

JUNE 7, 1979

75c

the contemporary  
music magazine

# down beat®

**MEL LEWIS**  
sticks it alone  
with his 17 men

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**STAN  
KENTON**  
on the mend,  
looks ahead

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**down  
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## education in jazz

—by James Williams

James Williams, pianist, arranger-composer from Memphis, TN; former Berklee instructor, now touring with Art Blakey. Current album with own group, *Flying Colors* (Zim), with Slide Hampton.

Unlike many of the musicians who have contributed to this column, I was not a student at Berklee although I learned a great deal there as a teacher.

Gary Burton recruited Pat Metheny and me for the Berklee faculty about the same time. Gary heard me play at Memphis State University where I also conducted and wrote for several jazz groups. Naturally, I was flattered when Gary asked me to teach at the school where he and Quincy Jones, Keith Jarrett, and so many others had been students.



I realized too that Berklee and the Boston musical environment could be one of the best roads to New York and a place in the professional music world. And that's just what happened.

Teaching made me form and articulate my musical ideas. Playing and hanging out with faculty musicians such as Bill Pierce, John LaPorta, Dean Earl, Andy McGhee, Greg Hopkins, and Bill Thompson—plus working around Boston with my own group—put my previous experience into perspective. (When I wasn't teaching or playing, I would be in the Berklee library reading their great collection of jazz scores.)

So, after three-and-a-half happy years at Berklee, I got to New York—and beyond—on a first class ticket. However, one never stops learning, so this past year with Art Blakey is the best possible post-graduate course; and I get to associate with top musicians in the entertainment field.

When I am asked, here or abroad, to recommend a place to learn, Berklee heads my list—not only for its outstanding curriculum and faculty but for the whole Boston music scene. That's where much of it came together for me.

James Williams

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## the first chorus

BY CHARLES SUBER

"I don't know if it occurred to you, but most of *down beat's* readers are students. The reason I'm willing to do an interview in the first place is because you're dealing with the educational market." This is Gerry Mulligan—"clever, witty, and saucy" Gerry Mulligan—talking in this issue about his music, his bandsmen, and his and their contribution "to the learning process of musicians." Also involved in this process are two other band leaders discussed in this issue: Stan Kenton and Mel Lewis.

These three musicians—Kenton, Lewis and Mulligan—typify the concern for jazz education by virtually all currently active big band leaders. But of all the leaders, Kenton has been the one most closely associated with the school stage band movement (which is not the same as the school jazz movement). He is also the one most responsible for the unfortunate polarization that now exists between two factions of jazz educators.

One faction of jazz educators (not necessarily the older ones) idolizes Stan Kenton as *The Holy Sound Maker*—with Maynard Ferguson and the late Don Ellis as latter day saints—with all the musical implications therein. Their doctrine calls for screaming unison brass, ultra dynamics, precision before improvisation and tight arrangements with solos sublimated to *The Sound*. And these educators send their students to Kenton's band clinic to get off watching Stan *The Man* rehearse his troops.

The other faction, a fast growing majority, appreciates what Kenton has been—especially during the halcyon days of Johnny Richards, who was to Kenton as Billy Strayhorn was to Ellington. But their first loyalty is to the individual jazz player and his right of improvised expression with a large or small ensemble. They feel comfortable with a black and blues heritage, with a more egalitarian music. These are the educators who encourage their students to attend combo/improvisation clinics run by the *original* National Stage Band Camps which gave Kenton his first exposure to the school jazz world.

Some educators seem to forget that their mission is to train and inspire students, not to build shrines to a past that was, at best, peripheral to the mainstream of jazz. This could not have happened if the Old Guard had emulated Kenton's most characteristic attitude: don't look back, don't do anything the way you used to. If only the elders could break out, dissolve the cult, set their students free and let the good times roll!

Next issue examines the rocky side of jazz with Randy and Mike Brecker, Tony Williams, Phil Manzanera (hot rock guitarist with *Roxy Music*), a photo/essay of the New Orleans Jazz Festival; *Profiles* of Valery Ponomarev, Muscovite trumpet player with Art Blakey, and George Goldsmith, Detroit drummer; and more.

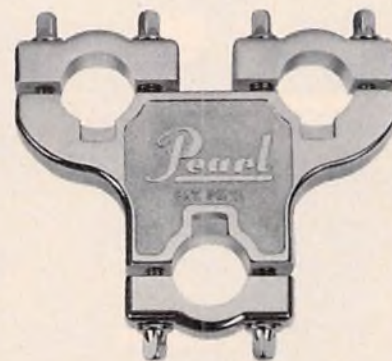
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# CHORDS AND DISCORDS

## A note from Manfred Eicher

In his analysis of the music of Pat Metheny (*db* 3/22), Neil Tesser makes reference to ECM as "an esthetically respectful environment for white improvisers." We would like to make it quite clear that we have never made any selection of musicians on a basis of race, nationality, philosophy, religion, sex, politics, colour or astrological sign, and Mr. Tesser's theories on "white and black schools of musical thought"—it might be revealing to hear him attempt to further define these "schools"—are entirely his own.

And, by the way: If Metheny's music is "unquestionably jazz" how can it then be "deter-

minedly white" and "upper middle class"? Mr. Tesser should bear in mind that not all musicians and not all record companies are as preoccupied with racial division and class distinctions as himself.

Manfred Eicher  
President, ECM Records  
Munich, Germany

*Mr. Tesser replies:*

*For a company that prides itself on (among other things) clarity, ECM's willful misreading of my words and intent is rather astonishing. Nowhere did I suggest the label was a respectful environment for only white improvisers; the article's very next line, "There is no racism intended here," provided that clue to those who were listening. Most people correctly understood me to be commending ECM for its openness to nontraditional improvisers.*

*I understand ECM's sensitivity on this subject; over the years, many critics have used the label's choice of musicians as a club with which to attack the music. It would do the folks in Munich*

*well to remember, however, that I have not been one of them.*

## We really mean it, we're serious, this is the last

Here's one more *final* Weather Report letter. I'd like to commend *down beat* for allowing this whole dispute to transpire. It is a credit to the editors for providing the many opposing viewpoints on the subject. Whether the reviews are just or not; whether Zawinul is the best or not; and whether we like the band's attitude or not, are all open for discussion. I do think everyone will agree that *db* deserves applause for supplying the means to argue in print. Thank you.

Robert M. Polito

Philadelphia

## Two for Pat Metheny

Dear Pat,

Your music is so beautiful and your ability as a guitarist is so awe inspiring I was truly amazed to learn what a shallow and egotistical person you really are. For you to be so presumptuous as to tell another aspiring musician, "You have what it takes," is a most outrageous broadcast of your own ignorance . . . and it only takes you six notes to tell??? Much to my displeasure, you are in a position to greatly influence the lives of many musicians and as such have an obligation to weigh very carefully every word. You have a right to your opinion, as do I, but I must say that you greatly disappointed me. Do you think those guitarists at Berklee are stupid? I don't want to be Pat Metheny and I know a lot of great guitarists who don't want to be you either.

Little boy, I hope you grow up soon because you might even be a better player than you are now, and you might then make a contribution to the world of art, other than your present course of self indulgence. Hang on to that article in *down beat* [3/22/79] and read it when you are 30 and have a good laugh.

John Dougherty  
Wilmington, Delaware

Congratulations on your fine feature on Pat Metheny and his group. I am 41 years old and have been listening to jazz for years. I had the pleasure of seeing the Pat Metheny Group in Seattle last February. I am thoroughly refreshed by this young man's talent and approach. You are to be commended for giving him the recognition he deserves.

Robert O. Smith  
Vashon, Wash.

## Grover Washington straightens the record

Thanks to *down beat* for including an article (4/19) written by Steve Bloom from an interview conducted at my home. However, I wish to correct a few errors and make a couple of comments that I feel are necessary.

1. Charles Earland is responsible for my first date on Prestige. I recorded with Johnny Hammond on that label later. Johnny Hammond and Rudy Van Gelder were responsible for my initial relationship with CTI.

2. I have never recorded with Lonnie Liston Smith, as written; it was Lonnie Smith.

3. The guitarist on my last two albums, and my upcoming album, is Richard Steacker, not Streaker.

4. CTI and Motown did not belong to

continued on page 43

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## POTPOURRI

New guidelines for **National Endowment of the Arts Music Program grants** raise to \$15,000 the aid available to established composers/performance of jazz, up from \$2500. Grants for study are up to \$5000; organizations and ensembles may receive \$2500 to spend as matching money, and a new grant category, for jazz related activities, is intentionally open-ended. For applications, call 202-634-6390, or write the NEA at Columbia Plaza, 2401 Virginia Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20516. But hurry—due date is June 1.

Tenorist **Gene Ammons** would have been 54 April 15, when a Birthday Memorial Tribute organized by Katherine Cox was held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York City. Music and memories were provided by **Frank Foster, Amina Claudine Myers, Eddie Bert, Harold Vick, Bob Porter, Howard McGhee, Ajaramu**, and many others.

**Red Rodney, Carl Fontana, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, and Jake Hanna** will play at the Kansas City Jazz Olympics, June 1-3 at the Radisson Muehlebach Hotel in two ballrooms—one for dancing, one for concerts.

**Jay McShann** is the topic of a documentary biography, *Hootie's Blues*, 30 minutes in color, aired by Nebraska Educational Television, financed by the

Lincoln Jazz Society, and available from co-producers Bart Becker and Mike Farrell at 2724 Sumner, Lincoln, NE 68502.

May was Jazz Month in Nevada; **Monk Montgomery**, president and founder of the Las Vegas Jazz Society and **Jacque Belmont**, of Reno's "For The Love Of Jazz," worked up some 30 free public shows, with **Gus Mancuso's band, Supersax, Russ Vines' Nevada Contemporary Music Ensemble** and **Dave Matthews' youth band** playing.

Readers wanting **Newport Jazz Festival** show and ticket information are advised to write: P.O. Box 1169/Ansonia Station/New York City/10025. Fest HQ: Suite 2159; N.Y. Sheraton.

Composers **John Carlsi** and **Terry Riley** received 1979 Guggenheim fellowships. **Frank Zappa** will appear in Austria with the **Vienna Symphony** on June 13, playing *Bogus Pomp* and other works. We wonder if Woodstock II, set for August 15-17 will present any improvised American music.

Bassist **Slam Stewart** got a plaque at Boston's Berklee Performance Center for having "fostered and encouraged the appreciation, study, creation and performance of jazz."

## FINAL BAR

Drummer **Donald MacDonald** died March 21 in New York City at age 41. Ill health had forced him to retire from performing, and he was residing in Woodstock, New York, at the time of his death. First studying percussion at Fredonia State Teachers' College, he played in Florida for several years. MacDonald worked and recorded with Jackie Cain and Roy Kral, Tim Hardin, Richie Havens and Gary McFarland, but was probably best known for his membership in Jeremy Steig's early jazz-rock band the Satyrs, which included Warren Bernhardt, Eddie Gomez and Adrian Guillary; he was also in the White Elephant Band led by Mike Mainieri. MacDonald is survived by four children and his wife, who wrote **db** that a *Final Bar* "seemed the most fitting way for me to let all the musicians that he played with over the years know that he has passed on."

Pianist-composer-arranger **Mel Henke**, best known to jazz fans through his association with the West Coast jazz movement of the 1950s and a number of albums made at that time for Contemporary Records, died of a stroke at his suburban Los Angeles home in Canoga Park on March 31. He was 63. In addition to his jazz club and recording activities of the '50s, Henke was pianist with the John Scott Trotter Orchestra on *The George Gobel Show* television series, and for many years served as pianist-accompanist for TV personality Garry Moore. His last jazz album, done for Warner Bros. in the late '60s, was *La Dolce Henke*. For the last two decades Henke had been active in advertising as a jingle writer and, in partnership with graphic artist Eyvind Earle, produced a number of critically acclaimed film trailers. Henke is survived by a son and daughter.

# NEWS

## Bassist Red Mitchell Tours U.S. An Exile After Communication

NEW YORK—Latest jazz expatriate to return to the U.S. is bassist Red Mitchell. Mitchell's third and most extensive visit since his departure to Stockholm in 1968 teams him with pianist Tommy Flanagan and Nils (Nisse) Sandstrom, the Swedish tenor saxophonist, in a touring trio dubbed Communication.

Just after opening at the Village Vanguard, Mitchell told **db**, "I'm at a crossroads in my life. I think it's time to recycle myself. There seems to be a new, much more wide open jazz audience here, due in part to the fact that so many people have become players. Literally millions of people have taken up guitar and learned the blues, so they identify as players." His plans call for three cribs—in Stockholm, New York and Los Angeles—and three basses, to save on contrabass air fares.

Mitchell's leave taking of the States was politically motivated. Engaged in active opposition to the Vietnam war, Mitchell split "because my efforts added up to little. I was contributing more to the opposition through paying my taxes. I didn't want to pay taxes any more and I didn't want to go to jail, either. I also didn't want to continue doing movie and TV music which I felt was contributing to the atmosphere of violence here. From the beginning, I have to take my share of the blame. I was playing on the *Peter Gunn* show in the late '50s, which was the first in a long series of shoot-'em-ups that used jazz in the background."

After moving to Sweden, Mitchell decided to "put all my eggs in one basket, and try to learn how to improvise words and music at the same time—do what they do in the West Indies as a tradition, but in a jazz way." Thus far, Mitchell's explorations have resulted in 35 originals, works and music which have been recorded by Swedish singer Alice Babs, Norwegian vocalist Karin Krog and Mitchell himself on the album *Blues For A Crushed Soul* (Sonet), dedicated to film director Ingmar Bergman, who at the time of recording was having tax problems himself.

Happy to return home and play

the music he loves best ("the kind of jazz that has a balance between the planned and the unplanned; in other words, there's a lot of freedom and a lot of accumulated knowledge in it") Mitchell reports a new musical movement in Europe, which he characterizes as "free European improvised music."

"It's an attempt to establish the identity of a European improvised music which is not American," he explained. "And there is some anti-black feeling involved." Originating in Germany and performed by classically trained European musicians, "Continentism" is, according to Mitchell, the brainchild of some European record companies and critics. Some of the "free European improvising musicians" have put down Sandstrom, the 37 year old tenorman who has played with Mitchell for six years, as "too American."

There have been several versions of Communication since Mitchell and Sandstrom started working together; the group has included other horn players and expatriate pianist Horace Parlan. After a gig at Bradley's in '78, where Mitchell worked in tandem with the soft spoken Flanagan, the Detroit born pianist was chosen for the tour.

"We've known each other since '54, when I met Tommy in Detroit," said Mitchell. "It's always been easy to play with him, it's always felt like home. I can't play with him often enough." The bassist's empathetic approach to his colleagues is apparent on a recently issued Artists House LP he shares with guitarist Jim Hall.

On May 29, Communication opens at Concerts by the Sea, near Los Angeles; June 7 they are at the Paradiso in Santa Cruz; June 8, the Great American Music Hall, San Francisco; June 9-10, Peter Douglas' Beach House in Half Moon Bay; 14-16, Parnell's in Seattle, and June 17 they play Portland, Ore. They open for a week at New York's Sweet Basil June 19, and will play a Waterloo Village concert at the Newport Festival, with hopes of visiting Boston and Chicago thereafter.

—bret primack

June 7 □ 9

## Hank Garland Plucks Again After 18 Years of Silence

BOILING SPRINGS, S.C.—Guitarist Hank Garland, his personal country-jazz fusion silenced since a 1961 car crash, will record again and may be profiled in a film.

Recording is scheduled to begin within two months in Spartanburg, S.C., as Garland weighs an independent producer's offer to film his life story, according to his manager, brother Billy Garland.

"I musta did some good somewhere," Hank Garland says of his re-emergence.

The recording, for a self produced project to be sold through mail orders, will end a painstaking recovery from the accident which left Garland with massive brain damage and memory lapses. He spent three months in a Nashville, Tenn., hospital, did not play guitar for five years and did not conclude therapy in Florida until last autumn.

Garland immediately returned to his family and the area of South Carolina where he began playing banjo as a child.

In his early teens he had switched to guitar and headed for Nashville, starstruck. "He was away when he was sup-

posed to be in high school," remembers his father, Jay. In the country music capital, Garland played with Paul Howard, Jim Reeve, Eddie Arnold and Elvis Presley (on *Blue Hawaii* and several other albums).

But that was only one side of his artistry. Influenced by Django Reinhardt, Barney Kessel and Tal Farlow, Garland formed one of Nashville's first homegrown jazz groups, the Nashville All-Stars. They appeared at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival.

The car crash interrupted steady gigging at New York's Roll Club and combo work with then-fledgling vibist Gary Burton. Garland led Burton's first date, *Jazz Winds From A New Direction*. Columbia's 1962 *The Unforgettable Guitar: Hank Garland* was his last release.

To hear Hank and his family tell it, he is back to his old pinnacle, thanks to three hour daily rehearsals.

"He's doing great," said brother Billy. "I don't think there's no one around who can top him."

"I'll just play what I want to," says Hank. "I started out country and when I wanted to play jazz I did it as well as I could."

## Oscar's Suite For Homeland Filmed Canada's Splendors On Screen

TORONTO—"My profession has taken me to every part of the world, none more beautiful than where I live." So Oscar Peterson, a 1979 Grammy winner, pre-faced the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's presentation of his *Canadiana Suite*, televised in March.

The hour-long program combined a filmed studio performance of the suite by Peterson and a 37 piece orchestra with footage of the areas of Canada which inspired the work's dozen sections—among them, the Rocky Mountains in *Land Of The Misty Giants*, the Maritimes in *Ballad To The East*, Toronto in *Hogtown Blues*, and the Montreal neighborhood in which the pianist grew up in *Place St. Henri*.

Producer-director Durnford King used a split screen technique effectively, so the musicians could be seen alongside the natural and urban splendors of Canada. An interpretive dancer, Pat Miner, was filmed on location around the country.

Unforgivably, credit was given among the musicians only to Rick Wilkins as arranger; the essential contributions of drummer Jerry Fuller and especially



DAVID REDFERN

bassist David Young were not publicly acknowledged.

Peterson composed the *Canadiana Suite* in 1964 and recorded it with his trio later that year. A big band version was orchestrated by Phil Nimmons in 1970 and recorded (but never released) by the CBC in 1973. A third recording of the work is planned for 1979. —mark miller



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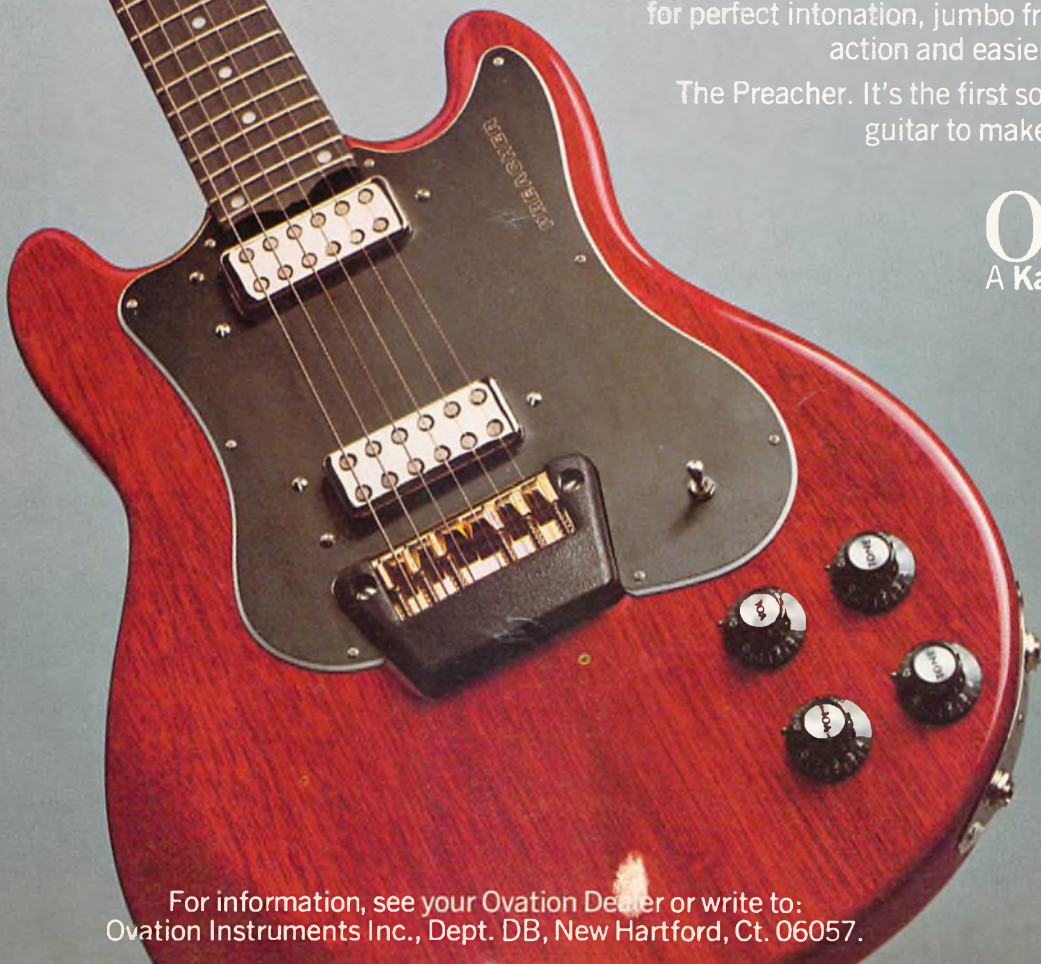
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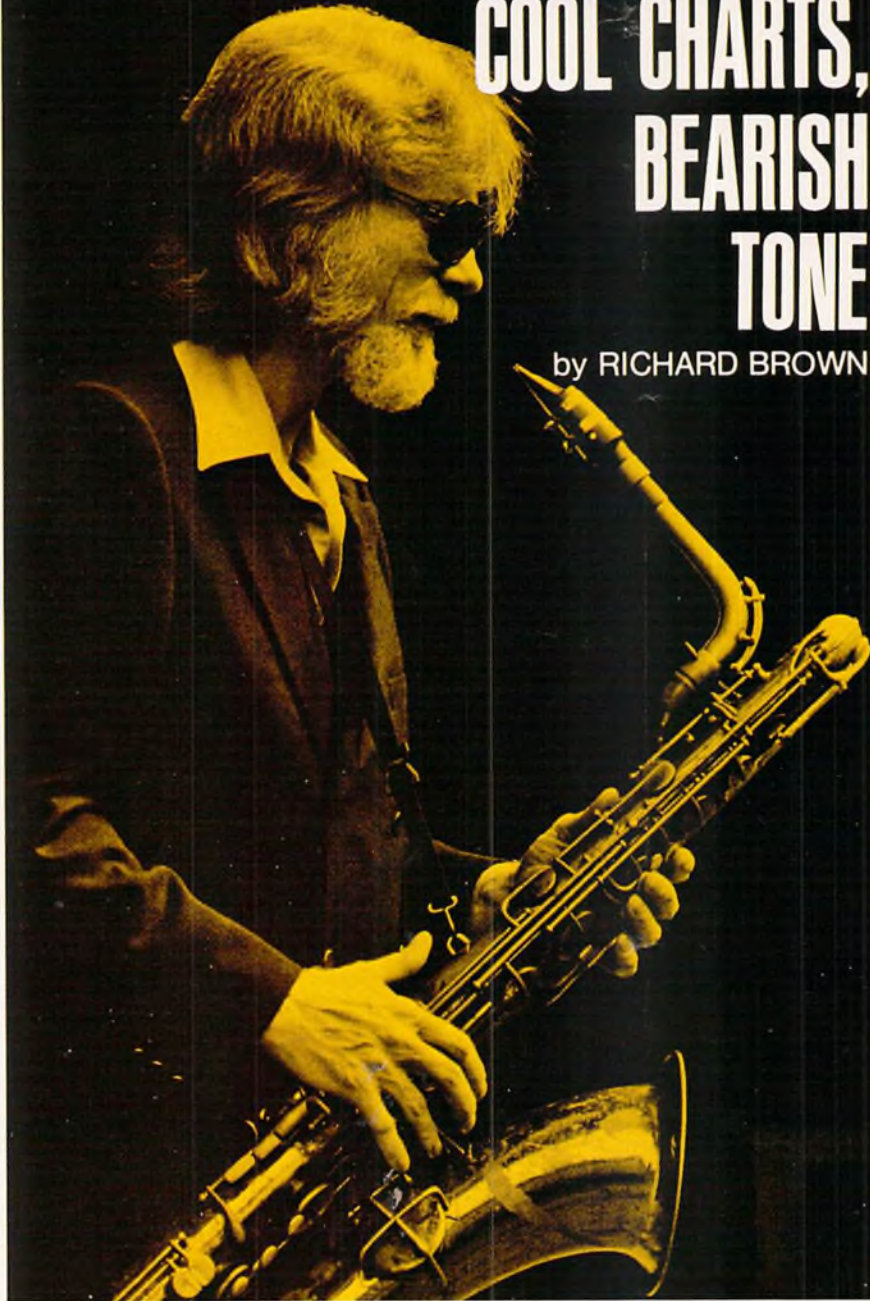
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# Gerry Mulligan

## COOL CHARTS, BEARISH TONE

by RICHARD BROWN



VERYL OAKLAND

**G**erry Mulligan in his pince-nez reading glasses, shuffling through the *New York Times* for a review of his Carnegie Hall big band concert, makes me feel like a child tugging a negligent father's shirtsleeves.

"I like to read certain critics, because you can learn from some of them," he offers obligingly.

"This might be a good place to start," I venture. "Have critics ever affected you very 12 □ down beat

much?"

"I can't really recall," he mumbles disinterestedly. "I'm not really thinking about that at the moment. I have to disagree. That's not such a good starting place."

Perhaps Gerry Mulligan has overdosed on interviews. He emits bored sighs and mumbles brusque answers into his newspaper. His right foot begins pounding the floor regularly as I ask after a chord progression which he spoke

about with his pianist before the Carnegie concert.

"I don't remember that," he says. Silence. He answers some new questions superciliously and turns to the crossword puzzle.

Mulligan puts the paper aside, glasses off now—at last!—but he looks away with an icy stare, foot pounding.

"He's very stand-offish and always has his defenses up," a long-time friend of Mulligan's would say days later, with affection. "As he gets to know you he lets them down, but even then it's only to a certain point. He's like a faucet: he runs hot and cold all the time."

Gerry looks for a cigarette. "I'm not in love with your questions, man. I hope they pick up as you go along."

The topic is Gerry's pianoless quartet, but he offers little.

"Why haven't many people used that format lately?" I ask.

"People? What people?" he asks.

"At the time, many jazz groups imitated your band."

"Did they? I didn't notice. No, I didn't notice whether they did or didn't."

"At times, Gerry would have fits of anger and maybe frustration," Alan Dawson tells me later. Dawson was Dave Brubeck's drummer from '68 to '74, years when Mulligan frequently performed with Brubeck. "Naturally I found him a very emotional person, but also a very caring person."

"You seem very edgy," I say to Mulligan.

"Something about the implications of the questions you're asking," he says. "I also have other things on my mind. To have to stop to think and talk about what I'm doing and what I have done is . . . I'm doing this because Mel Torme kept saying you've got a deadline. I said all right, but I've got a lot of work to do. So that's really more to do with my being edgy than anything else. And . . . I don't really enjoy talking about what I'm doing all that much. Never have."

"Mulligan grew up in what he feels was a narrow, conventional and authoritarian Irish Catholic home," Nat Hentoff wrote in *Jazz Is*. In 1944, at age 17, Mulligan left high school and his home. And perhaps this was also what made him nestle so deeply in the warmth of music.

Mulligan's many talents bloomed fast. By the age of seven he was composing and copyrighting songs, and after basic piano studies he taught himself to play saxophone. At 17 he left home to tour with Tommy Tucker's big band as an arranger. In 1946, at 19, he moved to New York and until 1951 wrote arrangements and tunes for the big bands of Gene Krupa, Claude Thornhill, Elliot Lawrence, Stan Kenton and others. About this time he switched from tenor to baritone sax and sometimes performed with the bands for which he wrote.

Gerry got into trouble with many of his employers because of the wicked tongue lashings he would give a band if its performance level was less than he expected.

Krupa's band had little time to rehearse because it toured so much and Gerry felt their playing had become lax—and it had. After one set, within earshot of the audience, Mulligan lit into the band and Krupa in no uncertain terms.

"I told them all to go to hell," he says. He was fired the next day.

Composer/theorist George Russell knew Gerry then. "He was clever, witty and saucy, the way he is now," says Russell. "Gerry had a

chip on his shoulder. He had more or less the same difficulties that made us all bitter and hostile. He was immensely talented, and he didn't have enough of an opportunity to exercise his talent."

It was Gerry's lucky association with Gil Evans' circle of New York musician friends that enabled him to get in on their momentous joint venture, the unusual Miles Davis nonet of 1948—whose reception was so cool it performed only one gig, a three-week stint at the Royal Roost—and waxed *Birth Of The Cool* recordings. These classic "cool jazz" sides changed the course of jazz and even now the Capitol reissue album is one of jazz's steadiest sellers.

Mulligan played baritone and wrote some of his best tunes and arrangements for this band, the originals *Rocker*, *Venus De Milo* and *Jeru* besides charts for *Godchild* and *Darn That Dream*. Although neither the most advanced nor adventurous of the nonet writers, at 21 he

dom exciting and seldom dull; his usual avoidance of ballad playing. (He started performing also on soprano sax about five years ago, but it's not yet as natural as his baritone playing.)

In fact, even by the late '50s he had fallen behind the mainstream. His Concert Jazz Band and sextet in the '60s were lost in the flood of new and exciting jazz artists.

"Pipe and slipper jazz is what I want," he explained in 1954. "Just lazy, I guess . . ."

This attitude still seems to hold him back. "I'm not concerned with changes in my style or techniques," he says now. "What I'm concerned with are the ideas that I'm working on now, and I don't think about whether they're different or the same as old ideas. It's not a consideration to me."

But later in the interview he says wistfully, "I might have been able to accomplish more had I been more ambitious, more something, I don't know. . . . But I don't know if a person can do things differently. We do what we can

Guadaloupe Club Med and an 18 show Kool Super Nights tour, accompanying Mel Torme for half their set, with Sarah Vaughan's act closing the show.

The band, which looks fresh out of college, is full of excellent musicians whose potential is better revealed by the expansive charts Torme provided the band for the tour than by its standard fare of professional, slick Mulligan tunes and arrangements. The wide dynamic palette, varied moods and instrumental combinations, and extended, dramatic writing in Torme's arrangements allow the players to exhibit their deep sensitivity.

"The reason for putting the band together is that I want to write," says Mulligan. "I want to hear my music. In my old Concert Jazz Band I wound up doing damn little writing because I had to do the business end of it. Eventually, I didn't have the time nor inclination to write anymore." Ideally, the Willard Alexander agency will handle business now.

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**"I'm concerned about the ideas that I'm working on now, and I don't think about whether they're different or the same as old ideas."**

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had an exceptional talent. The patented Gerry Mulligan sound is epitomized in *Jeru*: smooth, slurred chord changes, voice leading and subtle harmonic colors. Polyphonic commentary behind solos, making solos part of the music's fabric. Witty use of rhythm and meter, alternating between 3/4 and 4/4—doing one 4/4 idea variation in 3/4—and twice extending a tail motive by repetition, making the phrasing irregular. And an upbeat tune, of course, but always gentle.

Even in his youth, Mulligan was conservative.

"Gerry," says George Russell, "was impatient with anything that moved too far away from the mainstream." He was popular as a band writer, in fact, because he made jazz innovations accessible to the public. He even wrote a few arrangements of his tunes for Charlie Parker's strings.

Mulligan's pianoless quartet, formed in 1952, spread his name worldwide. The quartet originally had Chet Baker on trumpet, Mulligan on baritone, Bob Whitlock on bass and Chico Hamilton on drums, and became so popular it made *Time* magazine.

Gerry came to maturity as a baritone saxophonist in that quartet, and his popularity meant the baritone became a less freakish solo jazz instrument. The musical identity of Harry Carney—the prototypical baritonist—had been subsumed by the personality of the Ellington band. Serge Chaloff, more sophisticated and accomplished on baritone than Mulligan, tried in the late '40s and early '50s to make the big horn a more prominent solo instrument as did Leo Parker, but it was Mulligan who broke through and liberated the baritone from its accompanist image.

Like his writing, though, his baritone sax playing—stylistically and otherwise—has changed remarkably little since the '50s: the gritty, constricted bass clarinet-type tone, punctuated with honks; the many solo phrases with a short, simple motive he permutes until the tail end; the solos that seem chained to middle register; the well-crafted lines—sel-

do. What we can do is try to organize our present and future priorities, but we still have to accomplish what we're doing with the equipment we have."

For a period in the late '60s and early '70s he worked on and off as a guest performer with the Brubeck trio, and for the first time since 1951 there was no Gerry Mulligan band, big, small or in between. "It's easy work," he said at the time. They rarely rehearsed and Brubeck took care of the bookings.

About this time, also, his music—tunes, arrangements and solo improvisations—was branded "unadventurous" by critics in such publications as *Down Beat* and *Jazz and Blues*. He still wins some jazz fan popularity polls—he's held a *down beat* monopoly since 1953, usually with a dearth of competitors—but he felt he was ignored by some media.

He told Leonard Feather in December 1973, "I've noticed in recent years my name was not even placed on the nomination list in the *Playboy* poll in the voting for bandleader or combo leader or composer. For a couple of years my vanity was kind of piqued. I felt left out, hurt. . . . Then they did it again this year and I really got mad. Even if they didn't notice what I was doing in previous years, how could they not have known about Newport? Readers may look at these lists and assume I'm not active."

He returned as a band leader early in the '70s, but the bands were short lived and made little impact. There were moderately successful reunion concerts with Chet Baker in '74 and '75, but these were like bittersweet memories, the "Remember me?" comeback attempt of a star who hadn't changed with the times. Indeed, they were a reminder of the unfulfilled promise that is Gerry Mulligan.

Mulligan deserves praise, though, for his ability to survive solely as a jazz performer and for never compromising his musical integrity.

This past year, Mulligan has been working hard with a new 14 piece big band. So far the band has played Newport, StoryTowne, the

Mulligan is proud of his band, and he has a right to be. His 13 young musicians are Laurie Frink, lead trumpet; Barry Ries and Danny Hayes, trumpets; Keith O'Quinn, David Glenn and Alan Raph, trombones; Ralph Olsen, Ken Hitchcock, Gary Keller and Eric Turkel, saxophones; Mitch Forman, piano; Richard de Rosa, drums; and Mike Bocchicchio, bass. His sax players double on clarinets and flutes for color, and all his soloists—which includes Ries, Hayes, Hitchcock and Forman—have distinctive and exciting instrumental voices. The driver of the band is drummer de Rosa, a subtle but powerful timekeeper who takes an occasional solo himself.

It's hard getting such a ponderous, big-money operation off the ground and the band is still on shaky ground. The only sure gigs lined up at presstime were two Newport Festival spots. There are plans to make a record. The band was off through April.

Their biggest potential market right now is the college and high school circuit—concerts and clinics—which would make them itinerant professors.

"The last statistics I saw—it was a long time ago, but I can't imagine it's gotten any smaller—there were at least 13,000 college-level courses on jazz and jazz bands and 25,000 or more high school courses," says Mulligan. (Mulligan refers to old figures for courses; there are now about 16,000 high school jazz bands and 1500 college jazz bands in the U.S.)

"I'm not really anxious to spend a lot of time in a school situation again—I did that once and didn't like it. But I enjoy doing this with the band. We can contribute to the learning process of music students. All my musicians are products of the school programs that grew up in the last 25 years or so and they're aware of the students' problems.

"My problem now is just booking the thing and working it the ways I want to; to get work in areas I want to play and to keep the band members happy so the band will be their first call of duty. If I can keep our working pro-

# Mel Lewis Orchestra

## THAD JONES ROAMS BUT NOBODY MOANS

by BRET PRIMACK



CHARLES BEHNKE

**I**n their heyday, big bands were everywhere: nationally prominent as touring and recording groups, both black and white; territory bands; radio broadcast bands; college and high school ensembles; chart toppers like Miller, Dorsey, Goodman and Shaw; the bebop big bands of Eckstine and Gillespie—America had *big band fever!*

Although there are many fine rehearsal, high school and college big bands throughout the country today, there are but a handful of professional big bands working consistently. Disco and our wretched economy, among other things, make it difficult to keep a big band together. But we still have Woody Herman, Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson, Stan Kenton, Mercer Ellington, Buddy Rich, Sun Ra, Toshiko/Tabackin, Frank Foster's Loud Minority. And Mel. Mel?

In 1966 a superb brass man and arranger and a loquacious drummer with heavy big band chops put together a big band stocked 14 □ down beat

with solid studio players. Working Monday nights at the Village Vanguard—a tradition that survives—the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra quickly gained a reputation as the meanest big jazz band in the land. For 12 years, critics and listeners applauded their straightahead sounds. But late last year, for reasons still unclear, Thad split for Copenhagen, Denmark, to write for and lead the Danish Radio Orchestra. Mel didn't miss a beat; he recalls thinking, "There are other people in this world and I've got to take care of 17 of them."

For a 1979 taste of big band operations, I recently joined Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra for a one nighter. Once the band assembled in front of the Vanguard we were off for Cherokee High School in Marlton, New Jersey. Mode of travel—a band bus. Because of the economics of group travel, the band had just returned from a late winter seven week Midwestern tour on this very vehicle. The tour

was a string of one nighters, the meat of big band tours.

Pianist Jim McNeely told me something about touring. "On the road, the pace can get monotonous. It's concert after concert, Holiday Inn after Holiday Inn. It's very hard to have any contact with people. You can meet someone the one day you're in a town and hang out, but that's it. Every day is a new kind of experience, which is kind of disorienting, and the camaraderie of the band on the bus is the only thread that keeps going throughout a tour. The bus becomes your little home. Everyone has their own area on the bus. And everyone hangs out, parties when they can and tries to support everyone else. To me, that's what helps carry each individual through a tour, that group spirit. If it wasn't for that . . .

"It would be different if we were playing gigs where we had two weeks in one place, but the way it is, you check into a motel and you're there for seven or eight hours at the

most, then you run right out and move on."

I asked lead trumpeter Earl "Big Bird" Gardner about the effect of big band touring on the chops. "It's a grind when you first go out. If you haven't been doing much gigging, it usually takes about a week to get your chops into some kind of shape," he answered.

"You also have to learn to adjust to a lot of different situations. Like getting off the bus and running in to play, then finishing the gig and getting back on the bus and going to the next gig. Sometimes you don't have a chance to warm up before you go on to play. You have to learn how to deal with these things out there on the road if you're going to make the gig. Sometimes you're on the bus a whole day. We did one bus ride of 22 hours; everybody was flipped out after we got off the bus. It's hard physically, very draining. It takes a lot out of you to go and play like that.

"On the last tour, when we were going into Little Rock, there was a report of a sniper on the interstate we were traveling. It was the only road in and out of Little Rock; if you were going into Little Rock, you had to go on this road. Somewhere outside of Little Rock, I told our bass trombonist Jim Daniels, 'Hey man, we're on the outskirts of town, we better get down.' Daniels and I got down on all fours and crawled up to the front of the bus. Everybody was looking around like: are we going to get shot at?"

Lead trombonist John Mosca said, "Let's face it, last winter's tour was the pits as far as the traveling. We did as much distance sideways as we did going straight ahead on the bus, with all the sleet and snow."

Most big band players cite the excitement of big band playing as justification for the road dues. Trumpeter John Marshall, who spent three years on the road with Buddy Rich before joining Mel, agreed. "If you have a few days of real hard traveling, you start to tell yourself it isn't worth it. But then the band might slow down. It might not be so rough the next week. Then you *know* it's worth it!"

Jim McNeely: "It's rough when you have all one nighters, situations where you leave early in the morning, or where the weather is so cold that the bus breaks down. It's a pain, but when I think back to accounts of cats in bands in the '40s, especially the black bands traveling through the South—man, they really paid some dues. So if we have to wait five minutes for our hotel room key to be ready, that's not so bad. A lot of cats have paid a lot more dues than we have."

"I remember the time we slept in the Rome airport," John Marshall said. "We had no hotel. We played this gig out in the country and then spent the night in the airport. That was memorable. The plane didn't leave 'til nine or ten in the morning."

John Mosca explained, "When you're on the road and living together, your lifestyle is invariably reflected in the performance. If it's an uptight scene all day, it's not possible to get on the stand and be relaxed. That's an area in which this band excels: because of Mel's personality, this band is a party all the time. It's not like that on some bands. The cats in this band dig each other. We would do anything for each other. Bread, anything. When we get up on the stand at the gig, that's the high point of the day.

"I've been on bands where the cats dread the gig, but with us, it's really fun to get up there. We're anxious to play. The music swings and everything's relaxed. Every cat feels he has a say in what happens, musically

**The bus driver had to stop for directions. "The hunt!" shouted one band member, and lifting an imaginary trumpet to his lips sounded the call. The band responded with loud barking—a chorus of hunting dogs.**

and otherwise. The music of this band is so great that no matter what part you play, you feel that yours is the most important part out there. You really get close to the music and close to each other as a result. To really make music sound good, you have to be tight with the other cats. There has to be a lot of consideration for each other."

Big band stories about group conflict are common. Leader vs. sideman. Boring music complaints. Not so with Mel's band. Trombonist Lolly Bienenfeld enthused, "Playing with this band is the best thing that's ever happened to me—musically and in a lot of other ways. It's an education all the way around, from talking to the guys in the band and having their enthusiasm about music rub off on

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me, to playing with Mel. Everyone in the band is sensitive, sensitive people who are a pleasure to be around."

Said trumpeter Larry Moses, also a veteran of the Buddy Rich experience: "Everybody's learning. That's why I dig this band. Everybody's very positive about the music. Even if they bring a chart in Thad didn't write, there's a way the band sets it up, plays it so it still gets that same feel, which is really hip."

Lee Robertson, a trombonist who has worked in Air Force big bands, explained why Mel's band is different. "Things get opened up on this band. If you're playing a solo and it's happening, Mel lets you play. It's not like some other band where the leader says, 'You got two choruses here and two there.' Mel knows when a cat's happening. He lets you stretch out. That's the thing about this band: it's a small group a lot of the time as well as a big band."

Mel Lewis emphasized this point. "When we first started as a band, we got criticized. Too many solos, not enough ensembles. Actually, it was just that we were playing four minute arrangements ten minutes long. Our idea was that the impact would be greater that way. Besides, we are a jazz orchestra, featuring jazz musicians. The cats got to play. It's got to stay that way. I wouldn't change that for anything."

And Marshall concurred. "Every solo you take, the band is swinging. You're grateful to play in something like that. Even if you only get one spot a night, you know it's going to be swinging because we've got a swinging drummer and a mean lead trumpet player. They set you right up."

Originally a band of seasoned New York players, the average age of Mel's band (excepting the leader himself) is now 27.

"When I joined the band, it was going through a transition," said Mosca. "It had been a band made up of New York studio musicians. Gradually, the band turned over to younger cats who were willing to travel more."

For many younger players, big bands have been institutions of higher learning. Trumpeter Gardner agreed. "I was playing third trumpet when I joined the band. Al Porcino was playing lead. Now, I always wanted to be a lead player. I used to listen to Porcino on records. But when I joined, Porcino was playing lead and I was really freaked out about that. I listened to him as much as I could and then six months later I was playing lead. It happened so fast—I never thought it would happen that fast. I started copying what Porcino did, until I understood the music a little better. I'm still trying to figure out the music."

Tenorman Richie Perry, a veteran of the Glenn Miller band under the direction of Jimmy Henderson, spoke of his teachers: "When I came on this band, I was sitting between Jerry Dodgion and Pepper Adams. That was school. That's where I really learned how to play in a section. I joined the band and two weeks later we were in Europe on an eight week tour. I played every night sitting between Pepper and Jerry."

Robertson: "The tradition is being maintained in this band today. Nobody knows who most of us are but we're all aware of the responsibilities of the tradition of this band.

"Mel's got his own personality, and the band reflects it. There isn't another big band that can be as loose as we are on the stand. But when it's time to play the music, we don't screw around."

Although the reasons for former co-leader Jones' departure are something of a mystery to the band's personnel, there is no question about the band staying together. "Now, the band is really roaring," Mosca asserted. "It's the best brass section since I've been on the band. Earl and I have been together for two years so we really communicate. He's the best lead trumpeter of his generation and that really makes the band's sound—outside of the drummer, he's the most important cat. We've got the best big band drummer, too. We also have a lot of soloing talent. I'm enthusiastic about the future."

"In a way, I'm looking forward to a Thad-less band," McNeely said, "because it's going to give some of us other guys an opportunity to write and contribute to the band's musical shape. It's an opportunity for the band to take another direction. The music right now is so dominated by Thad's personality; maybe if enough of us start writing, we can go in another direction, still keeping Thad's tradition, which would be the groundwork. I think it

# STAN KENTON

## Restless Emperor of a Creative World

by JOHN McDONOUGH

**T**he sands of time are richly etched with the footprints of Stan Kenton and his orchestra, an institution in the history of jazz that has never been quite content to live within the bounds of big band customs and traditions set by others. The story of the Kenton era has been one of a man primarily concerned with expanding his limits and trying out new ideas, regardless of where they might take him. Often they've led him if not exactly beyond jazz, at least aside from it. This in turn has often led to a certain critical bewilderment on the part of writers who, upon hearing some of his more ambitious work (and a Kenton performance is almost by definition ambitious) from a critical viewpoint built on Ellington, Basie and Herman, have found only pomposity and ponderousness.

But Kenton has heard something much different: an endless series of textures, tempos and contrasts. The possibilities of 15 or 20 trumpets, saxes and trombones, not to mention another dozen or so french horns and strings, presented him with unlimited fascination. They must be explored, regardless of what the jazz writers might think. So around 1947 Kenton brought forth into the world "Progressive Jazz."

If Woody Herman's second Herd (the Four Brothers band) answered bebop by adapting it to the big band sound, then Kenton's Progressive Jazz response was to create an entirely distinct counterproposal. It was Ellingtonian in the sense that it sought to create an entire ensemble entity rather than a simple backdrop for a string of solos. But there the similarity ended. No one could confuse even the most extensive concert works of Ellington with the 20th century classical European influences Kenton was exploring.

Band leaders Boyd Raeburn and Earl Spencer were contemporary pioneers of the new orchestral frontiers, but somehow they failed to develop a commercial backbone to sustain the new adventures. Kenton survived; they did not. After a period of temporary retirement in 1949, Stan came back, this time with what he called his "Innovations" orchestra, a lumbering 42 piece behemoth that came as close to symphonic jazz as any orchestra had since Paul Whiteman's *Rhapsody In Blue* 16 □ down beat



TOM COPI

**Although Stan Kenton is impressed by the fidelity of direct-to-disc recording, he wonders whether it isn't a step backwards. "That's the way we used to do it," he says, and Kenton is not a man who likes doing anything the way he used to.**

experiment in 1924. New bands, new arrangers and new sounds continued to come through the '50s and '60s and, as recent records attest, into the '70s. The cumulative result has been body of work that exists in its own world and is rooted in its own traditions, never fully accepted by the mainline jazz community, and what's more never really interested in winning such acceptance. When you talk about Stan Kenton, jazz is often beside the point.

Kenton today, at 67, is still very much an object of contemporary interest, although since May, 1977 his activities have been restricted somewhat due to a skull fracture (there was never a stroke, as some reports had it) he received in a fall while in Reading, PA. Several blood clots on the brain were surgically relieved, and the long period of recovery began. After about a year he grew restless and decided to return to action, but it was a medically premature decision. He wasn't ready. His speech and memory had been affected by the accident, and his faculties had not entirely mended, although the lapses were generally not evident to audiences and certainly didn't affect his music. Now, however, he is about 98% recovered, and probably soon able to resume a normal schedule.

But the period of prolonged relaxation has evidently become habit forming. He is com-

fortably settled into his Hollywood home of three years, and for the first time in a long, long time, he has had time to concentrate on composing and arranging. At least two new pieces are ready and will surely appear in his future repertoire.

A national tour had been scheduled for this summer and fall, but was recently canceled, a circumstance from which arose further rumors of a deteriorating physical condition. But according to sources close to Kenton—Kenton himself declined to be interviewed—all is well. Willard Alexander, who books the band, spoke to him several weeks ago and reported that he sounded perfectly normal and in good health. According to Tom Cassedy of the Alexander office, the tour was canceled because "he didn't feel up to it and because whenever he comes back he wants to do it first class." In the meantime, he prefers to relax and continue writing.

Another kind of writing he continues to avoid, however—the literary kind. He will never do an autobiography, says Kenton's personal manager Audry Coke; he simply has no interest. Other writers do, though, and several biographies are in the works. Dr. William Lee, Dean of Music at the University of Miami, is well along on a major volume, with Kenton's full cooperation. It is scheduled for publication this November by Putnam. Pre-



**Art Ensemble  
of Chicago  
Nice Guys**



**Nice Guys.** Lester Bowie, Trumpet. Joseph Jarman, saxophones. Roscoe Mitchell, saxophones. Malachi Favors, bass. Don Moye, drums, percussion. "The Art Ensemble of Chicago plays an unbeatable combination: music, drama, tone pictures, avant garde adventurism, traditional jazz improvisation . . . above all, an overwhelming sense of vitality, expansiveness and sheer, joyful fun." (*San Francisco Chronicle*) ECM-1-1126

**Pat Metheny  
New Chautauqua**



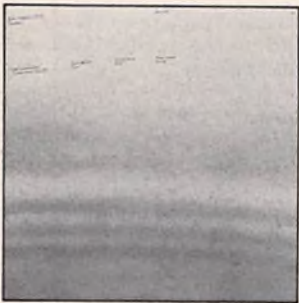
**New Chautauqua.** Pat Metheny. Metheny's first solo record (plays electric 6- and 12-string guitar, acoustic guitar, electric bass). "Metheny produces bright, ringing chords and solos that dazzle with melodic and harmonic ingenuity." (Robert Palmer, *New York Times*). Fourth album for ECM following *Bright Size Life*, *Watercolors*, *Pat Metheny Group*. Current Metheny band voted top new jazz group in *Billboard*, *Record World*, *Cash Box* and *High Fidelity* polls. ECM-1-1131

**Cherry/  
Walcott/  
Vasconcelos  
Codona**



**Codona.** Collin Walcott, sitar, tabla, percussion and vocals. Member of Oregon. Prior ECM LPs: *Cloud Dance* and *Grazing Dreams*. Don Cherry, trumpet, flute and vocals. Played with Ornette Coleman and others. Current quartet with Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Eddie Blackwell. Nana Vasconcelos, berimbau, percussion and vocals. Recorded with Egberto Gismonti on ECM (*Danca Das Cabeças* and *Sol Do Meio Dia*). ECM-1-1132

**John Abercrombie  
Quartet  
Arcade**



**Arcade.** John Abercrombie, guitar. Work with Dreams, Billy Cobham, Ralph Towner, Jack DeJohnette's Directions. Two solo LPs: *Timeless*, *Characters*. "Its awesomeness is one of sublime constancy, spoken by a master of his instrument." (*Jazz Magazine*). Richie Beirach, piano. ECM LPs: *Eon*, *Hubris*. George Mraz, bass. Peter Donald, drums. ECM-1-1133

**Leo Smith  
Divine Love**



**Divine Love.** Leo Smith, trumpet, flugelhorn, steel-o-phon, gongs, percussion. Dwight Andrews, alto flute, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, triangles, mbira. Bobby Naughton, vibraharp, marimba, bells. Charlie Haden, bass. Lester Bowie, trumpet. Kenny Wheeler, trumpet. ECM-1-1143

# RECORD REVIEWS

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



## ANTHONY BRAXTON

FOR FOUR ORCHESTRAS—Arista A3L 8900: *One composition with schematic title by Anthony Braxton.*

Personnel: four orchestras drawn from the Conservatory of Music, Oberlin College; individually conducted by Kenneth Moore, Gene Young, Robert Baustian, Murray Gross.

\*\*\*\*\*

The music of Anthony Braxton has created a storm of controversy ever since his works were first documented by Delmark Records over a decade ago. Since then a substantial amount of music has been issued on a number of labels foreign and domestic, in an ever evolving variety of mood, form, and instrumentation—from solo saxophone recitals to duets, trios, quartets, quintets, on up to what had previously been Braxton's largest ensemble, the "big band" which recorded *Creative Orchestra Music 1976* (Arista). Braxton's detractors have held his catholicism against him; by claiming he has "sold out" the jazz community, by claiming his music doesn't "swing," by claiming that his name-dropping of European composers is merely a backward attempt to obtain classical respectability.

At the very least it should by now be obvious that Anthony Braxton knows exactly what he's doing. His music swings when he wants it to; often, however, he has gone out on a fragile, unfamiliar limb in an attempt to expand not only his own musical vocabulary but ours as well. This is what he has done with the work designated *For Four Orchestras*, and despite the diversity of his previous work, nothing he has done could have predicted the sound spectrum which he has created in this most ambitious of his endeavors.

To begin with, this work sounds nothing at all like *Creative Orchestra Music 1976*. Those six pieces drew on such diverse influences as Ellington, the Orient, and Sousa. *For Four Orchestras* is based upon an atonal harmonic environment given structure not through a mathematical progression of a particular tone row, as Schoenberg might have done, but rather through a complex series of spatial modifications of Braxton's material—"spatial" in this sense meaning the process of sound development through and around a physical space, involving an extremely large number of instrumental and gestural combinations in order to expand the music's potential for growth.

This is not an original conception on Braxton's part, since it has its roots in the antiphonal choirs which Renaissance and Baroque composers used for dramatic effects. The idea of spatial modification of music, or in Braxton's terms "multiple orchestra activity," has been used in various ways by such diverse composers as Gabrieli, Bach, Mozart, Bartok, and especially the contemporary American composer Henry Brant. But there is also the tradition of "big band battles," not to

mention New Orleans parade music, and the peripatetic nature of Sun Ra's aggregations and the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

Braxton, of course, is familiar with all of these sources, and has assimilated them into a composition which, I feel, succeeds both conceptually (on paper) and musically (in the ear). The closest aural analogy I can come up with would be a cross between Stockhausen's multiple orchestra works such as *Carre* and *Gruppen* and the liquidly dense harmonic modulations of Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, but this is still a simplistic example which doesn't suggest the scope or depth of Braxton's attempt.

In its complete realization, *For Four Orchestras* is nearly three hours long. Of course, a recorded performance loses quite a bit of physical immediacy, and the limitations of the recording medium and economic and time factors forced modifications of Braxton's original conception of the work, so that this set stands as a documentation of what Braxton calls "an excellent version of the 'essence' of the piece."

Whether or not the communicative components of the piece could have been reduced into a more succinct, more easily digested composition is hard to say. Certainly, the uncompromising length and complexity of the music defies a great deal of intellectual perception without having a complete score to follow as the music unfolds; in any event the mind simply cannot retain and relate all of the thousands of intricate details within the total length of the musical experience.

The overall contour of the piece is traceable, however, and one absorbs a feeling about it in addition to recognizing occasional specific details. There is a notable growth and development of intervallic themes which begin pointillistically and are handed from instrument to instrument, each adding a different color and timbre, until the texture thickens into a cloudy harmonic hazing of unison passages on side two. Despite the number of participants, Braxton has ordered his material into a transparent, chamber music lucidity which allows an interior view of the developmental design of the music's fabric. The various episodes of activity and stasis form a consistently evolving variety of coloristic guises, dynamic ranges, spatial maneuvers, timbral juxtapositions, and levels of intensity which ultimately define Braxton's individual solutions to *Klangfarbenmelodie* (or melody created through a constantly shifting series of tones and colors), a technique originated by the Second Viennese School composers (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern).

Side three introduces flurries of triplets in a context of brass fanfares and aggressive percussion. This leads to the work's first real climax, and the sparse and haunting passage following the cacophony dovetails into a section

alternating articulated clusters of notes and string glissandi like a drawn out sigh. The music continues to expand and contract in a series of tense, coherent gestures until the end.

There are problems throughout the piece. The length is certainly a handicap—it is in fact longer than any classical symphony, even the gargantuan behemoths of Bruckner and Mahler. The basic pulse of the piece and the speeds of the various episodes are not of a contrasting enough nature for maximum variety, and the shifts which do occur are spaced so widely apart that the evenness of tone threatens to lull the listener into complacency. The fact that this is probably his first orchestral composition which he had heard manifests itself in Braxton's inexperience in scoring for maximum effect and diversity. His palette should increase and become more flexible as he is given further opportunities to hear his orchestral conceptions performed.

Nevertheless, this is a remarkable release, one which gives evidence that Anthony Braxton is at the forefront not only of instrumentalists, but of composers of every classification. No longer can he be pigeonholed as a "jazz composer." Arista is to be praised for paying what must have been a considerable bill for this project. Let us hope that sales are enough to warrant that it not be an isolated instance.

—art lange

## DUKE ELLINGTON

AT FARGO, THE CRYSTAL BALLROOM, 1940—Book of the Month Club Records: *The Mooche; Sepia Panorama; Ko Ko; There Shall Be No Night; Pussy Willow; Chatter Box; Mood Indigo; Harlem Airshaft; The Ferryboat Serenade; Warm Valley; Stompy Jones; Bojangles; You Took Advantage Of Me; Rumpus In Richmond; The Flaming Sword; Never No Lament; Clarinet Lament; Slap Happy; Sepia Panorama; Boy Meets Horn; Way Down Yonder In New Orleans; Oh Babe, Maybe Someday; Five O'Clock Whistle; Rockin' In Rhythm; Sophisticated Lady; Cotton Tail; Whispering Grass; Congo Brava; I Never Felt This Way Before; Across The Track Blues; Honeysuckle Rose; Wham; Stardust; Rose Of The Rio Grande; St. Louis Blues.*

\*\*\*\*\*

DUKE ELLINGTON 1940—Smithsonian Collection R 013: *Jack The Bear; Ko Ko; Ko Ko; Morning Glory; Congo Brava; Concerto For Cootie; Me And You; Cotton Tail; Never No Lament; Dusk; Bojangles; Portrait Of Bert Williams; Blue Goose; Harlem Airshaft; At A Dixie Roadside Diner; All Too Soon; Rumpus In Richmond; Sepia Panorama; Sepia Panorama; In A Mellowtone; Warm Valley; Warm Valley; Pitter Panther Patter; Body And Soul; Sophisticated Lady; Mr. J. B. Blues; Mr. J. B. Blues; Flaming Sword; Across The Track Blues; Chloe; I Never Felt This Way Before; Sidewalks Of New York.*

\*\*\*\*\*

DUKE ELLINGTON, FARGO ENCORES, 1940—Jazz Guild 1006: *It's Glory; Sheik Of Araby; Sepia Panorama; Ferryboat Serenade; There Shall Be No Night; Chloe; Sidewalks Of New York; Caravan; Cotton Tail; I Never Felt This Way Before; Across The Track Blues; Honeysuckle Rose; Wham; Warm Valley; God Bless America; In A Mellowtone; Chatter Box; St. Louis Blues.*

\*\*\*\*\* 1/2

Collective Personnel: Wallace Jones, Cootie Williams, Ray Nance, Rex Stewart, trumpets; Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol, trombones; Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Otto Harwick, Ben Webster, Harry Carney, reeds; Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, guitar; Jimmy Blanton, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; Ivie Anderson, Herb Jeffries, vocals.

One could not have picked a better time to begin an acquaintance with Duke Ellington than the last 12 months. Last year came the Ellington Carnegie Hall concert of 1943 on Prestige, and now comes the only other recorded work in Ellington's epic career that could possibly surpass it: the definitive Victor sessions of his most fully realized orchestrations, and an amazing series of beautifully re-

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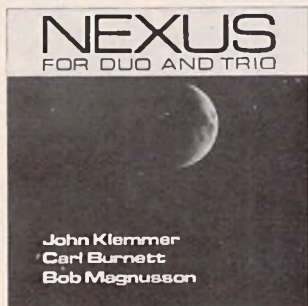
**Pierre Moerlen's Gong/DOWNWIND**  
On the heels of their critically acclaimed EXPRESSO II, one of Europe's most acclaimed bands moves in new rock directions.



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**Michael Gregory Jackson/GIFTS**  
On GIFTS, young guitarist Michael Gregory Jackson emerges from the ranks of "new music"—with a highly accessible album of daring jazz and fusion.  
**Oliver Lake/SHINE!**  
Saxophonist-composer Lake scores another astonishing new music milestone, with two original pieces for quartet and strings and a pair of trio improvisations.  
**Henry Threadgill/X-75 VOLUME I**  
Air member Threadgill's first Arista/Novus album spotlights his brilliant composing, playing, and arranging, in unique new instrumental frameworks.

corded live performances of many of the same pieces. If you listen to these performances seriously and are not drawn into an appreciation of the extraordinary and unique world of sound Ellington built, then you probably never will be—for this is a 20th century marvel at the summit of its power.

The Ellington band of 1940 was that rarest of all musical breeds—an indecipherable ensemble sound that refused duplication by any group of musicians other than the ones Ellington had somehow gathered around him. It was an arranger's band, that is true; but such codes can be broken. The secret of the sound was far more elusive than notes on paper. It was buried in the individual sounds and styles of 15 one-of-a-kind players. But it all came together when Duke Ellington lifted his hand.

The Fargo collection by Book of the Month Club Records catches the band on one of the thousands of forgotten one-nighters it played in the backwaters of America, far from the pomp and circumstance of Carnegie Hall or the high visibility of the Savoy or the Broadway Cotton Club; an utterly unimportant date in an unimportant town. But how it played! Furthermore, the source material is unique among the deluge of pre-war live recordings available today on so many small labels. It is *not* an air check. Two enthusiasts, Jack Towers and Dick Burris, actually brought a disc recorder and mikes to the site and recorded from the bandstand. During the course of the evening's 44 numbers, nine were broadcast over a local non-network radio station, but we are allowed to continue listening long after the announcer packs up and goes home for the night. And because these performances contain none of the distortions of on-air transmissions, the sound is near perfect; literally direct-to-disc. It gives the most vivid and intimate aural picture of the band that I know of anywhere, including the more perfectly realized Victor recordings. BOMCR has programmed the titles in the order they were originally played, although seven have been needlessly dropped along the way. Among the missing are *Sheik*, *Chloe*, *Caravan* and an extraordinarily swinging *Sidewalks Of New York* in which "Tricky Sam" Nanton floats out to sea on an ocean of rolling, gorgeously undulating saxes (recorded more brilliantly here, by the way, than on the original Victor record made a month later.) But no harm done, since all the deletions of the BOMCR version can be picked up on the Jazz Guild LP, plus a few added titles from a Chicago date about the same time and a superior set of liner notes by Jerry Valburn.

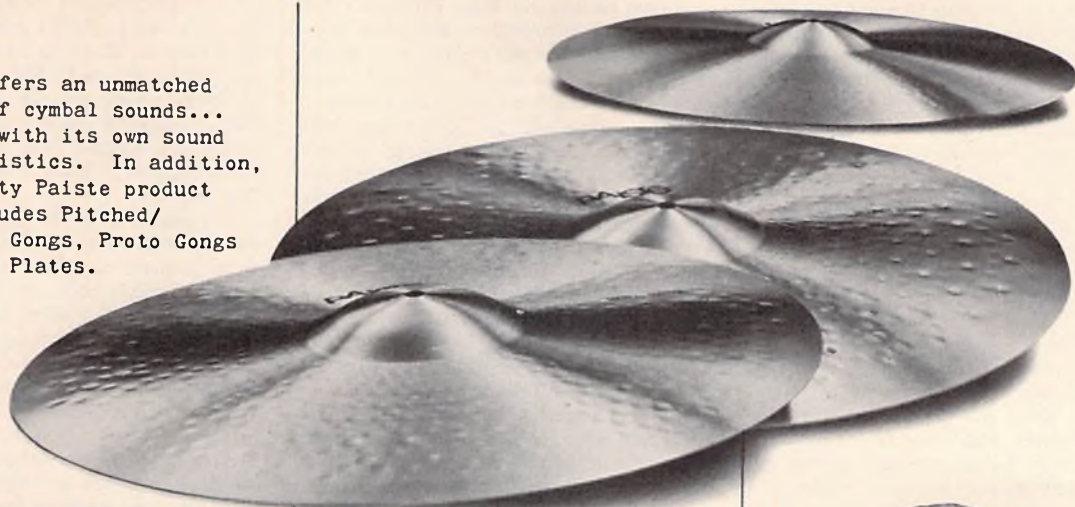
The Smithsonian collection gathers together certainly the best collation of 1940 Ellingtonia on Victor ever issued, and accompanies it with detailed annotations by Larry Gushee which praise and damn freely and take us through each piece bar by bar. Several alternate takes reveal the formality of structure Ellington apparently preferred. *Ko Ko* has no major solos aside from some bass breaks by bassist Blanton which change hardly at all from one version to the other; *Sepia Panorama*, which Duke adopted as his theme when the 1940 ASCAP embargo against the radio networks barred him from using *East St. Louis*, differs only in subtle areas of emphasis and feeling, not in substance or ideas; and the two *Warm Valley's* (an Ellington title that, according to one musician, is gynecological and not geographic in its reference) are a Hodges set piece, virtually identical.

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#### ROY BURNS

Born in Kansas and began key phase of his professional career when he moved to New York. Joined the Woody Herman band in 1957 and thereafter played with major artists in live performance, TV appearances and records. Became Rogers Staff artist in 1968. A Paiste artist.



#### JACK DE JOHNETTE

Born in Chicago and studied music since the age of four. Started playing Jazz professionally on piano at 14. Switched to drums 2 years later. Has performed on records and in concert with some of the greatest Jazz artists in the world and now leads his own band. A Paiste artist.

#### CARL PALMER

Started playing drums at age 11. At 15 left school and came to London to play in a group. Early in 1970 joined with Greg Lake and Keith Emerson to form "Emerson, Lake & Palmer." A Paiste artist.

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The rigidity of the solo routines becomes even more evident when we turn back to some of the counterparts on the Fargo program, played in the context of a much less demanding occasion. Compare even Ben Webster's solos on *Bojangles* or *Cottontail*. There are key phrases which do not change, and in almost no case is a chart actually "opened up" to additional choruses as frequently happened in the Basie and Goodman bands. *Across The Track* is a notable exception in its leisurely opening.

But this is not to say there are not differences. There are differences in feeling and ambience. The Fargo *Conga Brava*, for example, is far more biting and intense than the relatively sedate studio version, although many of the notes and phrases in Webster's solos are the same. And Sonny Greer seems to swing the band harder, perhaps stirred by Webster. The band may not have been a collection of improvisers, but it had its ways of compensating for that.

Although the perennial *Rockin' In Rhythm* appears only on the Fargo LP, it offers a typical example of the more relaxed atmosphere prevailing in the ballroom setting. Catch those clinkers from the brass section right after Nanton's driving, hell-bent-for-leather solo. And note the playful flourishes Webster blows, apparently for himself, before Duke pulls things together for *Sidewalks*, which was still an incomplete arrangement. The Victor version reveals that several more orchestral sections were put into place during the four weeks between Fargo and the recording date.

Although the Jazz Guild is available in better record stores, Smithsonian and BOMCR albums are sold only by mail order. The former is \$11.48 from Smithsonian Recordings, Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336. The latter is from Book of the Month Club Records, Camp Hill, Pa. They are all well worth acquiring. In fact, they are essential, among the most important dozen or so jazz albums in existence today. —mcdonough

## THE DANISH RADIO BAND with THAD JONES

BY JONES, I THINK WE'VE GOT IT—Metronome MLP 15629: *Tip Toe*; *Kids Are Pretty People*; *New York City*; *Ebbe Skammelson*; *Day Dream*; *Dancing Girls*.

Personnel: Jones, leader, cornet; Jasper Thilo, soprano, alto saxes, clarinet, flute; Per Carsten Petersen, soprano, alto, flute; Bent Jaedig, tenor and alto saxes, flute; Uffe Karskov, tenor and alto saxes, flute, clarinet; Flemming Madsen, baritone sax, bass clarinet, clarinet; Benny Rosenfield, Palle Bolvig, Idrees Sulieman, Allan Botschinsky, Perry Knudsen, trumpets and flugel horns; Vincent Nilsson, Erling Kroner, Richard Boone, Ole Kurt Jensen, Alex Windfeld, trombones, bass trombone and tuba; Ole Kock Hansen, Fender Rhodes piano; Bo Sylven, guitar; Niels Henning Orsted Pedersen, contrabass, electric bass; Bjarne Rostvold, drums; Ethan Weisgard, congas, percussion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thad Jones had been leading and performing with the Danish Radio Band for more than a year before he recently made the association more or less permanent. On this recording with the Danes it's hard to say where Jones' influence begins and ends. As a leader of the Jones-Lewis orchestra his presence has always been a dominant one, but during that long association he was doing much of the arranging and writing for the band.

Here he contributes two compositions, leaving the rest of the arranging and writing to the European musicians. This results in an interesting mix of musical ideas, ranging from

traditional ballads like Duke Ellington's *Day Dream* to Niels Henning's rock inspired *Dancing Girls*, which features electric trumpet and electric guitar—voices that weren't much heard in the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band.

Putting comparisons aside, this band is an excellent and often exciting one; the soloists are universally excellent and the rhythm section, perhaps the key to any big band's personality, is explosive and swinging.

The first two charts, *Tip Toe* and *Kids*, are Thad's, and they are prime examples of how he likes to use a band as a collection of smaller units, taking the woodwinds, for example, through a difficult chorus then bringing in the soloist—in this case Sulieman—to work with the rhythm section and the saxes, followed by the trombone section playing the same passage. From here the whole arrangement opens up to bring in the full band as single unit, an approach always effective and often dramatic.

The ballads on the album are Jones' *Kids*, with a warm Nilsson trombone solo accompanied by Pedersen's bass, and Ellington's *Dream* with principal soloist Jasper Thilo sounding very much like Johnny Hodges.

Bo Sylven's arrangement of Jeff Kent's *New York City* is driven relentlessly by Rostvold on drums and Weisgard's congas, while Idrees Sulieman contributes a blistering solo.

If there is anything missing from this diverse big band performance it is the sound of Thad's cornet—he plays only a brief passage on *Kids*—and the sound of an acoustic piano. There are moments when the Rhodes doesn't have the percussive keyboard sound to cut through the collective force of a 20 piece band. Thad hasn't yet made this big band his own, but it's an expert group he'll have to work with. —nolan

## JACKIE McLEAN

MONUMENTS—RCA AFL1-3230: *Monuments*; *On The Slick Side*; *They All Seem To Disappear*; *Gotta Get A Piece Of Your Soul*; *Long-Time Lover*; *Dr. Jackyll And Mister Funk*; *The Molimo*.

Personnel: McLean, alto saxophone; Clifford Carter, keyboards, Minimoog, Oberheim polyphonic synthesizer; Hiram Law Bullock, guitars; Will Lee, bass; Mark Egan, bass, (cut 2); Steve Jordan, drums; Sammy Figueroa, congas, percussion; vocals on 3-6; brass on 3, 5 and 7.

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After several years of solid if not exciting records on the Danish SteepleChase label, Jackie McLean has returned to domestic production with a vengeance. He has signed with a corporation not generally known for a sustained jazz output, and emerges, in this his third career phase, on a funk-flavored date supported by a cast of session players you are likely to encounter on every other album on *Billboard's* Jazz Top 50 chart.

Listeners distraught with Sonny Rollins, Donald Byrd, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Turrentine and other former Blue Note artists struggling more or less successfully to transfer their neo-bop roots to a contemporary environment may frown at this release in a pessimistic "here we go again" prophesy. But true Jackie McLean fans have nothing to worry about: *Monuments* is a surprising record, and while not up to the altoist's best Blue Notes, it is certainly among his best in the '70s, brimming over with the inspirational bursts and intensity that one expects the album planners were hoping for.

Much of the credit for the quality of the album must go to its producer, arranger and sole provider of material, Mitch Farber, who among other things has a hardcore jazz back-

ground as a producer for Muse Records and who is a self-professed Jackie McLean fan. Farber has directed the contemporary sound and electric setting for McLean with sensitivity and good taste; only *Dr. Jackyll And Mister Funk* is blatantly disco codified, but characteristically enough, even this number provokes McLean to some of his hottest soloing in a long time.

It is undoubtedly Mr. Farber's skill as producer/arranger that is behind Will Lee's and Steve Jordan's unusually cushioned and responsive accompaniment, Clifford Carter's space-expanding touches and fills, and the discreetly effective female vocals added on several cuts. The result is a combo coherence as organically communicative as a conventional jazz group, but as rhythmically compelling as a contemporary funk band. Jackie McLean answers the challenge, performing with the decisive attack and bite he once was famous for, even reaching, on *Long-Time Lover*, the long lost tone of dreamy élan, which is the other side of his musical personality. *Long-Time Lover*, a dedicatory composition by Farber to McLean and his wife Dollie, is the high point of the album, complete with a Gil Evans-like orchestral backdrop advancing in almost military fashion to mesh with McLean's alto in a very promising moment that one would like to see explored on any future McLean-Farber collaborations.

Calling this album the beginning of a new period for Jackie McLean may be premature. Many of the LP's aspects here have gone unmentioned, such as the very melodic themes and the nuances of the unison passages between McLean and Clifford Carter, but it remains to be seen whether *Monuments* is a one-shot injection in the saxophonist's career, or whether indeed McLean will be able to advance from here. The groundwork, at any rate—to a new monument—is laid. —gabel

## TONY WILLIAMS

THE JOY OF FLYING—Columbia JC 35705: *Going Far*; *Hip Skip*; *Hittin' On 6*; *Open Fire*; *Tony*; *Eris*; *Coming Back Home*; *Morgan's Motion*.

Personnel: Williams, drums; Jan Hammer, keyboards (cuts 1,2,6,7); Herbie Hancock, keyboards (3,5); Brian Auger, keyboards (4); Cecil Taylor, acoustic piano (8); George Benson, guitar (2,7); Ronnie Montrose, guitar (4); Paul Jackson, electric bass (2,7); Stanley Clarke, electric bass (3,5); Mario Cipollina, electric bass (4); Michael Brecker, tenor sax (2); Tom Scott, Lyricon (3,5); Ralph MacDonald, percussion (2); Randy Brecker and Jon Faddis, trumpets (2); Barry Rogers, trombone (2); Dave Sanborn, alto sax (2); Ronnie Cuber, baritone sax (2).

\*\*\*\*\*

This is an all-star album, similar in concept to the one "Johnny" McLaughlin put out a year ago, with eight wildly diverse cuts chosen to show the range and versatility of the original jazz-rock drummer: Tony Williams. What can you say about an album that revolves between commercial funk with George Benson and Herbie Hancock, hard rock with Ronnie Montrose and Brian Auger, and finally an esoteric acoustic duet with Cecil Taylor? Taking the positive tack, you'd promise something for everyone, of course. But realizing how the growing schisms within jazz tend to breed intolerance, we'd be remiss not to warn various sect devotees that *The Joy Of Flying* may take off in too many directions for some tastes.

There are three quartet alignments at work here, plus or minus a few studio extras, and two more potent duets. Jan Hammer, now leading a Hendrix-influenced rock group and wearing a portable keyboard strapped across

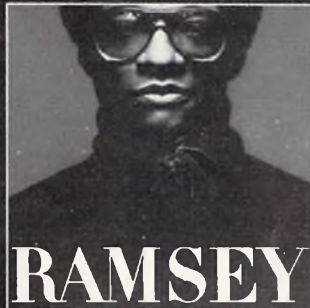


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his shoulders, supplies the strongest fusion clout on the album. *Going Far* opens with a fairly simple synthesizer motif kicked along by excellent Roto-Tom accents from Williams, but *Eris* goes further in its pursuit of high energy excellence. Against a majestic backdrop of electronics, this latter piece explodes into a two-man jam that sees Hammer cooking on all burners (multi-tracking the Moog, Oberheim and Polymoog synthesizers at his home Red Gate studio), and Williams at his manic best on the drumkit. They're both all over their respective instruments and the tune is white hot.

Weakest of the two near-jazz groupings has to be George Benson/Paul Jackson with a partially shackled Hammer and some glossy horns. *Hip Skip* gets reasonably funky after Minimoog and guitar solos, but Brecker's tenor spot, while technically soulful, doesn't send the tune any place unique. Williams gets in a couple of quick licks, but the big production has a dampening effect. *Coming Back Home*, a Hammer composition, avoids sweetening and gives Benson more room to operate, but remains lightweight compared to the tunes surrounding it.

Herbie Hancock fares better with Tom Scott and Stanley Clarke, his warm synthesizer mix announcing *Hittin' On 6*—then he throws a funky Clavinet into gear. When the Lyricon solos late in the action, the compliance between Scott's rhythmic backers gets rather tasty. *Tony* begins as a pretty ballad, with Hancock switching between electronic fills and acoustic statements, then falls into a mildly funky groove that's quite pleasant. Nothing epochal, though.

The oft-MORish tendencies of Williams' jazz cronies are not shared by the straight rock quartet featuring Montrose and Auger. Recorded live in Tokyo before a huge crowd, *Open Fire* blasts its way into high speed sensationalism and hefty volumes. Tony's slow-down drum solo contains a hint of poly-rhythmic genius, and the whole band returns for a heavy finale. Because some of Williams' Lifetimes have turned out just short of awful, we'd think twice about encouraging him in this metallic vein... but *Open Fire* is one of the stronger cuts on the record.

And yet, it's the album closing duet with Cecil Taylor that is sure to cause the greatest critical stir. Only drums and piano are featured on *Morgan's Motion*, but it's sheer molten explosiveness between these two volatile jazz giants. From the first note, Taylor seems totally involved with the introverted mind and muscle of his music, and things intensify from there. Williams joins in with muffled bass drum expletives that sound something like an angry neighbor pounding on the apartment wall. As Taylor begins to pummel towards his climax, Williams continues to feed off of the pianistic attack, extending each keyboard riff into a cubistic patchwork of drum bursts and silences. His empathy for Taylor's brand of convoluted soloing is both surprising and impressive, and by keeping his usual cymbal flash in reserve, Williams is able to play the skins for their darker tonalities. It's a remarkably cohesive duet, with potent internal dynamics.

Overall, Williams proves at least partially successful in each of these sonic ventures, but sacrifices part of his power to the Hancock-Benson syndrome. Williams is best when he sticks his neck out, in one direction or another, and just lets all that rhythm come to a

boil. The pairings with Taylor and Hammer are cases in point.

—henschen

**TOMMY FLANAGAN and  
HANK JONES**

OUR DELIGHTS—Galaxy GXY-5113: *Our Delight; Autumn Leaves; Robbins Nest; Jordu; Confirmation; A Child Is Born; Lady Bird.*

Personnel: Flanagan and Jones, acoustic grand pianos.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**HERBIE HANCOCK and  
CHICK COREA**

AN EVENING WITH HERBIE HANCOCK AND CHICK COREA—Columbia PC2 35663: *Someday My Prince Will Come; Liza; Button Up; February Moment; Maiden Voyage; La Fiesta.*

Personnel: Hancock and Corea, acoustic grand pianos.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

What a contrast these two releases provide! Both were recorded last year, but they are a quarter of a century apart in most respects. They represent two generations, two styles and two eras of jazz.

Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones are not really of the same generation (Flanagan is 49 and Jones 61), yet they play so much alike that it is difficult to tell them apart. Flanagan's solo lines tend to be a bit more boppish and convoluted, but there are plenty of passages where even this does not hold true. Oddly, the backup work is more idiosyncratic than the solos are. Jones' accompaniment is smooth and steady, like a guitarist quietly strumming along with a walking bass, while Flanagan's accompaniment is choppy, punchier.

This music has aged well. The tunes are old friends and the solos old hat, but the music is delightful in spite of its familiarity. Old friends can be a comfort and old hats a pleasure. Take *Confirmation*—Flanagan takes the lead and the first solo. He plays two spirited choruses while Jones comps gently underneath. The texture immediately thickens with Jones' solo, largely because of Flanagan's busier comp style. The musical energy reaches a peak during the last two choruses when the pianists trade fours, each man pushing the other to dizzy heights.

Except for Thad Jones' lovely ballad *A Child Is Born*, all the tunes (even *Autumn Leaves*) are taken at toe-tapping tempos, and there is hardly a dead beat on the entire album. Jones and Flanagan perform impeccably throughout. There is nothing fancy about the arrangements, but there is plenty of fancy fingerwork, and the rapport between the two pianists is remarkable. Like two dazzling dancers, they know when to step out and when to lend support, when to walk and when to fly. It is a masterful demonstration of mainstream jazz at the piano.

The Hancock/Corea release is so different from the Flanagan/Jones album that it could almost be a different idiom. It's not that Herbie and Chick are all funk and fusion. On the contrary, there is barely a trace of their electric styles here. Instead we hear their conservatory side, a black tie and tails style that owes as much to the salon as to the jazz lounge.

The double album, recorded live in concert, begins with two standards; but even here the Corea/Hancock approach is very different from that of Jones and Flanagan. For one thing, in *Someday My Prince Will Come* the melody is nearly smothered beneath the gar-

lands of ornaments and runs, something which never happens with the melodies of *Our Delights*. For another, both Chick and Herbie could take some comping lessons from the old pros. Their bass lines walk with a limp. But there are some healthy differences, too. In a Flanagan/Jones duet it is always clear who has the lead and who has the accompaniment. Corea and Hancock do not always maintain this strict division of labor. In *Someday* there is a wonderful two chorus embrace where you can't tell the dancer from the dance. In the other standard, Gershwin's *Liza*, Chick and Herbie trade a few conventional choruses, but then they go loco and take *Liza* places she's never been before. They discard everything but the beat and leave *Liza* breathless.

Sides two and three are taken up by two loosely structured pieces performed with both virtuosity and self-indulgence. The cornerstone of *Button Up* is a rhythmic drone which is not really much of a foundation. The dynamic duo seems to have fun building structures around it, but few architectural marvels emerge. Here again neither pianist has "the lead;" true to the '70s, both are free and equal partners. This demands extraordinary concentration and inventiveness, which Corea and Hancock do not always sustain. When they are both *there*, it is very exciting, such as in a passage about midway through. Herbie hammers out a chordal ostinato in the bass while Chick sends up a flurry of upper register sparks.

*February Moment* is a Hancock solo. Herbie's ideas on this side seem to derive more from impressionists like Debussy and Scriabin than from jazz. There are flashes of pianistic brilliance, but most of it is too meandering to

mean much. There are some beautiful colors but not enough design.

Side four's a jewel. On Hancock's classic *Maiden Voyage* both pianists play fine solos to equally fine accompaniment, although the double solo which follows doesn't fare as well as others on the album. Then the tempo drifts away, and the two men trade Bartokian licks before bringing back the theme, soft and tinkly as a morning breeze. Corea's *La Fiesta* begins with a fiery display of virtuosity, mostly from Chick, who then plays a long imaginative solo. Herbie's splashy solo is driven by Chick's relentless accompaniment to a stunning peak.

The differences between these two releases is not one of artistry but of refinement. The Flanagan/Jones album and half of the Hancock/Corea (sides one and four) are fully developed. But the latter's sides two and three are more like works-in-progress than finished products. The ideas there are still rough, and, like unpolished stones, they would be more valuable if they were tumbled around some more. —clark

## GIORGIO GASLINI SESTETTO

GRAFFITI—Dischi Della Querica 2Q 28005: *Graffiti Suite (Black Out, Soul Street, Ballo Popolare Sui Navigli, Black Night, Black Light, Tosti, Mexico City Free); Alle Fonti Del Jazz; La Ballata Del Pover Luisin.*

Personnel: Gaslini, piano, electric piano, spinetta; Gianni Bedori, tenor and soprano saxes; Gianluigi Trovesi, alto and soprano saxes, bass clarinet; Paolo Damiani, bass; Gianni Cazzola, drums; Luis Agudo, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

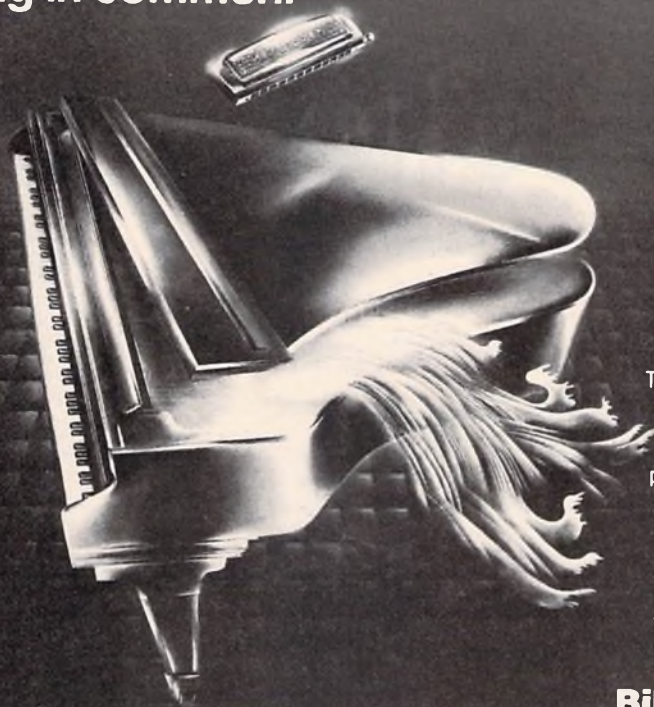
It has been said that European jazz musi-

cians will never be able to match the superiority of their American counterparts—"in terms of swing and ecstatic intensity: i.e., the black tradition" is how Joachim Berendt puts it—and perhaps this was true up until the early '70s, when Berendt wrote those words in his *Jazz Book*. Instead, he and others have pointed to the "coolness" of Scandinavians like Jan Garbarek; the rockish (Keith Tippett, Elton Dean and John Marshall) or avant-though-non-swinging (Evan Parker/Derek Bailey) Britishers; and the electronic musings of people like Jasper Van t'Hof, Wolfgang Dauner and Terje Rypdal.

If the Europeans were a bit slow in picking up on the energy of '60s visitors like Braxton, Cherry, Shepp and the AACM, at least one group (certainly among many) is directly wired in: the Giorgio Gaslini Sestetto. Taking off from Coleman, Dolphy and Shepp, Italian keyboardist Gaslini leads his highly competent and deviously swinging sextet with fire, humor and freedom, grounded with a solid urgency and an attention to detail that holds the proceedings together. And if some of Gaslini's jumping off points seem passe—Ferlinghetti's *Black Night*, *Black Light* and Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues*—the treatments, though derivative, are fresh and exhilarating.

Gaslini's six part *Graffiti* suite comprises three sides of this two LP set, recorded live at Milan's Teatro Lirico in November of 1977. Throughout, the band shows a predilection for angular though ballsy ensemble playing (*Black Out*), buffered by an innate melodicism (*Soul Street*) and exceptional solo and unison work. *Soul Street* and *Ballo Popolare* display the sextet's different approaches to the blues: the former a Coltrane-like reading with a

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tinge of Texas in Trovesi's alto, the latter a more twisted, vocal, Dolphy-esque exercise with deep-toned bass clarinet. *Black Night, Black Light* exhibits the considerable facilities of Cazzola, Agudo and Damiani, who displays a richly singing, sonorous tone.

Gaslini himself is featured on *Tastiere* ("Keyboards"), building multi-tiered lines on what sounds like a harpsichord, then switching to electric piano and finally to his romantic acoustic. A stilted though sensuous dialogue between Trovesi (alto) and Bedoni (tenor) adds to the richness of this segment. *Mexico City Free* ends the suite with allusions to *La Cucaracha*, humorously spirited.

*Alle Fonti Del Jazz* deals with Eastern themes and motifs, as Bedoni's (or is it Trovesi's?) playful soprano takes on the nasal tones of the musette. The delicately swinging, Brubeck-like *La Ballata* ends the performance—one that should, if it were available on this side of the sea, convince us of the virtuosity and "ecstatic intensity" of which our European friends are capable. —zipkin

## DAVID ROSENBOOM and DONALD BUCHLA

COLLABORATION IN PERFORMANCE—1750 Arch Records S-1774: *And Out Come The Night Ears; How Much Better If Plymouth Rock Had Landed On The Pilgrims, Section V.*

Personnel: Rosenboom, composition and performance, electronic voice; Buchla, instrumentation, orchestration and electronic voices.

★ ★ ★ ½

Here are two strikingly divergent ventures into machine music, both in their own ways addressing the perennial musical problem of balancing diversity against order: both, with

differing degrees of success, confronting a problem unique to electronic music: how to infuse technology with human values and musical meaning.

The first of these pieces, *And Out Comes The Night Ears*, is improvised by Rosenboom on an electronically prepared piano. By interfacing the piano's several registers with sound sensing and modifying devices which the player can key in by touch switches, Rosenboom and Buchla transform a standard Steinway into a flexible, potent electro-acoustic hybrid. Freely improvised, *And Out* begins with jagged bass plunges foiled by metallic, vibes-like sounds in the upper register, seasoned with electronic glisses and swept filter effects. There's little legato here, for the electronics accentuate the piano's naturally percussive attack. More interesting, though, than the individual sonorities is the way this chancy, disorganized piece gradually becomes more accessible—more orderly disorganized—as it progresses. It's difficult to tell whether this process of organizational discovery occurs in the listener's mind or results from the soloist's grasping the logic of the instrument's electronic network and of his own improvisation.

In *How Much Better If Plymouth Rock* the principle musical problem again involves seeking diversity and humanistic values in a structured, machine-like context. Donald Buchla's synthesis equipment has always been strong on sequencing (Subotnick's *Silver Apples Of The Moon*, realized on Buchla equipment, is a good case in point). Used here is the Buchla 300 Series Electric Music Box. Assisted by a computer, this device generates synchronized melodic variations on a series of preselected pitches, playable through four dis-

crete synthesizer voices. The result? A kind of "improvised tapestry" of changing timbres, envelopes and registers, all minimally varied, a fabric of shifts from electronic to pseudo-acoustic events which drone on, raga-like, in a dizzying circularity of sound. Dynamics, though, are monochromatic; and coupled with the clocklike rhythms created by the music box/computer interface, the piece becomes more and more like one of those white on white paintings: conceptually provocative but uneasily contemplated for any length of time.

—balleras

## JIM HALL and RED MITCHELL

JIM HALL/RED MITCHELL—Artists House AH 5: *Big Blues; Beautiful; Waltz New; Fly Me To The Moon; Blue Dove; Osaka Express.*

Personnel: Mitchell, bass; Hall, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★

Jim and Red. Red and Jim. No leader—just companionship, empathy, and beautiful music. It was Red, Jim, and Carl (pianist Perkins) back in the mid '50s on the West Coast in one of the coziest drumless trios ever formed. These soulmates are here reunited after Mitchell's long self-exile to Sweden, and the celebration is quietly jubilant, fervently dancing, mutually inspired.

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Artists House continues John Snyder's superb production record from A & M Horizon. An eight page booklet includes scores and composers' solos on Hall's intricate *Waltz New* and Mitchell's simply *Beautiful*, as well as nearly complete discographies of both musicians prepared by Jim Gicking. Attention to detail in printing and recording (at Sweet Basil, a Hall hangout) show as much care, love, and genius as the performance does.

—fred bouchard

## GEORGE BENSON

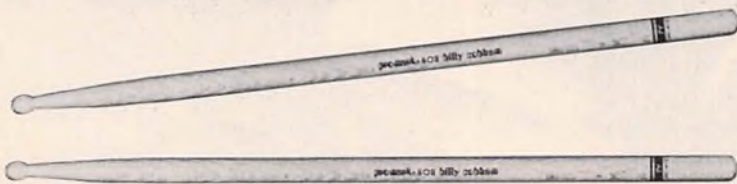
LIVIN' INSIDE YOUR LOVE—Warner Brothers 2BSK 3277: *Livin' Inside Your Love; Hey Girl; Nassau Day; Soulful Strut; Prelude To Fall; A Change Is Gonna Come; Love Ballad; You're Never Too Far From Me; Love Is A Hurtin' Thing; Welcome To My World; Before You Go; Unchained Melody.*

Personnel: Benson, guitars, vocals; Earl Klugh, acoustic guitar; Phil Upchurch, rhythm guitar; Ronnie Foster, electric piano, Yamaha CP30, Minimoog, Polymoog; Jorge Dalto, acoustic piano, Clavinet, electric pianos; Greg Phillinganes, electric piano (cut 7); Will Lee, bass; Stanley Banks, bass (8, 11); Robert Popwell, Jr., bass (5, 7, 10); Steve Gadd, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Mike Mainieri, vibes (5).

★ ★

Much has been already said about George Benson ascending to commercial recording fame while rather guiltlessly disassociating himself from the modern jazz hierarchy (to which he once belonged). His vocal success with *This Masquerade* (from the 1976 *Breezin'* LP), which earned him a Grammy award, has resulted in consecutive pop efforts in hopes of at least equaling that achievement. Last year's *On Broadway* came close and so may the many

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such attempts—especially the covers of *Love Ballad*, *Hey Girl* and *Unchained Melody*—on this two-record package. But, as has been his problem recently, little is heard from that blazing guitar Benson rode in on and this is *Livin' Inside Your Love's* major tribulation.

Since *Masquerade* each successive album has contained additional vocal numbers, featuring Benson's now stylized sugary, scatting tenor. On 1977's *In Flight*, four of the six tunes were sung. The number reached six on last year's double, live *Weekend In L.A.* and, predictably, rose to seven with this release. At this point, my argument does not so much concern his vocal capabilities (or lack of); I merely question the amount of recording time availed to pop pursuits at the obvious expense of his once revered guitar playing. Apparently, Benson is star struck and will not let up until he's universally recognized as a heralded balladeer. Thus, it's no small wonder that he can't find the time to play.

I don't expect this debate would rage so vehemently had Benson proven himself as a potent vocal force. Indeed, if he had, we could have accepted as consolation for the lost guitarist the discovery of a true male jazz voice for our times. Unfortunately, that has not been the case.

Benson adds virtually nothing to the vocal dimensions of song. On *Love Ballad*, his chief method is displayed—a scat style marked by a pronounced waver in tone intended to evoke the jazz spirit a la Mesdames Vaughan and Fitzgerald. Actually it is cheap and pretentious, a device calculated to engender the greatest emotional response from the soft hearted. Torrents of strings and a persistent disco rhythm confirm the song's clearly romantic design.

It is worth noting, however, that Benson's guitar'n'scat solo during the above-discussed rendition is well taken and should be further explored on future dates. Why he features this impressive technique—first popularized on *Masquerade*—so infrequently here has probably most to do with his own vocal priorities.

Instrumentally, only two of the five non-vocal tracks are of any significance. *Soulful Strut* (originally recorded by Young-Holt Unlimited in 1968) is undoubtedly the swingingest piece on the set and Benson should be congratulated for uncovering it. A couple of Ronnie Foster compositions (*Nassau Day*, *Prelude To Fall*) offer Benson a funkier framework for some momentarily-straight-from-the-gut-bucket pickin' while his own *You're Never Too Far From Me*, a brisk and bouncy number, is simply very pretty music and just may be the best cut on both discs.

Still, I've always regarded such tunes as exceedingly pleasant filler while awaiting the more ambitious projects to follow. They don't, for *Livin'* is a particularly unambitious musical effort. The layer of strings that hovers like a massive cloud cover taints any gems that might be included. Plus, whatever once possessed Benson to select early '70s classics like War's *The World Is A Ghetto* and Donny Hathaway's *Valdez In The Country* (both on *In Flight*) is missing here. Instead, he and producer Tommy LiPuma have chosen from the scroll of early '60s golden oldies and come up way short. For Benson, who writes a minimum of his own material, this is the whole ballgame, and he blew it.

I can't say I didn't expect it, but, yes—*Livin' Inside Your Love* is a great disappointment.

—steve bloom

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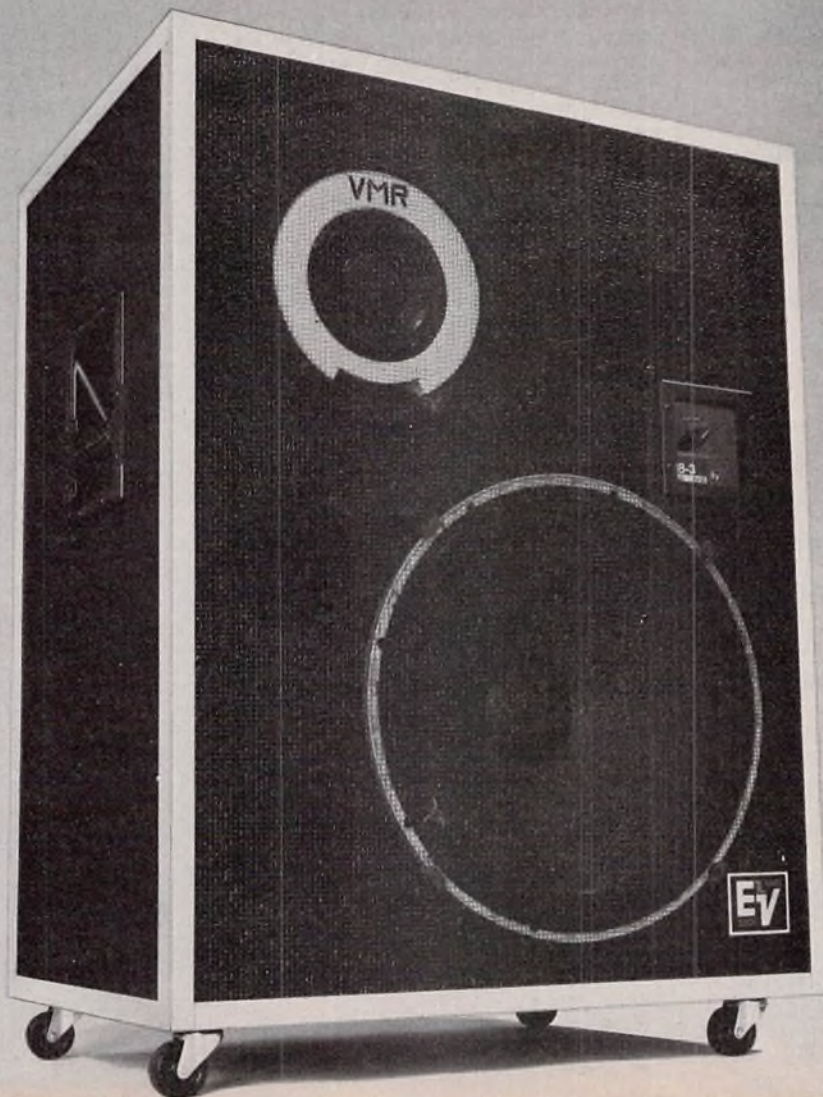
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# BLINDFOLD TEST



## PATRICE RUSHEN

BY LEONARD FEATHER

Patrice Rushen was 21 and already an established figure in contemporary music as keyboard soloist, composer and arranger at the time of her only previous *Blindfold Test* (db 5/6/76). With her switch to Elektra-Asylum Records and a self produced album high on the pop and jazz charts, the Locke High School alumna is at a crossroads.

"I haven't decided yet which direction to take," she said recently. "I've been involved in playing, performing, arranging, orchestrating and producing, and haven't yet decided that I'd like to do any one of them full time.

"I know I have to sell records, but I have an artistic commitment to myself that I don't want to sacrifice. On the last album the emphasis was changed: I did more singing, and had a chance to write for strings, horns and woodwind ensembles. I didn't play as much, but this opened up a new audience, so next time that many more people will be paying attention."

She's featured on the L.A. Jazz Ensemble's Korman Record *In The Life Before*, and has lately been working on a project with Lalo Schifrin that will involve Stanley Clarke, Alex Acuna and Manolo Badrena. She was given no information about the records played.

**1. JOANNE BRACKEEN.** *Dreamers* (from *AFT*, Muse). Brackeen, composer, piano; Ryo Kawasaki, guitar; Clint Houston, bass.

I think it was Chick Corea on piano; and the guitar player sounded like John McLaughlin. I couldn't figure out who the bass player was. But I thought the playing was very good, very supportive, good solos. The composition sounded like something Chick would write, in the way the changes move.

I think it was well performed. The mood was really nice. The group kept a certain continuity of feel throughout; everyone was playing off one another really nicely. Just for that alone I would give it three stars. And the composition I would also give three stars. Overall, three and a half stars.

**2. JANE IRA BLOOM.** *Braxton Bop* (from *We Are*, Outline Records). Bloom, soprano sax, composer; Kent McLagan, bass.

I think the saxophone was maybe Joe Farrell... the tone reminded me a lot of him, and the fluidity. He really plays soprano saxophone well. The bass player—this must not be my day for bass players, that's really difficult. I'll just take a guess: Charlie Haden. The solo was very melodic in approach, and a lot of space, and I know Charlie Haden does utilize that concept a lot.

The composition was really interesting, and intricate, too, for them to play right together, phrase exactly alike on two instruments that are really far apart in terms of tonality. I'll give it three stars.

**3. MARY LOU WILLIAMS.** *J.B.'s Waltz* (from *My Mama Pinned A Rose On Me*, Pablo). Williams, piano; Buster Williams, bass.

I'll have to think about who the piano player was for a few minutes. The bass player I would say was very young, Ron Carter-influenced. Might be Ron... The harmonic concept and the solo flavored the kind of lines that Ron might play... Ron, or Ray Brown, somebody that is really a prominent voice on bass.

The piano player stumps me. I just couldn't put my finger on it. Reminded me of a lot of different people—not one enough to make me think it was somebody that I really knew well.

I would say the performance was good but, in a way, timid sometimes and kind of inconsistent. Sometimes it would be right in the pocket and they'd really be playing very fluidly; and sometimes they'd get stumped—maybe technically; it didn't sound like musical problems, like they were running out of ideas necessarily. But it may be due to a person who is either very young, or who has been playing a while and hasn't really been playing a lot, consistently.

But the composition was good, and the bass player and pianist complemented each other very well, just from a musical standpoint. I would give it two and a half stars.

**4. BOBBI HUMPHREY.** *My Destiny* (from *Freestyle*, Epic). Humphrey, flute; Ralph McDonald, composer, percussion; Richard Tee, keyboards; Eric Gale, guitar; Anthony Jackson, bass.

I'm not sure about this; I would say the flutist could be Bobbi Humphrey. I'm just going mainly on the approach to the solo and the sound. But sometimes on records the sound can be deceiving. But I'll say it sounds like Bobbi... on better days. And that's not a putdown to her, it's just that that's one of the better solos that I've heard.

I think the rhythm track was good, but it wasn't really tight, so it tended to sound kind of busy. It's real important in doing music of that nature... the mix is crucial and it didn't sound like as much attention as could have been spent in really balancing the rhythm instruments was spent.

The composition wasn't anything special for me; just sounded kind of like a lot of other stuff that I've heard. And everybody did what you usually do when you play that kind of beat, I guess. Nothing special, but it was okay. I'd give it two stars, although it's kind of hard to rate, because the performance was rather shaky.

**5. JOANNE GRAUER.** *Longing* (from *Joanne Grauer*, MPS). Grauer, piano, composer; Paulinho Da Costa, percussion.

I liked it; that was really good. Hmm, can't say who that pianist was, but it was excellent. The solo

was very good, and the composition was very nice. I didn't recognize it, so maybe it's an original. I liked the way the tune started, quietly, and built to a climax and came back down. The percussionist was very sensitive also. I would give this four stars just for the performance. I'm sure it must be some people that I like.

**6. MARIAN McPARTLAND.** *I'll Remember April* (from *Now's The Time*, Halcyon). McPartland, piano; Vi Redd, alto sax; Mary Osborne, guitar; Lynn Milano, bass; Dottie Dodgion, drums.

The tune is *I'll Remember April*, and I think the alto saxophonist sounded good; they were swinging really hard, almost sounded like they were singing. The sound, and just the approach, reminded me of my friend Vi Redd, bluesy and with a lot of feeling.

The rhythm section? I draw a total blank, I really don't know. Sometimes it seemed like the tune was kind of running away from them, but still I got that feeling that they were really into it.

I would say, just for the energy, two stars; and I really liked the alto soloist, whoever that was. The pianist could have been Marian McPartland.

**7. BARBARA CARROLL.** *Lazy Love* (from *From The Beginning*, United Artists). Carroll, piano; Ben Lanzarone, arranger, composer.

The pianist, believe it or not, sounds like John Lewis, because of the light touch and the type of lines; it has a little bop feel. But I know the context is a bit different from what he might be doing.

The pianist showed a lot of maturity. They could have brought up a little more in the mix. I'll take a stab at John Lewis. I could be totally wrong, but that sound is familiar to me.

The composition is fair. It was well done; the orchestration, the arrangement really helped the composition have a little more depth; it kept it from getting boring, introducing the different colors with the strings and some of the horns, because the composition wasn't something real special. But then maybe it wasn't supposed to be, so they could show off the soloists. Two and a half stars.

**8. TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI/LEW TABACKIN.** *Elegy* (from *Kogun*, RCA). Akiyoshi, composer, arranger, piano; Tabackin, tenor sax; Britt Woodman, trombone.

That's great; five stars, no question! Excellent performance, great solos. Mainly because of the second saxophone solo, that sounded like Lew Tabackin to me. I would say Toshiko and Lew, their band. And that last trombone melody, that sounded like Britt Woodman.

It's been a long time since I heard Toshiko play, so I wasn't quite sure; but that second sax solo did it.

LF: That was an all-female *Blindfold Test*. All the leaders were women.

PR: Wow!... yeah... that really surprises me. Not so much about Joanne Brackeen, because I know she's been very influenced by Chick. And the one I thought was Joe Farrell, that really threw me; she's excellent.

LF: Joanne Grauer was the pianist you liked so much.

PR: I wouldn't have guessed that. And Mary Lou Williams, that threw me. But like I said, it sounded like the person was young or an established player... because musically it was all together; so it had to be someone who was very, very gifted but hadn't been playing for a while, so maybe their chops were down.

LF: It never occurred to you that it was an all-female set?

PR: No, it didn't. It really sounded good, and I guess that's a test—if it sounds good, it sounds good. You couldn't just say, "Oh, that sounds like women playing..." you know, how do women sound? Good, bad and indifferent—like men.

# PROFILE

## JOHN HICKS

BY JOEL HERSON



ROGER POLA

Pianist John Hicks' brilliant work with Betty Carter over the past five years is startlingly reminiscent of Art Tatum, the standard bearer of keyboard excellence. Born in 1941 to a St. Louis preacher, Hicks began his musical education at the age of six with lessons from both his mother and the Union Memorial Church organist. While in elementary school he played in the Church's "Celestial Chorus" and fondly remembers performing the Nathaniel Dett composition, *Juba Dance*.

Hicks' affection for choral music persisted through his years at Sumner High School which found him singing in the school choir while classmates Lester Bowie and Oliver Lake played in the marching band.

The first money gig arrived at age 17 with blues singer Little Milton. "That was a good job for learning to play in all the keys," Hicks recalls. "The piano was so flat nobody could tune up to it, so if the song was in E flat I automatically had to play it in E."

Hicks refers to his experiences at Lincoln University in Jefferson City as a period of "serious musical development." He switched his major from government to music in his second year and with fellow student Julius Hemphill played "any kind of gig we could find to get our meal ticket money. Those gigs were my first dealings with the quintet format, the trumpet/tenor front line. I was buying a lot of Bud Powell, George Shearing and Oscar Peterson records back then. And Art Tatum, but at that time I couldn't really deal with what Tatum was doing."

After Lincoln University Hicks headed for Boston. At the Berklee School of Music he played in ensemble groups with Chick Corea, Gary Burton, and the 14 year old Tony Williams. A Boston after hours joint called The Pioneer Club provided opportunities to meet and sit in with Sonny Stitt, Lucky Thompson, Kenny Dorham, and the late Israel Crosby, who had played such formidable bass for Ahmad Jamal.

In 1963 Hicks entered that hallowed hall of learning known as Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and stayed for two years.

"Art was pretty heavy on piano players. There were tons of tunes to learn and Art wouldn't allow any music on the bandstand. He said you were supposed to remember it." Hicks claims to have been unprepared at first for the extensive solo work Blakey demanded of him. "Art just sort of pushed me out there and said, 'You got it.' Of course once I got into it I saw how great it was."

Pianistic influences during this period were Hank Jones, Tommy Flanagan and Jimmy Rowles, the common denominator for Hicks being their great clarity. The association with Blakey resulted in Hicks' first record date, *Smoke It*, originally released on the Mercury label featuring Blakey, Lee Morgan, John Gilmore, Curtis Fuller, Victor Sproles and Hicks.

Hicks has always enjoyed the special, subtle art of comping. Stimulated originally by Red Garland, Wynton Kelly and Bill Evans in their work with Miles Davis, Hicks has evolved an outstanding comping style, always energetic, never intrusive. Perhaps the most vivid display of his skill in this area has been in the demanding musical contexts of Betty Carter.

Hicks had heard Betty Carter's classic LP with Ray Charles back in St. Louis but his first glimpse of her in action was in 1966 at the Five Spot. "I said, 'God, I'd sure like to play with her!'" It just so happened that Betty needed a piano player and Hicks was recommended by Jack DeJohnette. (Hicks had been playing in a quintet with DeJohnette that included Charles Tolliver, Gary Bartz and Cecil McBee.) Hicks worked with Carter for two years, playing both the Five Spot and Wells, the Harlem chicken-and-waffles house.

In 1968 Hicks went on the road with Woody Herman's band for two years and then turned professor in 1970, teaching music at Southern Illinois University, only 30 miles from the home turf of St. Louis.

In '73 there was a call from Europe. Tolliver wanted Hicks to play a jazz festival in Holland with Reggie Workman and Alvin Qucen. The performance was recorded and released in Europe by Strata East.

The next two years brought work with the old taskmaster, Blakey, both in New York with Eddie Henderson, Carter Jefferson and Mickey Bass, and at Ronnie Scott's in London, where Bass was replaced by Stafford James.

Hicks was badly frightened during the first few months of 1975, having suffered an automobile accident that injured his right hand. "I had the cast cut back a taste so I could deal with four fingers. My doctor was a piano fan. He kept telling me it was a good time to work on my left hand."

In April the cast was removed and Hicks re-joined Betty Carter in a collaboration that becomes more exhilarating with each successive performance. Ms. Carter praises, "Hicks' energy level and his ability to retain so much for so long makes me feel that he's one of the best piano players around. Especially the energy

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Kenny Washington, who has been providing impeccable service to Betty on traps says, "John isn't scared of *any* tempo! No matter how fast he's playing, and he plays *fast*, it always comes out clean."

Hicks shrugs off his piano virtuosity as "just the work I put into it. The longer I play the more I realize there's all this *other* stuff to work on. That's something you always have to deal with—you can't ever relax on it. But you get into this habit of learning and if you keep that happening, sometimes you surprise yourself."

During his occasional time off from Betty Carter, Hicks plays his own gigs, frequently supported by the tasty drums of Clifford Barbaro. The tenor players Hicks likes to play with are "the ones who like piano players, like George Coleman, Junior Cook and Harold Vick."

Hicks' own album will be showing up in the record stores presently on the West 54 label. He is featured in solo, duo and trio contexts accompanied by Barbaro and Walter Booker. Right after the recording session that produced this album Hicks "suddenly had tons of ideas" and plans to execute them on wax this summer. Intrigued by the writing of Ernie Wilkins, Frank Foster and Slide Hampton, Hicks anticipates using four or five saxophones on this date. Playing with another pianist, perhaps Albert Dailey, is a further possibility he finds attractive.

Not one to torment himself over creating new forms, Hicks feels, "If you just keep playing and concentrate on doing it *right*, your concept will change naturally as you change."

Pressed to articulate a kind of ultimate goal, Hicks allowed that "there is a sound that's always in the back of your head and you try to work toward that. There are certain people who've done it. Trane, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong. It's a sound that transcends the instrument." db

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## JOHN EATON

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BY JERRY DE MUTH

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The audience that filled the Carmichael Auditorium of the Smithsonian Institution for a solo piano performance of songs by Gershwin and Arlen last January erupted into cheers when it was announced that the performer, John Eaton, would be leaving the Prime Rib restaurant for an open-ended engagement in the new lounge at the Embassy Row Hotel.

Eaton, a prominent fixture on the Washington, D.C. jazz scene for more than two decades, was more than pleased.

"What it means," he told **down beat**, "is people want to hear someone play in a sensible setting and not where the music is incidental to the restaurant."

For most of the past eight years Eaton has been playing solo piano in piano bars, six of those years at the Carriage House restaurant. Before that he played in various settings, beginning with a stint with a dixieland group at the Bayou around 1957. Then from 1958 to 1961 he led his own trio, with bassist Billy Taylor and drummer George "Dude" Brown

at the Mayfair. His first piano bar experiences, at the Silver Fox and the Madison Hotel, followed. Next he moved to the famed Blues Alley where, from 1968 to 1971, he was the house pianist, leading a trio that included Taylor and drummer George Brown. It was here that he finally began to attract attention. But it was a summer back at the Mayfair that he remembers as a special experience—four months when he was joined by violinist Stuff Smith.

"Stuff had gone to Europe with Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald for Norman Granz," as Eaton explained their meeting which occurred in 1959. "He got as far as Paris where he got drunk or something and was fired. Somehow he found his way to Washington and ended up playing at Blues Alley with us."

Eaton recorded with Stuff on an album for Verve. It was Eaton's only recording until four years ago when he recorded the first of two solo piano LPs for Chiaroscuro Records.

At Blues Alley, Eaton, who is not to be confused with the Philadelphia jazz pianist John Charles Eaton, also played with Clark Terry, Wild Bill Davison, Vic Dickenson, Zoot Sims and Maxine Sullivan.

"Working with her was a great experience," he says.

Eaton thinks there is something special to be gained from working with a singer. "It gives you a feeling for the song you can't get if you're working only from a jazz perspective," he explains.

Eaton's playing draws from every important pianist from James P. Johnson to Teddy Wilson to Art Tatum without ever being imitative. He integrates the trademarks of these pianists into a new and fresh whole, applying this style to original reworkings of a variety of jazz and pop standards in a manner that makes them stand apart from "definitive" versions by others. His two solo albums include jazz tunes by Fats Waller, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Duke Ellington and John Lewis; pop standards by Rodgers and Hart, Walter Donaldson and Alec Wilder; contemporary songs by Lennon-McCartney, Simon and Garfunkel and Stevie Wonder; a couple originals, and even such off-the-wall choices as the theme from M.A.S.H. (*Suicide Is Painless*), *Old McDonald (Had A Farm)* and *Dixie*, all done at slow tempos.

Such variety in choice of material is partly a product of years of playing at piano bars, an experience Eaton has used to grow artistically, not shrink as so easily could have been the case. Eaton strongly defends his piano bar playing, and not just because it has meant steady, well paying work for him.

"One of the best experiences is to work in a solo piano bar," he commented one evening between relaxed sets. "You don't have to do singing-along but you have to be flexible.

"Working at the Carriage House for six years gave me a great deal of confidence. The difficulty is not lack of confidence, it's whether or not you're reaching someone. If you cannot reach people some way, then you should be doing something else. It's not only a question of what you play, but when you play it.

"Good music is difficult to listen to," he admitted. "But it's always accessible if you give it time."

Despite all his solo playing in clubs and concerts and on records the past eight years, Eaton performed with a bassist, Tommy Cecil, during the 11 months he was at the Prime Rib.

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Besides feeling strongly about Cecil as a bassist—"He listened to what I did and gave more than just bass lines"—Eaton thinks all solo pianists should occasionally play with bassists, and in a variety of other settings.

"Anything that can make you hear differently is good," he explains.

"My theory is you should go back and forth between playing solo and playing with a bass player because they tend to interact in an interesting way. There's some adjustment to be made. You hear the instrument very differently when you work with a bass player. You can't pedal the same way. You have to use more tone with your right hand. This is the only way you can get a blend with the bass so it sounds like one thing instead of somebody fighting somebody else.

"Also, working with a bass player, particularly someone as good as Tommy, you begin to feel more free with rhythm again. But all in all, I think my future lies in playing alone."

Eaton says there is both a discipline and a freedom that exists in solo playing. The discipline comes from having to carry it all yourself. "The freedom comes from the ease with which you can suddenly decide to end a tune after one chorus and shift into something else. You can also suddenly change keys or rhythms."

Being so devoted to solo piano, it is not surprising that his favorite pianist is Art Tatum, although he also holds special Fats Waller, Willie "The Lion" Smith and Oscar Peterson. But he feels that Tatum did not play as well with other musicians as he did solo, that something was lost.

"Tatum always thought like a pianist and the things he did orchestrally with his left hand were essential to his style and when he had to sacrifice that to work with a bass player or guitar player or whatever, something went out of his playing. Somehow it seemed shallow."

Eaton obviously feels as strongly about past traditions as he does about the current scene, if not more strongly. And he prefers older pianists not only stylistically, since they don't forget about their roots, but also technically. "They are more pianistic; they exploit the sound quality of the instrument.

"You can't do without sources but traditions are being sloughed off by many musicians today," he declares. "Any music that goes into an isolation booth can't be alive."

Thus although he will praise Keith Jarrett for "incredible ability" and for generating much of today's interest in solo piano, he also criticizes Jarrett for neglecting his roots, for self-indulgence and for too much of an "it starts with me" attitude.

Still, Eaton says he has "heard things of Jarrett's I like very, very much." Eaton also finds Bill Evans "a little too doctrinaire, there's a sameness," although he likes Evans "very much."

Of other contemporary pianists, he likes Chick Corea as much for his humor and sense of swing as for his technical ability and last fall, during a rare vacation, Eaton was impressed with George Cables whom he heard with Dexter Gordon. "He broke into five minutes of Earl Hines—tremolos, cross hands—during one solo. There were no gimmicks. It was the real thing. I thought it didn't exist any more." Eaton also praises Ellis Larkins and Dave McKenna, both solo pianists who regularly play piano bars.

"McKenna is incredible," he enthuses. "He's kind of a post-Tatum solo pianist. He's



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quite unique and can always adjust his conception whether he's playing solo or with a bassist or whoever."

Larkins, Eaton observes, plays solo with an element of surprise.

As for himself, he says, "All the things are working favorably. The reaction to my records, the Smithsonian things, Embassy Row."

His five concert series—one Sunday a month—at the Smithsonian sold out. He featured two different composers at each one—Cole Porter and Jerome Kern, George Gershwin and Harold Arlen, Richard Rodgers and Irving Berlin, Vincent Youmans and Duke Ellington, Fats Waller and Jimmy McHugh. Previously he had played only occasional, isolated concerts at the Smithsonian. The popular songwriters series, which was Eaton's idea, probably will be repeated next season, with the focus on different composers.

A year ago Eaton was featured on a PBS jazz program backing a vocalist. There is also a possibility that PBS will tape some of his popular song performances for broadcast.

"If PBS did that it would be a helluva break," he commented glowingly.

Washington always has been John Eaton's home and because he has a family there (including a flute playing 15 year old daughter and a 13 year old guitar playing son) he chooses to remain in the nation's capital. A PBS series then would also be a break for others, enabling them to enjoy his playing. At 45, John Eaton may finally become known outside a circle of Washington, D.C. fans and a group of fellow musicians. **db**

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This year's Women's Jazz Festival represented an advance on the inaugural 1978 bash: there were more events, attendance was up sharply from last year, and the good vibes remained. Again credit was due to the two in-

# “The Leblanc has a fat sound.”



Leblanc Duet No. 4, featuring Pete Fountain

It's prior to show time at Pete Fountain's new bistro in The Hilton on the River in New Orleans. We're relaxing at a table near the stage, and Pete's describing what he enjoys doing when he's not here.

**Fountain:** I love to fish. I have a small fishing boat, and go out on it a lot. Around home, my hobby is just tinkering with my cars. I have twelve antique cars, including a '36 four-door convertible like Roosevelt's. Could be his, because it has an oversize trunk, maybe for the wheelchair. I enjoy my Rolls, too. My Rolls and my Mercedes. Those two cars I run a lot. And I started collecting trucks. Have a half dozen of 'em. I'm really interested in old planes, too. The biplanes. And I love race cars. Got into motorcycles for awhile, too, and still have my Harley 1200cc. Big Harley. I kick it, and it kicks me back. It's tough.

That's one of the things I like about my clarinet, too. My Leblanc.

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**Fountain:** Well, I don't like a high, screechy sound. I like it more mellow, like Irving Fazola was known for.

I have his clarinet, you know, but I can't play it too often. When Faz died, his mother put it away in the case, and then left it there for possibly six years. Well, I got it and sent it to Leblanc, and I said, "Could you just recondition this, because it's my idol's." Well, after they sent it back, I started playing it, and when the wood gets warm you're reminded that Faz used to like his garlic. This garlic comes out, and it grabs you by the throat, and, I tell you, it fills up the whole bandstand. So we always say, "Fazola still lives every

time somebody plays his clarinet."

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domitable local women who dreamed up the concept, a disc jockey named Dianne Gregg and the singer/pianist (and db correspondent) Carol Comer.

Except for the big concert on the third and final night, all the events took place in various areas of the Crown Center Hotel, a big urban redevelopment project that provided a handsome though uncomfortably overcrowded setting for the jam sessions (in a bar), and the "Big Apple Women In Jazz" evening, organized by Cobi Narita and members of her Universal Jazz Coalition (held in a large open area surrounded by the many shops and cafeterias of the International Cafe). A gospel mini-marathon with choirs from the K.C. area also was held in the Cafe area.

The jam sessions in the bar were hampered by the presence of the regular group working there, a trio headed by the flamboyant Roy Meriwether, who offers pianistic impressions of a thunderstorm. He was, however, replaced from time to time by various sitters in, among them Amy Duncan, a pianist and singer from Boston who ran down the entire Lambert-Hendricks-Ross version of Miles Davis' *Four* quite effectively. Barbara London played lyrical flute and sang a wispy vocal on *Meditation*.

The Narita-sponsored evening was performed by a delegation of volunteers from New York, here mainly for the exposure, and the experience of seeing their sisters presented in the major concert. The talent ranged from clearly amateurish (not all the women were full time pros) to very competent, under the musical direction of the splendid bassist Carline Ray.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the music was mainly bebop, the lingua franca of jazz after all these years. Joy Spring, a vocal quartet, sang the Clifford Brown tune of that name as well as Miles Davis' old *Little Willie Leaps*. The show closed with the entire company singing or blowing on a mixture of *Anthropology* and *Oleo*.

The surprise hit of the evening was a satirical quasi-blues sung by Evelyn Blakey, *Put On A March For My Dime*. A paramedic who specializes in pediatrics, she is Art Blakey's daughter and plans soon to take her own group, *Celebration*, to Europe. With her stentorian voice and entertainment-oriented song she had the crowd in her pocket.

Carline Ray also sang in her customary throbbing, super-deep contralto. Jane Ira Bloom, a 23 year old Yale graduate, played impressive soprano sax with a rhythm section that included Amina Claudine Myers, piano, and Paula Hampton or Barbara Merjan, drums. Jill McManus sat in all too briefly on piano later in the evening.

The only predominantly male event of the festival was a high school and college band invitational. The four bands read their parts well and showed a generally commendable sense of dynamics and shading, but only one, the University of Kansas Jazz Ensemble I, from Lawrence, Kansas, directed by Jim Barnes, showed real creativity and promise among the soloists.

In another part of the hotel, during a six hour span on Saturday, clinics and workshops were held. Catching Carol Kaye's bass class and Joanne Brackeen's advanced piano class, I was most impressed by Brackeen's relaxed rapport with the students. Other workshopers were Sue Evans, percussion, Monette Sudler, guitar, and Dr. Karen Fanta Zumbunn, improvisation.

Finally, across the river at Memorial Hall



Carline Ray

in Kansas City, Kansas, the main concert attracted about 2200 to a 3000 seat hall (but for organizational foulups it might well have been a capacity attendance). Though I spent a little time onstage emceeing, it was not hard to judge the performance level and to conclude that despite many moments of innovation and excitement, the overall impact did not quite reach that of last year's show, which had concluded with a triumphant set by the Akiyoshi/Tabackin band.

The WJF introduced a new element this year, a combo contest for which applicants sent tapes. The judges did well in selecting Aerial as the winner. This New York based quartet is led by Nina Sheldon, a pianist whose work was strong, very imaginative harmonically, and swung ferociously. Her blend with Barbara London's flute on such tunes as Cedar Walton's *Ugetsu* set the style for the combo, but it was Carline Ray's vocal on a song called *Tomorrow's Woman* that symbolized the spirit of the entire festival. With Barbara Merjan on drums (the youngest of the group; she's a student at Ithaca College), the impact of Aerial was startling and should assure these women of a record deal.

Urszula Dudziak and Michal Urbaniak lived up to their electrifying electronic repu-

tation. Backed by Kenny Kirkland, piano; Marcus Miller, bass, and Richie Morales, drums, Dudziak's voice and Urbaniak's violin (he only played Lyricon very briefly, apparently dissatisfied with the sound system) took this Midwestern audience by storm. Most amazing of all was Dudziak's unaccompanied vocalese foray; her use of the Echoplex was masterful, or rather mistressful, on *Future Talk*.

Marian McPartland's duo set was notable for her two beguiling originals, *Time And Time Again* and *Silent Pool*, for her customary harmonic brilliance, and for Brian Torff's astonishing bass work.

The attempt to mount an all-female "Jazz Festival All Stars" group failed to come off, mainly because the rhythm section didn't jell, with Dr. Zumbunn too heavy handed at the piano and Sue Evans, known mainly as a percussionist, playing drums, along with Sudler's guitar and Carline Ray's bass. Saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom and Sudler offered some exemplary solo work in a Sudler original, *Transition*, after which both of them disappeared, along with Zumbunn and Evans. One wondered why they were brought so far to play one number.

Melba Liston, just in from the West Indies (she has been a teacher for the past five years at the Jamaica School of Music) played the rest of the set, backed by McPartland, Ray and Merjan. She approached the trombone a little gingerly, like someone renewing acquaintanceship with an old friend (she has hardly played during her teaching years), but soon provided evidence that her chops are back in splendid shape. She played *Donna Lee* at a pleasingly laid-back tempo, then had the crowd offering mid-solo applause in her reading of the Mary Lou Williams blues, *What's Your Story Morning Glory*. After shifting into a more technically demanding *Night In Tunisia*, she closed on a relaxed note with *Come Sunday*. It was good news that this distinguished Basic-Gillespie-Quincy Jones-Randy Weston alumna plans a permanent return to the U.S. this year.

Carmen McRae is almost beyond criticism; suffice it that her set was notable for a splendid choice of songs (*The Night Has A Thousand Eyes*, *Autumn Nocturne* etc.) and of instrumental helpers (Marshall Otwell, piano; Ed Bennett, bass; Frank Severino, drums). Carmen, as usual, accompanied herself on the piano for the last two numbers.

Joanne Brackeen closed—a mistake, since her name is not strong enough, and hundred of walkers-out (assuming nothing important could follow McRae) thus deprived themselves of the chance to listen to a pianist who is surely destined for great things. Though she had time for only three pieces before the midnight curfew, there was ample evidence of her wealth of chordal and modal cerebration, her incisive control, and the superb empathy among her and Eddie Gomez and Billy Hart (the latter was her teammate in the Stan Getz rhythm section). Her set was composed of well crafted original works.

Despite the errors in programming and pacing, the WJF was able this year to establish itself as one of the more valuable festivals, and one that is now receiving belated media coverage (this time around both CBS and NBC were on hand with cameras). With possibly a little more help at the production end, Comer and Gregg next year may be able to mount the smooth, sold-out event this could and should be.

—Leonard Feather



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**MULLIGAN**

continued from page 13

grams organized so I can always let them know enough in advance to be able to block out the periods I need... then, of course, when we're in New York they can do what they want.

"What I try to do with my band, especially when we're traveling, is to focus our enthusiasm for music and keep a positive attitude toward life going as an antidote to what can happen if the band becomes bored and unenthusiastic. The attitude musicians bring to the band is a very important part of their personal makeup to me. A musician's attitude in the bus takes on an importance, as well as his abilities as a musician.

"I don't like to have the band out for longer than five or six weeks at a time, because then the negative aspects of prolonged traveling start to affect them. The band could be riding on excitement the first few weeks and then, for whatever reason, hit a slump. It's similar to sport teams. And you have to suffer through this. It could be days or weeks, because a kind of fatigue sets in. I'd rather go out for shorter periods and come back home so I can write and everybody can recharge their batteries.

"The only drawback of the Kool tour for the band is there's not enough playing time to keep it at the peak of enthusiasm. It's not an easy thing for a band—especially a young, enthusiastic band like mine—to play only 40 minute sets every night. And there's usually a day in between this tour's shows; I like to have the band play every night. When you're playing the same 30 to 45 minutes a night, you don't get to play much material. So after a tour like this I'm hoping to get the band into rehearsal just to get back into the book again."

At the Carnegie Hall sound check three hours before the Kool tour concert, Mulligan used every minute he had for rehearsing. "I want more definition—not so soft," he told the band. "And start fuller so the fourths and seconds come through. . . . Beautiful. Let's play the sax chorus without the rhythm. . . . You're playing those notes wrong, man."

He sings it: "Ba doo ba de doo . . . It's still not right, but okay, let's go ahead."

Later he's seated at the piano, talking to the pianist: "What I want is this." He plays chords descending stepwise going through the circle of fifths. "Everyone in the band goofs it." Mulligan is lucky he has any time at all for rehearsing while on tour, with all the traveling, appearances and interviews involved.

It's hard enough to be able to rehearse off the road. "Rehearsing is a function of music that has been practically lost sight of, because the cost is too great for a professional band to be able to do it," he says. "The [union rehearsal pay scale] rulings about rehearsal money were made for radio and TV stations, to make sure the musicians get paid for rehearsals. But if the same scale of rehearsal cost is applied to a jazz band, the quality of music is going to fall apart, and I think to a great extent our music has suffered. A good many musicians in my band had spent a good part of their time in New York going from one rehearsal band to the other, because they want to play; it's the only way to learn, to develop as a player, and it's the only way writers get a chance to function."

Most of the lengthy answers Mulligan gives are about things that disturb him, and reveal him to be a middle aged orphan in the foster

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home of today's music world. He is a child of the big band era and early '50s cool who refuses to grow up.

"For the first time, there's a generation gap among musicians," he says. "I hesitate to say how I feel about rock because if they [young people] don't like what you say, they turn you off."

With a sense of alienation, he talks about the advent of records and death of the big band era.

"Records are not forthcoming as they were in the '40s and '50s, and even the '60s. But it's the existence of records that destroyed the 'in concert' market. If there weren't any records there'd be an awful lot of traveling going on. Other things in our society have been destructive to live music and dance bands, the big band era. The big band era had a lot of help in being killed. There was the 20% tax the government levied during WW II on places where there was dancing. So places stopped having dancing and by the time we got into the '50s people were out of the habit of dancing. There were once ballrooms all over the country for bands to play in. Folks' habits changed, and by the time the tax had been removed the bands were gone; they could no longer support themselves. Gas rationing also helped kill the ballrooms.

"The recorded music business has ultimately harmed our music. A great deal of the music of the past 20 years has been manufactured by businessmen, not artists—manufactured music, in imitation of whatever happens to be successful at the moment. Most of it can't truly be called music because the musicians don't ever meet in the studio. It seems to me there are some human qualities necessary for it to be music. At least the musicians should be in the same room at the same time. I'm a holdout for humanity. I'm not trying to be subtle. . . . Anyway, that's a halfway decent ending."

**G**erry Mulligan phones me a few days after the interview because he feels he hasn't spoken enough about his band. "The reason it took me so long to get warmed up was that I'd rather talk about my band than myself. It gets tiresome talking about myself, anyway," he says.

He was most brusque on personal questions in the interview, but many questions I now ask over the phone about the band will trip booby traps.

He experimented in a recent sextet with electric piano, guitar and bass. Would he consider using them in his big band?

"Now wait a minute," he says angrily. "You're back away from what I'm talking about. That's why I got angry in the first place. You ask me questions I don't want to talk about. I'm not interested in giving easy answers to people to tell them what to do with their music. Let 'em find out for themselves." And allatamileaminute.

But in a later tirade he contradicts this. "I don't know if it occurred to you, but most of *down beat's* readers are students. The reason I'm willing to do an interview in the first place is because you're dealing with the educational market."

Later he again explains his dislike of the first interview: "I seemed to be doing yet another biography interview, which I can hardly stress how strongly I don't want to do."

The musician blows hot and cold, but the music stays cool.

db

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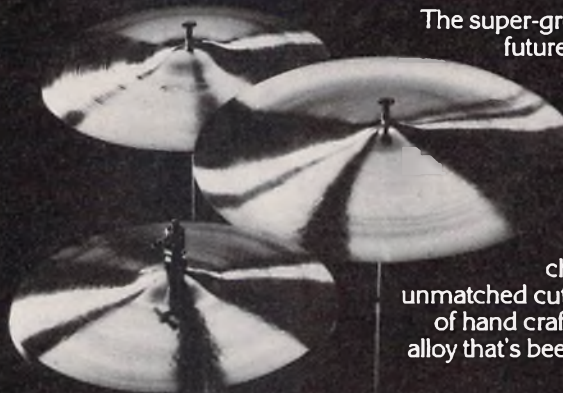
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would be good to have other people write for the band."

Mosca mentioned, "We got Bob Brookmeyer and some of the good young cats around town like Bob Mintzer, Dave and Kenny Berger writing some stuff."

Lewis said, "If Thad *did* come back, I'd say, 'How 'bout some music? Got some ideas you'd like to lay on us? Who else is going to play your music better than us!'"

Mosca confided, "It's hard for me to think that he won't be back with us. I know we can make it without him; it's not a question of that. Thad is just the kind of cat who makes any band better."

Perry, the tenorist: "No one writes for the saxophone like Thad. The saxophone section is hard to write for and make it sound right. In a lot of people's writing the lead alto and baritone double, both playing the melody. Thad has five separate voices, each voice like a melody unto itself. He doesn't write with limitations in mind."

Discussion of the band's charts prompted pianist McNeely to reveal, "Something I really appreciate is that the piano is a very important instrument in this band compared to most other big bands. The piano gets to play a lot of different kinds of tunes, so it's a challenge. It's probably the hardest big band book."

In order to keep a big band together, the cats have to be happy. John Mosca believes "cats have to have time to do their own thing. Study and play with small groups. Big band playing is really a sacrifice in terms of your ego. Even if you're the featured soloist, you're only going to be soloing five per cent of the

time you're up on the stand. The rest of it is ensemble playing. Cats like to have time off in town to shed and play with small groups."

Mel has a plan. "I'm trying to work out a pattern where we'll be on the road for five or six weeks at a stretch, and then come home for five or six weeks. Work out of New York, do weekends, the Vanguard. Let the cats do their own thing, so they can write, be with their old ladies, and do other kinds of gigs."

Suddenly, our driver, Leroy Jackson, stopped for directions at a gas station. We were in Marlton but couldn't find Cherokee High. Bass trombonist Jim "Jack" Daniels picked up the cue. "The hunt," he exclaimed. Lifting an imaginary trumpet to his lips, he sounded the call. The band responded with loud barking—a chorus of hunting dogs. So this is big band life on the bus!

But once they hit the high school stand it was all serious. Thad's arrangements are still dynamite. Standout soloists were in abundance.

Luckily, this band has just recorded, in digital sound no less, making them the first big band to ever record digitally. Coming from Telarc Records, the album is called *Au Natural*. The perfect wedding of computer and recording technology, digital sound offers uncanny sound reproduction, in this case of a smokin', straightahead big band.

Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra: Earl Garner, Larry Moses, Ron Tooley and John Marshall, trumpets; John Mosca, Lee Robertson, Lolly Bienenfeld and Jim Daniels, trombones; Dick Oatts, Steve Coleman, Bob Rockwell, Richie Perry and Gary Brown on saxophones; Jim McNeely on piano; Bob Bowman on bass; and Mel on drums. **db**

sumably, it will be met with more approval by its subject than Carol Easton's 1973 bio, *Straight Ahead: The Story of Stan Kenton* (William Morrow Co., out of print), which suggested among other things that Kenton was vaguely racist since there have been precious few black faces peering from behind the instruments in his various bands.

"He detests the book," writes his friend, long time producer-observer, *Billboard* staffer and former *down beat* editor Dave Dexter. "When fans bring copies for him to autograph he refuses, although he'll sign any other item they offer."

He will probably autograph any of the several Joyce LPs that have appeared in recent years, even though he didn't authorize their release and dismisses them as inferior products. They are made up mostly of air checks from the '40s, a period now of little interest to Stan.

For Kenton, current works mean almost entirely records on Creative World, the organization he formed around 1970 to release and market his LPs in a way he felt Capitol no longer could. Capitol had been Kenton's home almost from the beginning. He had recorded with Gus Arnheim on Brunswick in 1937 as a sideman and with his own band for Decca in 1942. It was a good band, distinguished by arrangements full of quarter note sections played on the afterbeat, but not the band upon which he would build his reputation. For the most part Kenton can be heard growing to maturity and beyond on his Capitols, which span 1943 through the late '60s.

continued on page 43

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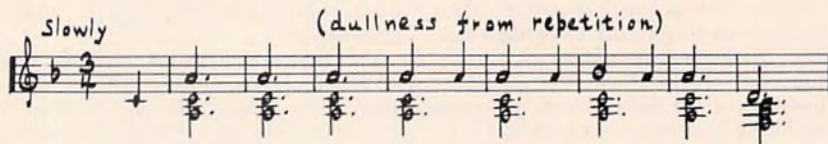
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# HOW TO

## VITALIZE INNER VOICES

BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

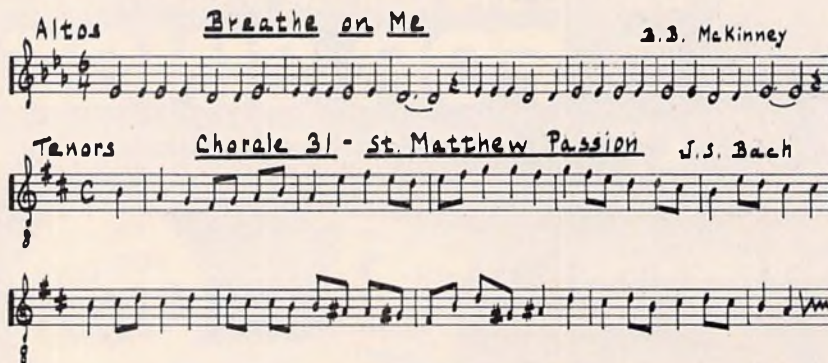
In both melody and harmony, action attracts attention. Along a melodic line, fresh notes furnish that action; along a harmonic progression, fresh chords do. And the more dormant either becomes, the more important to musical flow becomes the other. With no chord changes to refresh its drowsy repeated-note melody, for example, Liszt's *Love Dream* likely would sound too insipid even for the most pastel of romantic images:



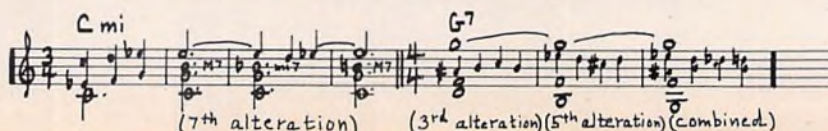
In ballads especially, where slow tempos increase the actual time-span of note-values, repeated or sustained melody tones invite a moving background, either as complete chord changes or as inner-voice activities:



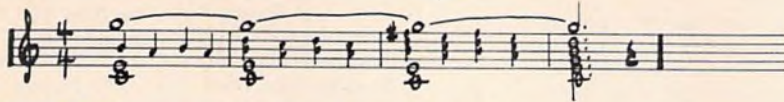
Because former *How To's* have already discussed chord-change backgrounds (db, March 11 and 25, 1976), this one will focus on inner-voice activity. Here are two sample inner-voice lines, the first from a hymn, the second from a chorale:



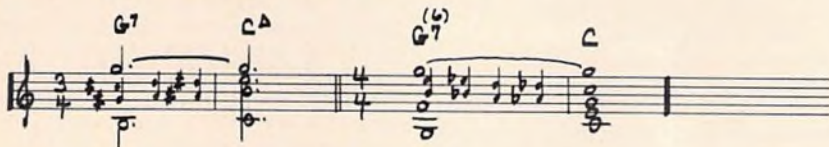
Where the McKinney alto part plods along convenient chord-tones, merely fleshing out the harmony, the Bach tenor part forms an independent melody whose motion would itself furnish interest whatever the principal melody might do. To achieve such accompanimental independence, Bach employs anticipations and appoggiaturas, passing tones and neighbor notes, and all the other non-harmonic niceties which so often transform ordinary straightforward chords into suspenseful events. And though their musical styles might never resemble a Bach chorale, so do jazz harmonic masters. Three particularly clear examples of effective background motion are Bill Evans' double-piano version of *Emily (Further Conversations With Myself)*, Verve, V6-8728), Oscar Peterson's accompaniment to the Ray Brown bowed-bass solo on *Somewhere (West Side Story)*, Verve, V6-8454), and Chick Corea's backgrounds in *Spain (Light As A Feather)*, Polydor, PD 5525). And many orchestral accompaniments to vocal ballads, say to Ella Fitzgerald's *But Not For Me* (Verve, MG V-4024) or to Sarah Vaughan's *The Shadow Of Your Smile* (Mercury, MG 21079), demonstrate similar finesse behind the melodic line. The French horn figure in Tchaikovsky's *Romeo And Juliet Overture*, though, remains the classic example for using upper neighbor notes (any recording). Whenever chord components are not being heard as melody notes, they become subject to activity through alteration:



Alternating notes may be single, double, or triple:

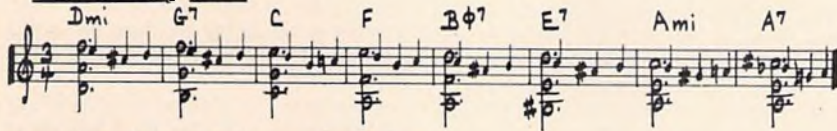


Chromatic motion beautifies internal parallel fourths:

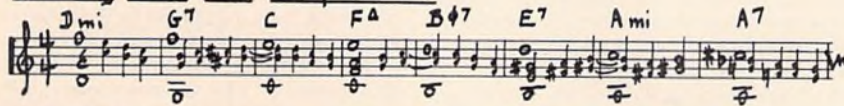


Cycle-of-fifth chord progressions, such as those that occur in *All The Things You Are* or *Autumn Leaves* or *Bluesette* or *How High The Moon*, make excellent practice exercises for concentrating on some particular inner-voice motion type. For example:

Surrounding notes



Passing tones and suspensions



So that readers may make their own discoveries, here is a practice routine, a sustained melody line moving down through successive chord components at each repetition of its cycle-of-fifths harmony:



**CHORDS**

continued from page 8

RIAA during my stay. I had to rely on their word for "gold certification." Also, *A Secret Place* was not among those designated "gold," as reported.

5. I am a resident of Philadelphia and not rural suburbs of Philadelphia.

As far as the pretentiousness with which my home is described, let me say this: I have a wife (the same one who, according to the article, "kicked me out of the house with the horn") and two children, two companies which I operate from home, rehearsal studio space and areas to conduct other business and musical and personal needs.

Considering my longevity as a professional musician and, thankfully, the foresight we used to hang on to my earnings, it saddens me that my accrued assets (referred to in the opening paragraph) lay suspicion to my being "just another member of the growing force of black superstars." [Italics are Washington's]

Allow me also to take exception to all label designations (crossover, commercial jazz, fusion, etc.). These labels are probably not ill-intentioned, but are nonetheless unnerving, especially when my aim is to just play or write or produce good music that, hopefully, all people can find an appreciation for.

Again, thank you for the article and the opportunity to clear up some points.  
Grover Washington, Jr. Philadelphia

**KENTON**

continued from page 41

But during the '60s Capitol became understandably enamored of the money-making potential of rock, especially the Beatles. Jazz became less and less important to the company, and was hardly promoted at all. Kenton felt he wasn't getting the marketing support he needed. So he bought out his accumulated masters (many of which Capitol had dropped from its catalog) and used them as the cornerstone for the new Creative World catalog.

Creative World was much more than a boon to collectors. It became the platform for Kenton's new music of the '70s. Creative World has been financially independent of the Kenton orchestra from the beginning. The records do not subsidize the band, nor do the band receipts subsidize the records. The Kenton empire was and remains a first class operation. A magazine (*Creative World*) was put out, packed with news not only of Kenton's doings, but news of noble competitors and colleagues as well. The publishing activity alone cost nearly \$70,000 annually.

But Creative World's principal business remains records, and its reputation for quality products has been consistent and impressive. Kenton's chief producer has been Kenton (although Bob Curnow is producer of record on many Kenton LPs). Kenton enjoys the flexibility and possibilities of modern multi-track recording and closely supervises not only the

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**KENTON**

continued from page 43

recording itself, but the many aspects of post-production and mixing. At least six outside labels have approached him for a direct-to-disc album; although he is impressed by the fidelity that can be achieved by the process, he wonders whether, for all the improvements, it isn't really a step backwards.

"That's the way we used to do it," he says, and Kenton is not a man who likes doing anything the way he used to. Playing his old arrangements bores him completely. Yet one can usually expect to hear *Intermission Riff*, *Peanut Vendor*, *Artistry In Rhythm* and at least some of the others at a typical concert. Kenton grits his teeth, smiles, and plays them anyway.

Another thing Kenton prefers to avoid is reunions. Anyone who had led a band as long and worked with as many musicians who went on to become stars as Stan Kenton is frequently called upon to roll back the clock and pretend like it's 1948 or 1954 all over again. Woody Herman, Count Basie and Benny Goodman are other survivors of the golden age who constantly have to compete with their past.

Kenton is convinced, however, that the arrangements he plays today are too tough for the old-timers and are more effectively played by the young players with whom he prefers to surround himself. He feels there's little to be gained in reunions with veterans like Shelly Manne, Maynard and the others. The sight reading of the younger players is superior, he insists, and so is their flexibility. The stars of his former bands have matured and found their own styles. There is no reason they should have to put aside their own growth and revert back to an earlier day. Most have grown rich in the studios anyway, and the younger players are surely less costly.

The Kenton troops of today are at liberty for an indefinite period, but not permanently. Stan could bring his band together very quickly, and three quarters of the 1977 personnel would probably report for active duty. Although his music has been controversial, he is not. Few band leaders seem to have won such consistent affection and respect from their sidemen as Kenton.

"He was so personal," Shelly Manne once told George Simon, "always one of the fellows and yet nobody ever lost respect for him. And the spirit of the band was wonderful. It was such a clean atmosphere. You always felt that you were working for something that really mattered instead of just jamming *Tea For Two* or *Perdido*."

The Kenton concept is an arranger's band, not an orchestra whose identity has been set by a nucleus of key soloists. Among the current personnel, reedman Roy Reynolds and percussionist Ramon Lopez are the senior members, even though their tenures only go back to '71 or '72. There are no Freddie Greens or Harry Carneys to bring continuity to all the changes—only Kenton himself. But new musicians apparently invigorate him.

He relies almost entirely on the leading music schools for his players: Towson State, North Texas State, Berklee and a handful of others. If he needs a musician, he calls one of his faculty contacts and asks for a recommendation. He also asks members of his orchestra for names.

Kenton does not audition musicians. He hires on the recommendation of people whose judgment he trusts. His office receives a num-

ber of audition tapes as well as unsolicited scores and arrangements, but none ever find their way into the Kenton fold. As for arrangers, he relies on a stable of writers such as Dave Barduhn, Hank Levy, Gene Roland and long time associate Bill Holman. With the exception of some Chicago and Blood, Sweat & Tears material from the *Plays Chicago* album (ST 1072), Kenton, unlike his peers Herman and Buddy Rich, has avoided rock-derived music. It's not to his taste, and he seems to have little interest in it, despite the accent on youth in his rank and file.

The summer clinics which Kenton is famous for (see *First Chorus*) give the band its only chance to settle down and rehearse new material; otherwise, there is just no time. Kenton will not do untested material in front of a concert audience. He also feels he must actually hear it. He cannot make a final judgment just reading a manuscript.

Until recently, Kenton has shown a great enthusiasm for the road. He would travel by bus with his men and stay in the same hotel with them, even though the facilities were not always what one would expect for a star of Kenton's standing. But that may be changing. He's grown to like the peace and quiet of home life in his native southern California during the last year of relaxation—his "vacation," he calls it. He is much less accessible to interviewers these days, for example, an understandable prerogative of a man who has served so long in the spotlight. It certainly must be a relief not to be under the financial burden of maintaining a traveling big band.

When it works, the band's fees are negotiated by the Willard Alexander office: there is no set price. A contract always depends on the size of the expected audience, the location, how many other concerts can be lined up within a 50 or 100 mile radius and other factors. But in order to maintain his Creative World staff of eight or nine, his accounting people and the band's payroll, the orchestra must gross at least \$15,000 a week from concerts and dances, or about three quarters of a million a year.

Kenton on records starts with *The Kenton Era* (ST 1030), a superbly annotated and intelligently assembled four LP composite of Kenton's career from its first audition records of 1940 through the rise to initial popularity during World War II and the various experimental orchestras of the late '40s and early '50s. Issued originally by Capitol in the late '50s and now available through Creative World, it is made up almost entirely of unsuited takes, air checks and concert performances.

Pre-war band buffs will note the influence of Sy Oliver in the early work of 1941-42. Kenton led an unpretentious dance band then, but the music was punchy and imaginative. Many consider it the best work of the entire set, although Kenton would probably dismiss such people as unreconstructed squares.

The first distinctive Kenton sound began to develop with the arrival of arranger Pete Rugolo, architect of Kenton's postwar progressivism. Rugolo's first chart, *Opus A Dollar Three Eighty*, is included. Aside from bad miking which loses Art Pepper almost completely on *Samana*, the sound is remarkably good throughout. It is a Kenton treasure, and a vital chapter in the overall development of the big band in jazz. It is the best place to go for an understanding of the Kenton evolution, unconditionally recommended. **db**

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**Giorgi's:** Jazz (Sat.); call 545-5040.  
**WUWM** (90 FM): NPR's "Jazz Alive!" (Sat., 7 pm); jazz daily.

## KANSAS CITY

**Radisson Muehlebach Hotel:** Kansas City Jazz Olympics featuring *Red Rodney, Carl Fontana, Jake Hanna, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Gary Foster, Doc Cheatham*, and others (6/1, 2, and 3).

**Country Club Plaza:** Eight area jazz groups perform at various locations (6/1, 11 am-1 pm).

**Lawrence Opera House:** *Albert Collins Blues Band* (5/18 & 19, 9 pm).

**Mark IV:** *Jimmy McConnell Quintet* (Mon.-Sat., 9 pm-1 am); open jazz jam (Sun.).

**Ramada Inn Central:** *Pete Eye Trio* featuring *Milt Abel* (Mon.-Sat., 8:30 pm-12:30 am).

**Nick's:** *Frank Smith Trio* (Mon.-Sat., 9 pm-1 am); jazz jam featuring *Claude "Fiddler" Williams* (Sun., 5-9 pm).

**Signboard** (Crown Center): *John Lyman Quartet* jazz jams (Fri. & Mon., 4:30-7:30 pm).

**Concerts-in-the-Park:** Name jazz acts perform free throughout summer (Sun.); call 921-1212 for schedule.

## BOSTON

**Lulu White's:** L.A. 4 (5/15-17); *Illinois Jacquet Quartet w/ Slam Stewart* (5/22-24); *Carol Sloane & Jimmy Rowles* (5/29-31); *Ran Blake* (6/3); *Scott Hamilton* (6/4-7); *Woody Herman & Herd* (6/17); *Eddie Davis & Harry Edison* (6/19-21).

**Ryle's:** *Steve Veikleay Quartet w/ Art Frank & Teddy Kotick* (Fri.); *Amy Duncan Trio* (Sun. & Mon.).

## DETROIT

**Baker's Keyboard Lounge:** *Joe Pass*, solo guitar (5/15-20); *Milt Jackson and the Roy Brooks Trio* (5/22-27); *Yusef Lateef* (5/31-6/10); call 864-1200 for details.

**Cobb's Corner:** Local jazz nightly with *Lyman Woodard, Marcus Belgrave, Griot Galaxy* and others; call 832-7223.

**Downstairs Pub:** *Joe Chila and Friends*; other local jazz groups (Fri. & Sat.); call 961-6108.

**Punch & Judy Theatre** (Grosse Pointe): *Air* (5/13); *John Hammond* (5/23); *Don Cherry, Collin Walcott, Nana Vasconcelos* (5/25); *Ralph Towner*, solo (5/26); *Passport* (6/1); *Johnny Griffin* (late June); call 343-0484.

**Music Hall:** *Akiyoshi/Tabackin Big Band* (5/16); call 963-7680.

**Orchestra Hall/Paradise Theatre:** *Detroit Jazz Composers at the Paradise, with Teddy Harris and the Detroit Voices, Hastings Street Jazz Experience, Jimmy Wilkins Orchestra* (5/25); call 871-3644.

**Keyboard Cabaret:** *Bugs Beddow Jazz Quintet* (Mon.); call 563-7650.

**Alger Theatre:** *Tommy Dorsey Orchestra* (6/9); call 884-6500.

**The Gnome:** *Charles Boles* (Wed. & Thurs.); local jazz groups (Fri. & Sat.); call 833-0120.

## CHICAGO

**Jazz Showcase:** *Dizzy Gillespie* (5/16-20); *Ira Sullivan and Joe Diorio*, guitar (5/23-27); *Milt Jackson and the Monty Alexander Trio* (5/30-6/3); *Art Farmer Quartet* (6/6-10); *Johnny Griffin Quartet* (6/13-17); *Dexter Gordon Quartet* (6/20-24); 337-1000.

**Amazingrace** (Varsity Theater, Evanston): *McCoy Tyner Sextet and Ralph Towner*, solo (5/25, tent.); 328-2489.

**Rick's Cafe American:** *George Shearing* with *Brian Torff*, bass (thru 5/19); *Jay McShann, Claude Williams, Buddy Tate, Joe Morello* (5/22-6/2); *Al Grey-Jimmy Forrest Quintet* (6/5-16); *Barney Kes-sel-Herb Ellis Quintet* (6/19-30); 943-9200.

**Wise Fools Pub:** *Koko Taylor and Her Blues Machine* (5/17-19); *Jump 'n the Saddle Band* (5/20); *Kahil El Jabar* (5/22, tent.); *Mighty Joe Young* (5/23-26); *Willie Dixon* (5/27); *Magic Slim Blues Band* (5/30-6/2); *Lonnie Brooks Blues Band* (6/6-9); *Judy Roberts* (6/13-16 & 20-23); *Roger Pemberton Big Band* (Mon.); 929-1510.

**Bulls:** *Sparrow Quartet* (5/22 & 29); *Ghalib Ghallab* (Wed. & Thurs.); *Billy Whittfield* (Mon.); 337-6204.

**Orphans:** *Joe Daley Quorum* (Mon.); *Ears* (Tue.); 929-2677.

**Gaspar's:** *Jazz Members' Big Band* (Sun.); 871-6680.

**Jazz Institute Hotline:** (312) 666-1881.

**Chicago Blues Line:** (312) 743-5505.

## ST. LOUIS

**Khorasan Room:** *Les Brown Band* (5/22).  
**La Casa Club:** National and local jazz; call 534-5929 for details.

**Mississippi Nights:** National and local music; call 421-3853 for details.

**The Upstream:** Jazz (Fri. & Sat.); call 421-6002 for details.

**Midwest Big Band Society:** Write to 33 Highwood Dr., Belleville, Ill. 62221 for details.

## CLEVELAND

**Cleveland State University:** C.S.U. Jazz Ensemble (5/27).

**Chung's:** *Larry Booty* (nightly).  
**Fitzgerald's on Shaker Square:** *Dick Mone* (nightly).

**Our Gang, Too!** (University Hts.): *Bill Gidney* (Wed.).

**Peabody's Cafe** (Cleveland Hts.): *Ernie Krivda and the Ron Godale Trio* (Sun.).

**The Theatrical:** *Hank Kahout* (nightly); *S. J. Mendelsohn* (5/7-6/2); *Lite Rain* (6/4-30).

**Northeast Ohio Jazz Society:** (216) 429-1513, from 9 am to 5 pm daily, for membership and information.

## DENVER

**Bentley's BBC:** Local jazz; call 861-7877.  
**Blue Note Club:** Top-name jazz and blues; call 443-6660.

**Cafe Nepenthes:** Occasional jazz and blues; for information call 534-5423.

**Clyde's Pub:** Denver's home of "pure" jazz, featuring top-name East/West Coast talent; call 425-1093.

**Emerson St. East:** Local jazz every night; call 832-1349.

**Rainbow Music Hall:** Top-name jazz, blues, rock, folk, country talent; call 753-1800.

**Tulagi's:** Top-name jazz and blues; dial 443-3903.

**Wall Street Jazz Cellar:** Big-name and local jazz; for information call 442-6780.

**Zeno's:** *Queen City Jazz Band* (Fri. & Sat.); 623-2104.

**KADX** (105.1 FM): 24-hour jazz.

**KCFR** (90.1 FM): 25% jazz and blues in free-form format.

## BUFFALO

**Klenhans Music Hall:** *Dizzy Gillespie* as guest soloist with the *Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra* (5/31), 8:30 pm.

**Traffamadore Cafe:** Jazz and blues (Thurs.-Sun.); *Mark Murphy* (5/10-13); *Ron Carter Quartet* (5/18 & 19 tent.); *Ernie Krivda* (5/25 & 26); *Chuck Mahronik* with *Eliot Zigmund and Frank Tusa* (6/1 & 2); *Pat Metheny Group* (mid-June, tent.); *Dave Friesen and John Stowell* (6/22 & 23); *Jeremy Wall Trio* (Sun.); *Milestones* featuring *Richard Kermode* (Thurs.); live broadcasts of most jazz events on **WBFO** (Sat., 10 pm) and **WEFR** (Fri., 10 pm); call 836-9678.

**University of Buffalo:** *First Annual University of Buffalo Jazz Festival* with: *Phil Woods Quartet, Chuck Israels and the National Jazz Ensemble, Al Haig Trio, Don Cherry with Nana Vasconcelos and Collin Walcott*; a multi-media presentation on the history of jazz in Buffalo with *db's John Hunt* and photographer *Ron Wofford*; workshops and lectures with *Dan Morgenstern, Gunther Schuller, James Patrick* (Festival Director), *Edward Berger*. All above groups will hold jazz clinics in addition to performances. Dates are June 4-15. Call (716) 831-3411 for more info.

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