

FEBRUARY 22, 1979

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music magazine

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Some companies have recently "discovered" LED's and comparator circuitry that Peavey pioneered and has been using for years. These recent "converts" were most vocal in the past against LED's...that is, until they updated their "plain Jane" units. Some of the

other companies spend a lot on cosmetics but not much on built-in forced air cooling and large numbers of output devices to enable reliable rack mounted operation under

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In comparing pro amplifiers, one should apply the old commercial sound "dollar-per-watt" rule. The CS-800 is again "on top" at 81¢ per professional watt. The fact is...Peavey is not behind anyone in power, durability, features or performance.

Below are the respective published specifications of the "heavies" in pro amps. Check for yourself to see how we all stack up. You might be surprised.



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Peavey CS-800	100 W Total 400 Watts/Ch. @ 4 Ohms 260 Watts/Ch. @ 8 Ohms (Both Ch. driven)	20	2 Speed forced air cooling	Yes	Totally Plug-in Modular	None Required	Quasi Complimentary All rugged NPN Silicon Outputs	Not given No accepted Measurement standards Presently exist.	\$649.50	\$0.81 per Watt Based on 4 Ohms/Ch. min. load	
Crown DC-300A	360 W Total 180 Watts @ 8 Ohms 4 Ohms Not Given	16	Conventional Passive Airflow Only	No	Hard Wired	None Required	Quasi Complimentary All rugged NPN Silicon Outputs	Not given No accepted Measurement standards Presently exist.	\$919.00	\$2.56 per Watt Based on 8 Ohms/Ch. min. load	
BGW 750 B	720 W Total 360 Watts/Ch. @ 4 Ohms 225 Watts/Ch. @ 8 Ohms	20	2 Speed forced air cooling	Yes	Modular	Relay Circuit	Collector drive Complimentary using PNP & NPN Silicon	42% No measurement details given.	\$1099.00	\$1.53 per Watt Based on 4 Ohms/Ch. min. load	
Yamaha P 2200	700 W Total 350 Watts/Ch. @ 4 Ohms 200 Watts/Ch. @ 8 Ohms	12	Conventional Passive Airflow Only	No	Hard Wired	None Required	Emitter follower drive complimentary using PNP & NPN Silicon	Not given No accepted Measurement standards Presently exist.	\$1095.00	\$1.56 per Watt Based on 4 Ohms/Ch. min. load	

All above figures based on manufacturers' published specifications and minimum recommended load impedances as of 11/1/78

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down beat

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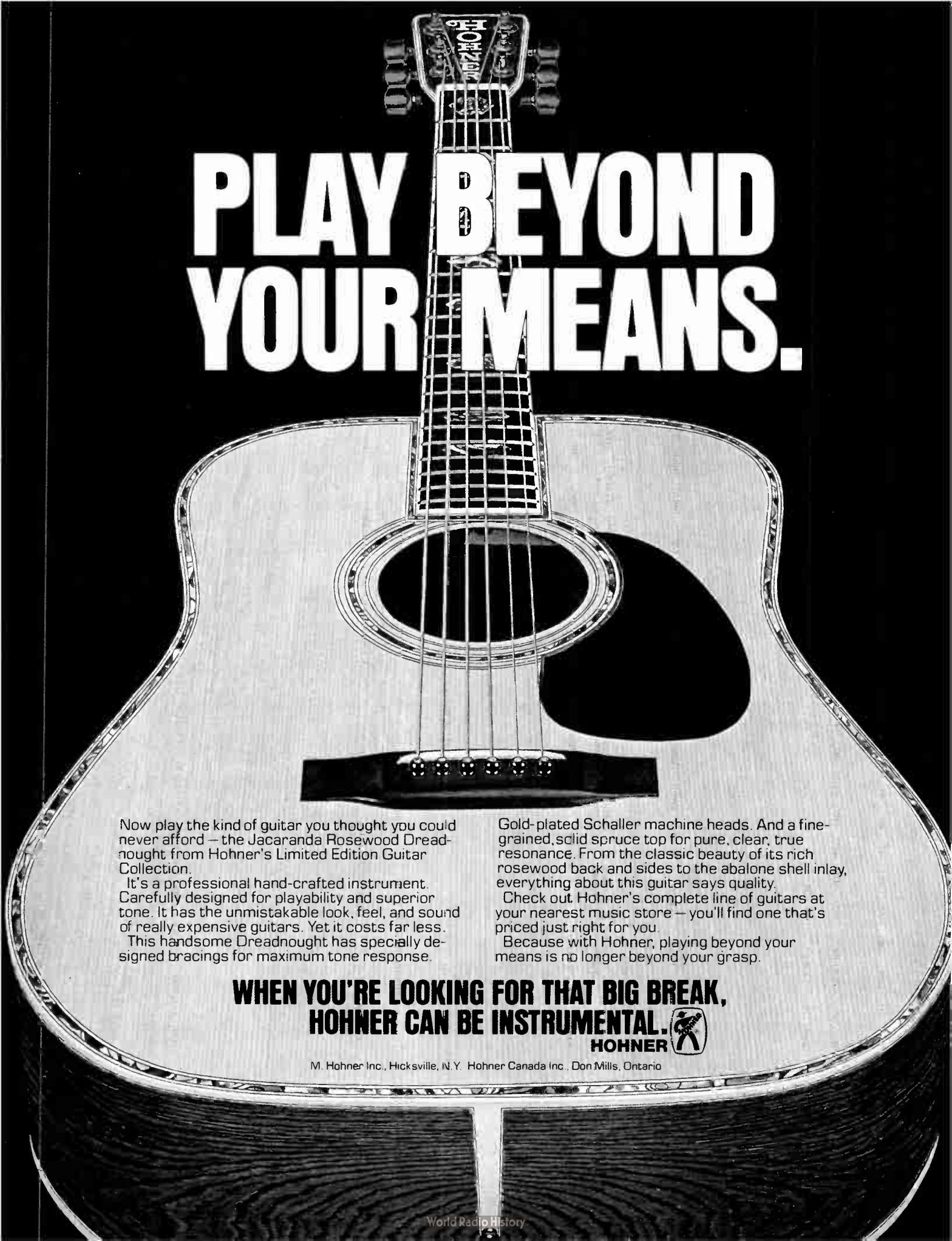
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DAVID GARIBALDI TALKS ABOUT CONCERT PERFORMING AND ROGERS.

"One important key to the success of our group, 'Tower of Power' is our emphasis on duplicating in live concert the sounds we get on our records. I mean, we try not to put something down on record—with special effects and special equipment—that would be impossible to duplicate in the typical large auditorium we play.

Trying to duplicate our studio sound in live concert can really be demanding. First of all, when you perform in open-air stadiums or big arenas, you can't really hear how you sound or how it fits into the total sound of the group. It's a special kind of challenge to play music in a place that was meant for basketball. There are just too many other outside noises and distractions.



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The key is to be confident and to have the right mental attitude which allows me to play relaxed and naturally. My live performances must be honest to the original music...then I can give the audience a fresh and energetic concert every night.

Of course, your equipment also has a lot to do with your mental attitude and what the audience hears. And that's one of the reasons I use Rogers. Their drums are known for quality sound. You don't have to mess with the set to make it sound good.

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Again, tuning is a big advantage of Rogers. Their drums are made round and they stay round—even after being abused on the road. Because of that quality, I find they are easier to tune. MemriLoc hardware is another great thing about Rogers. It's dynamite for a musician like me who keeps traveling from concert to concert. Once I get everything the way I like it, the drums and cymbals quickly set up exactly the same way for every performance.

With Rogers, I can get just the right sound and set-up, night after night...under just about all kinds of conditions. And when I have confidence in my equipment, the distractions of a big arena are always less of a problem."

**"IT'S A SPECIAL KIND OF CHALLENGE TO PLAY MUSIC IN A PLACE THAT WAS MEANT FOR BASKETBALL."
—DAVID GARIBALDI**

education in jazz

—John Abercrombie

John Abercrombie is currently featured on his own solo guitar album, *Characters* (ECM), and on Jack DeJohnette's *New Directions* (ECM). Abercrombie's *Arcade* (ECM), to be released March '79, features Berklee alumni Richard Beirach, George Mraz and Peter Donald.

Anyone aspiring to be a professional player needs, in addition to talent and technique, confidence in himself and lots of experience playing with good musicians. Berklee makes this all possible; it did for me.

When I went to Berklee—fresh out of high school with only some extra-curricular rock 'n roll experience—I had only a vague idea of what it took to be a professional.

I soon learned that the guitar repertory goes beyond folk and rock. We were into Bach chorales and Charlie Christian lines, and learning parts in a 12-piece guitar "big band." The other students in other ensembles and classes kept me challenged and open to new ideas. My first record dates were for Herb Pomeroy's *Jazz In The Classroom* series with such student sidemen as Ernie Watts, Lin Biviano and Sadao Watanabe. Playing money gigs in the Boston area provided additional on-the-job training.

While I didn't choose to take many of the fabulous writing courses available at Berklee, the music was all around me and much of it was absorbed in my playing. Even today I am aware of concepts in my playing that had its origins back in school.

All the while, my confidence was building, particularly from the ongoing encouragement of teachers such as Pomeroy and John LaPorta. Their constructive criticism and support gave me enough confidence in my ability to make it that I transferred out of the music education program—I had thought of the possibility of getting a teaching certificate—back into the professional diploma program. This confidence was reinforced by a road trip with Johnny "Hammond" Smith's organ trio. So when Chico Hamilton invited me to go with his group to New York, I was ready. Ready to play whatever came my way.

Wherever I go, young musicians ask about where they should go to school or how to make it in a playing career. Berklee always comes to mind first. I have never run across any other school that so prepares you for the real music world.

John Abercrombie

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the first chorus

BY CHARLES SUBER

Bruised egos aside, most of the brouhaha about the one star review *down beat* recently gave Weather Report's *Mr. Gone* was an understandable disagreement about what-is-jazz. That critics and other listeners (and other players) will always agree with the musician's best intentions is a violation of natural law. Innovative musicians, such as the WR members, risk disturbing their audience when they dare, as they must, move beyond the limits of what the listener is accustomed to call "jazz." They are also likely to upset their audience if and when they depart from an established style or concept. (Another natural law holds that the best of musicians will sometimes hit a clinker.)

Anthony Braxton is another innovative musician whose evolving concept of what-is-jazz is sometimes held suspect by listeners—and mainstream jazz players. In a fascinating interview in this issue, Braxton makes a well reasoned argument for better communication between musician and listener. He is concerned about the problem of properly translating the medium of music into the medium of print. He is also concerned about the labels used by non-musicians to segment music into artificial parts. The core of his concern is the ability of the artist to maintain control over his own creativity. Braxton doesn't care for anyone else to define *his* music.

John Abercrombie has become, according to *db* interviewer Tim Schneckloth, "possibly the most interesting, least predictable guitar stylist on the current scene, working in a bewildering variety of contexts but clearly stamping each project with his distinct musical personality." Abercrombie's concept of what-is-jazz is currently being developed simultaneously in three musical directions: with Jack DeJohnette's quartet, with his own group including Richard Beirach, George Mraz and Peter Donald; and with duets with Ralph Towner.

Abercrombie, who at one time thought of being a teacher, talks explicitly—with good lead work from the interviewer—about his creative process. His remarks come as close as you can get to translating music into words.

Tal Farlow, as John Abercrombie suggests, is an integral part of the modern jazz tradition. He is also a product of that tradition. His playing bears the hallmark of Charlie Christian, Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker and Red Norvo. Farlow's contentment to play in the jazz mainstream does not mean that his playing is dated. On the contrary, his ideas are new and impressive, stimulated by his experiments with electronics. His prodigious talent is expressed with impeccable technique and great verve. No one is likely to question Tal Farlow about what jazz is.

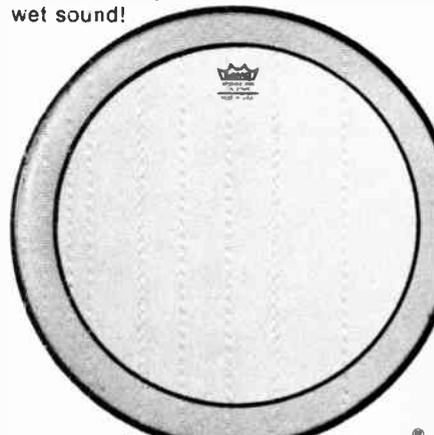
The next issue of *down beat* features interviews with Oregon, i.e. Paul McCandless, Glen Moore, Ralph Towner, and Collin Walcott; Jaki Byard, pianist and teacher; and Warren Bernhardt, solo and group piano player. All this, plus Profiles of Irv Kratka and his Inner City jazz record operation, and saxophonist Chico Freeman, son of Von. *db*



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one to the other.

"I like the MF4 particularly for playing some of the softer jazz things and the quicker-moving pieces, because it isn't quite as demanding as far as air power and velocity go.

"Also, I realize that not everyone uses my size mouthpiece. A player might prefer a *huge* mouthpiece that takes more air. Then he might rather have an instrument with a bore that's not as large as the MF's. The theory of 'large mouthpiece/small-bore horn.' Now, with the MF4, we're giving him that option. A medium-large bore that might match his mouthpiece better. Plus all the features that've made the MF so popular":

Fast valves.

"I want to press a valve and see it come up fast. Even when it's not show-room clean.



I mean, I wonder how many players clean their horns out after every performance, as the little pamphlet says. I've used hundreds of trumpets in my day, and these are the valves that work the best."

Toughness. "I'm very rough on an instrument. So it has to be designed and constructed so it'll withstand me. And the airlines.

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Brass or silver. "The instrument comes in either brass or silver-plated brass. If I were playing in the trumpet section a lot more, like in the back row, I'd go for the silver, which seems to sound brighter. But up front, my identity sound tends to be bright, and I'd rather hear it darkened or mellowed. So I go for the brass. It's all very personal, anyhow, and we give the player a choice."

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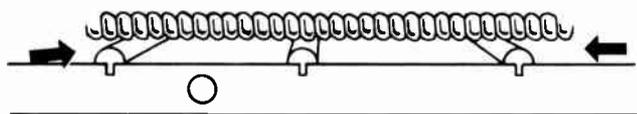
The new MF4.

HOLTON



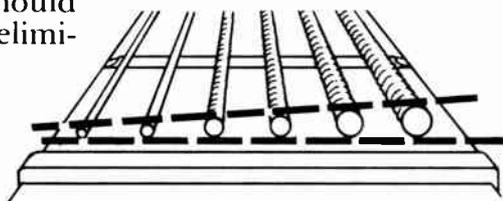
“Very simply, sir, Gibson’s new Equa guitar strings will actually make your..ahem...guitar..easier to play.”

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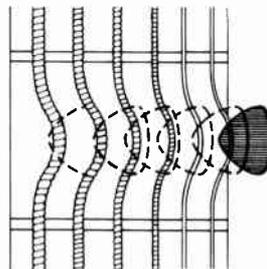


“Perhaps you would be interested in the benefits lower playing action offers? Physically, it’s easier for your fingers to make chords. Which means you can play faster.

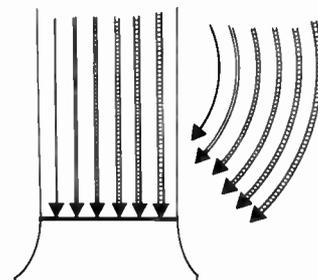
“But that’s not all. Because Equa strings are equalized, they all vibrate in the same plane. No single string will be lower than the other. And that should effectively eliminate fret buzz.



“Of course, we mustn’t forget about equal resistance. It’s another way Equa helps you play faster. Neither your fingers, nor your pick, will get hung up on an uneven string. And, unless you want them to, one string will not be playing louder than another.



“In addition to which, there is no neck twist. Uneven pull on guitar strings sometimes causes the neck to twist out of shape. Equa balanced strings solve that dilemma quite nicely.



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“Will that be all, sir?”



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CHORDS AND DISCORDS

Mr. Gone

David Less in his review of Weather Report's *Mr. Gone* (db 1/11/79) falls prey to the dread reviewer disease, inconsistency. For simply not measuring up to their previous stellar heights, WR is presented a single star. But whether *Mr. Gone* is a disappointment to us fans is not the central issue—consistency is. Atlanta Rhythm Section (db 8/10/78) received one and a half stars, and that album was termed in part "downright offensive." The "fairly uninspired" Blue Mitchell (4/20/78) was given two stars.

The criticism of *Mr. Gone* is that it won't shake up the fusion world—a change for WR. They have shown themselves to be mortal. So, too, Mr. Less has shown his mortality by letting his hopes for *Mr. Gone* overshadow much of his objectivity.

Bob Jones

Monmouth, Ore.

I am very much a fan of Weather Report's and while *Mr. Gone* is their most commercial and worst album to date, the rating of one star is a little unfair, particularly when Grover Washington, Jr.'s *Reed Seed* earns three stars on the same page. I thoroughly agree that Zawinul has let us down, but many others have jumped on the commercial bandwagon long ago and have received far better ratings for their efforts. While Joe forgot his true ad-

mirers, he may have moved quite a few disco-commercial-jazz fans a little closer to the real thing. And, at their concerts, Wayne Shorter makes it all first-rate jazz while blowing the house down.

Vic Condelee

Highland Park, Mich.

Weather Report's records are but a fraction of their live concert. I am thankful for the few times I've seen WR live.

Still, each record has been unpredictably excellent. Every cut on *Mr. Gone* is a five star cut. I disagree with David Less: the melody lines *are* there and the music *is* catchy. And what does "too completely preconceived" mean?

I too remember the genuine excitement of WR's earlier efforts. It's too bad Mr. Less cannot appreciate the genuine excitement of their present music.

Bill Taylor

Frederick, Md.

Keep 'Em Comin'

A letter about a letter about a letter may be pushing it a bit, but I think there is an important point to be made concerning Will Haight's letter (12/21/78) condemning Brian Eggleston for his letter in a previous issue (11/2/78). Granted, Eggleston overreacted to Metheny's comments about fusion, but when Haight says that Eggleston should "keep his letters out of db," he sinks even lower.

I couldn't help being reminded of a remark by Joe Zawinul in the 6/15/78 issue: "I just want to see the mediocrity gotten out of the business, to upgrade the standards." The question that comes to mind when reading these separate but related comments is not "What is good jazz?" but "What is really being said?"

Haight is literally saying that people who disagree with him should not have the right to have their letters printed. Zawinul is actually saying that musicians *he* considers mediocre should not have the right to be in the business. The implications are obvious, and I doubt that anyone could say these things and really mean them. To be offended by music that you do not like is pointless. And the merest suggestion that any art form should be regulated is anti-art itself.

David Lufkin

St. Paul, Minn.

Sanchez Plays In Peoria

Douglas Clark's "no rating" review of Chuck Mangione's *Children Of Sanchez* (db 12/21/78) is extremely wrong. I and many others feel that this is a *top rate* album and deserves *full* credit. The music is outstanding in the way it tells a story, even without vocals.

To describe *Sanchez* as "filled with the flash and falseness of Hollywood" is outlandish. Clark has been watching too much TV. Maybe he should go back and listen to the album again and concentrate more.

John Carlson

Peoria, Ill.

No rating is a very stiff mark against this album. I feel the music is very strong. Sure it's a bit repetitive, but it's a soundtrack and a soundtrack is always a bit repetitive.

Judging from the record sales and the reaction to the concert on PBS, *Live At Wolf Trap*, and a recently attended concert, I would say that the reviewer is in the minority, and that *Children Of Sanchez* will probably be a classic in a few years.

Adam Penenberg

New York City



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12 down beat

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NEWS

Hometown Tribute To Wes Montgomery Set

INDIANAPOLIS—Black History Month here peaks with a celebration of this city's rich jazz legacy, as the city fathers honor late guitarist Wes Montgomery Sunday, Feb. 18.

The second annual tribute to Montgomery will include a 7:30 p.m. concert in the Indianapolis Convention Center, essentially a homecoming for a dozen of the city's homebred jazzmen and the teachers who worked with them decades ago. A reception will follow the show.

Roy Ayers' Ubiquity will be featured; the remainder of the line-up, however, is a veritable who's who of Indianapolis improvisers: Montgomery's brothers Buddy and Monk, with whom he played and recorded; organist Melvin Rhyne; trombonist Slide Hampton, who gave Wes his first touring job; bassist Larry Ridley; cellist/composer David Baker; trumpeters David Hardiman and Virgil Jones; drummers Benny Barth and Willis Kirk; guitarist

Ted Dunbar; bassist Leroy Vinnegar, and reedman James Spaulding. Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard remains a "maybe."

When Montgomery grew up in Indianapolis in the '30s and '40s it was one of the nation's most segregated cities. But in the black schools, particularly Crispus Attucks High School, jazz sunk roots. Big bands frequently played the city, a railroad hub.

Current Mayor William H. Hudnut III, an erstwhile vibes player, wants to surmount the city's past and "make Indianapolis the jazz capital of the country," according to Montgomery tribute coordinator James Coe. The city budget underwrites all Black History Month activities.

Last year's concert success encouraged downtown hotels and clubs to begin booking jazz. Next year municipal financial support ceases.

"We'll be on our own," said Coe of the next tribute, "but at least we have a start."

FINAL BAR

Charles Mingus died January 5 of a heart attack in Cuernavaca, Mexico; he was 56 years old. The premier bassist, composer and bandleader had been suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) for about a year, and was in Mexico seeking treatment. Following his death he was cremated, and after a Hindu ceremony his ashes were scattered over India's Ganges River by his wife, Susan Graham Ungaro Mingus.

Born on April, 22, 1922 in an army camp in Nogales, Arizona, Mingus was raised in the Watts district of Los Angeles. After childhood trombone and cello lessons, he became acquainted with Britt Woodman and began studying bass with Red Callender and H. Rheinschagen, a former member of the New York Philharmonic. In high school, with the help of saxophonist Buddy Collette, Mingus began working gigs. He was 19 years old when he joined Louis Armstrong's big band, but he left after a northwest trip rather than tour the still segregated southern U.S. During the '40s he also played with Kid Ory (in Barney Bigard's band) and Lionel Hampton, for whom he wrote arrangements and with whom he made his recording and composing debut, *Mingus Fingus*.

Moving to New York in 1951, Mingus was much in demand for his virtuoso bass technique, and he worked with the Red Norvo trio, Billy Taylor's trio, Art Tatum, Stan Getz, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. "His accompaniments are so complex and so ingeniously conceived as to function also as counter melodies," Harvey Pekar wrote in *db* in 1962. "Ostinato figures, pedal points, and double stops stimulate the soloist, and as a soloist Mingus' great technique allows lines as complex as a guitarist, ranging over the bass, jumping wide intervals and reaching tremendous climaxes in upper registers."

Mingus emerged as a composer and leader in the mid '50s with his Jazz Workshop, a group of flexible personnel working without scores, taking vocal directions, encouragement or onstage abuse from the bassist himself. Drummer and friend Dannie Richmond was long associated with the workshop, which Gary Giddins described as "the Harvard University of Jazz"; Eric Dolphy, Jimmy Knepper, Jaki Byard, John Handy, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Ted Curson, Hamiet

continued on next page



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February 22 □ 13

NEW RELEASES

Inner City is keeping ears busy: with *New Wine In Old Bottles*—Jackie McLean with Hank Jones, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams, and (also licensed from Japan's East Wind Records) keyboardist Hubert Eaves' *Esoteric Funk*, Art Farmer's *The Summer Knows*, and Ryo Kawasaki's *Eight Mile Road*. On *Classic Jazz* (originally on Black And Blue) is guitarist Tiny Grimes' *Some Groovy Fours* and saxman Arnett Cobb's *The Wild Man From Texas*. Altoist Ernie Krivda's second LP, *The Alchemist*, is an IC production featuring Eddie Gomez, Bobby Moses, Gil Goldstein, and Ray Mantilla.

Lee Konitz dedicated his *Tenorlee*, a trio date from Choice Records with pianist Jimmy Rowles and bassist Michael Moore, to the late saxophonist Richie Kamuca. Other recent Choices: Buddy DeFranco's *Waterbed* (with accordionist Gordie Fleming) and *Sir Elf Plus 1*, pianist Roland Hanna with George Mraz on bass.

An all woman date, *Now's The Time* on Halcyon, recorded live at the Monticello Room in Rochester, N.Y., features Marian McPartland, Vi Redd, drummer Dottie Dodgion, guitarist Mary Osborne, and bassist Lynn Milano.

New Degrees And Choice At Berklee

BOSTON—In an effort to assist career-oriented students, Berklee College has restructured its Bachelor of Music degree program to include majors in jazz arranging and composition, performance, audio recording, electronic music, film scoring, and allow self-structured concentrations, in addition to its present degree offerings in music education, composition, and applied music.

Starting with the summer '79 semester, Berklee's approximately 2,500 students will have the option to design with administration approval their own

course of studies, as long as they fulfill basic course requirements in jazz theory and arranging, a substantial amount of traditional music, and academic (non-music) courses.

"We're confident these changes will be received enthusiastically and have a positive benefit on our ability to effectively prepare Berklee graduates for artistically fulfilling and financially rewarding careers," wrote Robert Share, Berklee administrator. The program change has been approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

Roy Burns, A Natural Drum Clinician

LOS ANGELES—"I enjoyed being a full-time professional musician but after a while that wasn't enough for me," says Roy Burns, drummer/clinician for Rogers. "I prefer to play with a good college band that really wants to cook than with a bunch of tired professionals who don't care anymore."

Formerly a studio player (notably on the *Merv Griffin Show*), 43 year old, Kansas-born Burns has written 15 drum books, including *Elementary Drum Method*, *Finger Control*, and *Natural Hand Development*. The natural approach is his comfortable method: "Whenever I feel the need for physical exercise, I lie down until it goes away," he told the audience at his four hour concert/clinic at New York's Town Hall last autumn, which was co-produced by Alex (of Alex Music) Caruzza. "You don't have to force getting in shape by lifting weights. Develop stamina by playing. Allow it to happen."

Burns joined Rogers as a clinician in 1968, helped develop their Memri-Loc hardware and worked on the Robert Paiste "sound creation" cymbals.

"At the Town Hall concert I discussed how the Paiste cymbals were made, what metals they were made of, and how to select and play them. Then with pianist Gil Goldstein, bassist Jeff Berlin, and guitarist Mike Stern I demonstrated how the individual cymbals sound in a live music situation. They offer a collection of new sounds, completely different from orthodox cymbals."

Burns claims to be "as far as I know, the only professional musician working full time with a major corporation. Nor did I have to fit into a preconceived program in order to do it—I was able to develop the major directions myself. That's why I like working with Rogers. I can be a musician, a participant in the development of new equipment, and an educator as well." He expects to tour with his clinic/concert again in fall '79.

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DAVID REDFERN

continued from preceding page

Bluiett, and many others performed and recorded under the workshop aegis (a detailed account of the Jazz Workshop appeared in *db* 12/7/78). Mingus also organized a Jazz at Massey Hall concert in 1953 with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell and Max Roach, which he recorded on his independent Debut record company (after years of distribution problems, the label was absorbed by Fantasy).

In the 1960s, Mingus attempted to rival the Newport Jazz Festival, recorded at Monterey and Town Hall, tried to institute a school of Arts, Music and Gymnastics, and developed his compositions from tunes to orchestra contexts. Of *Pithecanthropus Erectus* John Litweiler wrote: "That it combined tonal, modal and atonal sections in a flowing manner—several years before the explorations of Coleman, Miles, and Coltrane—remains less important than the agonized unity of perception and execution by the reeds, and the beautiful, amazing theme." Mingus, whose favorites from Western classical music included composers Debussy, Ravel, and Richard Strauss' *Death And Transfiguration*, sometimes shunned the term "jazz" as "a word that separates the black musician from the money. I just play and dig music. Good music." He also asked himself (in *db*, 7/21/60) "What is jazz? What is my music in relation to jazz and what kind of composer am I or what kind of bass player am I?" He frequently dismissed critics, stating (*db* 7/16/64): "The only real and good critics are the ordinary people who buy my records and like listening to jazz. That is, shopkeepers, milkmen, soldiers." He considered *Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* (Impulse) from this period his most satisfying recording.

Mingus was a tempestuous personality; musicians, audiences, writers, club owners, and promoters often found him abrasive, though (as Mike Hennessey wrote in *db* 5/13/71), "When a man like Mingus stops fighting, thinking people everywhere have cause to reflect on the agony and fearfulness of a cultural burden massive enough to sap even his seemingly unquenchable spirit. He has fought with great conviction and tenacity for a better deal for the black artist and has constantly condemned racial injustice." The late '60s found Mingus in a severe depression and in destitution; a documentary film, *Mingus*, directed by Tom Reichman in '71, detailed his eviction from an East Village apartment. But after the appearance of his semi-autobiographical, semi-fictional *Beneath The Underdog* and receiving a Guggenheim fellowship for composition, Mingus reemerged at a Philharmonic Hall concert directing a 20 piece orchestra (released as *Charles Mingus And Friends*, on Columbia). Thereafter he became increasingly active, touring, recording, and composing to much acclaim. A collaboration with lyricist Joni Mitchell is being completed, and *Me, Myself An Eye*, a studio session including the major work *Three Worlds Of Drums*, will appear shortly on Atlantic Records. Albums of Mingus' music can be found on the Atlantic, Archive of Jazz, Barnaby, Columbia, Fantasy, Impulse, Savoy and Trip labels.

Mingus was praised (by Martin Williams in *db* 2/22/68) for forging an alliance of Duke Ellington and Charlie Parker's influences, though the bassist claimed to have arrived at musica's conclusions similar to theirs on his own. He has also been cited for his dramatic use of vocal cries, dissonance, the blues, Latin music and tempo and time changes.

Mingus was married several times, and his survivors include five children and two stepchildren.

Before they hit the charts, they hit Slingerland.

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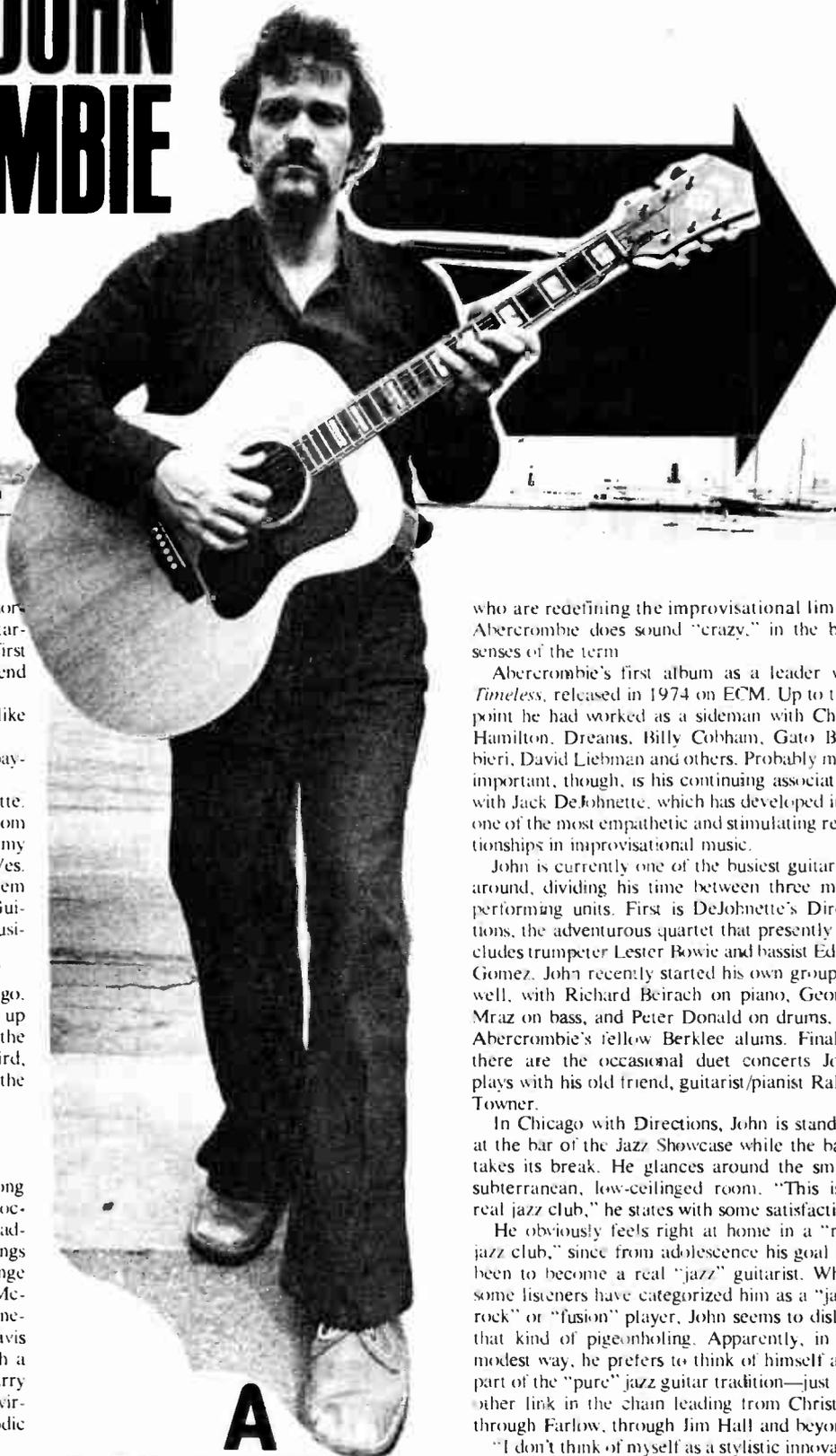


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JOHN ABERCROMBIE

by Tim Schneckloth



One afternoon in 1967, I was sitting in a dormitory room, listening to records with a guitar-obsessed friend. About halfway through the first side of Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*, the friend became agitated.

"How come no guitar players sound like that?" he asked, seeming slightly irritated.

"Sound like what?" I replied, not really paying attention.

"You know, *crazy*—like Dolphy and Ornette. I've listened to a lot of jazz guitar players, from Charlie Christian through Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, Barney Kessel, Johnny Smith and Wes. They're all great musicians, but none of them sound like they're stretching the music any. Guitar players don't seem to stake out the new musical boundaries like horn players do."

"Well, Charlie Christian did, in his time."

"Yeah, but that's been almost 30 years ago. What's happening now? Guys like Wes came up with new, original styles, but they weren't on the cutting edge of jazz music as a whole. It's weird, especially when you consider how dominant the guitar is in rock music."

He did have a point.

Fortunately, we didn't have to wait very long before the jazz-rock-blues crossbreeding occurred, putting guitar players out with the advance troops. First, Jimi Hendrix opened things up electronically, giving guitarists a wider range of sonic expression. A little later, John McLaughlin came along with his heavily Coltrane-influenced style, shaking up the Miles Davis group and the Tony Williams Lifetime with a radical new conception of "jazz guitar." Larry Coryell was in there pitching, too, using his virtuosity as a springboard for sonic and melodic experimentation.

Things have quieted down a bit since that late-'60s/early-'70s flurry of activity. The last few years, however, have seen the emergence of John L. Abercrombie from the ranks of faceless sidemen. At 34, he has become possibly the most interesting, least predictable guitar stylist on the current scene, working in a bewildering variety of contexts but clearly stamping each project with his distinct musical personality. He's among the few guitarists performing today

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who are redefining the improvisational limits. Abercrombie does sound "crazy," in the best senses of the term.

Abercrombie's first album as a leader was *Timeless*, released in 1974 on ECM. Up to that point he had worked as a sideman with Chico Hamilton, DREAMS, Billy Cobham, Gato Barbieri, David Liebman and others. Probably most important, though, is his continuing association with Jack DeJohnette, which has developed into one of the most empathetic and stimulating relationships in improvisational music.

John is currently one of the busiest guitarists around, dividing his time between three main performing units. First is DeJohnette's Directions, the adventurous quartet that presently includes trumpeter Lester Bowie and bassist Eddie Gomez. John recently started his own group as well, with Richard Beirach on piano, George Mraz on bass, and Peter Donald on drums, all Abercrombie's fellow Berklee alums. Finally, there are the occasional duet concerts John plays with his old friend, guitarist/pianist Ralph Towner.

In Chicago with Directions, John is standing at the bar of the Jazz Showcase while the band takes its break. He glances around the small, subterranean, low-ceilinged room. "This is a real jazz club," he states with some satisfaction.

He obviously feels right at home in a "real jazz club," since from adolescence his goal has been to become a real "jazz" guitarist. While some listeners have categorized him as a "jazz-rock" or "fusion" player, John seems to dislike that kind of pigeonholing. Apparently, in his modest way, he prefers to think of himself as a part of the "pure" jazz guitar tradition—just another link in the chain leading from Christian through Farlow, through Jim Hall and beyond.

"I don't think of myself as a stylistic innovator or anything of that nature," he says. "I'm just trying to play what feels right for me."

What "feels right" for him now is a hard style to describe. It has been called "romantic" as well as "eccentric." In more down-to-earth terms, it might be described as an approach that combines a very modern sense of harmonic freedom with the dark, thick sound of traditional jazz guitar, and execution of stunning facility.

"I grew up playing all the '50s rock and

A DIRECTION OF HIS OWN

roll," John says, trying to trace the evolution of his style, "but I never thought in terms of soloing. It was just chords or little leads. But when I heard some other kinds of music, I decided that I really wanted to be a jazz guitar player.

"Barney Kessel was the first guitar player I really heard on a record. I loved it. I bought all those records and tried to copy the things I heard. I used to do my own little versions of things like *The Surrey With The Fringe On Top*. They must have sounded horrible. I especially realized that when I went to school at Berkeley and learned something about harmony.

"Hearing Jim Hall was the next major breakthrough. I'd been playing the guitar for a while, stumbling around, totally amazed at how people like Tal Farlow, Johnny Smith and Barney played. It all sounded so hard to me. So when I heard Jim, something connected really strongly. It was so musical, but it didn't sound like Barney or Tal. He wasn't playing those long, complex lines, but I could relate to what he was playing. It was slow enough so that I could hear it; it didn't seem like a technical kind of thing. I decided that was the way I wanted to play.

"I spent years trying to copy him, to the point where I became really introverted. I wasn't letting everything come out, not by any means. So I finally abandoned that and started to play—crazy," John laughs.

The "crazy" influences had to come from somewhere else, though. "Most guitar players," John notes, "that were sort of brought up on the jazz guitar tradition have to look to other instruments after a while, because the guitar only developed to a certain point.

"I had always been fascinated by saxophone players who could play long phrases with a single breath. Charles Lloyd and Coltrane used to flip me out just because they could play these long, legato sweeps. That's a really difficult thing to do on guitar."

John had to try it. "I'd hear Coltrane play those amazing kinds of broken intervallic things," he says. "I didn't know what they were; I couldn't hear what the intervals were and write them down. So I'd just sit down with the guitar after hearing a record, while it was still sort of buzzing around in my head, and try to play things that reminded me of it."

The Coltrane influence pops up in some of John's compositions, too. The title cut on the *Timeless* LP, as well as several cuts on his recent *Characters* album, have drone-like and modal qualities reminiscent of Coltrane's '60s

scale. Plus, the bass notes shift.

"So when you're improvising over the piece, you're playing only one modal scale. But the fact that the bass lines are moving and the sound of the chords is changing a little bit makes it more interesting than if I just played on one chord or one bass note, like a rock and roll vamp."

John's *Characters* album is marked by tunes in this vein, including *Ghost Dance* and *Even-song*. They are carefully orchestrated pieces, consisting of layers of guitar sound, all performed by John himself through the miracle of multiple tracking. The thoughtful symmetry and organization of the album probably represent one extreme in John's performing life, the other extreme being the free form, open-ended context of DeJohnette's Directions.

"A lot of the music we play with that band is so free," he says. "There's not a lot of structure in terms of chords. So I'm continually making up things. Sometimes it works, sometimes it sounds like we're all bumping into each other."

John recalls a concert that Directions played at the University of Chicago in the fall of '76, when the group included saxophonist Alex Foster, bassist Ron McClure and pianist Warren Bernhardt.

"The band had less of a direction then," John feels. "There were five players and we were playing tunes by Warren, tunes by me, tunes by Jack. We were playing free; we were playing rock and roll, everything."

"At one point in that concert, everybody was playing different tunes, and I started playing *Misty*, just because it sounded so out to me. The music was starting to sound really weird, like contemporary classical music, so I just started to play *Misty*, like Charles Ives would play *The Star Spangled Banner* in the background, with some sort of lush thing in the foreground—a weird juxtaposition. I like to do that sort of thing; it's interesting."

The group's approach has changed a bit since then, John thinks. "With only four people of really distinct personalities there's much more of a concept of how to play—even if we walk on and don't play a single structured piece, even if we go on and play improvised music for a whole set. And Jack and I have really developed much further playing together. That relationship has really grown."

"I know that, unless I'm in a weird mood or something, whatever I play is going to fit, because Jack's real sensitive to all that. Sometimes when it's just myself, Gomez and Jack

"I really wanted to work with a keyboard player and not have to do all the comping," John says. "And Richie Beirach has really developed over the years. When I first met Richie, he sounded much like Chick Corea or Herbie Hancock, real derivative. In the last couple of years, though, he's opened up amazingly."

"I also wanted to write more structured pieces. And Richie writes a lot, too—very complicated kinds of tunes with hard cores. I think that's another kind of direction the music can go in that will link it to the past—the harmonic aspect. Like the Miles group with Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock—some of those tunes were very complex. Some of them had no chords, but some had very specific structures with very impressionistic sounding chords and strange ways of moving around."

John's new group is really not so new, having been in the making for over a year. "The group really came about because Peter Donald, who lives in Los Angeles, came to New York to do some commercial gigs. I used to play with Peter back in the Boston days, and we just got together for old times' sake. It felt so good that we said we'd play together again the next time he came to town. We got Richie and George to play; I got a little gig for us and it worked out nice."

Even though John plays in varied contexts, he feels that his playing is starting to come together in a more personal, consistent style.

"The music varies from record to record," he feels, "but there's sameness to the way I'm approaching everything now. I have a more definite idea of how I want to play, and I'm finding that it's transferable, no matter whether I'm playing with DeJohnette in a very free form situation or playing with Collin Walcott in a very open, raga-sounding kind of piece. I can see the differences in the music, but I'm able to incorporate the way I play into a variety of music. I'm seeing it more as total music now."

At the same time, John has clarified his ideas on equipment. His present performing setup is fairly conservative. Although he employs echo devices in the studio, he currently uses no sound modification devices on stage, excepting the built-in reverb on his Walter Wood amp and a volume control pedal.

"I've been in and out of using certain devices, feedback and so on, and I'm still prone to going back into it. But for now, a very warm, sustained sound makes more sense to

"In the improvising experience . . . there's a thought process going on. But it goes by so quickly that it's like the fastest decision-making I've ever had to do."

work.

"I think I'm influenced by a lot of the jazz music from that period," John feels. "A lot of Coltrane's work had that sort of droning quality. And there was Miles' *Kind Of Blue* album, which was the first practical use of modal scales in jazz playing."

"I also listened to some kinds of Oriental music—Indian, Japanese, Korean. I like the certain kind of spaciousness in that music, the use of space."

"*Timeless* and *Parable*, from *Characters*, incorporate those things, and they're examples of the kinds of tunes I like a lot. You take a very simple melody, a repetitious melody with only a few notes. But underneath it, the harmony changes, and the harmony is usually all related to one scale. There may be five different chords, but they all contain the same

playing, we'll be playing three different rhythmical feelings. Jack will be playing very slowly; I'll be playing very fast, or vice versa; and Eddie will be somewhere in between. All of a sudden, we'll just meet at this one place. Then we just take off and play in a real fast jazz tempo, really locked together, playing the time really strong.

"Those are very exciting moments. It used to sound like wandering to me, or noodling. But now I can really hear where it is and make more music out of it. I trust whatever Jack or Eddie is going to play. And Lester's totally off the wall, but it all works somehow."

John had another group concept in mind, though, that gave him the impetus to assemble the Beirach-Mraz-Donald quartet. He hopes to work things out so he can remain a member of both groups.

me. It's really what I've always wanted. I think that fuzztone and all those attachments are just a way of getting to a more vocal expression, a way of making the instrument sing. That's the only thing I missed in the earlier jazz players. But of course, the music has changed since then. Back then, it wasn't intended to be impressionistic or vocal; it was supposed to be more linear."

John's sound is one of the most interesting aspects of his playing. The tone he gets on his solid body Gibson Les Paul Junior with DiMarzio pickups sounds like it should be coming from a larger, acoustic-electric guitar like the Gibson L-5.

"A lot of people ask me about that," he says. "They want to know how I get that kind of sound out of a solid body guitar. But to me, it just sounds that way. I use a very dark setting

ANTHONY BRAXTON

by Bob Henschen

"I'm interested in creativity as activity that would vibrate again to the precepts of high culture as it was established, say, in Egypt . . . that being activity that is not just something to dance to, although I'm not against dancing and I like commercial music as well, but a music which moves to establish insight and affinity alignment with other areas' forces . . . music for healing, music for dealing with changes that are reshaping our lives and technology. So many different areas of creativity.

"The mystical implications have been, of course, creativity as activity to align one with certain forces. There's a direct relationship between that and African and Indian music, and even the Gregorian chants in the early stages of what we call—wrongly—Western art music. Music that was functional as well."

Whatever preconceptions his music might have given you, don't ever think Anthony Braxton "cold." He's a gentle, professorial man, soft-spoken, intellectual, friendly, humorous, self-examining, thoughtful and warm. A musical visionary with an analytical, mathematical mind, Anthony is nevertheless a quietly emotional, passionate defender of his musical art in modern culture. Braxton is a down-to-earth human being and a fascinating philosopher who puts his futuristic ideologies into action.

"I'm interested in creating a reality of works," Anthony went on, "a cross-section of works that would have a methodological alignment with the entry into certain forces. That's why I work from so many broad contexts. Certain forms can reveal certain vibrational areas. Certain forms are also related to the investigation, and arrival at, certain forces. I'm very systemic in terms of my involvement with composition as a means to tap some of these zones; that's how my music is related to world culture. I spend a great deal of time researching the solidification of world culture in all of its progressional stages, regardless of time zone."

It seemed an appropriate time and place for Anthony Braxton to talk about where art, music, and culture will be going. We spoke on a sunny autumn morning at Paolo Soleri's "two suns arcology" called Arcosanti, the prototype city-structure for a proposed community of 5,000. Arcosanti would be a pollution-free, self-supporting environment that integrates pan-cultural creativity into the very fibre of its existence. I sat with Braxton and drummer/saxophonist Mark Montesano in Arcosanti's Ceramics Apse, an open half-dome building that faces south to collect sun in winter and yet provides shade in summer—and we discussed Anthony's elaborate theories and practices.

The talk would turn to ideals, stereotypes, 18 □ down beat



language, jazz journalism, and the music business itself, but right now Braxton was enthusiastic about the role of music in culture. When the conversation turned to Haitian veves (drawings that represent an energy field or "loa") and the functionalism of Native American musics, Anthony became animated. "Are there books on this?" he asked Montesano. "Oh man, after the interview could you give me . . ." he laughed and then went on, supercharged with the excitement of a new find: "That's what I'm saying . . . there's no such thing as 'new music.' All the information I'm looking for already existed. So I've merely started a quest to regather some of this information to make it relevant for this time zone.

"That's what I'm interested in: activity that pools information from world culture as a means to reestablish transformational world culture. The reason I went into titles like I do is because I couldn't relate to mono-dimensional language. It didn't accurately comment on what I was saying was a multi-dynamic continuum, and so I began to move towards alternative coding, to schematics, to hieroglyphics."

It was explained that as culture becomes more complex it can comprehend much more in a small amount of space, and that's where hieroglyphics originally came from. "That's right," echoed Braxton, "it was multi-dynamic and multi-dimensional. And that's exactly what I'm looking for. It's wonderful, like here I am at Arcosanti and now you tell me about a whole area of symbols and signs that I could learn about."

With Anthony's goals and ideals becoming more clear, the conversation focused on his current music and how some people have reacted to it, calling it "non-black" among other things. "There's an idea that's prevalent in this culture that black people are limited to a certain area of information in terms of their vibrational spread, but that's not true." Anthony remonstrated. "The forms of music now referred to as blues, jazz, etc., well, that's certainly one area of the projectional thrust of black people. But then we also have people like William Grant Still. The vibrational spectrum of black people is no different than the vibration of certain white people. As far as the areas which attack my music as being 'not black,' it's done so from the information scan

that exists in this time period, namely that to be black you have to play disco music or something like that.

"The solidification of what we in this time zone refer to as Western art music, well, that was a cross-transfer cycle of Western culture having to do with, say, the Moorish invasion in Spain, the information which ensued there. There's more than enough evidence to suggest that Beethoven and Haydn, I think it was Haydn, were of a Moorish strain. But they never talk about that in the library or in the university. What happened is that the basic area black people have been pushed into is that black people are good tap dancers or play dixieland jazz.

"But that's not under the heading of redocumentation, because at every junction of the music the information has come from a composite slice of world culture. Everybody has contributed to the positive aspects and the negative aspects which have taken place on this planet. And it's like I refuse to play in a way that somebody thinks I should play if I'm supposed to be really black . . . because that's not true. I mean, first of all I'm on the planet, I'm in this body every day, and I wake up in it and it's like my experiences are just as valid as anyone else's experiences . . . whatever that means, whatever experiences mean. And it's like we're dealing with the slant on information in this period, the vibrational affinity surrounding how information is perceived. It's one of the major problems.

"And the thrust after a given time zone moves towards the understanding that, well, black people never contributed to this particular area, black people or Indians never contributed to this particular area. But in fact, everyone has contributed to everything. So in my activity I'm not afraid to say, 'Yes, this year has been Beethoven year for me.' And why not? Why can't I claim Beethoven? Why can't I claim Bach? I mean, they were indigenous creative people that we refer to in this time zone as Caucasian.

"But even the concept of race doesn't work for me in this time zone, it doesn't correspond to the total progressional time thrust as far as how human beings were perceiving each other. So it's like, no; I claim Bach, I claim Paul Desmond, and I claim Karlheinz Stockhausen as being within the zone that I should be able

to draw from. Whatever it was that attracted me to their music (whatever that means, and whatever is *whatever*), why can't I relate to their music? And why does it have to be seen as being outside of what is acceptable for a creative black person to deal with? I think those definitions have greatly distorted the planet in this period, and I think I would make myself less than what I am if I adhered to those definitions."

It's no secret that jazz and other creative musics ("projectional thrusts?") seem to have met with some sort of status quo disapproval at every evolutionary crossroads. And unlike Europe or Japan, America has been slow in coming to grips with its own musical advances. "That's the history of this culture. If people were able to *accept* our history," Braxton contended, "I think that would help this particular country an awful lot. Not to mention the progression of world culture. The basic idea that is being perpetrated in this period is that black people never contributed to high culture, or that non-white people never contributed to culture, or that woman has never contributed to culture. But once these ideas are challenged, of course, they fall away. And if the culture could finally get to a position where we could *really* look at the historical progressions in an artist's life, there will be much we can learn—because there's lots of good things that happen in this world. But *then* the further developments can be based on something which is *true*. I think it would benefit humanity to be able to extend from an honest base in terms of correct information and from physical events which *really* took place."

The current state of things is perpetuated, Anthony feels, by American lifestyles that are predicated on misinformation. "I think it has a lot to do with how people perceive themselves on the planet. People usually look at themselves in relationship to, like, if you come from *this* high school, it's your high school against another high school. That's historically been a thing that's been happening. If you look at Egypt in its highest cycle, there were different groups that were against each other . . . and with the solidification of Greeks and the Romans. People tend to think in terms of their territory, their isolated group of people, and vibrate towards that. Vibrational affinities seem to travel together and, at this point in time on our planet, seem to perceive themselves with respect to only their particular affinity as opposed to other affinities. And so you get misinformation which moves to distort the actual information which exists on the planet. And you have people who begin to think of themselves as white, black, green, rich, poor, Mexican, Spanish, American . . . in fact, all of these aspects *can* be viewed as such, but the semantical implications don't have to be the same way.

"Because I disagree completely with the idea of race. I mean, I don't want to say I 'disagree' with it," Braxton corrected himself, "I mean I see *something else* as opposed to the idea of race. And the concept we have of religion has also moved to greatly separate people in terms of how they see themselves. People are separated from each other by a variety of things. The heart of the problem we're dealing with came about because of the nature of how these separations have been perceived throughout the ages, not just in this time zone, but the whole progression thrust of humanity has, at every sector, vibrated to certain kinds of separations based on this, based on

that. And at the heart of it is an inability to accept what really is. Now why *that* is is something else. It might have something to do with what this experience on Earth really is all about, but *I* don't know."

We joked about how Braxton got himself out of *that* one, and Anthony laughed out loud. But he continued to expound on how "misinformation" can be traced to words . . . and how music has suffered at the hands of critics. Despite the fact that Anthony is an articulate linguist himself, even to the point of building up his own unique lexicon rampant with "vibrating affinities" and "time zones," he has purposely constructed a baffling new method of titling his musical works with mathematical diagrams instead of words. On one level, of course, Braxton's symbols attempt to transcend conventional description. But the diagrams also emphasize Anthony's "distrust of words," an attitude more than justified, it would seem, by a recent panning of Braxton's latest record in *People* magazine. When Anthony first began using the pictorial titles he thought nobody was listening to him anyway ("even my brothers don't listen to my music"), and he believes now that they may have become "too much of a spectacle." But he stands by his previous skepticism.

"I think the journalism that surrounds the music has traditionally been very dangerous,



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because what's happened is that the basic thrust of journalism has always moved to make the music move into the same affinity alignment that we had with language. Music has always been channeled into traditional concepts. I think journalism on the whole *could* be positive if, say, criticism was removed. I'm not interested in criticism. But I think *positive* journalism could help *educate* people about the music. Now, in this time zone I have noticed that there is more positive journalism with respect to alternative creativities and I'm of course happy about *that* development.

"But I'm frightened of how the collected forces of Western culture, at some point after a given time zone, somehow put the music in an alien position *through* words. For instance, my music is looked at as being an activity that has a lack of commitment in terms of emotional content, or music which is too analytical, or, as Phil Woods said in *down beat* [Blindfold Test, 10/16/78], music that has 'hate' in it. So I think what we need in this period is more honest information. We need the journalistic community to *educate* the people about what has really been happening in the music.

"Definitely what's needed in this time zone is another approach to dealing with what creativity really is and all the jazz-rock categories, the jazz categories, classical categories. On one level they *could* be useful, but the semantic implications, the way these different labels are used to narrow the spectrum of the music, runs against the grain of actual life in terms of people's life experiences. But it's more than that. It has to do with the affiliative nature of Western culture in this time zone . . . how phenomena is perceived, and especially alternative creativity."

Braxton's eclecticism is evidenced by his compositions and a string of widely divergent recordings, from trio improvisations to creative orchestra marches to swingworthy alto sax on bop-associated standards. "I've tried to add to the body of information that is perceived. Each of the records I've tried to approach in terms of making available particular areas. I don't know how long I'll be recording for Arista, and before that it was very difficult to get music available in this country, and so I've tried to make each record indicative of a given viewpoint. I really would like to have the various aspects of my work finally documented, because I've never been *only* interested in playing alto saxophone or playing in open-ended situations. Rather, there are many areas of my work which are yet to be documented."

Unknown to many is the fact that Braxton has already completed a large body of notated music, most of which remains unpublished. "Oh yes, I have about seven orchestral works completed, two string quartets, 20 piano pieces . . . I have a *pile* of music, and I'm working on a lot of music right now. The next record, on Arista, will be a three-record set of notated music for four orchestras . . . 160 musicians, 40 in each corner. It will represent the first time I've gotten a record of my completely notated music available."

Anthony accomplished this massive project at Oberlin College in Ohio. "The people at Oberlin were open to the project and I was very fortunate that they would do this. Dr. Wendell Logan teaches there and he's aware of my music. It's all notated. It's not that different from normal notation on this particular composition, so it didn't represent any real

problem in terms of executing it—outside of the fact that I needed excellent technicians. I still can't believe that it's completed," enthused Braxton, who explained that "it doesn't have anything to do with any of my other records."

In another area, Braxton is an accomplished pianist and has written a new work for two pianos. "I'm hoping to get Frederic Rzewski and Ursula Oppens to play it. I love the piano, but when I get around those two I get very nervous. They're so . . . proficient," he laughed. "I love the piano and I'd like to hope that one day I could do more with it. It's just kind of intimidating to be around such good pianists all the time. I tend to practice when no one is around."

Relatively unusual among avant garde composers and performers is Braxton's relationship with a major record company. Arista not only gives Anthony exposure to the masses, the company also allows him unprecedented latitude in the kind of projects that he is able to undertake. "Of course I have to function within certain economic coordinates, otherwise I'd be doing a lot of large concerts. As you know, musicians like myself normally have to function in solo to quartet, sometimes quintet, situations, and people tend to get the idea that that's what the music is about. But in fact I've always tried to function in as many contexts as I could . . . I've just been limited as far as the economic consideration is concerned."

"My relationship with Arista has been very good for that, because I've been able to get the Creative Orchestra record out and the chamber orchestra piece with myself and George

"I'd like to hope that . . . we can move towards a new set of problems rather than deal with the old problems."

Lewis in Berlin, and now the piece for four orchestras. I would never have had an opportunity to do it myself. But it's not like because I've been at Arista I've done the projects because I knew they could be done. Rather, the music is already existent. I'm very grateful to get some of it out."

Anthony praises individuals like Carla Bley who have tackled the whole music business and achieved a certain degree of success and independence. "I admire that about her and Michael Mantler, the fact that they have not only created the music, but they've put together the company and gone through the agony of dealing with all of this business to make outlets for themselves. I have always wanted to have my own record company, but to be honest I never had the capital to even begin to do it. When I *did* have some money I would buy another instrument, because I still don't have my arsenal in terms of basic materials I need to work with." Braxton's "arsenal" includes contrabass clarinet ("there are six on the planet"), soprano sax, contrabass sax, and a multitude of diverse reed instruments. He quipped that as soon as he's out of debt again, he's going to ask his wife if he can buy a synthesizer.

But Anthony admitted that the nitty gritty levels of music marketing would not be for him. "No, I would have to probably have some help. I'm not very sophisticated as a business person, and I still have an awful lot to learn about the music business. It's very different from music, the music business. It's like learning another instrument."

Braxton is managed by Rasa Artists from 20 □ down beat

New York, an organization that also handles Sam Rivers, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and other forward-looking musicians. "They've helped to get me more work than I would normally get in this country."

As for his friends in the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Anthony said "they're still working and growing. I think it's one of the most important ensembles in this time zone. I just think it's criminal that they are unable to document their music on the level that they should. There is a possibility that they might be with ECM Records, I've heard talk of that. They've already done the recording and to my knowledge they'll have a record coming out in the next couple of months on ECM. Lester Bowie is playing with Jack DeJohnette now, so he's been talking with Manfred Eicher. I hope ECM is really going into a new cycle. *Somebody* has to pick up the slack for American music."

In days gone by both Braxton and the Art Ensemble found temporary haven overseas. Mark Montesano reminisced about the hour-long Albert Ayler specials that Europeans used to get over the airwaves, and Anthony commented on his experiences. "They have much more documentation over there. There's a television film of Eric Dolphy, Bud Powell, Mingus and Charlie Shavers or someone. People that you don't normally associate with having a chance to play together. There are films in Europe . . . Sweden has more documentation on John Coltrane than you would believe. But there's not that much documentation here."

The obvious question was: Why? "Well I'd say first and foremost, racism has a lot to do

with it, if we're talking about creative musicians who happen also to be black people. Then too, I think for the most part we're dealing with a lot of misinformation. We live in a culture where the programming is so intense for commercial forms there's no room for musicians like myself. Of course, there are problems in Europe also. I don't mean to talk about Europe like it's Mecca. But some of the problems *there* are a little different."

As for the present American situation, Braxton conceded that, "It's getting better. I mean, the main problem has been the suppression that took place in the '60s, as far as the journalism and the media is concerned. Now that some of the musicians are getting opportunities to record there has been response. Not like commercial music, but it's been getting better, or it hasn't been getting worse. I don't ever see us making a million dollars or being successful like the rock musicians, but if we can just pay our rent or have enough money to continue our research, that would be wonderful. That's really what I desire."

By this point several musicians and onlookers had joined our discussion, forming a makeshift ecumenical panel spanning several races, religions, and geographics. One musician from Tucson's Lotus Ensemble, Dennis Warren, had studied at Bennington with Bill Dixon, and the mention of Dixon's predicament set Anthony on a different, compassionate tack.

"My only problem is *why* hasn't somebody in this culture recorded Bill Dixon? His last record, *Intents And Purposes*, was recorded over ten years ago! I think the man is *extreme-*

ly important. He's in Bennington, Vermont. He's teaching and he's writing and growing, and we could all learn from his music if it was available. I think it's just a shame.

"But I mean, if we talk about Bill Dixon then we could surely run down 500 other people whose work would merit some kind of exposure. Not just what we call restructuralists, that being belief, in this time zone, in the concept of innovation. I think innovation, as important as it is, is no more important than all the other thrusts which are of interest . . . the concept of the stylist, the concept of the people who move forward because of looking backwards, the people who are connected with the so-called 'tradition.' I think *all* of those aspects are necessary if we are going to move towards transformation, because in fact, every progressional thrust is related to a given zone that people seem to be born into. And none is more important than the other. I wish I had a chance to experience more of Bill Dixon's work.

"I think there's definitely been more exposure for *some* musicians in this period, but there are a lot of musicians who haven't had that exposure. We just talked about Bill Dixon. I don't mean to sound ungrateful for the fact that, say, I've been allowed to record in this period, but what I'm trying to talk about is how information is perceived. If there was another understanding of creativity, then we'd have another whole scene happening.

"You have to remember that we're functioning from the context of being professional musicians; we make our living doing what we would be doing anyway. So it's like we make our living from something that doesn't exist. And then, on top of that, the words which surround how our music is perceived have nothing to do, in many cases, with the essence of what the music is really connected to. I look forward to a time zone where all of the various projections of styles can be made available so that people can experience them.

"Like for the guy who says, 'I don't like the music of Anthony Braxton,' wouldn't it be wonderful if he could hear the records and *then* say, 'Wow, now I know I don't like the music of Anthony Braxton!'"

But Anthony Braxton, despite his acute empathy for the problems and pitfalls that face modern music, is a positive thinker. His awareness of past and present realities equips him all the more for a head-on confrontation with tomorrow. As we near the end of a confusing, transitional decade, Anthony sees reason for encouragement.

"I've never been more excited about creativity. It seems to me that we're moving into one of the more dynamic creative cycles in this whole culture. And it's like everywhere I go I run into creative musicians who have another viewpoint to contribute to the composite thrust of information. I'm very excited about the music. I've never been more excited . . . and I was excited 20 years ago.

"But there's *so* much happening. Much more than people seem to think. I'm personally very excited about march music and the drum & bugle corps music that's happening. I'll give anything to see a football halftime.

"There's just so much music happening. It would be a shame if it's distorted by the same old precepts which have moved to mischannel everything else. I'd like to hope that at some point this planet will move towards a real transformation, where we can move towards a new set of problems rather than deal with the old problems." db

TAL FARLOW

Turning Away From Fame

by Burt Korall

Tal Farlow—the name must strike a positive chord if you've been listening to jazz for a while. Before absenting himself from the limelight, this guitarist brought to the music a flock of fascinating ideas, an innovation or two, flashing technique and more than a little of himself.

In all, Tal was on the scene a little over ten years. The 1950s, the Eisenhower decade, was his time. During this period he had a strong effect on fans and his colleagues, making memorable music with the Red Norvo Trio, the Artie Shaw Gramercy Five, and his own trio, featuring explosively talented Eddie Costa on piano and creative Vinnie Burke on bass.

His career prospects were excellent. He was at his peak. Then quite suddenly—or at least it seemed so at the time—Tal picked up his marbles in 1958 and went home. He got away from the big city and its nonsensical hustle, while escaping the "show biz" aspects of jazz so repugnant to him.

"Perhaps I was meant to be away from New York and places like that," Tal says, adding: "I got fed up with the backstage parts of the jazz life, the 'business' relationships, the pushing and shoving. It seemed that I became increasingly involved with stuff that had nothing to do with music. Though I wanted to continue playing, I couldn't deal with all the other things. So I made a change.

"I moved to Sea Bright on the Jersey Shore with my wife. I like it there. It's quiet and peaceful. It feels right to me. I do things around the house, tinker with tape recorders and boats. I teach a bit and sometimes get out and play, mostly locally. Every once in a while I make a record or appear at a festival.

"I'm not really a part of the scene," he continues. "It may sound unusual to you, but I never felt like a professional musician. I never had any desire to be a leader, either. I just wanted to play guitar. I guess I got into the whole thing by accident, anyway."

Tall, quiet, reserved, basically shy, Tal had a sign painting and display business in Greensboro, North Carolina, when he heard Charlie Christian on network radio with Benny Goodman in 1940. It was an extraordinarily striking experience that changed the course of his life.

"Christian made music important to me," the guitarist says. "I rearranged the schedule at my shop so I could work nights and listen to band remotes from places like the Panther Room of Chicago's Sherman House, the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York, Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in New Jersey and the Hollywood Palladium.

"I became very familiar with Miller, the Dorseys, Basie, Glen Gray and a number of other bands. But Christian was the one who got me moving. I bought all the Goodman-Christian recordings and memorized Charlie's



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choruses, note-for-note, playing them on a second-hand \$14 guitar and \$20 amplifier. Though a late starter for music—I was 22 in 1940—I sure was fascinated."

Tal kept listening to the radio and progressively enlarged his record collection. Lester Young became a favorite and major influence. After a little while, the budding guitarist noted a link between Christian and the President of the tenor men.

"The conception, feeling and phrasing of their music have a lot in common," Tal asserts. "I believe Prez was the father of the legato style. Most guys weren't too subtle and didn't play those long lines before his records got around.

"With Prez I went through the same process as I had with Christian. I committed his solos to memory—from the blue Decca discs and many of the Basie Okeh and Columbia recordings. I had special favorites—*Lady Be Good*, from Prez' first recording session in 1936, with the small band: Basie, Jo Jones, Walter Page and trumpeter Carl Smith; that one and *Taxi War Dance*, *Texas Shuffle*, *Every Tub*, *Jumpin' At The Woodside*, *Jive At Five*. They all helped me learn what and how to play.

"Much of what I was listening to wasn't that complicated. Christian's compositions for the Goodman Sextet were mostly blues, with a bit of *I Got Rhythm* and *Honeysuckle Rose* thrown in. It was after hearing Coleman Hawkins and Art Tatum that new worlds opened up. As I became aware of the chord and interval possibilities, I realized there was much more to

music than I ever thought.

"I couldn't believe it when I first caught Tatum," Tal remembers. "I was working late one night. I had my little radio on. I moved the dial and came across this pianist who sounded like three or four guys playing at once. Even as dumb as I was harmonically, never having listened to far-out harmonies and changes, I knew something marvelous was happening.

"*Begin The Beguine*, *Rosetta*—they played about four sides in a row without any commentary in between. I thought to myself, 'If they don't say who it is soon, I'm in trouble.' Finally the announcer said, 'You've been listening to the piano artistry of Art Tatum.' I took the sign brush and wrote his name on the easel on my work table. It's probably still there. The next day I went to see the music store guy down the street and ordered Tatum's records."

Living in a small Southern town, Tal had few friends with whom he could share his enthusiasm for jazz. There was a clarinetist named Paul Bell. And when Greensboro became an Air Corps base, he met pianist Jimmy Lyon.

"Jimmy and I got real friendly. He was very much into Tatum, too. We talked a good deal and made plans to form a group when he got out of the service. Eventually we went to New York together, from Philadelphia.

"How did I get to Philly? Well, during the war, more and more musicians were being drafted. Even territory bands needed players.

I was 4-F and got in with this group that was based in Philadelphia. A drummer named Billy Banks led the band. He lost his bass player. There were no bassists around Greensboro, so he hired me.

"I hadn't been playing too long, about two years," Farlow recalls. "Couldn't read a lick. Still can't. I joined the musicians' union, which was run by the fire department; most of the town's players were in the firemen's band. I left town with Banks but allowed my sign business to continue functioning, in case something went wrong. In fact, I commuted back and forth.

"After a little while, I met people in Philadelphia and got calls for various kinds of work, mostly with trios in cocktail lounges. Guitar was big. Piano, bass, guitar seemed the most popular instrumentation."

Word began to spread about Tal Farlow, even at that early juncture in his career. Dardanelle, the pianist and vibraharpist who had a little group in Richmond, heard about the guitarist and contacted him.

"I was back home in Greensboro, not making any plans to go any place. When Dardanelle sounded me, I went up to Richmond and played for her. I guess she liked what she heard. I joined the trio. Paul Edinfield was the bassist. We made our way north, playing Baltimore, Philadelphia, then New York.

"It was my first visit to the Apple," Tal explains. "We played the Copa Lounge for six months. It was a great time to be in town. Charlie Parker was giving off sparks, influencing every young player in sight. I'll never forget the first time I heard him at the Three Deuces on 52nd Street. It was fireworks, like hearing Tatum.

"From that time on, I was at the club as much as possible. On my Monday night off at the Copa, I was at the Deuces before anyone else, waiting for Bird to show. Sometimes he didn't, so the guy who ran the place put up a sign advertising other musicians who weren't there, either. Just to get people to come in."

Three years later, Tal worked at the Deuces with ex-Woody Herman vibraharpist Margie Hyams, opposite Parker. He listened in awe whenever the great man was on the scene. One evening he recalls most vividly as a bit of a circus.

"Bird came storming into the club after a lengthy absence. The management tried to get him up on the stand immediately. He wouldn't be rushed. We were standing in the rear of the place. Margie, Miles Davis, Al Haig, Curley Russell and I watched the comedy unfold. Bird had some sardines and crackers and was eating them with a sense of relish, while the management pleaded with him to come to the stand. They got to the point where they were cajoling and begging him. He kept offering them sardines and crackers. We laughed 'til our sides hurt. Finally he came out and played.

"When he was doing his thing, there was no comedy," Tal avers. "He knew his instrument so well, it was so much a part of him, he could play anything he had in mind. The connection between his fingers and thoughts was that direct."

Like many young musicians of the time, Tal became deeply involved with Bird's tunes, his new changes on standards, his feeling and phrasing, and the lightning tempo the boppers brought to jazz. And Farlow played every chance he got.

"It was pretty hectic. At one point I was performing all night on 52nd St. and working 22 □ down beat

a nine to five job in the display department at Goldsmith Brothers, a store in Manhattan.

"At the beginning," Tal reports, "I had some difficulty getting into what Bird and Diz and Miles and those fellows were doing. Because I came from Charlie Christian and played essentially in his style, I found the bop phrases didn't fall easily on the guitar. But I kept listening and working out my problems until I felt comfortable with the modern idiom.

"Practicing? I was unorthodox then and still am. I practice only what I expect to play on the job. No scales, arpeggios or exercises. I don't recommend my method. But that's what I do. Not being able to read, playing entirely by ear, might have something to do with the way I prepare myself to play."

From whom did he learn the most? Tal mentions that Artie Shaw was an excellent musician, that he absorbed a good deal from Shaw and from pianist Hank Jones while with Shaw's Gramercy Five in 1953-54. But he insists Red Norvo was the key to his development.

"Red was a great teacher. I spent about five years with him—off and on—in the 1950s. He kept feeding me knowledge. Talk about technique! Red was really fast. He loved to play 'up,' especially when we got Mingus in the group.

"I was no faster than the next guy until I went with Red," Tal says. "Those little arrangements he had played in the Woody Her-

SELECTED FARLOW DISCOGRAPHY

GUITAR PLAYER—Prestige P 24042.

FUERST SET—Xanadu 109.

SECOND SET—Xanadu 119.

THE RED NORVO TRIO WITH TAL FARLOW AND CHARLES MINGUS—THE SAVOY SESSIONS—Arista SIL 2212.

MOSTLY FLUTE WITH SAM MOST—Xanadu 133.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES—Concord CJ-26.

TAL FARLOW '78—Concord CJ-57.

man band really were tests. I had to work like crazy, just to keep up with Red and Mingus—they forced me into the woodshed. I kept practicing until I could play with them without any trouble. By the time we made our first records, I was ready."

With the Norvo trio, first with Charles Mingus then Red Mitchell on bass, Farlow defined who and what he was. It became apparent to the jazz community that a major player had emerged.

Tal had assimilated Christian and Young, particularly their manner of accentuation and linear propensities. He also understood the implications and techniques involved in the Parker-Gillespie music. Farlow brought to the Norvo trios music a quickness of response lifted by extraordinary technical resources. His ideas and articulation were one. He often resorted to double-timing to get in all he had to say.

His performances on Norvo trio Savoy recordings recently reissued by Arista are harmonically venturesome and sometimes rhythmically complicated, but his playing never sounds unnatural. He often refers to the blues and to the back country areas where he was reared. Like Red, he has a love for melody and it flows through his commentary. Even as he moves afield and abstracts an improvised sequence, the melody somehow lingers, simmering just below the surface.

"I guess I'm always looking for good melodies, the good tunes with unusual harmonies," Tal says. "When I played club dates with society bands, I got into this thing where I would seek out particularly interesting obscure tunes to play. It kept me from being bored."

When Tal cut loose from Red, he played periodically with his own trio in New York. The unit's home was The Composer, a now-defunct jazz room on Manhattan's East 58th St. Eddie Costa and Vinnie Burke worked hand in glove with their guitarist/leader.

Tal was then in excellent form. Penetrating on ballads, he was awesome on the faster tunes. Costa's ability to improvise with enormous energy and imagination often made the evenings unforgettable. Vinnie held everything together in an unobtrusive manner, making pertinent comments when his turn came.

Like many good things in music, the trio didn't last long enough to truly take hold. It was here and gone, and those of us who heard it didn't realize how good it was until it no longer existed. Vinnie went his own way; Eddie died a few years later in an auto accident. Tal moved to Sea Bright. His residence in the center of things was over.

For several years, there was silence. Tal's contract with Norman Granz's Verve label ran out in 1960. No one knew for sure what he was doing. It was almost as if he had never been.

"During that period, I worked in New Jersey," Tal explains. "I played all kinds of jobs. Many of them had nothing to do with jazz. Most of the time the players didn't know me. I felt there was no necessity to concentrate entirely on jazz. I found I could have fun playing a variety of jobs, as long as I didn't have to read."

Finally in 1967 Tal came out for a while. Jazz disc jockey Mort Fega brought the guitarist back into the foreground, if only temporarily.

"It was difficult to persuade him, but finally he decided to make the move," Mort says. "The man is truly modest, self-effacing, reticent. He has no idea of the extent of his talent."

Tal picks up the story.

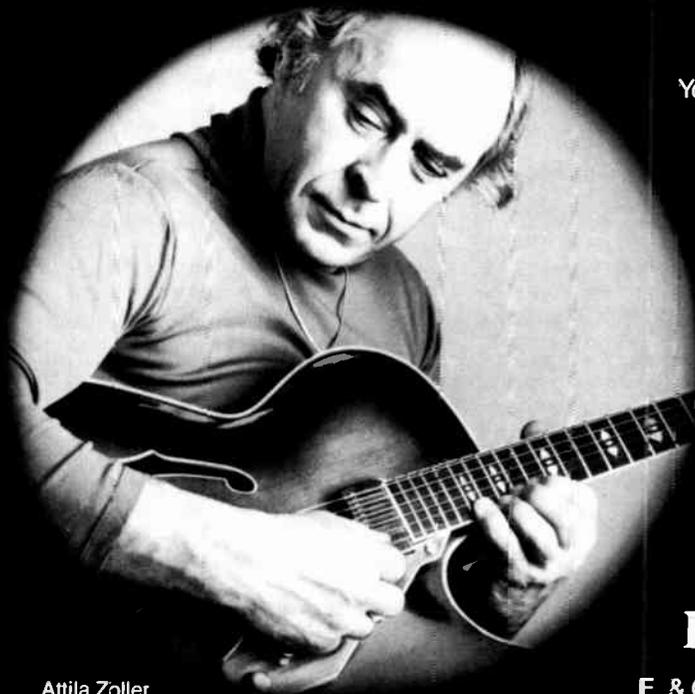
"Mort got me together with pianist Johnny Knapp. Johnny, who has the same kind of rolling power and sensitivity that Costa had, was working at the Little Club in Roslyn, Long Island. Mort drove me out and I sat in with John, Ray Alexander—the vibes man—and drummer Mousey Alexander. It felt pretty good. Then John came out to my house at the shore and we got into some things. He suggested 'a doctor who plays real good bass.' That turned out to be Lyn Christie. We played together, got to know one another, then began work at the Frammis on New York's East Side—a gig Mort had set up for us."

The jazz audience found the trio exhilarating. Tal's playing hadn't essentially changed. Sharp, together, and more mature, many evenings he was fantastic, tapping a variety of feelings. Because of his reticent personality, he seldom drew attention to himself, instead allowing his colleagues to open up, encouraging an exchange of ideas.

As *New York Times* critic John S. Wilson pointed out, "He is heard less as a soloist with accompaniment than as part of an ensemble. His electric guitar and Mr. Knapp's piano are constantly dancing around each other in musical conversations full of delightfully responsive passages."

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RECORD REVIEWS

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

KEITH JARRETT

SUN BEAR CONCERTS—ECM 1100: *Kyoto*, November 5, 1976; *Osaka*, November 8, 1976; *Nagoya*, November 12, 1976; *Tokyo*, November 14, 1976; *Sapporo*, November 18, 1976.

Personnel: Jarrett, piano.

* * * * *

Where shall we start? Perhaps with a prediction: at some later date, a strict survey of jazz history may well downplay Keith Jarrett's contribution to the idiom. A radical thought? Not really; for while such jazz traditions as improvisation and blues tonality are essential to Jarrett's creations, so are the last 150 years of classical music, the folk airs of this and a dozen other cultures, and an art-mysticism that rivals Scriabin. They are among the tools with which Jarrett is crafting a deeply personal, yet strikingly universal, new American music.

Through this music, as well as through the uncompromising, sometimes arrogant stance he offers his public, Jarrett has always managed to stir controversy, and *Sun Bear Concerts* should prove no exception to this rule. Recorded in late 1976, *Sun Bear* comprises both halves of each of the five solo-concerts that made up an extraordinary tour of Japan. A heady encyclopedia of both performance and composition technique, it is not without occasional pretense; but its length is vindicated by the nature and quality of the work. In a way, this album's release represents the boldest act of Jarrett's career, and one of the nerviest in that of ECM auteur Manfred Eicher as well. Both were surely aware of the critical skepticism that would greet a ten-record set of Jarrett's improvised piano concertos—especially since his solo concerts have so consistently fallen through so many definitional cracks—not to mention the problems posed for consumers by *Sun Bear's* \$75 list price.

Still, the politics pack nowhere near the intrigue of the music itself. Expansive but rarely unwieldy, even the least successful of these musings is a remarkable achievement. The best of them—the entire *Kyoto* and *Nagoya* concerts and the first piece from *Tokyo*—stand with *The Koln Concert* (ECM 1064/65) as the apotheosis of this one-man genre. To borrow a phrase from novelist John Cheever, they are the inventions of a giant.

The *Sun Bear* pieces are likely the last Jarrett solo concerts we will see on record, and the only ones postdating *Staircase* (ECM 1090/91), which was recorded some six months earlier. *Staircase* provides the pivot-point of Jarrett's solo art: it showed a focusing of conceptualization. The clear-cut sense of purpose attained on *Staircase* helps shape *Sun Bear Concerts*; the sustained, at times merciless, development of motivic material is another carryover. In a very real sense, these

longer, more meandering pieces are not *Staircase Live*; but in a very real sense, they are.

In some cases, as in the opening Chopinesque strains of the *Kyoto* concert, or the manic Swiss clock figure that closes the first *Nagoya* piece, this thematic grist is nothing short of brilliant; in others, it is simply well-considered, and in a few others, overwrought and empty. In all cases the material is new, but the voices conveying it are familiar. None of these multi-sectioned pieces, when listened to and studied in its entirety, resembles any of the others, yet all share in the widely recognized collection of moods and styles that are among Jarrett's trademarks. There are quiet pastoral melodies, passages of arpeggiated majesty, passionately evoked Romantic themes; fresh and jaunty songs, soaring or quieting hymns, and even a couple of the rollicking boogie-woogieish ostinatos that more regularly populated his earlier solo concerts. The suggestions of English folk song that seemed to imbue *Koln I* has gone international: there are touches of Russian, Mid-Eastern, Indian, and Oriental musics in various sections, always transmogrified into something that only hints at such origins while remaining firmly in Jarrett's grasp.

Obviously, when working with a set of recurring, strongly evocative elements, the issue of form—how these damned things are put together—emerges as a key factor. Jarrett's usually unerring sense of dramatic structure is necessarily put to the test by the self-imposed demands of his full length fantasias, but it most often triumphs with a fascinating resourcefulness. In fact, while the individual segments are the music's gleaming showpieces, the transitional fragments connecting them provide some of the most insightful moments.

The metaphor of meditation in this music is too strong to ignore. For one, Jarrett prepares for each solo concert by clearing his mind of mundane clutter; for another, these pieces are overpoweringly intimate in the way they can draw a listener in and hold him captive for their length.

But the metaphor is most clearly drawn by the sections of repeated, intricately-patterned figures that sprout in many of the *Sun Bear* pieces. These are not ostinatos around which Jarrett dances melodic ballet, nor are they his equivalent of simple mark-time riffing. They are sonic mandalas. The album notes include the advice, "Think of your ears as eyes"; and just as mandalas are often stared at to induce meditational trance, these patterns can be "stared" at to produce transcendent results. In the first *Osaka* piece, for instance, the crashing overtones of the mandala seem to be playing an ephemeral ghost melody in the piano's upper harmonics; in the first *Sapporo* piece, Jarrett effects a mandala that is actually composed of several smaller designs. By 1976 they

had become a mature and fully integrated component of the solo concerts, and the most mystery-shrouded of the music's many virtues.

I haven't the space nor do I think it important to describe these pieces individually, but a couple of standouts must be mentioned. In *Tokyo I*, Jarrett settled early into what is definitely a raga, using a left hand drone and gorgeous passages from India in the right; the piece includes a blazing Jarrett blues and an altogether unexpected coda. The *Kyoto* concert, even more unexpectedly, can be taken as one double-length creation, since the pristine motif that opens the first piece reappears at the end of the second. Moreover, *Kyoto I* doesn't so much end as it just stops, and the fierce dissonance that opens *Kyoto II* serves the purpose that a symphony's third movement might. It is virtually unassailable.

Both *Kyoto* and *Tokyo*, in fact, might be a good place for ECM to start reissuing *Sun Bear Concerts* in more manageable format—the obvious answer is five double-LPs. The refusal thus far to break up the set is my severest criticism, and one being echoed daily by listeners unable to drop the dough for such a windfall recording. Reasons of "artistic integrity" have been mentioned, but that's goofy; *Sun Bear Concerts* were not all recorded at one sitting, and certainly need not be bought or heard that way. (In fact, the wholesale release of them all actually obscures the individualism of each one.) I have a few quarrels, too, with the way various pieces are spread over two sides of a disc—in some cases there is a fade on side one and a clean start on side two, giving the impression that something was missed.

And that is an impression you want to avoid with music of this magnitude—whether it will some day be seen as '70s jazz, a new American synthesis, or even a glittering artistic cul-de-sac. Jarrett has once more stepped into the cave of his creative consciousness and brought to light a music of startling power, majesty, and even warmth.

—neil tessier

CECIL TAYLOR

THE CECIL TAYLOR UNIT—New World NW 201: *Idut*; *Serab*; *Holiday En Masque*.

Personnel: Taylor, piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto sax; Raphé Malik, trumpet; Ramsey Ameen, violin; Si-rone, bass; Ronald Shannon Jackson, drums.

* * * * *

It may be that his place in the critical hagiography is virtually as secure as Armstrong's, yet the irascible Taylor continues to fret that he is inadequately appreciated although his densely textured cacophonies are pitched well over the head of the average listener. The point is well taken, however, when one considers that he seeks academic as much as popular acceptance, and that, as the present recording attests, he has taken his pioneering approach to small ensemble orchestration and interaction to the pinnacle of its development.

The inclusion here of Ramsey Ameen's violin alongside the familiar trumpet and sax completes the full symphonic tonal palette in miniature, rounding out a rich timbral blend that augurs possible larger scaled projects. On the other hand, the intimacy of the quintet permits a degree of spontaneous interplay impossible in larger formats, a responsiveness quite remarkably illustrated in this tour de force of empathetic improvisation. It has become almost a cliché to describe Taylor's work as brilliant, and yet anything less is an injustice. His furious and prolonged intensity

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can be exceedingly taxing, but the diligent listener is rewarded as the seemingly impenetrable maelstrom of dissonance reveals, upon closer inspection, a sparkling kaleidoscope of swirling motifs, refracted through the multiple facets of the ensemble to produce hard, prismatic colorations.

From the double-stopped, Stravinskian violin chords that open *Idut*, the composition plunges swiftly into the turbulent eddies of sound that are Cecil's trademark. With plangent block chords and rumbling arpeggios Taylor beats out a percussive chordal matrix beneath trumpeter Raphé Malik's staccato war whoops, sidekick Jimmy Lyons' alto squiggles, and the Egyptian-born Ameen's classically inflected keenings. Through episodes of tension and relaxation the players react to one another's ideas with all but clairvoyant sensitivity, as drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson (late of Ornette Coleman's band) echoes Taylor's nervous percussive twitching with uncanny intuition. Unfortunately, bassist Sirone is lost in the otherwise pellucid mix, but the sonic thicket is no less crowded for that, and the piece maintains a concentrated intensity until Cecil's piano slips off suddenly like a ghost.

The mood is more subdued on the almost elegiac *Serdab*, which develops a call-and-response theme in fugal fashion, featuring Malik and Ameen in strong performances and Cecil in an unusually lyrical vein, even suggesting Keith Jarrett at times. Taylor's manic energy returns to its customary frenetic level on *Holiday En Masque*, an extraordinary extended screech that had this reviewer crying uncle by the time its 30 minutes had elapsed. Taylor's style recalls Aylor's glossolalia abandon, but in place of the saxophonist's rapturous roman-

ticism he substitutes an intellectual angst that cries out with the same desperate urgency.

This beautifully packaged and annotated album captures Taylor at the peak of his maturity, employing essentially the same conceptual group framework he has utilized at least since *Unit Structures*. As his music is now fairly well documented, continuing efforts in the same mode run the risk of excessive self-duplication, although the string voicings here provide an aspect both novel and superbly compatible. A follow-up disc on the Rockefeller-funded New World label is due out later this year, and it is hoped that Cecil will wax some of the more varied instrumental and even vocal works he has introduced in recent years.

—birnbaum

INTERFACE

INTERFACE—ReEntry RE-001: *Quartet: A Day In May; Atlantis; February; Solo Poom #3; Flies; Tolls*. Personnel: John Fischer, piano, compositions; Charles Tyler, baritone sax; Mark Whitecage, alto sax, flute; Perry Robinson, clarinet; Rick Kilburn, bass; Phillip Wilson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Interface, an amazing group of talented free-spirits, has managed to combine the best of several musical worlds. In the process, it has scored impressive triumphs at its home base of operations (Environ, a congenial loft in Manhattan), and at such international forums as the Berliner Jazztage.

Led by composer/pianist John Fischer, Interface appeals through its direct emotionalism, textural diversity, impeccable musicianship and self-discipline. Another important ingredient is the structure of Fischer's music. Each composition is underpinned by a firm framework.

Tolls, for example, is a sequence of spontaneously generated events segmented by recurring chordal slams. Articulated on the downbeat of each eight-beat phrase, the chords define soloists' spaces and set moods.

Another instance of what Fischer calls "primary structures" occurs in *Solo Poom #3*. As Fischer utters his explosive array of vocal gestures, another voice provides an oom-pah-pah, three-quarter time bass line. It's the kind of bizarre, yet effective, juxtaposition of old and new that worked so well in Kubrick's *2001* where Strauss's *Blue Danube* underscores the lyrical movements of spacecraft.

Fischer's music also has an attractive programmatic dimension. *Atlantis* opens with bassist Rick Kilburn's sub-aquatic rumblings. *Flies* includes the furious stop-start buzzing of Perry Robinson's clarinet, Mark Whitecage's alto and Phillip Wilson's drums.

Aside from structural and dramatic/emotive variations, contrast is achieved by alterations in the ensemble. *Quartet* is just that, a four-some embracing the robust energies of baritonist Charles Tyler plus Fischer, Kilburn and Wilson. *February* is a free-flowing impressionistic interaction between Fischer's romantic piano and Whitecage's ascetic alto.

Interface is one of the most productive and accessible of today's experimental enterprises. Its expressions run the gamut from comic to tragic. Its seriousness is leavened with a daidistic wit and appreciation for life's paradoxical nature. It vibrates with the most profound pulses of the '70s.

—berg

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

GIANTS OF JAZZ: LOUIS ARMSTRONG—Time-Life Records STL—J01 P3 14674: *Dippermouth Blues; Copenhagen; Cake Walking Babies From Home; Cold In Hand Blues; My Heart; Gut Bucket Blues; Heebie Jeebies; Cornet Chop Suey; Static Strut; Georgia Bo Bo; Willie The Weeper; Wild Man Blues; Potato Head Blues; Ory's Creole Trombone; I'm Not Rough; Savoy Blues; West End Blues; Muggles; Tight Like This; Knockin' A Jug; Mahogany Hall Stomp; Ain't Misbehavin'; Black And Blue; That Rhythm Man; Some Of These Days; Dallas Blues; My Sweet; Sweethearts On Parade; When It's Sleepy Time Down South; Blue Again; Star Dust; Some Sweet Day; On The Sunny Side Of The Street; Song Of The Vipers; Jubilee; When The Saints Go Marchin' In; Marie; 2:19 Blues; Pennies From Heaven; That's For Me*.

Personnel: Armstrong, cornet, trumpet, and vocals with these groups: King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, Clarence Williams' Blue Five, Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven, Savoy Ballroom Five, his Orchestra and his Sebastian New Cotton Club Orchestra, the Mills Brothers, his All Stars; musicians include: King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, Baby Dodds, Lil Hardin Armstrong, Buster Bailey, Coleman Hawkins, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman, Sidney Bechet, Bessie Smith, Kid Ory, Johnny St. Cyr, Earl Hines, Zutty Singleton, Jack Teagarden, Joe Sullivan, Eddie Lang, J. C. Higginbotham, Luis Russell, Eddie Condon, Lonnie Johnson, Pops Foster, Carroll Dickerson, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, the Mills Brothers, Bobby Hackett, Peanuts Hucko, Bob Haggart, Sid Catlett, Cozy Cole, Barney Bigard.

★ ★ ★

The musical legacy of Louis Armstrong, arguably the single most influential figure in jazz history, has fallen victim to Armstrong's image as a popular performer and to the racial stereotypes which so pervaded the Jazz Age his innovations helped found.

In 1979 Armstrong's developments within the jazz idiom are almost 50 years behind us and, unfortunately in his own lifetime, Armstrong's role as a happy-go-lucky, brow mopping "darky" partially obscured those developments from critical, non-patronizing view. Ever-evolving musical fashion and, perhaps, Armstrong's somewhat embarrassing image to the black communities of the '60s and '70s,

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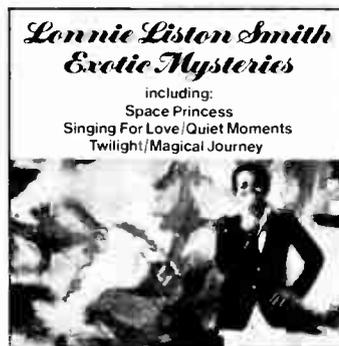
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have denied his music the degree of intelligent reassessment it has long demanded, especially from younger critics (who, through accident of birth, are chronologically closer to the Armstrong of *Talk To The Animals* than to the Armstrong of *Weatherbird Rag*, recorded half a century ago). Armstrong is the most influential of jazz artists, but is also the least understood of major figures within the music.

Time-Life Records, in a three disc sampling from his career, caters to the popular stereotype of Louis Armstrong the entertainer and falls quite short of presenting the portrait of Armstrong the artist that is so long overdue.

Part of the blame lies with the concept of this series, *The Giants Of Jazz*, of which the Armstrong set is the initial entry. *The Giants Of Jazz* follows Time-Life's highly successful mail order series of the early '70s, *The Swing Era* (in which original arrangements of big band classics, *In The Mood*, *Stompin' At The Savoy*, *Parade Of The Milk Bottle Tops* and others, were brilliantly re-recorded in stereo and helped resurrect, for the thousands of series subscribers, memories of organdy gowns, malt shops, Glen Island Casino and the Dorsey Brothers).

That series seemed to define a middle-brow/middleaged jazz aesthetic, with a jazz-as-superficial-entertainment philosophy pervading the editorial focus of the project. While *The Giants Of Jazz* series shares that editorial focus, it differs significantly from *The Swing Era* series in that it uses only original recordings by the artists profiled in the three record sets. And each set comes boxed with a bio-discography and a color portrait of the artist "suitable for framing."

Time-Life modestly proclaims *The Giants Of Jazz* "the greatest collection of jazz ever assembled," certainly a reasonable assertion if one believes that no giants of jazz have emerged since the big band era (the period from which all the profiled artists will be selected).

The three records take us through Armstrong's career from 1923 with King Oliver's Creole Jazz band to 1950 with his own All Stars. Opening with *Dippermouth Blues*, the King Oliver classic in which Armstrong does not solo, was an unexpected choice; one might have expected *Chimes Blues* with Armstrong's first recorded solo. But since *Dippermouth* remains to this day a definitive example of the polyphonic ensemble Armstrong's innovations as a soloist would banish from the mainstream of jazz development, the selection is justified.

The first three sides of this set (from *Dippermouth* to *Mahogany Hall Stomp* in 1929) offer a well-structured, if quite incomplete, study of Armstrong's sustained growth as a musician and as an influence. Thereafter selections lean heavily towards entertainment effects (e.g. mugging vocals and minstrel humor).

Among the essential Armstrong recordings passed over are *S.O.L. Blues*, *Gully Low Blues*, *Chicago Breakdown*, *Fireworks*, *Skip The Gutter*, *Knee Drops*, *Beau Koo Jack*, *Weatherbird Rag*, *Body And Soul*, *I'm A Ding Dong Daddy* and *I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues*.

Neither of the bio-discographers, Chris Albertson or John S. Wilson, comes to terms with Armstrong's genius. Albertson simply proclaims, "Armstrong was more important to jazz than Beethoven was to classical music, or than Shakespeare was to drama."

A rather broad generalization taken at face value, but to a listener well versed in Arm-

strong's musical language, several of the selections in this set offer it unerring support. Armstrong's dominance of the ensembles in *Cornet Chop Suey* and *Willie The Weeper* announce, full blown, a new solo aesthetic in a music that enjoyed a primarily ensemble tradition. *Wild Man Blues*, *Potato Head Blues* and *Muggles* are extensions of the then-existing range and tonality of brass instruments, while Armstrong's vocals, *Heebie Jeebies* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, are a grand complement to his instrumental technique and the primary model for subsequent generations of jazz singers. The opening trumpet cadenza to *West End Blues* is an encapsulation of the genius that forever changed jazz from a folk tradition to an art form. Yet in *The Giants Of Jazz* such moments of sublime inspiration pass without instructive comment.

Two other record sets provide a better introduction to Armstrong: *The Genius Of Louis Armstrong* on Columbia and *Louis Armstrong And Earl Hines—1928* on the Smithsonian label. The scholarly writing of Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition*, and Richard Hadlock, *Jazz Masters Of The Twenties*, provide illuminating perspectives on his stylistic innovations.

Time-Life's *Giants Of Jazz* is, however, perfect for the informed jazz aficionado who might enjoy the convenience of so many recordings under one roof, as well as the clear sound transfers achieved. For that person this three record set serves as a sort of glossy enhancement of Louis Armstrong's art, if not as the definitive recorded survey which, alas, has yet to be produced.

—linda prince

MAYNARD FERGUSON

CARNIVAL—Columbia JC 35480: *M.F. Carnival*; *Fantasy*; *Theme From "Battlestar Galactica"*; *Stella By Starlight*; *Birdland*; *Baker Street*; *How Ya Doin' Baby?*; *Over the Rainbow*.

Personnel: Ferguson, trumpet and flugelhorn; Eric Traub, tenor and soprano sax; Mike Migliore, alto and soprano sax, flute; Bob Militello, baritone sax, flute, and piccolo; Nick Lane, trombone, Phil Gray, trombone; Stan Mark, trumpet, flugelhorn; Joe "Loon" Mosello, trumpet, flugelhorn, piccolo trumpet and percussion; Dennis Noday, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ron Tooley, trumpet, flugelhorn; Biff Hannon, keyboards; Gordon Johnson, electric and acoustic bass, flute; John Odini, acoustic and electric guitar; Bob Economou, drums; Peter Erskine, drums; Ruben Bassini, percussion; Maretha Stewart, Hilda Harris, Barbara Massey, Yolanda McCullough, Vivian Cherry, vocals; Aaron Rosan, Paul Winter, string concertmasters.

★ ★ ½

While firmly in the funk and fusion mainstream, Ferguson's music nevertheless occasionally recaptures an intensity of feeling that might in a lesser musician and leader be credited to pure accident.

But the rare emotion showing through is about the only thing accidental in this rather transparently calculated effort at satisfying the tremendous audience knocked out by the walloping trombone of *Rocky's Theme (Gonna Fly Now)*.

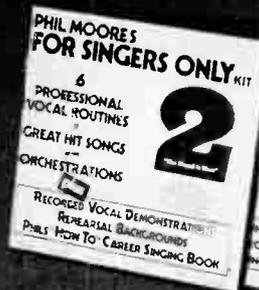
Maynard's ensemble on the LP is skillful enough, especially the deft synthesizer work of Biff Hannon on *M.F. Carnival*. A disco version of the already funk-ed-up *Fantasy* of Earth, Wind and Fire is lifeless despite a short, pretty solo by Ferguson and a cheerfully moronic vocal chorus chanting away. But even Maynard's ebullient high-noting can't quite ignite such fizzled missiles as the *Theme From Battlestar Galactica* or the thud-dingly cloddish pop nonentity *Baker Street*.

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The choice of selections here isn't the only problem. That's proven by the transposition of Weather Report's *Birdland* into something wingless and gutted enough to provide the orchestral overture to a Norman Lear sit-com.

Only the swinging and romantic *Stella By Starlight* and a wistful, yet still dynamically charged *Over The Rainbow* would give any indication to those new listeners what the era of the big bands was all about. But then, those times are also the album's toughest to hustle to and be hustled by.

It's difficult to actively dislike music so mechanized and primly professional. As disco goes, it's at least recorded well. But *Carnival's* an equally hard album to like, particularly for those who remember Ferguson groups of yore, and music he used to play called jazz. —simon

TOM WAITS

BLUE VALENTINE—Asylum 6E-162: *Somewhere*; *Red Shoes By The Drugstore*; *Christmas Card From A Hooker In Minneapolis*; *Romeo Is Bleeding*; \$29.00; *Wrong Side Of The Road*; *Whistlin' Past The Graveyard*; *Kentucky Avenue*; *A Sweet Little Bullet From A Pretty Blue Gun*; *Blue Valentines*.

Personnel: Waits, vocals, acoustic piano, electric guitar; Da Willie Gongga, electric piano and electric grand piano; Charles Kynard, organ; Alvin Shine Robinson, Roland Bautista, Ray Crawford, guitar; Harold Battiste, piano; Herbert Hardesty, tenor sax; Frank Vicari, tenor sax; Byron Miller, Jim Hughart, Scott Edwards, bass; Earl Palmer, Rick Lawson, Chip White, drums; Bobbye Hall, congas. Orchestra on cut 8 arranged and conducted by Bob Alcivar.

★ ★ ★ ★

From the cumulative body of his recording, a plausible case can be made for Tom Waits being the definitive American artiste of our

time. A man obsessed, fascinated yet repelled by American pop culture and its bastard children of cheap sex, senseless violence and the pervasive hustle of all and any form, the six Waits albums are as accurate a barometer of our age as anything likely to be placed in a time capsule for the perusal of whatever, if any, generations might follow us.

Whereas Waits' first three albums were more concerned with the whimsical mundanity of life in fast food/planned obsolescence America, the more recent trio of discs (*Small Change*, *Foreign Affairs* and *Blue Valentine*) pull no punches and slice right into the nightmare underbelly of our collective unconscious. Don't misinterpret this—Waits is anything but a moralist. He is an inveterate storyteller, a chronicler of Junk Life USA, one man as deeply imbedded in the tawdriness of day-to-day existence as the characters he so meticulously describes. When Tom moans about getting a Christmas card from a locked-up whore in Minnesota, chances are it's not only true, but that his connections with the lady go a lot deeper than words can intimate.

Without question, *Blue Valentine* is the most graphically violent and disturbing album in the awesome Waits catalog. The hues of blue and red dominate the musical and lyrical aspects of the album. Murder and mayhem are evident in every single song, with references to artillery and ruptured arteries riddling the imagery.

But if you can manage to wade through the gore of the lyrics, you can't fail to notice that Tom has assembled his finest group of backup men to date. Old friends Vicari, White and Hughart are back, with able support from West Coast organist Charles Kynard and New Orleanians Robinson and Hardesty.

The set opens with the lone non-Waits original, *Somewhere*, from *West Side Story*. The gang war refrain proves an appropriate intro for the following street carnage songs, with Tom crooning against a lush cascade of strings. This out-of-character deviation is remedied when we are thrust into the world of *Red Shoes By The Drugstore*. A refined throw-back to *Step Right Up* from *Small Change*, the cut features some slick Bautista guitar. *Christmas Card* and *Romeo* are vignettes from the smarmy side too, but side one's showstopper is \$29.00, a paean to L.A. streetwalkers, in this case an unfortunate who gets manhandled by a kinky customer. Vicari's tenor and Hughart's bass make this lengthy cut come alive as one of Tom's top vinyl efforts.

Bullet is another strong song about streetwalkers—teenyboppers this time—with Robinson and Hardesty excelling. The title cut is a forlorn urban sprawl blues, Hank Williams cum massage parlor, *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* by way of Raymond Chandler.

If you're already a Waits fanatic, you get the idea. It's becoming more and more difficult to describe Tom's work. His cadences and inflections are unique, his viewpoint cynical yet concerned, his vernacular an incredible mish-mash of American slang. His is the true California sound of the '70s, moreso than the chic despair once evidenced by Gram Parsons and now the Eagles. You may not like what Waits is saying, but he is as American as you can get. Grab this week's copy of the *National Star* from the rack at the 7-11, pick up a copy of John Gregory Dunne's *True Confessions* and drop *Blue Valentine* on the turntable. How can you doubt that the iceman does cometh?

—hohman

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WAXING ON . . .

Soulful Women Singers

Diana Ross: *Diana Ross* (Motown M7-907R 1) 1/2

Thelma Jones: *Thelma Jones* (Columbia Records JC 35485) ** 1/2

Vivian Reed: *Another Side* (United Artists UA-LA911-H) ***

Betty Wright: *Betty Wright Live* (Alston 4408) ***

Donna Summer: *Live And More* (Casablanca Records NBLP-7119) ** 1/2

Denise LaSalle: *Under The Influence* (ABC Records AA-1087) ***

Zulema: *Z-licious* (LeJoint LEJ-17000) *** 1/2

Gloria Jones: *Windstorm* (Capitol SW-11854) ****

What unites this sampling of eight new releases by current female r&b vocalists more than anything else is the consistent and rather high level of quality. While no pure masterpiece is yielded, and while the bouquet does have its thorny sides, only one truly dismal performance is given. With such a high batting average the present status of (female) soul music may be better than we would tend to think. 1978—a vintage year?

The one sour note, not surprisingly, comes from **Diana Ross**, who may be dismissed by now. Her album strives for the gossamery, and is so bland and veiled that it is a mental effort to remember when it is playing. Having reached stardom and Las Vegas, Diana Ross appears to be virtually disdainful of the blood and guts commitment inherent in working up a hit. Diana Ross wants to be a show biz goddess a la Streisand, and to get there she shrouds herself in anonymous material that protects her image from Top 40 topicality.

Thelma Jones is looking in the opposite direction on this, her first album. Produced by Bert DeCoteaux with spirit and empathy for Ms. Jones' still gospel tinged style, the album has her searching for a hit among old and new songs. No great personality comes to light, but the album does show that Thelma Jones possesses good command of her big voice, that she is fond of vibrato embellishments, and that she sings with intimacy as well as projection when the material is right, as it is here on two occasions: *How Long* and *Stay Awhile*.

Equally strong but with a much more forceful personality and sense of individual style is **Vivian Reed**, who may well give the surest, most trained of all the performances under review here. With perfect ease and unflinching attack she hovers over the heavy disco-stomping rhythm tracks (by Jeff Lane of B. T. Express fame) that would have shot down lesser voices. And though Vivian Reed is accustomed to more tuneful material, she manages here to create a fruitful contrast between the punchy rhythm patterns and the narrow interpretative space left her.

The most affecting and genuinely fun record to come along in sometime is *Betty Wright Live*. The cut that carries the album is a 12-minute long version of *Clean Up Woman* broken up into a medley in which **Betty Wright** resorts to impersonations of some of her most treasured colleagues. An old trick done here with such gusto and talent that one wonders if Ms. Wright will ever be able to rid herself of

requests for it in the future. So contagious is the audience response on the recording and so nuanced are Betty Wright's imitations that the joke bears repeated listening. Wright is in good form throughout, as is the band with a knock-out drummer in Gregory Wilkerson, and *Betty Wright Live* is that rare thing in pop music, a live album that works.

Donna Summer does not fare quite so well on the live sides that constitute 75% of her new double album. The live versions add nothing new to her hits; the rise and fall of her climax hungry style is too obviously demarcated; side two contains an unforgivable

selection of standards; but what is worse—and this is in marked contrast to Betty Wright—is that Summer herself is not having a very good time. Her audience rapport and ad libs are mechanical and there is no fizz in her maniac effervescence.

Be that as it may, the operating word for *Donna Summer Live And More* is the last, which refers to the studio recording that is her latest hit, *MacArthur Park*. One of the most baroque and grotesque affairs in all of pop history—as much acted as sung by Richard Harris in his celebrated version—*MacArthur Park* is rich material indeed for Donna Sum-

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mer and producer, Giorgio Moroder.

Summer is our supreme momentum structuralist, and her style is by now so familiar to the listeners that her tension building and resolve is even further amplified by our sense of anticipation. In its own way, it is like waiting for a Parker/Gillespie break. We know she has to get there, and when she climaxes and crosses over from the song's exposition into Summer/Moroder rhythm grooves, we experience not only a solution of the tensions laid into the song, but also of our own pent-up Donna Summer expectations. Summer milks dry this Hitchcockian preference for suspense to surprise on *MacArthur Park*, which is ornately dramatic to begin with, and the sardonic laughter, forewarned by ominous guitar strumming, dispels any notion that this might be another pious version of the Jimmy Webb monster. It will haunt any spine, including, one suspects Richard Harris'.

With Denise LaSalle we are down to earth again and in her expert hands; it is not a bad place to be. Well-known Southern ground is covered by this Memphian who has added a more aggressive feminist tone to her lyrics. Giving the cheated woman a new point of view in *Workin' Overtime*, she satirizes advice of the sort found in *The Sensuous Woman* manuals. Scaring lyrics and hot horn licks go well together, especially when relieved, as here, by a sense of humor and some lighter tracks such as the swinging *P.A.R.T.Y.* Produced and written by Denise LaSalle herself, *Under The Influence* is a solid, if somewhat traditional effort.

Qualifying more than nominally as a singer-songwriter because of her independence, Zulema (Cusseaux) also has arranged and produced her first album for LeJoint, London's new soul label, with Van McCoy helping out. *Z-licious* is a justifiable title, for this is a personal, ambitious but always musically satisfying venture. Backed by a crack band sporting such players as Jon Faddis, Harold Vick, Bernie Glow, Cornell Dupree, Gordon Edwards and Chris Parker, Zulema ranges from recited rubato passages (*Prologue*) over disco material with unusual lyrics (*Change*) and nakedly pleading ballads (*Hanging On To A Memory*), to riveting tunes of hit quality (*Praying For A Miracle*). The union of Zulema and McCoy represents a well-weighted first project for LeJoint Records, striking the balance between fresh, unorthodox talent on one side and drawing on experienced, impeccable production skills on the other.

Gloria Jones, though, tops it all, and one cut in particular, *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me* nears the sublime. Sung in an overtly hoarse manner affected by this Ms. Jones to match and mingle with the buzzing guitar accompaniment, and with a strutting, dynamic rhythm section to drive home the irresistible melody lines, *Kiss Me* is as sizzling a song as I can remember. Motown is unavoidably evoked—Paul Riser is listed as co-arranger—and one is tempted to speculate that if that company's classic era had occurred during the present disco times *Kiss Me* is the kind of sound they would put out. At least two other cuts, *Bring On The Love* and *Vaya Con Dios* have the same famous kick, and burn with Gloria Jones' charged singing; even though the fervor wanes slightly on the remaining tracks, they are all of a piece, production and soundwise. *Windstorm* marks one fine day in the studio for all involved.

—gabel

BLINDFOLD TEST

THE HEATH BROS.

BY BRET PRIMACK



JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

There are four members of the Heath family on the scene today. Percy is the eldest at 55, a bassist best known for his work with the Modern Jazz Quartet. Middle brother Jimmy (former nickname "Little Bird," 52, plays saxophones, writes (Miles Davis recorded his *Gingerbread Boy*) and teaches. Youngest brother Albert "Tootie" (aka "Kuumba") is 43 and a drumming man. Of another generation is Jimmy's son Mtumé, the percussionist and composer.

Percy and Jimmy came up in Philly as musicians of the bebop era who gained recognition with Dizzy Gillespie. In '52, Gillespie's rhythm section became the Modern Jazz Quartet and brother Percy went on to the big time. Brother James kept on playing and learning, gaining recognition as a composer. Although the brothers worked occasional gigs together, it wasn't until the MJQ broke up that Percy, Jimmy and Albert (who had been working with Yusef Lateef) formed the Heath Brothers. Albert played on *Passing Thru*, their latest LP (on Columbia), but has since gone off in other directions. Percy and Jimmy will be interviewed in *db* 3/22.

Before this test was administered, the Heath Brothers were holding forth at the Village Vanguard with Stanley Cowell on piano, Tony Purrone on guitar and Keith (son of trumpeter Ray, no relation to Aaron) Copeland on drums. Between sets, I caught Jimmy in the kitchen.

"Hey man, wanna do a Blindfold Test?"

"Yeah, Bret. You know, I've been waiting to be asked!"

1. BOOKER ERVIN. *Dee Da Do* (from *Down In The Dumps*, Savoy). Ervin, tenor saxophone, composer; Richard "Notes" Williams, trumpet; Horace Parlan, piano; George Tucker, bass; Danny Richmond, drums; recorded 1960.

Jimmy: I think that was Richard Williams on the trumpet, "Notes." And it sounded like Horace Parlan on the piano. The drummer I can't identify and bassist I'm not sure about. The saxophone, at moments, sounded like it could have been Johnny Griffin and it also sounded like it could have been Booker Ervin.

Overall, I think it was a nice little blues, a 12 bar melody with a kind of Charleston effect that is traditional in jazz music, and you couldn't call that anything else but jazz music.

Percy: It was a great trumpet solo by "Notes." But I didn't recognize the bass player either. I enjoyed it.

Jimmy: I liked the playing—the trumpet solo was very exciting. I know Richard and the way he plays, his range, etc., and if it's not Richard, I'm very curious as to who plays like that. The tenor playing was good. He played a couple of diminished runs that I heard from Charlie Parker and that's why I tend to believe it was Johnny Griffin, moreso than Booker Ervin.

Percy: He sounds more like Johnny Griffin.

Jimmy: He played the diminished run that Charlie Parker played on *Ko-Ko*, he played one of the licks that I used to play from Charlie Parker, so I know. Whoever it was, he studied his bebop.

The piano was out in the ensembles; the balance of the instruments was a little funny. But for the musical ingredients, four stars.

2. WEATHER REPORT. *Punk Jazz* (from *Mr. Gone*, ARC/Columbia). Jaco Pastorius, bass, composer; Josef Zawinul, keyboards; Wayne Shorter, saxophones; Tony Williams, drums.

Jimmy: I know exactly who that is because I have that record and that is the one composition on that album that I personally like because of its relative nature to Jimmy Lunceford's Charleston,

or two beat feeling. Jaco Pastorius is the composer and arranger. To me, the bass solo on the front was just a show of technique.

Percy: That was *electric* bass, not *the* bass.

Jimmy: He played a little bit of *Giant Steps*, a little bit of this and a little bit of that. It was an atonal sort of thing with the bass and drums, in the beginning. I guess it's okay if you consider it settin' up the next movement of the piece which was very melodic with Wayne playing the melody; I like that part, too. To me, sometimes the Oberheim synthesizer sounds like a \$20,000 accordion. Highly overrated, but some things he does with it in the front where he's not holding the long chords and sustaining notes so much, when he's playing different lines, that's fascinating to me from an orchestral standpoint: when he was doing one line and the bass was doing another. This composition has jazz roots.

Percy: I liked that one. I've heard some others from the album that irritate me instead of soothe but this is interesting enough to listen to. I really am a very prejudiced person, actually, as far as electronic instruments are concerned. The electric guitar, well, I'm not that against it but the use that's made of it, *whew*. Along with that came volume, which is really hurting a lot of people and they don't realize it. The volume and the decibels and the stress that's put on their ears . . .

Jimmy: It's almost masochistic.

Percy: It's like punishment, that torturous element of the electronic sounds. It's almost like if you want to drive a guy crazy, play a note, a very high note and hold it and keep him in a cell and he'll go completely out. That aspect of it; just turns me right off these instruments. But this use of electronics, I could tolerate it 'cause it wasn't the main ingredient.

Jimmy: That was a good drum beat, too.

Percy: Yeah, that was a good old drum beat. They almost got back to tut-te-boom, which is the beat I love. That was closer to the real feeling of the music, something to do with the roots. If it's supposed to be jazz or an extension of it, it's got to indicate somewhere where it came from, and a little bit of something people contributed along the way and this did that.

That initial bass thing, it sounds like a guitar player to me; most electric bass players sound like guitar players. But Stanley Clarke is able to transpose that technique over to the upright bass.

Jimmy: I think he got it from the upright first.

Percy: Anybody playing the Fender, it sounds like a guitar player on a bass guitar, really. I don't consider that instrument the contrabass. You know the person who could really play it very well isn't heard of. I heard Monk Montgomery play the electric bass a year or so after Wes died and honestly, man, it seemed like something has been transferred. He changed his whole style and he was improvising. He got a little bit of what Wes had; until that time, Monk played very bass oriented. This solo he took that I heard about a year after Wes died was just amazing and I'm sorry that he didn't come out and record that and let people hear that. Jymie Merritt's been playing a long time in another style but now the "stars" are the guys who play those scales and runs, things you would play if you were sitting out practicing exercises. It's just a bunch of notes. I'm sure every great jazz player knew all those same notes but the notes they picked out and chose to weave together in this basic musical language were like poetry, as opposed to just using the alphabet. I appreciate how fast you can say the alphabet forwards and backwards. Great. You can do that if you sit down for four or five hours a day and attempt to do that. To me, this flurry of notes and that style of playing is a great exhibition of facility and honest dedication to practicing runs and licks but I appreciate the more melodic. Take a breath in there. Pause in the sentence.

Jimmy: It's like a machine.

Percy: It strikes me as a show of facility. . .

Jimmy: . . . of the over-technical era we're going through.

Percy: I think so, too, but I appreciate it for what it is. I don't put anybody down, what they want to do for themselves is wonderful. They have choices as an artist to do what they feel they must do or what God has given them the talent to do or wherever this talent comes from—the source has given this to them and they utilize it to whatever degree to accomplish whatever personal purpose they have. I enjoyed it for what it was.

Jimmy: I'd rate that four.

Percy: I say three 'cause if I had heard that same music on the other instruments it might be four but I've got to take one star off for my narrowminded objection to electronics.

3. ANDREW WHITE. *Impressions* (from *Live In New York At The Ladies Fort*, Andrew's Music.) White, alto saxophone; Steve Novosel, bass; Donald Waters, piano; Bernard Sweetney, drums.

Jimmy: That's supersax, Andrew White. He's playing *Impressions*, or *So What?*, which was the original composition by Miles Davis and then Coltrane wrote the tune on top of that. Andrew is one of my friends and an excellent musician, playing so many instruments. Oboe, Fender bass and everything else, writing and transcribing. I recognized Steve Novosel on the bass, or I guessed anyway, because of the Washington connection. I don't know who the drummer is, or the pianist.

The only thing I don't like about that particular record is the sound of the saxophone. It's kind of harsh. I think that saxophone should be played easier, not so hard and violently. As far as his ideas, I thought it was a good record. It had a nice emotional kind of curve as far as the groove and coming back to the theme at the end. Because of the harshness of the sound, I would have to rate this one a three.

Percy: I enjoyed it very much. I know Steve and I've heard Mr. White before; he's a tremendous musician, like Jimmy said, he's super. It's a nice record but you know, I get bored very easily with modal playing.

Jimmy: The Dorian commode.

Percy: It sort of handcuffs the creativity as far as I'm concerned. You're boxed into that sameness of tonality. I hear it through the whole solo and it annoys me. It's a style of jazz playing that people went to through this revolutionary period of throw-

continued on page 48

PROFILE

JOE DALEY

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

"I've gone through quite a few bags; I've been playing a long time, and I don't try to copy anybody. But I always try to play, rather than stagnate like people my age usually do. I'm lucky in a way that I keep on playing. I'm 60 years old and I'm blowing. I try to keep something going all the time rather than fall back."

At 60, veteran Chicago tenorman Joe Daley looks no more than 45. As ageless in spirit as he is in appearance, Daley has embraced every style from swing to new wave in a career that has taken him from the fertile spawning grounds of Detroit through a stint with the Woody Herman Herd and on to an extended round of session work and teaching in Chicago. With a large, resonant tone reminiscent of early Sonny Rollins, Daley's style is centered around a solid and original post-bop groove that he negotiates with effortless technique and an infallible sense of swing. A frequent guest at Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase, Daley has worked with many touring celebrities and enjoys universal recognition among local notables. Presently Joe divides his schedule between teaching, an occasional "functional" gig (weddings, backing singers and the like) and the regular Monday night convenings of the Joe Daley Quorum at Orphan's, a Lincoln Avenue nightclub where he pursues the muse with an artistic abandon that often leaves his younger sidemen gasping in his wake.

Avoiding trendiness, Daley plays with a mastery that bespeaks his firm roots in the rich jazz tradition of the Midwest. "I was born in a little town called Salem, Ohio, 20 miles below Youngstown—nothing's happening there. My family moved to Detroit when I was a kid and I was brought up in Detroit. I'm glad I was, because Detroit is one of the best towns for blowing that I ever ran into. There are so many cats who came out of Detroit. I think the reason is that black and white musicians were always in the same union. See, a lot of towns have two separate locals but in Detroit there was always just one. I know Detroit's a little tougher now, with the political situation and the racial thing, but it was a great town and in spite of everything it still is.

"I started to blow in the late '30s and I've been blowing a long time—40 years for sure. I started when a kid across the street got a saxophone—I told my dad that if that dude could play one I could too. It was purely by accident, but I had been listening to bands. I wasn't hip, I didn't know what was going on, but I just liked jazz bands—Count Basie, Duke, Cab Calloway, even Larry Clinton, Tommy Dorsey, and Artie Shaw; I used to listen to them all. I gravitated toward blowing jazz and I did the whole route—World War II put me out of action for three and a half years, but I've always been a musician, always.

"I started on alto and then I got a tenor very early, so I played through several bags. I 36 □ down beat



KAREN CHRISTENSEN

studied a little bit but I didn't learn much from the teachers. I was mostly self-taught, so later on, when I began teaching, I made up my mind to teach everything that I wasn't taught. I tried to play like the guys I liked, Coleman Hawkins and Georgie Auld in the early days, Pres later on, and when Bird came along after the war, boy, we all got hooked on Bird. The first time I heard Charlie Parker I thought this is it, listen to this guy, what have I been doing all my life, and I got completely taken. It took me three or four years to get any semblance of it going, you know, to get into that bag. After that there was Trane and Sonny Rollins—those are the players I liked.

"I played with small combos in Detroit, local bands, and then later on with some big bands. Then I went on the road with a band from New York—it was just a panic band but I got to New York that way. I hit New York City before World War II; then I went back to Detroit because the war was on and I knew I had to go in. So I was a pilot, a flier, and I played in the band too, a little bit. After the war, I came to Chicago, and I worked out of here from the late '40s on.

"I went out on tour with Woody Herman in '50, '51, it was a little after Gene Ammons was in the band. Woody always had a good band and at that time Urbie Green was playing trombone, Sonny Igoe was on drums, Red Mitchell on bass—he had some good players. I had been working on a bachelor's degree and I took a leave of absence from school to go on the road with him. After that I played with groups and made records for people. I did about 30 sides for Pat Boone on Dot—I played a lot of solos but they wouldn't let me blow. They would say, 'You're playing too good, man.' I needed the money, but I'm glad they didn't put my name on the records.

"I made my album 15 years ago for RCA—I had a trio and we were all playing outside the changes then, and it was a pretty tough commodity to sell in 1963. I had heard Ornette and all that—the influence that he had was to wake everybody up to the fact that you could

do it, that it could be done. I don't think he necessarily influenced the actual playing of guys because he has no imitators, but he did wake up the jazz players to the fact that you could play outside and stop paying lip service to it. That jolted me out of it because I was aware that that was the way I would have liked it to go, but there was no reason, there was nobody around me to do it with.

"I tried to do it a couple of times but I couldn't do it by myself—you had to make everybody you were playing with aware of what you were doing, so it just had to evolve. But I did put an album out, and would you believe it, RCA wouldn't promote it. I made a big mistake because I could've signed with Atlantic—this was in '62, '63—I could've signed with Atlantic but I thought RCA had all the money. They paid me well but they didn't promote it. That was really a drag. So I made a few recordings but that was the only one under my name. I made one last winter but I don't know whether the guy is going to put it out or not—I think he ran out of money. I'd like to get one out but at this point I don't really care; all I want to do is blow.

"I'm not hot to get famous—if that comes along at my age, fine, but my main thing is just to blow. This job here has cost me money, because I've turned down a lot of high priced work, but this is the highpoint of my week. Monday night at Orphan's, I come here to blow, and if we have a slow night I turn all the money over to the rhythm section. Some nights I've reached into my pocket to pay the rhythm section, gladly.

"I'm writing and playing, playing and writing, and I'm thoroughly enjoying myself. I'm cutting down on functional music as opposed to absolute music but I still do commercial sessions. I was never in the jingle clique but I have done jingles, and I played at the Mill Run Theater [the posh, suburban dinner theater] for four years in the house band, '71 through '74, and then I quit. I like to teach but I only teach two afternoons a week and I keep it to that, and I only teach guys who really want to blow—professionally-minded only. I've had some good luck with them, some of them, they're coming on." Daley doesn't teach just saxophone. Among his former students are bassist Ray Neapolitan, who plays on T.V. shows and did a stint with Herb Ellis, and bassist Sam Agres, who plays in the Milwaukee Symphony. Tenor saxist Jim De Pasquale, who now composes television and movie scores, is a Daley alumnus, as are better-known saxists Chico Freeman, Dave Sanborn, and John Klemmer. "I teach and play a couple of functional gigs a week and that's it. I had some investments that are returning now so I'm cool. I'm not loaded but that problem is solved, so I owe it to myself to do what I should do."

Queried as to his preferences among contemporary players, Daley replies, "Right now, Joe Henderson is one of the top tenor players in my mind. Dave Liebman is a bad boy too—he can blow, I like him very much. I caught Sam Rivers—he's not quite as heavy as those other two but he's a nice player, I like him. Sonny Fortune is a good player too, and Freddie Hubbard when he's not trying to sell records. It's a bad evil now, the way they tell 'em 'You got to sell records,' so the guys are really floundering. When I look at Chuck Mangione I can't believe it—the garbage he's playing now! It's ridiculous—he plays some grammar school heads just to sell a record—that's claptrap. And George Benson, if he doesn't sing

now he's dead—his guitar playing has gone down and he's in a trap. Wes Montgomery was like that: he was blowing and then he started to make some money. I asked him one night—he refused to play any jazz—he said, 'I'm gonna promote my records; I haven't made money for years but I've got a chance now,' and a month later he died.

"But jazz will survive; it's improvisation and improvisation is one of the two creative outlets in music. You can play your instrument, become a real good mechanic, you can read music, play shows, do anything, but as for really creative outlets there are only two—you either improvise or you compose. So improvisation equals jazz and that's why it will always be around no matter what happens."

Daley, who performs free jazz with the same fluid facility, timbral richness, and conceptual originality that he applies to bop, is familiar with the work of Chicago's pioneering AACM. "I used to gig with Richard Abrams. We worked a lot together, but that's not my idea of atonal music. I like a true atonal feeling—no key center at all. We rehearsed a couple of charts like that, but I was playing like that in the '60s. We did it right. We didn't play any tunes at all. It's just that it was a little too far out at the time. We were about ten years too soon." db

EDDIE MOORE

BY BRET PRIMACK

He started with pots and pans. Now, his drums are Yamaha. The man's name is Eddie Moore, and he has just come off the road after seven years split among Stanley Turrentine, Sonny Rollins and Dewey Redman.

Moore took his first breath on September 14, 1940. His first jazz listening was at San Francisco's Golden Gate Theatre, where he heard Jazz At The Philharmonic with Lionel Hampton. The first group he played in was with his cousin, organist Merl Saunders, opposite Dinah Washington, who at the time, was backed by the Wynton Kelly Trio.

But Moore, a robust man who sprinkles conversation with laughter, really got his chops together at Jimbo's Bop City. "That's where I actually learned how to play the drums. I went to sessions there every morning. San Francisco used to be a city where there was music happening all around the clock. Cats would jam at Bop City starting at 2 a.m. If Miles was in town working the Blackhawk, when two o'clock came, all the cats in his band, like Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb, would come down to Bop City. I saw all the greats in that club."

Shortly thereafter, Moore started working with Buddy and Monk Montgomery in a group called The Mastersounds. Then brother Wes moved west to join the family. "This is before he had his hit tunes like *Bumpin' On Sunset*. Wes was playing just incredible. People don't realize how great Wes Montgomery was. Buddy too. Another underrated musician. People don't know what he can do. There were some nights we'd be playing where the music would be so hot it would be scary!" Also in San Francisco, Moore met and played with Texas tenorman Dewey Redman.

"But everybody started moving to New York." Moore arrived via a somewhat cir-

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cautious route. "In '68, I went to Vietnam with a State Department tour with this singer, Barbara Virgil. When that was over, a year later, she asked me to come to Europe. I had never checked Europe out and it seemed like a good chance.

"When I got there, she didn't have no work at all. There was no point in coming right back, so I decided to stay. I worked around Europe, and finally became the house drummer at Montmartre, where I worked with Dexter. When it was time to come back, I didn't have the money. So I went to the American consulate. First, they asked, 'Can't you do any other type of work? Is there anybody in the States we can wire to tell them you're stranded?' I gave them a couple numbers of musicians who I knew had no money. So they bought me a plane ticket and sent me to the closest point, New York. Later, of course, I paid the government back."

Crashing in the Apple with fellow percussionist Mickey Roker, Moore paid some dues. But not for long. After making the club scene to get heard, Moore was hired by Stanley Turrentine. "I worked with Stanley for three years. I started when he just had his hits, *Don't Mess With Mr. T.* and *Sugar*. We traveled all over the States. I also played on his album, *Pieces Of Dreams*."

After his departure from Turrentine's group, luck prevailed. "Three weeks after I left Stanley, I got the job with Sonny Rollins. That lasted three years and a couple of months. I did an album with Sonny, *Nucleus*. I learned a lot from Sonny; he made me go for myself. Sonny plays the saxophone like Elvin Jones plays the drums. You really have to know where the one is to work with Sonny.

"With Sonny, I finally got some recognition. Things started to happen. I started doing clinics for Yamaha. As you know, Yamaha makes everything from kitchen sinks to ski equipment! When I was in Japan with Sonny in 1975, they supplied me with drums so I wouldn't have to bring my drums from the States. I liked their sound and noticed the hardware was very strong. I spoke with the Yamaha people and got a nice set of drums and now I do clinics for them. They're very nice people."

Moore believes clinics have a positive influence. "It brings the young musicians right up to you. It makes them ask direct questions, which is better than just listening to you on a

record. It gives them a chance to meet you in person and ask certain questions that can help with what they're doing.

"I see some good young drummers who have a lot of potential, but some of them don't even know who Jo Jones is; that's hard to believe but it's true! They forget about the old masters, like Chick Webb and Baby Dodds, the ones who made it possible for them. Men like Jo Jones and Sonny Greer. Man, some of them don't ever know who Philly Joe Jones is!"

Moore names Art Blakey, Philly Joe, Roy Haynes, Shelly Manne and Elvin as his early influences. He also considers himself lucky to have met a lot of the "heavier" cats passing through San Francisco when he was just getting his drumming together. "At the time, I lived with my mother. I had a car and would pick up whatever drummer was in town at the Workshop or the Blackhawk. We'd ride around during the daytime and sightsee because everybody loved San Francisco, it's so pretty. Then, my mother would fix dinner and we'd go down to the basement, where I had my drums. We'd start playing. I miss those days."

One time Moore sat in with John Coltrane at the Jazz Workshop. "I didn't have enough experience at the time to cope with the situation. I wish he was living now. I had enough energy but I didn't know what to do with it.

"It's hard to get your own creative ideas together. I did it by working with different people and using everything I heard, my way. I tried to copy other people but it was impossible. I'd be concentrating on what they were doing too much and I'd be messing up the music. Eventually, if you work at it, your identity has to come out—if you put enough time into it."

Although most recently he's been working with Dewey Redman—they've recorded three albums, *Look For The Black Star*, *Coincide*, and *Eur Of The Beheader*—Moore rejoined Rollins for an appearance at JazzYatra '78, a six-day festival of Indo-Afro-American music in Bombay, India. "There were groups from practically every country. From the States, we had Sonny, Don Ellis, Joe Williams and Clark Terry. From Germany, Albert Mangelsdorff. Karia Krog came from Norway. Sadao Watanabe from Japan. Many more."

During the festival, afternoon programs were devoted to Indian music. Each day, a dif-

ferent instrument was featured, and Moore taped everything. "I dug their concentration and their energy. Plus the different time signatures. And their technique was unbelievable.

"Actually, JazzYatra was for the people who could afford to come. Just like in this country, there were a lot of people who wanted to hear the music but couldn't afford to get in. So I got a lot of people in, like the people who were working around the hotel and the driver who was taking us around. You know, despite all the poverty over there, they're very relaxed, very beautiful people."

Moore has just returned from a highly successful European sojourn with Redman. "I've been knowing Dewey for so long. When we first started playing in San Francisco, we were mostly playing free. Dewey always had a musical direction, but now I think it's got more mellow. We play a variety of music.

"I think I'm going to be stationary more in the next couple of years so I can get into teaching. I'm tired of traveling. I've been all over, Europe, Asia, on the road, for almost seven years. Now, I think it's time to do something else." **db**

CAUGHT!

BOB DYLAN

ACTIVITIES CENTER
TEMPE, ARIZONA

Personnel: Dylan, vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, harmonica; Steve Soles, rhythm guitar; Billy Cross, lead electric guitar; Alan Pasqua, piano, organ, synthesizers; David Mansfield, violin, mandolin; Jerry Scheff, bass guitar; Ian Wallace, drums; Bobbye Hall, percussion; Steve Douglas, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute; Jo Ann Harris, Carolyn Dennis, and Helena Springs, backing vocals.

Concertgoers and critics across the U.S. were bewildered by Bob Dylan's fall tour. Immortal tunes were transfigured into an almost unrecognizable amalgam of soul, hard rock and Tex-Mex country. More than one ticket holder left early, disheartened that *Lay Lady Lay* wasn't duplicated exactly, or that *The Times They Are A-Changin'* had been reshaped into a jagged rocker geared for hockey rink acoustics.

No one, especially the rock press, should have been surprised. Since 1962, Dylan has maintained his creativity by a series of courageous musical moves; his diverse album-to-album evolution has been accompanied by equally significant changes in each of four major tours. At the mid-'60s Newport Folk Festival, Dylan's switch to electricity was loudly booed by traditionalists. Subsequent tours with The Band (1974) and Rolling Thunder Revue (1976) were also courageous departures, the latter yielding up

Hard Rain with its acidic guitar riffs and broiling big beat.

Only three cuts from *Street-Legal* were performed in this concert, *Senor (Tales Of Yankee Power)*, *Changing Of The Guards*, and *True Love Tends To Forget*, the latter already undergoing drastic change. But it was the drastic alteration of a dozen epochal favorites that provided the real shock.

All I Really Want To Do, *It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)*, and *Like A Rolling Stone* were among the oldies transformed into smoking rockers, with guitarist Billy Cross striking the classic sweaty pose and generating white-noise volume levels. *All Along The Watchtower* provided an intense climax, done Jimi Hendrix style with Mansfield fiddling up the hottest solos. The three backup singers, attired in dazzling white choir robes, gave gospel rebirth to *Shelter From The Storm* and *Just Like A Woman*, imbued *Blowin' In The Wind* with a hymnlike beauty, and awakened boogie freaks with their Dylan-less *Rainy Day Women #12 & 35*. Tenor sax riffs by Douglas were less than gripping, but organ-guitar-sax trios on *Girl From The North Country* and a radically mutant *Tangled Up In Blue* were concert highpoints.

While certain Mexican influences from *Desire* were downplayed, *Senor* remained ethnic and the 14-year-old ballad *Ramona* was given Spanish inflections with help from Mansfield's mandolin. Basically, however, the blues-rock-gospel-country mix dominated the action. Bobbye Hall wrung a dynamite conga-bongo solo out of *One More Cup Of Coffee*, Alan Pasqua's bluesy organ gave *Ballad Of A Thin Man* a near-jazz flavor, and Dylan even sang the blues, opening with *I'm Ready*.

The only look back came when Dylan donned his wraparound harmonica holder and acoustic



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guitar for *It Ain't Me, Babe*, which was revitalized by a halting vocal interpretation.

While some chord changes remained intact, and most lyrics survived, almost every melody line of Dylan's tunes had been re-written. Even to long time Dylan followers, some tunes were unrecognizable. But his new-old songs were charged with energy, and the college crowd seemed impressed, although listeners waiting for the familiar are still waiting. While the band did not improvise significantly, nobody else on the pop scene has the nerve to deliver an acid rock *Masters Of War* to a crowd waiting to sing along with *Blowing In The Wind*. Even diehard jazz troopers have to respect Bob Dylan's creative courage, and this last tour must be considered a success, at least in terms of sheer balls.

—bob henschen

ART FARMER QUARTET

SWEET BASIL
NEW YORK CITY

Personnel: Farmer, flugelhorn; Fred Hersch, piano; Mike Richmond, bass; Akira Tana, drums.

Art Farmer now leads a quartet, making him the sole horn, because he desires the freedom and space to stretch out. Formed only two months before this Sweet Basil gig, his youngish band is gradually acquiring a high degree of tightness and assurance. Bassist Sam Jones brought Hersch to Farmer's attention, and Hersch in turn recruited Richmond (who had

served a recent stint with Stan Getz), and Tana (a San Franciscan who had gone to school with Hersch).

Working from a book of tunes both tasteful and diverse, the band led off with an unhurried version of Parker's *Red Cross*. Farmer's muted flugelhorn was silky smooth and inventive, with a subtle and alluring bite. Cedar Walton's *Firm Roots* followed, a typically flowing, memorable Walton line. Farmer's up-tempo solo never lagged, and neither did Hersch's sparkling piano essay. Tana, who is a powerful but sensitive drummer, then delivered an enthralling drum solo with a smiling, intently observing Farmer standing right beside him. *Some Other Time*, Bernstein's beautiful ballad, lent itself well to Farmer's honey-toned flugelhorn. After a slow, lyrical beginning, Farmer picked up the tempo and got off several perky, masterful choruses. Hersch's rhapsodic, ever-building solo was complemented by admirable support from Richmond and especially the eye-opening Tana. After a nice piano feature, Dameron's *Sid's Delight*, which included a quick-fingered, busy Richmond bass solo, the set concluded with Carla Bley's distinctive *Sing Me Softly Of The Blues*. Farmer once again created a superb solo, bubbling over with ideas, totally fresh and non-repetitious.

Farmer continued to assert his current world-class form after intermission. On an opus called *Cherokee Sketches*, which is basically the old war horse *Cherokee*, Farmer sped through the changes in the best bop tradition, wailing aggressively. Exciting exchanges between Farmer and Tana brought the number to a smoking conclusion.

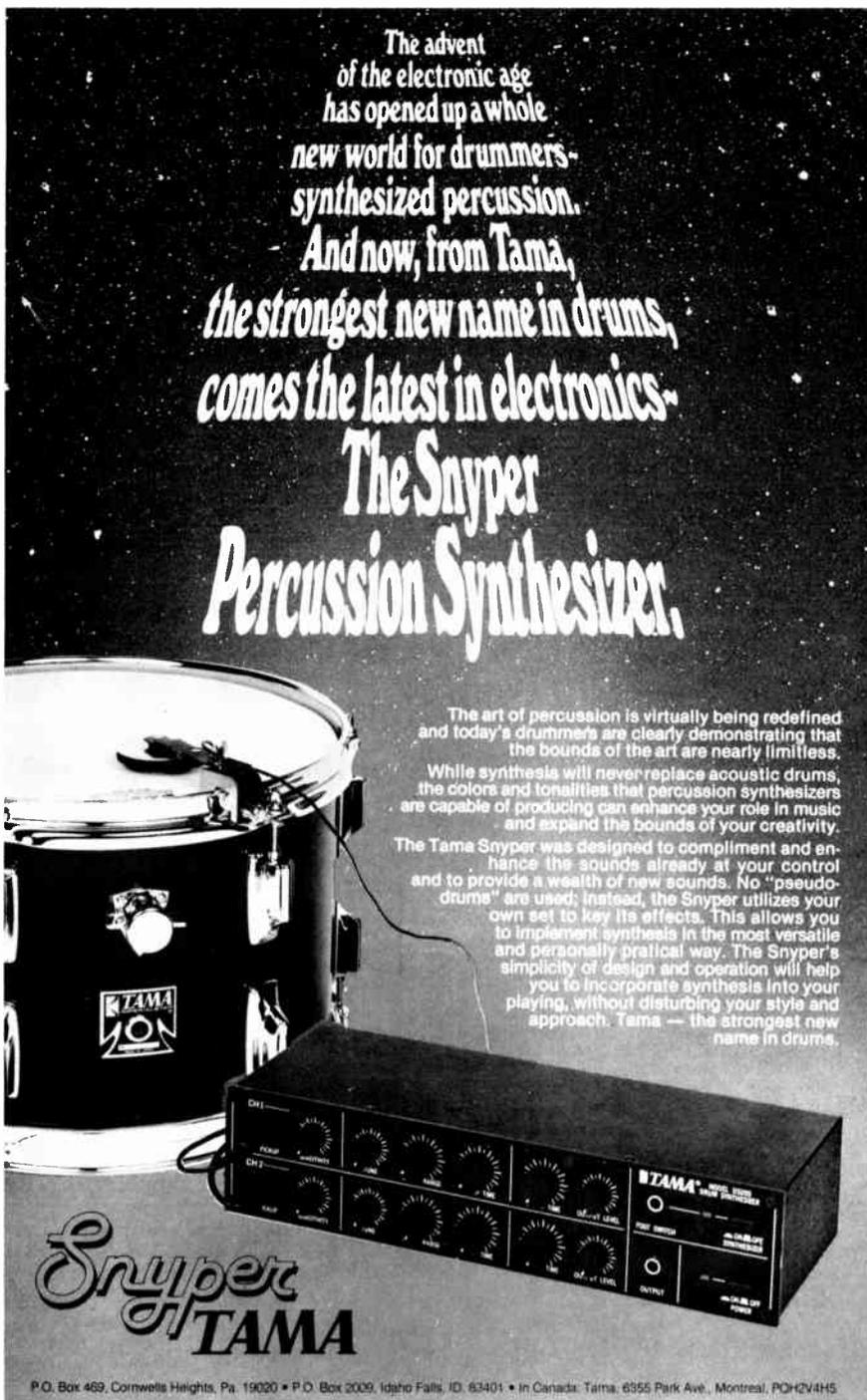
Farmer's solo on *I Can't Get Started* was magnificently paced, poignant at the start, fleeting and stinging later on. Hersch's spot was also top-notch, unpredictable, reflective, thought-provoking, and less diffuse than his other efforts. Farmer ended with a short, well-etched coda. Hersch was again featured with rhythm, this time for *It Could Happen To You*. Richmond contributed a captivating solo, many-noted and very fast, but more varied in approach than his prior improvisations. He is an excellent technician who sometimes becomes enraptured by his own facility and neglects to alter the pace of a solo. He was at his best when he was most spacious and least busy. Duke Jordan's Brazilian-tinged *My Heart Skips A Beat* phased out the set, as Farmer's muted horn remained absorbing with its warm tone, penetrating long lines and compelling twists and turns.

The old, historic jazz clubs Farmer played at in the '50s and '60s—the Five Spot, Open Door and Cafe Bohemia—are all long gone, but don't think that Farmer disappeared along with them.

—scott albin

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WEATHER REPORT

CIVIC
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

Personnel: Joe Zawinul, keyboards, synthesizers; Wayne Shorter, saxophones; Jaco Pastorius, bass; Peter Erskine, drums.

In contrast to the predominately pompous preenings and cerebrally sterilized goose-step struttings of the LP *Mr. Gone* (spelled Z-a-w-i-n-u-l), the Weather Report concert at Santa Monica Civic was a rousing success.

Not for the acoustically-oriented boppers in

the audience, of course. They wondered why saxophonist Wayne Shorter, veteran of the famous Miles Davis group of the '60s, remained in the background so much, or why he played only skimpy little coloring parts, or why he wound up getting buried under the avalanche of roaring electronics (spelled Z-a-w-i-n-u-l) whenever he *did* manage to get an occasional solo in edge-wise. For the most part, Shorter was superfluous.

The energy, the emotional intensity, and the musical smarts were generated by the astonishing Jaco Pastorius on bass, by the controlled but fiery drumming of Peter Erskine, and of course by that master of multi-layered, electri-fried keyboards, that 46-year-old bald-headed High Pontiff of the clean, well-ordered patch-cord set, the inimitable Josef Zawinul himself, stormy priest of prattle when he's grumpy, bright-boy-with-chops when he's on—and he was on. Mr. Gone, complete with cap and sneer.

Whoops, hollers, wolf-barks, conga slides and American Indian yelps preceded the opening of the curtain and the intro to *Black Market*. And then came Jaco, replete with shoulder-length hair, Indian head-band, and his sizzling four-stringed monster. By the time Zawinul completed a series of short, breathless phrases, the audience knew they were in for a full-blown night of it. Weather Report was cooking.

The fast Latin rhythms of *Palladium* (from *Gone*) sounded considerably better live than on the recorded version. And just as Mr. Z seemed about to pant himself to death with more of those short, breathy little phrases mentioned above, he unleashed several fluid lines a mile long, relieving the tension and sailing the energy level to new heights.

After several other pieces from *Mr. Gone*, including *Feathered Hat* and the title tune, all of which extended and greatly improved the recorded versions, Shorter, Pastorius and Zawinul took lengthy unaccompanied solos.

For one highlight, Shorter played a solo, cubistic version of Bob Hope's theme song, *Thanks For The Memory*, obliquely alluding to the hoary melody, and improvising with tremendous intelligence and class. The piece also exuded a poignancy that made several people wonder afterwards about Shorter's future with the group, especially in the light of his diminished role as soloist and composer.

Jaco's solo sojourn was another high. He chorded on the bass: he turned harmonies into cathedrals of bells; he threw in a fist-full of humorous asides. He turned on the Echoplex, laid down a riff, cranked up his fuzz-tone, and romped through a self-accompanied rendition of Hendrix's *Third Stone From The Sun*. After that, he thumped his bass on the stage floor with controlled force, and then casually threw it away to somebody back stage. Chops, energy, imagination, and defiance. Thunderous applause.

The blowtorch rapport between Z, Jaco and Erskine on *River People* (*Gone*), *Teen Town* (*Weather*), and the classic *Birdland* (*Weather*) took it higher.

All three pieces were exciting and cathartic, unless, of course, you were trying to listen to Shorter, whose '60s licks didn't fit in very well even when they were heard—which was not very often, perhaps because, like it or not, Weather Report (spelled Z-a-w-i-n-u-l) forges the way toward the electronic '80s and a new groove for a new time and a new day.

—lee underwood

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"I also use that kind of pick that is sort of teardrop shaped, and I use the reverse side of the pick—the rounded side rather than the pointed side. It does give it a fatter sound, especially since I use very light strings."

In some recording applications, John has been using a Fender mandolin-guitar, a mandolin-sized electric instrument with a stringing similar to a guitar's. It can be heard on the opening cadenza of *Characters'* first cut.

"I think I've found a little niche for that little guitar," John maintains. "I used to try to get that kind of high sound with the regular guitar, but I think it's more effective on the mandolin-guitar, just because of the timbre, the register. It has such a pure little vocal quality anyway, that when you use the volume pedal with it for dynamics you get a sort of breathing sense."

John is a longtime user of the volume pedal, since he likes the swelling, vocal effects he can get with it. "It takes very little time to develop a technique with it," he says. "It's just a matter of how you want to use it. When I started recording for ECM, Manfred Eicher said that he loved that effect, that sound. He asked if I could do more of it. I said, sure, that's easy. He made me more aware of the effect musically.

"I hear a lot of rock and roll players using it; they usually call it a violin effect. To me, it

sounds more like a pedal steel. To use it for anything other than very long tunes, though, is difficult, since it has a tendency to sound like a tape going back. I've used it in that sense, too, and that's a real crazy kind of sound that I like, but it comes off very electronic."

John feels that it's only been in the last couple of years that he's really gotten his feelings about equipment and approach clarified. The result has been a sense of confidence and continuity in his onstage improvisations. As difficult as it is to put improvisational techniques into words, John is willing to take a stab at it.

"In the improvising experience, or whatever you want to call it," he says, "there's a thought process going on. But it goes by so quickly that it's like the fastest decision-making I've ever had to do.

"If I find myself playing a long, very even type of phrase, I'll suddenly realize that if I continue in this manner, it's going to get very boring. So I'll play a more broken phrase, or a phrase involving more triplets, anything to break up the monotony of what I've just played. What you play is the impetus for what comes next, and it all has to be with the general flow of your solo.

"Of course, a lot depends on whether you're playing over a very preconceived structure or whether you're playing a very free piece with no structure. That can change your decision. What the others in the band are playing can change your decision.

"I believe in structured solos—solos that build and have a real curve to them. Generally, I'll start my solo by playing a very few notes and maybe keeping things more broken with, hopefully, a lot of thematic development. Then gradually, as the solo builds

and becomes more intense and fluid, I tend to play more notes and try to reach a real peak in the solo. Then it can taper off. Or sometimes it will reach a climactic point, and it's just obvious that that's the end of the solo.

"Things like that, I think, can only come from playing an awfully long time. When I first started to play, I was aware in a very specific sense of trying to play a structured solo, because that's what people had told me about. But until you've really experienced it and really played a long time, you have to play anything you can get your hands on—which is still partly the way I play. But over the years I've learned to edit things so that I can see myself while I'm playing."

A part of John's present confidence is his sense of detachment from the trends in current fusion music. He's aware of all the good young players around today but feels that his approach has little to do with the forms connoted by the term "fusion."

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"It's very difficult for me to play a very tight little arrangement with a lot of flashy licks in it," John feels. "My experience just doesn't allow for it.

"I'm sure that McLaughlin had a lot to do with the fact that there are so many proficient young players around. He came along and put together this band that played some technically ridiculous sounding stuff. Young guitar players were influenced by that, and all of sudden you turn around and find a lot of young people that can play the instrument very proficiently, in a certain sense. Hopefully, what will happen is that these people will find other ways to express themselves.

"What McLaughlin did was a very powerful, personal thing—almost revolutionary, in a way. And his version of it, since it's the original version, is the best. I think what's come along since then in that vein is very watered-down, very surface. What a lot of people miss is the great emotional impact of McLaughlin's music and the fact that it had a lot of depth. Sure, there was a

continued on page 46

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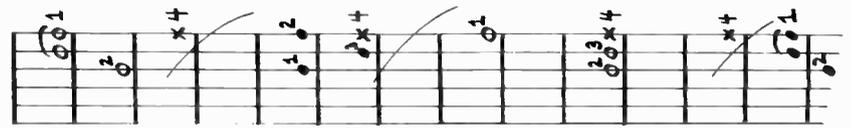
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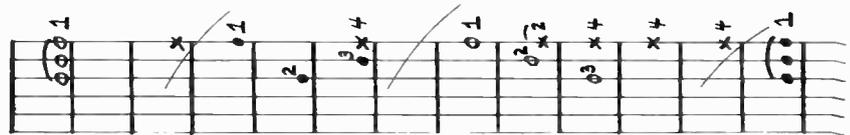
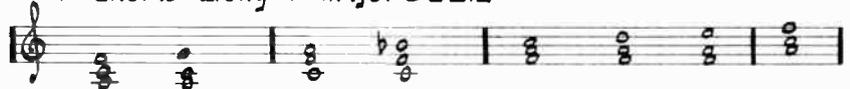
BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

Fingers closing in parallel motion toward an opposing thumb—this is the natural and customary operation of the human hand, an operation ideal for the simple acts of gripping or grabbing, for hammer handling or baseball batting. But to a guitarist straining for some contortionist chord, it's a pain in the clasp. To avoid finger-busting progressions, therefore, many guitarists often bend the rigid rules of harmony, parallel fifths and all. Yet many classic harmonic sequences lie within the guitarist's easy grasp, sequences which allow both left wrist and left shoulder to maintain normal and thus relaxed positions, sequences which transpose to any locality along the fingerboard, sequences which usually retain a finger on a string while changing from one chord-form to another. Guitarists who memorize such sequences automatically increase their fluency along chord-melody lines.

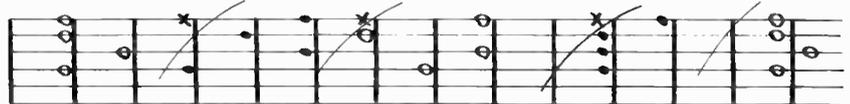
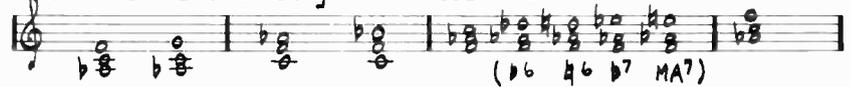
In the following three basic chord-melody patterns, notation is at the actual pitch the fingering diagrams produce, rather than at the octave transposition normally used in writing guitar music. Groupings are separated by curved lines on the diagrams and by barlines in the notation. The X-symbols indicate melodic notes not contained in the original triad or seventh chord.



F chord along F major scale



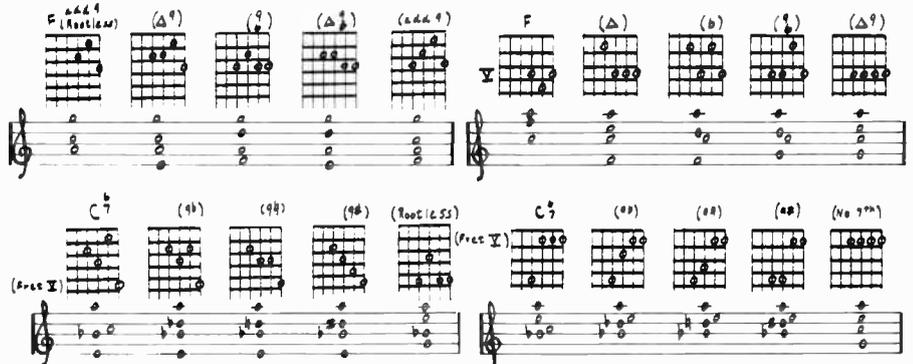
F minor chord along Fmi modalities



F7 chord (I⁷) along B^b major scale



Adding upper chord-components to any of these triads or seventh chords will modernize its sound and sometimes simplify fingering. Each of the following chord-variations should be tested as a substitute for its basic form. When the most pleasing sound has been found, fingerings which allow a finger to remain on a string while changing chords should be sought, then marked on the chord-diagrams for future reference:



Variation of basic-pattern segments allows a guitarist to harmonize either a chromatic line or a mixed chromatic-diatonic line. In practicing the following, the guitarist should first include all the chord-forms shown, then leave out one or more in various combinations:

F: root (F) to third (A)

F: third (A) to fifth (C)

(Actual pitch notation)

F m: root (F) to third (Ab)

F m: third (Ab) to fifth (Cb)

(Actual pitch notation)

F7: root (F) to third (A)

F7: third (A) to fifth (C)

(Actual pitch notation)

F7: fifth (C) to seventh (Eb)

(Actual pitch notation)

The chord-melody patterns illustrated in this article are only a small portion of those possible. Throughout the comparatively short history of jazz guitar chord-melody playing, many distinguished guitarists have devised their own patterns, guitarists like Frank Victor, Harry Volpe, Dick McDonough, Carl Kress, and Eddie Lang, whose published duets and solos will reveal those patterns. Several other guitarists, like Joe Pass, Howard Roberts, and Johnny Smith, have written recent books which include chord-melody material. Guitarists serious about soloing need to know the collective patterns from all these sources, and especially George Van Eps' early but inexhaustible chord-melody resource, his 1939 *Guitar Method*.

FARLOW

continued from page 22

"Some great music was made during the Frammis engagement," Mort Fega notes. "It would have been great to record Tal live. But I wasn't able to prevail upon him to allow it." A flash and Tal was gone again.

He emerged briefly in 1969 to make an excellent record which Don Schlitten produced for Prestige. Then titled *The Return Of Tal Farlow—Guitar Player*, it features a small group of players with close rapport: Alan Dawson (drums), John Scully (piano) and Jack Six (bass). Dawson and Scully are frequently quite surprising and Six does his job particularly well.

As for Tal, it is as if he had never been away from the scene. Impressive ideas, generally expressed with great clarity, identify his performances. The up-tempo items are bursting with juice, while his ballad work further reveals his ability with harmonies. Farlow in '69 was still a musician of consequence.

During the past decade, Tal has been in and out of things. He participated in several albums produced by Schlitten, including the late Sonny Criss' *Up, Up And Away* for Prestige and Sam Most's *Mostly Flute* for Xanadu. Recently there have been two Farlow

albums on Concord, and Tal has played the Newport and Concord festivals, touring a bit with a Newport group.

But for all intents and purposes, he is a part-time player. A homebody, Tal stays close to his Sea Bright base, doing most of his musical work locally. For a while he was at the Blue Water Inn. More recently, he was the attraction at The Quay in the seaport town.

Has he been listening to much music?

"Some. Enough to tell you that Joe Pass and George Benson are playing great, and that there are some young guitarists who are frightening. As for pop players, I really don't know what most of them are doing. The volume puts me off. I just haven't heard anybody working in the rock or pop style that makes me ask 'Who's that?'"

"My own playing? Sometimes I think it's changed with the times until I listen to the old records. I guess I'm pretty much the same, except I don't perform as much as I once did. Sometimes the lay-offs affect my work, other times they don't."

The future for Tal Farlow, according to the man himself, probably will be much like his recent past. "Looks like I'll stay around home. I have no idea when I'll play in the big city



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BLINDFOLD TEST

continued from page 35

ing out all traditional things. I listen to it but it's not my preference. I appreciate the abilities of the players. They were together in what they were doing. The curve was there. I felt that tension in the middle and a little relief on the end, which you don't get on some other recordings. It's just all top stuff, jump and all the way out. There's no curve to it. But I appreciated that one for its musical form.

4. NEWPORT REBELS. *Mysterious Blues* (from Newport Rebels, Candid/GRT). Charles Mingus, bass and composer; Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Eric Dolphy, alto saxophone; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Jo Jones, drums; recorded 1960.

Jimmy: I'm having a little trouble with this one. I know that's "Little Jazz." Roy Eldridge, playing the trumpet, I'm sure about that. The piano only played the introduction and I thought it was Tommy Flanagan. The bassist to me, a saxophonist, sounded like Charles Mingus. The alto sounded like it could have been two or three people. I thought at one moment it could have been Phil Woods, at another I thought it could have been Sonny Criss. The trombone was either Bob Brookmeyer or Jimmy Knepper. It was well recorded, the sound on this record was very clear. The melody wasn't that interesting to me; it kept saying the same thing; it never changed. It wasn't as interesting as the first blues melody we heard. The solos and the feeling were good. I would rate this one three and a half or four.

Percy: I would give it four. I appreciate that kind of playing very much. I'm not sure who was on most of the instruments but it did sound like Charles to me, the solo parts sounded like the Ming. I knew Roy right away. The other people I'm not really going to try and identify.

5. JOHN COLTRANE. *We Love To Boogie* (from Dizzy Gillespie's *Dee Gee Days*, Savoy). Gillespie, trumpet; Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Milt Jackson, piano; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Percy Heath, bass; Kansas Fields, drums; Freddy Strong, vocal; recorded 1951.

Jimmy: That was early Dizzy Gillespie...

Percy: Not too early, James.

Jimmy: Yes it was. It was at least 20 years.

Percy: But that's not so early.

Jimmy: That was Dizzy Gillespie and Coltrane when he was playing more like Dexter. When he started out I thought that was Dexter, then one of the last half tone changes he ran gettin' back into the head at the end of his solo, and I knew it was Trane. Milt Jackson was on the piano because I know his voicings and what he plays on the piano. The drummer...

Percy: It could have been Al Jones at that time if I remember the band. That vocalist's name was Freddy something, he was only with the band two weeks, after Joe Carroll. That's nice, nostalgic.

Primack: You remember anything about that date?

Percy: No, it's been so long.

Jimmy: But who was on drums?

Primack: Kansas Fields.

Percy: "Leadfoot!" Absolutely, "Leadfoot!"

Jimmy: I didn't know that.

Percy: I called him "Leadfoot." That was Kansas. He'll never forgive me for missing him.

Jimmy: Because of the shortness of the solos, I rate it three. Too much singing for me, not enough improvised solo. I wanted to hear more of Dizzy and Trane.

Percy: Well, you see, that was the reach for commercialism that was going on even way back then.

Jimmy: The vocal thing was still taking precedence.

Percy: The vocal thing always will come over. We'll go for the money with the vocal.

Jimmy: If they had just played, I would have loved it more.

Percy: People like that, Roy and Dizzy, you know them right away. They have that identification. But if you asked me who played electric piano on this record and who played electric piano on that record, I couldn't distinguish. You can't project your personality.

Jimmy: Since the machines came out, they took out all the individuality, that personal sound. If a guy has an electric attachment on his saxophone, there's no way he's going to sound like Ben Webster or find his own sound the way Ben and Johnny Hodges or Trane did. Because the electronic thing is going to take over and produce its sound, which is not an individual sound. They're putting on a lot of nigger buttons on synthesizers, push this and you get some soul, it bends the note out of tune; I call them nigger buttons. Distortions is what they should be called.

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