rather had the usual day gigs, which for me was driving school buses, taxis, and so on. Dave and I started spending a lot of time together both on and off the stand, since he would stay at my place at Dob's Ferry when he came to New York. He was playing with Ted Curson at the time. One summer, however, I had some time off, so I followed him out to his hometown, Portland, Oregon. We immediately started playing and were pretty well received, since he's already known there. We later went back to New York to do Dave's first record, *Star Dance*, for Inner City. He had gotten some pressure to use a name guitarist, which was right from the business end because I wouldn't have really been an asset in terms of selling a record. It's very political. If you have a relatively unknown leader, which Dave was, you need sidemen who are going to help you sell the record. You don't just use your friends, and talent is only half the equation. How well somebody is known is the other half. But since I already knew the material, I got the gig. The result was a chance to record my own album, *Golden Delicious*, for Inner City. It came right out of the blue and I had very little material prepared, so I was running around like a chicken with its head cut off trying to get a group organized. I got it together, though, and after a weekend's rehearsing, we were ready to go into the studio."

Stowell was fortunate enough to get pianist Jim McNeely, bassist Mike Richmond, trumpeter Claudio Rodito and his fellow Brazilian Dom Um Romao, and drummer Billy Hart. Despite the brief preparation time, there are many moments of remarkable group unity, with Stowell out front, pointing the way ahead. The changes are rapid; Stowell moves through keys like a bargain hunter at a white sale. He always sounds as if he's on the next key, using harmony more to declare departure than arrival, revealing a restless forward thrust. The three Stowell compositions seem to be in permanent flight, and though his melodic statements are often guarded, his guitar sound is very personal, reaching out and urging a high level of group communication.

"I'm very fortunate," he confides, "that In-

ner City has been willing to put out musicians who are not as well known, giving the artists a chance to start out by doing something with a little integrity. At this point in time we still don't have a society that subsidizes the art form, so often it's just natural that musicians are happy to start out by listening to a producer who's got some good commercial ideas about helping them sell a record. It's so tough just to make a living, and there's so much pressure. It's all exposure; if we're marketed more on the radio, in the club, more in the schools, then it could be easier and there wouldn't be this frantic, insane competition to do so much hack stuff, ground out just to make some dough.

"I feel just plain fortunate to be able to make a living making music. Talent's just half of it. Usually you have to be terribly aggressive, and even then it's often who you are lucky enough to meet—hopefully you will be prepared to take advantage of the opportunity. There are lots of guys who play as well or better than I do who deserve at least what I'm getting, if not more. It's just that I happened to meet Dave at a little bar in Greenwich Village.

"Dave and I are coming from totally different places in terms of our conceptual frames of the music. We even look completely different as we play our instruments. Dave is all but waltzing his bass around the stage, whereas I tend to be pretty still. But probably because of this he's helped me to project a sound and an involvement when I play before an audience. He tends to go more for density, while I seem to favor more space. He's bristling with this frantic energy most of the time, an energy that comes out in his playing and which helps him put himself across to an audience. Though our sound is often chamberistic, we're playing at festivals like Monterey, Arcosanti, and Russian River, where there are thousands of people, so projecting that sound is very important.

"Some of the things I would enjoy doing would probably sound out of place in his music. As a general rule, I try to let the music breathe more than he does, which isn't to say that one sound is better than the other. I think the trick is to avoid coming up with something too intellectual, which was one of my problems before I met Dave. I used to come up with little carefully constructed substitutions and harmonic extensions which might have been very hip intellectually, but weren't saying anything melodically. Now I am able to come up with voicings and other things to complement his melodies, and can contribute a lot more to our sound.

"What would I like to be doing when I'm 50? Playing something that's honest, and is an extension of what I'm doing now. The most important thing to me, as an improviser, is to be able to put a stamp or signature on the way I improvise, because then I can take any tune and make it sound like me playing it. I'm sure that most jazz musicians at my age are idealistic about what kinds of statements they make about their music. I can't say that I'll never be tempted to compromise. But I know that Jim Hall has never compromised; McCoy has never compromised. So certainly it's possible to sustain that feeling of being honest about the music throughout your career." **db**

*John Stowell's most recent album, released under his and Friesen's name, also features Gary Campbell on soprano and tenor saxes. It is Through The Listening Glass, IC 1061.*

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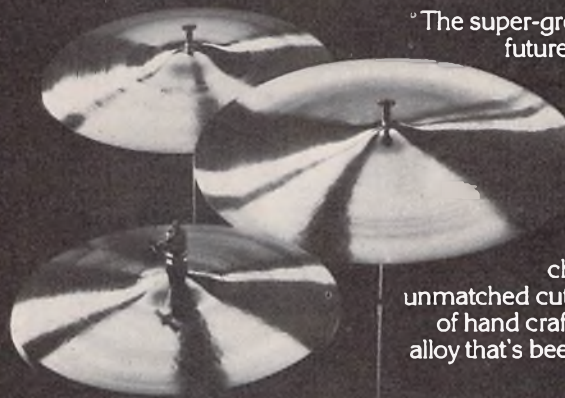
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## TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

BY RICHARD BROWN

**T**erri Lyne Carrington has played with giants from Rahsaan Roland Kirk to Buddy Rich. In addition, the 13-year-old from West Medford, Mass., has done drum clinics with Louis Bellson for Slingerland; she has received national exposure on such TV programs as *Zoom* and *To Tell The Truth*; she has been written up in *Ebony*, *People* and the *Boston Globe*; and that's only skimming the surface.

Terri has 60 or more of the best jazz musicians spreading her name, encouraging her and giving her every opportunity to sit in with them, not to mention her "big brothers" at Berklee, who are always looking after her best interests. "Everybody loves her; even *Max Roach* is crazy for Slingerland," Clark Terry says with a laugh.

Roach heard about Terri when she first sat in on one of his gigs a year ago, but he was quite skeptical that she was anything more than another cute kid beating on drums. After performing with Terri on *Rise And Fly*, though, his skepticism gave way to respect: "It must be a spiritual thing, because you may be 12 years old off the drums, but you're 25 when you play."

Buddy Rich brought her on *To Tell The Truth* when he made an appearance and lets her sit in with his band whenever they come to Boston. The late Rahsaan Roland Kirk frequently performed with Terri, and they last played together in a jazz special that was aired on Boston television only a week before his death.

She has also had a special relationship with Clark Terry, who sends her postcards filled with encouragement when he is on tour, signed "Love, Uncle Clark." "I may be partial, but she's making jazz history," he said. "She's a great talent; not just from the standpoint of being a little girl, but because she's a great little drummer. I've watched her grow over a number of years and listened to her work in many different settings, sometimes in big bands without proper rehearsals. She did a magnificent job with us when she sat in with our all-star group at the Wichita Jazz Festival and also when she sat in with my group at Cape Cod, and each time I hear her she sounds more and more professional.

"I like her because her head is in the right place," he continued. "She hasn't gotten carried away with it all. She's still a sweet little girl, and she has the right temperament for success. Terri's a little demon, cute as she can be, and I just love her."

Terri's musical talent was passed on to her from her father Sonny, who is the president of the Boston Jazz Society and plays tenor sax. Sonny's talent, in turn, was passed on to him from his father, the late Matt Carrington, who played drums with Fats Waller and Duke Ellington, among others. "I couldn't help but be



RICHARD BROWN



inspired to play jazz, because my father was always playing it," says Terri.

Terri's career began at five, when she played tambourine and sang along with Raasaan Roland Kirk on *Volunteered Slavery*. Inspired to play saxophone by Kirk, Illinois Jacquet and her father, and with a deep desire to graduate from the tambourine, she took over the alto sax that was just lying around the house and asked her father to teach her to play it. She was becoming a precocious alto saxophonist at the age of six, until the loss of her two front teeth ended that career.

When she was seven, she discovered her late grandfather's drum set in the basement of her home, and decided to have another go at music, this time as a jazz drummer. "The old drum set was the only other instrument in the house that she wanted to play," her father reminisces. "I didn't try to encourage her to play the drums at that time, because they were bigger than she was, but she begged me to bring the drum set upstairs and said she could play them if I set them up."

Sonny started her off with the "easy four" music of Otis Redding, James Brown, Cannonball Adderley and others, and taught her all he knew about playing the drums. At ages eight and nine, Terri studied with John Woolly at the Lexington Music Center. According to Terri, it was between the ages of seven and ten that she began to pay dues, sitting in on jam sessions at Wally's. At that time she confronted another problem common to her age group—she could only play at Sunday afternoon concerts because she could not stay up late enough for night gigs.

No matter. "I began to build a reputation for myself," explains Terri. "I would sit in on every concert I could, and soon people began to hear of me, and *they* asked *me* to sit in." She is quick to acknowledge the debt she owes to all of the musicians who helped her back then, including Ricky Ford, Bunny Smith, Bob Neloms, Maggie Scott, and, of course, drummer Alan Dawson, who has known her since birth and has always been one of her primary sources of inspiration.

At the age of ten she went on to study at Berklee with Keith Copeland, who her father says, "did the most for her from a technical standpoint." At 11, she became the youngest musician ever to receive a scholarship at Berklee because of her stellar performance with Oscar Peterson at the 1976 Boston *Globe* Jazz Festival, which Berklee President Lawrence Berk attended. Berk was so awed that he offered her the scholarship on the spot. "We don't normally teach special students like her," Berk points out. "She's probably the only one here for whom we've made an exception. Remember, we are a fulltime, accredited college; but she deserves all the help we can give her." At the age of 12 she became the youngest musician ever to endorse Slingerland drums and Zildjian cymbals; also at this age, she went on to study percussion with Tony Tedesco, her present teacher.

She admits that even after eight years of public performances she still experiences stage fright, but she scoffs at the importance of this admission. "Every musician of every shape and form has stage fright, or they *should*. If they don't it means they don't care about what the audience thinks of their performance. To go up in front of all those people and realize that they all came to see you—it's enough to make you nervous. *I have* to perform well, because of all of the people out



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there who have heard of me."

She shines most brightly as a soloist, and at a Jackie McLean gig at Sandy's Jazz Revival last September, the audience was impressed by her tasteful drum solo, based upon three loud and rapid intermittent attacks on the bass drum, occasionally altered with groups of four or two. As she demonstrated that night, it is her grasp of the formal concept of music that gives her playing real depth. She was not happy with her solo, though, perhaps for the same reason that she dislikes listening to tapes of her performances. "I don't like to listen to those things, because I know I can do better all the time."

Or, perhaps it was because she was using Alan Dawson's drum set: "When I play with Alan or Clark," she had told me, "or with any of the few people whom I really admire, I don't play as well as I know I can play."

Her goal in music? "I want to be a total musician, which includes writing and arranging music. I don't want to be known as just a drummer.

But that's not all. "To me, the most important thing is to do well in school, and to be with all my family members as much as possible . . . they're very warm and supportive people. These things come before drums. I mean, drums isn't everything." **db**

## CAUGHT!

### STEPHANE GRAPPELLI

THE EARLE  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

**Personnel:** Grappelli, violin; Dis Disley, John Etheridge, guitars; Brian Torff, bass.

We should all swing into our seventh decade with the verve and creative vitality of Stephane Grappelli. Grappelli's exuberant performance proved again that age has nothing to do with inventiveness or ability to play; the blue jean-clad violinist almost effortlessly dominated a long and satisfying first set.

We caught Grappelli and the Dis Disley Trio on the second night of a two-night stop-over at the Earle, an elegant new basement club in downtown Ann Arbor. Grappelli first came to prominence in 1934 as co-leader with Django Reinhardt of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France; the instrumentation of this touring group was close to that of the earlier band. The quartet basically plays in a swing idiom, but in Grappelli's talented hands that style can still delight with its strong pulse and effervescent lines.

Grappelli opened the set with *Just One Of Those Things*, dancing buoyantly over the chunky pulse. Here, and on most of Grappelli's solos, both guitarists strummed four-to-the-bar chords while Torff walked. Etheridge soloed on *Things* over Disley's rhythm guitar, while Disley, supported by Etheridge, took a ride on the second tune, *Fascinating Rhythm*. Both players are fluent and crisp-fingered, with common roots in the swing idiom; their detached legato lines contrasted nicely with Grappelli's smoother improvisations. *Golden Rain*, an airy Jean-Luc Ponty waltz, had more modern textures, particularly in Etheridge's quartal voicings. *Undecided* offered classic up-tempo swing.

*The Man I Love* functioned as a feature for bassist Torff, the lone American in this international group. Torff's approach to the acoustic bass echoes players, including Ron Carter and Richard Davis, who contributed to the mid '60s revolution in bass playing. Despite the stylistic differences, Torff's solos and accompaniment in no way clashed with the overall swing approach. His solo here was an excellent display of near-virtuoso technique and inventiveness.

After a fast *Pent-Up House* (a Sonny Rollins

tune), some reworked Edvard Grieg and *After You've Gone*, Grappelli told the audience he was going to play some piano. "To give the band a break." I had thought of Grappelli only as a violinist, but he turned out to be almost as adept as a pianist, displaying considerable command of the keyboard. Not surprisingly, he plays stride piano, with echoes of Art Tatum in his rippling sixteenth-note runs; his medley included *Time After Time* and *Tea For Two* at successively faster tempos.

His younger sidemen rested, Grappelli and the reassembled group ended their set with music they recently recorded for the film *King Of The Gypsies*—the splashy two-beat rhythm and emotional Gypsy scales were a natural for the band. The audience demanded and got an encore, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, with a soaring Grappelli solo with rich, romantic vibrato and near-squeal high register to fittingly close an enjoyable performance.

Opening for Grappelli at the Earle was a quartet led by local flugelhornist Louis Smith, with Rick Burgess, electric piano; Max Wood, bass; and Randy Gillespie, drums. Smith, who has an album out on SteepleChase, smoothly probed his way through four standards in a late '50s hard-bop style; the group's muted, almost restrained approach made an interesting contrast to the hotter playing of Grappelli and Disley's trio. —david wild



DAVID WILD



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the ridiculous: Kiss and miss and punk and funk and junk. Not only the black, it's the whole world that's gone for bullshit and flamboyance. I am the greatest. If everybody says "I am the greatest," somebody's lying. How can everybody be the greatest everything? I am Number One. What do you *mean* Number One?

**Jimmy:** It's the whole society. At football games and everything, everybody sticks up their finger and they're Number One. Everybody wants to be Number One, but who is Number One? Nobody. Everybody's the same. If a guy like Coltrane plays a whole lot of saxophone, he does his life's ambition and works the way he wants to and he's very good at that; so is he Number One over Sonny Rollins or Dexter or whomever? I've seen any one of those guys look like a baby on any given night. So this whole idea of stars is all a big hype. Nobody is a star. We're all people. I do different things than you.

For 30 years I've been in music, trying to do the best I can. I practice my instruments every day and try to better my writing and playing for the people; it's not just for me. But there are so many blocks out there that keep you from getting your stuff to the people.

Regardless of whether they accept it or not, I'm still going to be trying to be a better musician all my life, until I die, that's all. Any watering down and I'm not satisfied with it, and if I'm not satisfied with my own stuff I don't believe that anybody else can be satisfied. But I'm grateful if a lot of people pick up on it, if

my music really knocks them out. I ain't too carried away with the material 'cause we all gotta split from here and leave it anyway!

**Percy:** I don't need too much money. I've got to make a living but that's it. Take a couple of months off and go fishing, that's enough. But the powers that be, not only have they not considered the art form and taught the nation the appreciation of it, they have really stifled the creativity this way. If a kid finds out he can play less and make more, that kills the desire for him to ever play more. And it also kills the influx of thousands of kids who would say, "I'm going to learn how to play my horn, too, and I'm going to learn how to play some of what Charlie Parker did and some of what Johnny Hodges did and some of what everybody who's gone through before has done. The powers that be have stifled the kids' . . .

**Jimmy:** . . . *individuality.*

**Percy:** Individuals trying to express themselves on instruments is the hardest thing in the world to do.

**Jimmy:** But there are still some out there learning the traditional way.

**Percy:** A few, like Tony Purrone.

**Jimmy:** He liked Wes Montgomery when he was nine.

**Percy:** That style and that concept of playing, he's been devoted to it for ten or 12 years. Stanley Cowell, too. But how many Purrones and Cowells could there be? It has a lot to do with the lack of future in this music. Do the kids say, "Well, I would love to be a jazz musician but Bird died without a penny, and so did thousands of others who played jazz and devoted their lives to it, and have died penni-

less, like Fats Navarro?" Kids say, "I ain't going to devote my life to that 'cause I ain't going to get nothing out of it."

**Jimmy:** But there's still some people coming out. There's students coming out who are playing because they've got teachers like Frank Foster.

**Primack:** What about the upsurge of jazz education programs around the country?

**Jimmy:** The only thing I find lacking in that, after being a judge for a couple of college band festivals, is that their repertoire is not indicative of the music. Everybody plays Sammy Nestico arrangements and he writes like Ernie Wilkins and Frank Foster used to write for Count Basie's band. Like Thad Jones used to write. Nestico's in everybody's book but none of my arrangements are in the colleges. None of Frank Foster's and none of Ernie Wilkins'. Thad gets in because his thing is connected with the music paper company. The music they get in schools is really not representative. They get to the fusion thing, they get some Chick Corea arrangements 'cause he's a pop musician.

**Percy:** And it's labeled jazz.

**Jimmy:** But Chick's been through the tradition.

**Percy:** I'm talking about the product that they're selling now.

**Jimmy:** They sell an image and he's got that image. Regardless of what you play, after you receive a certain image and a certain stature, the people just keep on buyin'. There's another thing that's strange about this fusion dance music: it was anti-improvisation for a while, but it seems to be gettin' back to it now.

**Percy:** They're taking it as far in a certain



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direction as they can and they go all through the funk rock, stink rock, all the fusion . . .

**Jimmy:** Mellow rock.

**Percy:** They're mellowing back off. I hope it rocks out eventually. What they've done has confused people. Jazz was never pop music.

**Primack:** Now they've got chicks moaning in time with the music.

**Percy:** Yeah, any kind of sexual, do-it-to-me-baby. I heard one comin' in, "Shoot me baby, shoot me with your love." Any two word phrase that will fit against that beat, it's a hit. Somehow they've removed the category of jazz and thrown it in with everything else. Jazz players are taking part in this prostitution, too. A certain cat came down to the Vanguard when we were playing and told us, "It's the only way to play, baby." Oh, is it? It's the only way for him, not for me. I've got to go back to being a mechanic if I've got to conform to what the current craze is, 'cause they come and go. Our group built up our audience over a long period, and it's there. The music is recorded. Sometimes I go back and listen to some of those things I did in '57 with the Modern Jazz Quartet when we were really creating and trying to prove that this music was more than just "all that jazz." The connotation America has given it is that jazz means bullshit. All that bullshit. When they remove that stigma from the music and look at it in a different way, then they will have accomplished something. But the reference to jazz common in society today, "all that jazz," irritates me everytime I hear it because it seems to imply that the music is bullshit. And then they refer to the other music as serious music—shit, man, the music we play is serious

as all hell.

**Jimmy:** I've been serious about my music everyday for over 30 years.

**Primack:** Let's talk about *Passing Thru* . . . I love the pictures of the old jam sessions on the back of the album.

**Percy:** Those pictures are just various scenes the brothers have passed through. It's a continuing theme from our album on Strata-East, called *Marchin' On*. That album had a picture of Momma and Poppa on the cover in their marching uniforms and so that was carried on in the second album, marching on and passing through the scene.

**Jimmy:** We have passed through a lot of scenes.

**Primack:** I hope we haven't seen the end of the era of jam sessions.

**Percy:** They may make it back if they can possibly stimulate a rebirth of interest in the continuation of this art form, which I hope Columbia will do. They say they're going to do it. They're putting their machinery behind it and if they can sell an inferior product then they should most certainly be able to sell the real thing, if they really want to sell it. They could permeate the media with it.

**Jimmy:** Bret, you mentioned jam sessions; we used to have jam sessions in our house in Philadelphia with Johnny Coles, the trumpeter, and Ray Bryant and Coltrane and Benny Golson. A lot of cats would come by. Mom would fix up a batch of sandwiches and Kool-Aid and we'd jam and play music and just exchange ideas. Philly at that time was crowded with jazz musicians.

**Primack:** Why has Philly been such a hotbed for good players?

**Percy:** It's close to New York and cheaper.

**Jimmy:** The black community itself was closer in Philly and Baltimore and places like that. We would always go over to each other's houses and play. This was the folks' music at that time. We'd go over to Mrs. Coles' house and play in the living room and she loved it. All the neighbors would be standing around lookin' in.

**Primack:** After all these years, the brothers are finally playing together again.

**Percy:** It's marvelous. It's something we hadn't been able to do because of my being busy and successful with my thing and Jimmy was doing his thing. But in '75 we started by playing a tour of some cellars in Europe and that was some of the greatest music I've ever been involved with. But the thing that hurt me the most was that even though we had the family thing together—Tootie was playing with us at the time—and we had all that feeling in the music, we couldn't get recorded. Nobody wanted to record us. I made records for Atlantic Records since 1947 when Nesuhi and Ahmet Ertegun had a little fifth floor recording studio on 54th St. with a little elevator you couldn't even fit a piano into. After the break-up of the MJQ, I sent up a tape to whomever was in charge of recording there and asked for consideration for an album. I was refused and told that was not what they were recording at that time. That was the biggest disappointment ever in my life, as far as being loyal and whatnot to a record company. We still get royalties from those records so they're obviously still making money from MJQ product. And not to give me a one-album shot with my brothers was the biggest slap in the face I



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**HEATH**

continued from page 37

ever got. Besides that, some other company asked Jimmy to include a hit on any record we were to record, like the current saxophone craze at that time—if we did that, they would consider signing us.

**Primack:** How did you get hooked up with Columbia?

**Percy:** Accidentally, more or less. I saw Bruce Lundvall at Dexter Gordon's first recording session down at the Vanguard and he asked me casually what I was doing. I told him I had a group with my brothers and that we'd been having a good time with the music. He said he'd like to hear it and I told him I'd send him a tape. One year later we made the record.

**Jimmy:** Bruce said that one of his favorite records was the one I made with J. J. Johnson on Riverside.

**Percy:** Oh yeah, he knew us. He knew all of us.

**Jimmy:** He just didn't know what we were doing at the time.

**Percy:** He knew the brothers because he knows the history of the music. Bruce Lundvall is a jazz fan.

**Jimmy:** For me, playing with my brothers is the ideal situation. I've always been a freelancer, but as far back as my first record date, I've had my brothers on my records. Through the years Percy was so well established with the MJQ that we couldn't even get together to discuss it, 'cause we had nothing to offer. After MJQ broke up, there was no doubt that we could be considered as one of the better musical groups out here. Then after we got together something happened with my brother Albert and my brother Percy. Well, they differ so much. I'm always in the middle of everything. I'm the middle brother and I'm in the middle of the road musically. See, there's a ditch over on this side that's rock and roll and strictly commercial, and then there's a ditch over on this side that's sticking to something that's been done already, and here I am in the middle. I feel musically in the middle and brotherly in the middle. I tried to keep these guys together as hard as I could 'cause Percy has one attitude about music and Tootie has another. Me, I'm flexible. I've always been that way. I don't want the cheapest pair of shoes and I don't want the most expensive pair. I buy the middle. I tried to keep it together but somewhere we got lost in the concept of where we wanted to go.

**Percy:** What ditch are you putting me in?

**Jimmy:** If we had stuck together as the three Heath brothers, anything that we would have played would still have our own identity. If it was funk on this song, if it was jazz on this song, if it was ballads or a symphony.

**Percy:** Even the connotation of funk stinks.

**Jimmy:** That's just a term.

**Percy:** I don't even want that near my music.

**Jimmy:** See, I tried my best to keep it together. Tootie has his own band now.

**Percy:** I didn't want no fusion band.

**Jimmy:** Tootie wants to play his own music and be recognized for himself. We had reputations going for us and he wanted to do his own thing, so now he's doing it.

**Percy:** And I didn't want a fusion band and that's what he's come up with a year later, a bunch of fusion music, which is neither here nor there as far as I'm concerned.

**Jimmy:** Well, when we get to that, I believe

that the MJQ was a fusion band.

**Percy:** You always said that.

**Jimmy:** It was a fusion between Western classical music and American jazz.

I think the instruments is what it's really about. I still think acoustic instruments sound better than synthesizer, which sounds like a big accordion or a steamship whistle. I've checked out the Oberheim; I'm a student of music. I've checked out the rock people, the fusion people. I like Earth, Wind & Fire. I like their purity, their non-negativity in their lyrics. See, I'm not opposed to everything I hear.

**Percy:** Well I'm a little older and maybe I've missed the time limit where one can accept juvenile music as being the criteria to base my music on—the most elementary of beats, the march, to bring it back to where the drum is the dominant instrument in the formation ... Jimmy, you got it.

**Jimmy:** I like it.

**Percy:** I don't like it for nothing but dancing; it's annoying to me to get down and listen to it. You can express your tolerance and leniency, you can be in the middle, but I've made up my mind and I do not like it.

**Jimmy:** That's what I'm saying. In the case of me and you and Tootie, you're at one end and he was at the other.

**Percy:** And his end was ridiculous.

**Jimmy:** To you.

**Percy:** Did you want to turn into a funk band?

**Jimmy:** No.

**Percy:** I told Tootie, "We really got it, baby. You play better bebop drums than anybody out here. You're the best drummer I know, baby, and let's go on and play this music that everybody else has thrown aside." But I'm not responsible for his choice. He went through a lot of drastic changes during that period. This change here, he was going to be the world's greatest rock drummer.

**Jimmy:** That change started when he was playing with Yusef.

**Percy:** He started changing into more show-oriented material. It's just sickening to me, that he was affected by going for the money. It was a drag to give up when, as far as I'm concerned, he's the best I've played with—besides Kenny Clarke, that's a different category. But Albert Heath was the best young drummer around here in that type of playing. He gave that up because he wasn't receiving recognition or money or whatever it was he wanted out of it.

**Primack:** So Keith Copeland is now your drummer.

**Percy:** Yeah, he's Ray (the trumpeter's) son, he's 32 and very conscientious. He's been a teacher, and he really knows this music. He has a naturally inherited feel, he grew up around it so it's not too difficult for him to relate to the type of feel I appreciate.

**Primack:** How did you hook up with Tony Purrone?

**Jimmy:** I had been doing some single gigs up in Connecticut with Sonny Costanzo, the trombonist who's also the head of the music department at Housatonic Community College. I used to go up there and do some teaching and work gigs sometimes. A lot of times I would get there and it was just me, guitar, bass and drums; and the guitarist, Tony, was a very sympathetic player. He knew the repertoire and he didn't play nothing like the funk type guitar.

**Percy:** Watch it, James, you're going to state

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your real preference in a minute.

**Jimmy:** Oh no, I don't like no funk guitar. I don't like the *whang whang whang*. But I told Tony that on my next record date I'd give him a chance to make it and of course he was happy about that. When we got this record, usually the powers that be make you use a certain stable of players, which I think makes every record sound alike. My friend Hubert Laws is on every record! But I wanted to have a guitar player who *played*. Tony was great, man. Now, as a member of the group, he's having the time of his life. He's never been anywhere before. You should have seen his face when we opened last November at the Vanguard. All the musicians always come down and the name people were coming in every night to hear us. I was introducing him to those people and he was knocked out. He said, "Is that Joe Zawinul? Is that George Coleman?" He really loves these people and that love is in his playing.

**Percy:** They're his idols and that's the kind of continuation that should go on. Now Stanley Cowell, he's been with us since the beginning. I love him.

**Jimmy:** Actually, I've been playing with Stanley for about ten years. I made a record with him with Music Inc. and then I met him in Sweden when Tootie played a thing with Art Farmer. Stanley was playing with Max Roach, and after he left Max we started working together. We went on three European tours which I organized, taking Stanley and Billy Higgins and Sam Jones and Curtis Fuller. It was nice music and we had fun. Then we started the Heath Brothers and now Stanley is like the fourth Heath Brother.

**Percy:** That's how we introduce him, Stanley Cowell Heath.

**Jimmy:** He's a group-thinking person. He suggested we record *Marchin' On*, 'cause he had a record company, Strata-East, at the time. Stanley is a friend and one of the best musicians I've ever heard. His concepts, his ability to adjust to different situations...

**Percy:** His knowledge of the whole music, that's the thing. He knows all of it and he loves it.

**Jimmy:** Before Stanley settled down and really began to play with the group called the Heath Brothers, he was playing what they called at that time free and avant garde, more impressionistic kind of stuff. But I think Stanley really matured in the sense of swing since playing with Percy Heath. Stanley could already do everything on the piano, but from my observation he grew out of that experience—in fact he grows out of every experience that he's in. We really think Stanley belongs with us.

**Primack:** Summing up...

**Percy:** I'm very happy that we're part of Columbia's atonement, the restitution they're making, to restore the love and peace and some other emotions in this music, other than chaos and confusion. I hope that our product is worth their effort. They're going to put their machinery behind our product. We're very happy and fortunate and hope that this will be a turning point for others of authority and position who are able to do something for this art form that I've dedicated 35 years to. May jazz's cultural contribution to this country be recognized as that. I'm grateful to Columbia and Bruce Lundvall and all the departments up there for exploiting the real thing, and using the real thing to make money. They can create the market. So, we'll see. **db**

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# HOW TO

## MAKE VOICINGS SPEAK CLEARLY PART I

BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

The ear tends to hear overtones subconsciously, as part of that tone quality which distinguishes an Amati violin or a Zildjian cymbal, a Caruso or Crosby. Although many musicians learn much about overtones as part of their playing skills, say violin harmonics or trombone alternate positions, few seek out all the overtones to compare their relative strengths or especially to weigh their effects upon voicings. Those who do, though, can expect to sharpen their aural sensitivities as well as to deepen their insights into voicings.

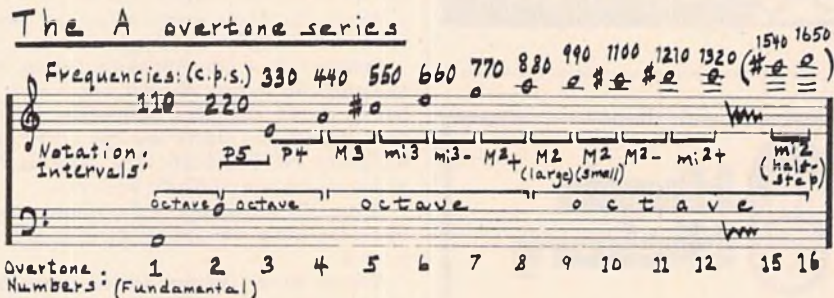
Because of the important roles overtones play both in coloring tone and in characterizing chords, Part I of this article will focus on the overtone series itself and on its relationship to voicing. Part II (db, April 5) will then continue into spacing, pitch area, component doubling and omission, and other such voicing generalities.

...

### OVERTONE SPACING VERSUS INTERVAL NOTATION

Because its adjacent pitches lie the same number of cycles per second apart—the frequency of its generating fundamental tone—the overtone series is equally-spaced in mathematical terms. In musical notation, though, equal frequency spacings don't add up to equal intervals. Instead, notated intervals narrow as equal frequency-spacing ascends. Where the overtone series stacks its components arithmetically (110, 220, 330, 440, 550, 660, etc.), notation stacks its octaves by an exponent of 2 (110, 220, 440, 880, 1760, 3520, etc.). Since the octave above any overtone is always twice the lower overtone's number, say overtones 1 to 2, 2 to 4, 3 to 6, or 4 to 8, the upper note always carries an even overtone-number. Odd-numbered overtones therefore always require fresh letter-names.

The following example illustrates the above points:



The example shows that as overtone series ascends, more and more overtones appear between notated octaves. None, for example, appear within the bottom octave, one within the second octave, and three within the third. Seven more would appear if the example showed the entire next octave, and fifteen more in the next, in which intervals would become smaller than a half-step, standard notation's smallest.

### OVERTONE TUNING VERSUS THE TEMPERED SCALE

The tempered scale is a human adjustment of nature's pitch balance within the overtone series, a compromise between tonal blend and harmonic utility. It replaces the arithmetically-equal spacing of the eight intervals between overtones 8 and 16 with exponential spacing among seven diatonic whole and half steps, and expands the fifteen narrower-than-half-step intervals between overtones 16 and 32 to the twelve half-steps in the chromatic scale. Harmonically, it raises major thirds and minor sevenths and augmented elevenths a mite above their matching 5th and 7th and 11th overtones, and lowers the major ninth a tad below its matching 9th overtone, meanwhile leaving the more sensitive perfect-fifth intervals (3rd overtone) pure enough to tolerate. Tempered-scale intonation sins must be excused; no other tuning allows the extensive modulation modern music uses.

### RELATIVE OVERTONE STRENGTHS

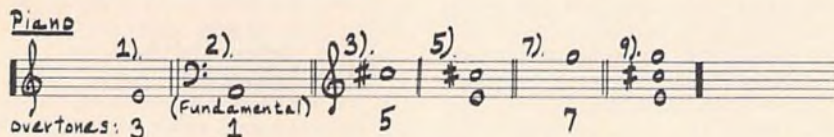
In general, the lower the fundamental, the longer and stronger becomes its discernable overtone series, and the higher the overtone number, the weaker it becomes within the series. The high-numbered overtones of high-pitched fundamentals therefore are at best subliminal, and the high-numbered overtones, around 13 and up, of even the lowest-pitched fundamentals usually become so faint as to defy detection. Within these generalizations, though, many variations occur—individual strings and individual pipes and individual instrument-types all tend to emit dif-



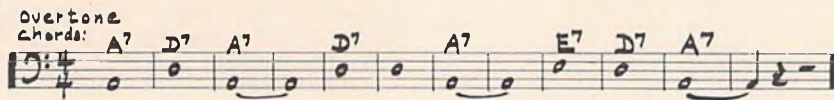
ferent overtone strengths and structures. And even a change in playing technique can change overtone conditions. Picking a guitar string near the bridge, for instance, loads that string with high overtones, while picking it dead center deletes all the even-numbered overtones, a warm sound uncluttered by octave repetitions.

### OVERTONE DISCERNMENT

This author brought his overtone-discernment out of the subconscious into conscious recognition through focused-listening exercises. One such exercise makes apparent the odd-numbered overtones and their inherent chord-types:



1. Play the written E softly, then release and remember it.
  2. Play the written low A loudly, then hold it while focusing the memory on E. After a few seconds, the E will emerge as an actual, rather than imagined, sound.
  3. Play the written C# softly, then release and remember it.
  4. Play the low A again loudly, then hold it while focusing on the C#, which in turn emerges as an actual sound.
  5. Play both the written E and the written C# softly, then release and remember them.
  6. Play the low A again loudly, then wait for a perfectly in-tune A major triad to emerge.
  7. Play the written G softly, then release and remember it.
  8. Play the low A again loudly, then hold it until an apparently flat G emerges.
  9. Play the E, C#, and G together, then release them.
  10. Play the low A again, then wait for a perfectly-blending A7 chord to emerge.
- Repeating the entire exercise intensifies and accelerates overtone perception.
11. Apply the exercise to low D and to low E.
  12. Listen for the blues harmonic progression while playing the following succession of fundamentals.



Similar overtone ear-training will result from applying the exercise to open guitar or bass strings while picking them at their middle (an octave above the open string, at the twelfth fret), where the absence of even-numbered overtones clarifies the presence of the odd-numbered.

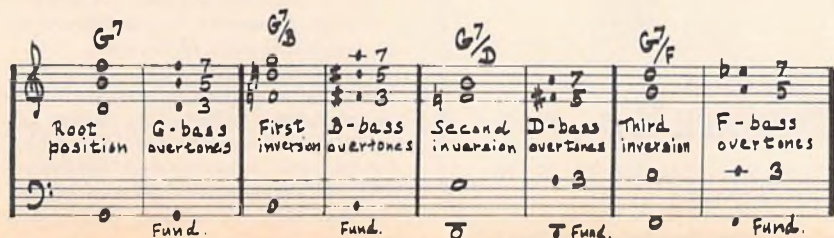
### OVERTONE CONCURRENCE AND CLASH

Whenever a bass note sounds, its own overtone series affects in some way the character of whatever chord in whatever voicing appears above it. Chord-note concurrence with bass-note overtones congeals and thereby tranquilizes the total sound: Chord-note clash against bass-note overtones disturbs and thereby energizes the total sound. Harmonic concurrence calms; harmonic clash activates.



In the above example of clash, the ear simultaneously hears both the actual chord-notes and the bass-note overtones. If all the notes were to be struck at equal volume, the upper chord-notes would override the automatically weaker bass note overtones, thus occupying the aural consciousness. Playing the bass octave loud and the upper chord-notes soft, though, would strengthen the overtones while weakening the chord-notes, thus balancing them all within the consciousness, and consequently intensifying the clash itself.

Where root position major triads and some of their extensions match chord-tones to certain overtones, inversions never do. Inversions invariably cause clash: inversions invariably stimulate harmonic energy.



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before groups like Woody Shaw's or Phil Woods'? This is disturbing, and obviously reflects the general immaturity of *db* readers. I feel the magazine should give less coverage to groups like WR, who put forth fabricated, mechanical, technological, highly aseptised music for zombies, and focus even more on the real cats, the Johnny Griffins, the Milt Jacksons, the Dexter Gordons, the Zoot Sims, who have it rooted in the marrow of their bones and have never been led astray. *They* are the real poets.

Despite a few irritating aspects, I find *db* very rewarding reading, particularly for the interviews of great musicians like Mel Lewis (6/1/78) and Archie Shepp (12/21/78): that's priceless. So I'll keep on sending my subscription check.

Philippe Briand Quimper, France

Hey man. Larry Birnbaum's interview with Weather Report (2/8/79), man, is a waste of time, ink and paper. Man.

It is incredible that the comments of those four fine jazz musicians are as interesting and informative as those of a punk rock group.

One star for maturity.  
Bill Flanagan Long Beach, Cal.

*Whose maturity? Ed.*

I doubt that many musicians go into the studios to purposely make a one star recording—but often enough, they do. When the musicians have the chops to come up with excellent stuff, a mediocre performance is especially disappointing. Clearly, this is the case with Weather Report.

In defense of *db* critics, I would have to say that they probably need less "education" than Joe Zawinul might think. *db* reviews are consistently intelligent, carefully written, and some analytical thinking always comes through. While I don't always agree with their ratings, at least I can get a feeling for where the critics are coming from.

Keep up the good work.  
A *db* reader for 13 of my 23 years,  
John Kelly Los Angeles

**Even More Contemporary**

I am writing in regard to Chuck Estes' bigoted remarks in *db*'s 1/25 issue (*Chords*, "Contemporary Readers"). Just because he's stuck in his own type of music, he doesn't have to

cut down all the others. For example, he referred to disco, punk, fusion and crossover as ear-offending trash. I grant you some disco is trash, just as all areas of music have trashy moments. But there are a lot of good disco tunes that get people dancing and feeling good and that's what music is all about!

I'm also a Chuck Mangione and Barbra Streisand fan (I believe he misspelled their names). Chuck writes some great stuff and his musicians can cook! And what does he have against Barbra? Just because her music would be considered "square" to jazzmen, I think she has one of the best singing voices today.  
Anthony Jacobs Yorkville, Ohio

**Second Chorus**

Instead of taking issue with *db*'s one star review of *Mr. Gone* (1/11/79), or even the controversial interview with the band (2/8/79), I think it is necessary to reflect on Charles Suber's defense of David Less in the *First Chorus* of that 2/8 issue. I feel that this will incite some thinking about the nature of criticism and its function in terms of what Cecil Taylor refers to as "... the cultural importance of the life of the music" in the January '79 issue of *Contemporary Keyboard*.

I take it that Mr. Suber's point in his description of the psychology of creative musicians such as Zawinul, Shorter, Pastorius and Erskine ("successful performers are by definition egocentric") is that it is automatic that these people should object to such a review of their creation. After all, it is *their* creation and thus, according to Mr. Suber's theory, inextricably tied up with their egos and existences as musicians. First, not only does that statement contain within itself a deadly psychologism which reduces the music as well as the spoken language of these people to mere effects of a certain "egotistical" state, it also makes it seem as if the musicians are not interested in the subject matter itself, but only in the efficacy of their enterprise through an image projected by the media. If the interview with the band proved one thing, it was precisely that these people, far from being egotistically wrapped up in an image, are genuinely concerned with not simply their own music, in the actual subject matter, but also with the meaning of their creation and its position in the world of music.

Mr. Suber goes on to admit that critics and journalists are not without egos, but, he says, "... their concentration is not on themselves, but on the work of others ..." My question is

this: Is it actually possible to attribute this kind of disinterested detachment to the critic and simultaneously accuse the musicians of self-absorption? And is the "evidence" really just the "disc on the turntable," divorced from an oeuvre, performances, expectations and juxtapositions with other forces operative in the musical world as well as our culture as a whole? Certainly, there are quasi-objective and subjective facets in every record review and the critic, far from simply considering the "evidence," brings with him or her a lot of conceptual baggage in the process of reviewing, and is at work in an overriding historical and cultural matrix which always makes the statements *more* than simply subjective "feelings" about one particular object.

Finally, my own opinion and a plea to the journalists and critics of *db*, a publication for which I have great respect: it is my contention that catch-phrases such as "super hip rock band with jazz overtones" (Less in 1/11) and "fusion" as a blanket term (Birnbaum in 2/8) simply don't cut it with a group as multifaceted and complex as WR—because these terms fail to really say anything about the music. As all great works, their music defies definition and ordinary classification. Secondly, would it not be far more interesting and of greater educational and social value to speak of other things in addition to technique, dynamics, equipment, et. al. in features and interviews? Like Taylor's "cultural importance of the life of music" or, as Joe Zawinul put it in his inimitable manner, "life itself"?  
Robert Leventhal Palo Alto, Cal.

*Mr. Suber replies:*  
*Mr. Leventhal's eloquent exposition on artistic altruism is essentially correct. My previous exposition requires an addendum: I did not make clear my belief that critics (and all of us) can also be egocentric. One difference between the artist and critic comes about in the manner the ego is projected. For every performing artist, the creative act, an extension of his ego, is the preparation and performance which is primarily designed to impress a particular audience—regardless of the particular impression on life to which the performer aspires. The critic writes to impress his audience, and he too may have grander aspirations. And great work by either artist or critic may have an impression on a wider audience beyond the one of the moment. An impression may thus be made by either creative person—or each interacting with the other—on "life itself."*

*But there is a basic difference of function between artist and critic. The performer is performed engaged in a subjective experience—projecting an ego heightened and fashioned by empathy, sensitivity, talent and technique. Ideally, the critic is engaged in an objective exercise; I previously omitted the obvious qualification that no mortal attains pure objectivity. As Mr. Leventhal says: "There are quasi-objective and subjective facets in every record review."*

*But just as a criterion of a musician's performance is the quality of his subjective treatment of his and/or someone else's music, so a criterion of a critic's performance is the objectivity he can focus on someone else's performance.*

*As to Mr. Leventhal's wish for us "to speak of other things in addition to technique," our editorial mandate is to add to our readers' knowledge of music and performance. Space does not often permit an examination of "life itself." We thank Mr. Leventhal for taking us beyond the pragmatic view. We welcome additional comment.*

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**Bourque:** Can you hear that already, or will you have to experiment with the equipment?

**Metheny:** I can definitely hear things that technology hasn't come up with yet. I'm really glad to be living in the time we're in because in the next 40 years we're going to have possibilities as musicians that are going to be mind boggling. I shudder to think what's going to happen to me when they master the guitar synthesizer, which is probably five to ten years away. It's going to completely revolutionize my music, and, yes, I can hear what it's going to sound like already; but they don't have it together enough yet. But they will.

**Bourque:** Your sound is unique, regardless of how you get it.

**Metheny:** I think the element that you're talking about is more just my musical personality. It was inevitable that someone like me—and there are others, obviously—would come along, someone who grew up with a knowledge of bebop and jazz and the ability to play through changes fairly well but never came right out and did it. What I try to do is play whatever I like, and I don't make any restrictions as to what style it's in.

**Bourque:** Your music, even with the electric guitars and keyboards, sounds acoustic, at least to my ears.

**Metheny:** Yeah, it seems as if we use the electronics to make it sound more natural, to give it more sense of breath, in a way. On the other hand, Weather Report really uses the electricity for an electric end. So maybe we're unique, from that standpoint.

**Bourque:** The inevitable question. Do you still think of yourself as a jazz musician?

**Metheny:** Well, not exactly. I put a large emphasis on the improvising aspect of it, and that tends to be close to jazz. But, on the other hand, I feel very loyal in a way to playing *Louie Louie*, too. It makes just as much sense to me.

**Bourque:** Are you consciously trying to synthesize jazz and pop, not to mention the obvious country elements in your music?

**Metheny:** It might seem synthetic now, but 15 years from now it will be seen in an entirely different light. People now are very classification conscious, but when you look back now at the groups that were slightly in the cracks ten years ago, like Gary Burton's group or the early fusion groups, they clearly seem jazz groups today. I think in retrospect we'll seem that way in terms of our emphasis on improvising. So will Weather Report.

**Bourque:** Lyle says you're just four punks playing jazz.

**Metheny:** [laughs] I will say we're very realistic about our talents and abilities. We have no delusions about how we play now. There

are major areas in our music as a group that are substandard to the way we would like them to be, things that we just can't rush, that only time will cure. We have to deal with those things on an intimate basis from night to night. We're all very young musicians and have a lot to learn. So it can be frustrating because we hear in our heads how it should be, but it doesn't always come out that way.

**Bourque:** Lyle also says that there's an immaturity or rawness in your music that accounts for part of your appeal.

**Metheny:** It's kind of embarrassing to come right out and say that [laughing], but it's true. Maybe the appeal is that we acknowledge it, and we're trying to become better all the time. We don't say this is it, the greatest stuff of all time. We say this is what we've got to offer for right now, and it's a positive thing. It bothers me to see young players strutting around as if they've got the greatest stuff ever. Some players, like Jaco, take that pose; but he at least can back most of it up [laughs].

**Bourque:** Apart from your writing and the group music, how do you feel now about your own playing?

**Metheny:** I guess I've been coming on really humble in the last couple of sentences, but, on the other hand, I feel very strongly about my



VERYL OAKLAND

own playing in relation to every other player I hear. I feel that I've got a lot to say, but there are certain elements of it that aren't fully formed yet. Again, there's nothing I can do to speed them up, other than to just play each night and live my life because the life experiences and the elements of living are what make the music, not how much you practice.

**Bourque:** What does living consist of for you?

**Metheny:** Well, whatever fate brings. Obviously, at this point in my life, living is mainly being on the road traveling as a musician. Sometimes I think being on the road so much hurts the music. It's an inbreeding sort of thing. The act of performing the music becomes the source of so-called life experiences. But I think it was necessary for us, and certainly for me as a player, to spend the last year and a half on the road.

**Bourque:** Do you also go out to promote the record?

**Metheny:** I make records so I can go out on the road. To me the live experience is what counts. My favorite thing is to be playing; it's the ultimate experience for me. I've yet to feel the exhilaration in the studio that I feel live. I get very little out of playing by myself. I only play when there's some receptacle, some audi-

ence. I pick up my guitar and play maybe three or four minutes, and it sounds horrible to me. But the moment there's someone else in the room that I feel would like to hear something, I can play great. It's not complete to just play for myself.

**Bourque:** What do you, as a performer, get back from an audience?

**Metheny:** To me, each night the audience brings the music. When we show up for a gig we have our part of it, which is our instruments, the tunes, our knowledge and our basic energy. But we find, without exception, that the good nights that we have are in direct correlation with the good audiences. They bring the energy, and if it's a noisy, rowdy audience that's talking and doesn't seem to be following all the details we just don't play the details as well as we would if we had the sense that they were on to every little nuance.

That doesn't mean that the audience must be attentive and quiet. For instance, we played in Tulsa a few months ago and had one of our best nights ever. The audience was real noisy. It was like a barroom kind of scene, but there was a certain kind of intensity in the air that was positive, and it was fun to play with. It wasn't a negative kind of noisiness but a "let's-go!" kind of noise.

**Bourque:** Do you generally prefer clubs to concerts?

**Metheny:** I prefer the intimacy of a club. I like to see who I'm playing for, and in a concert setting you're kind of blinded by the lights and the literal barrier between you and the audience. So I'm very much into playing clubs, though it's not that practical for us, needing more money as we get bigger. But I tell the guy that books the band to always include two or three nights in a club for every three or four concerts. I don't care if I lose money; I just want to have that experience of playing close to people.

**Bourque:** Speaking of getting bigger, are you surprised by your sudden commercial success?

**Metheny:** It caught me by surprise. I'll say that. I didn't expect it for another two or three years, but I think it's a good thing. I think we'll deal with it in a pretty responsible way, musically. I think that what we're doing is a positive influence on things. We're doing good in the sense that we're just playing what we've got to play, and it's very natural for us to play this way. It's not like we sat down and said, "Okay, this has been successful up to this point, why don't we do something that's similar to that?" We just play what we've got to play, and it seems to have come along at a time when people like it. To me there's a certain purity in that that I like. With me I have no choice in it, because I can only play that one way, really. I have a hard time putting on another style and doing it convincingly, so I have another kind of backhanded advantage in that way.

**Bourque:** One last question. Is this a good time to be a musician?

**Metheny:** This is such a weird time we're living in. That's the thing that I keep going back to. I just feel so fortunate that I happened to luck into something that I like that I can do. That's the luckiest thing that could have ever happened to me because people of our age and generation—and 13 and 14 year olds now—are getting such confused signals. But again, I think we're helping more than we're hurting. Anyway, we obviously can't think about that too much and still drive 400 miles from gig to gig and get everything happening on that level, too. db



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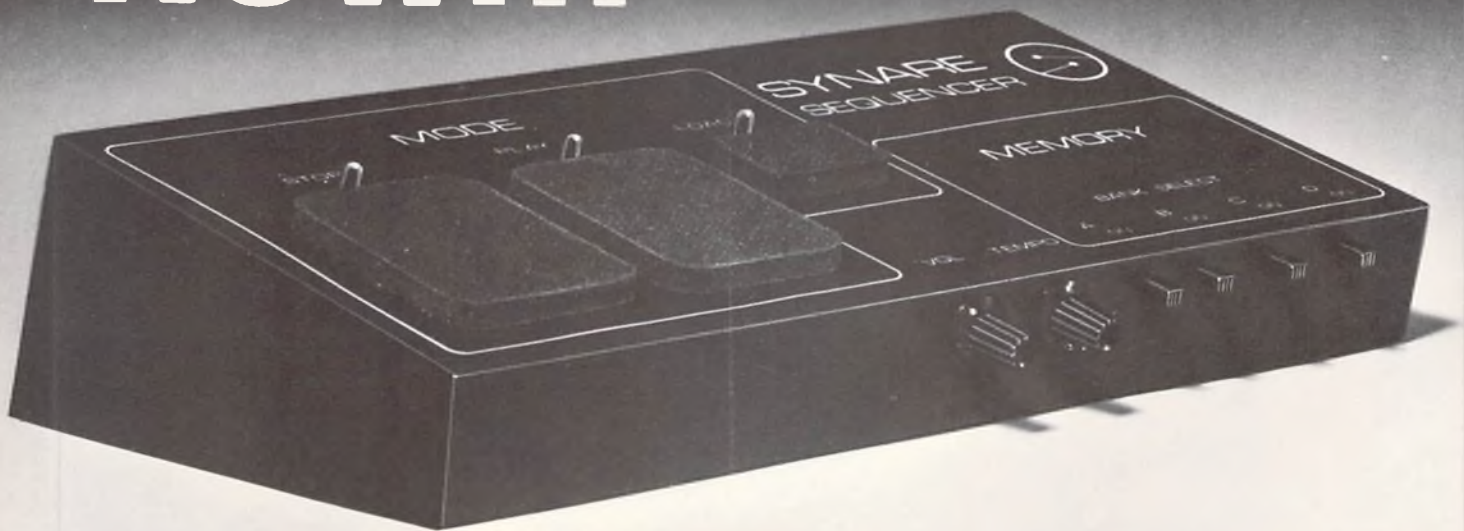
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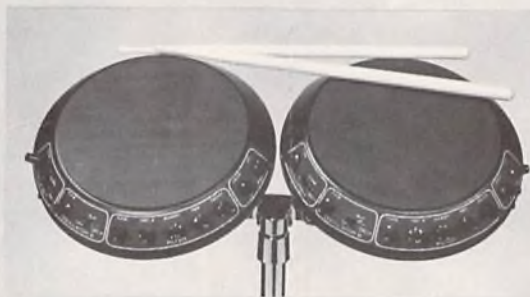
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