

# down beat

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## WEATHER REPORT GROUP OF THE '80s?

CHARLES WUORINEN  
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING  
AMERICAN COMPOSER

RED RODNEY & IRA SULLIVAN  
TRIUMPHANT TEAMWORK

DAVE BURRELL  
FROM JAZZ PIANO  
TO JAZZ OPERA



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# Weather Report

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL

A healthy number of **down beat** readers need no convincing on the subject of Weather Report, as the magazine's Readers Polls makes clear. Two months ago, the band was voted top Jazz Group for the ninth straight time, with its live 8:30 set the runnerup jazz album (five of the group's previous eight albums won this category as well); Joe Zawinul took synthesizer honors for the fifth time, and finished third in the composer and electric piano categories; Wayne Shorter garnered his 11th soprano sax victory, and also placed fifth on tenor; and, for the third year running, Jaco Pastorius reigned on electric bass. On the strength of these results, it wouldn't be far fetched to label Weather Report the "Group of the '70s."

Yet many listeners, including several of my critical colleagues, would vigorously dissent. Some rejected Weather Report's electronic sonorities and rock flavored rhythms from the outset, saving their allegiance for music that was acoustic and straightahead. Others favored the band in the early days, but grew disenchanted as the writing became more controlled and Zawinul asserted his dominance more clearly. The arrival of Pastorius, whose playing and performing style draws on rock as well as jazz, no doubt was the last straw for some fans who fondly recalled that Shorter and Zawinul had paid dues with Art Blakey, Cannonball Adderley and Miles Davis. Ask those listeners about Weather Report, and they may question whether Weather Report ought to be considered a jazz group at all.

This kind of bickering would deserve little more than a "ho hum"—after all, does it really matter what we call Weather Report's music?—if the music itself did not raise important questions regarding musicians with jazz sensibilities who choose to operate in the broader marketplace of popular music. There are a lot of "fusion" bands around that aren't worth the space it would take to dismiss them, and Weather Report towers over these groups like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. In addition, we ought to admit that music shouldn't be dismissed simply because it aims to please, and that in certain situations we welcome less abstract gratifications. (As I once heard Lester Bowie put it, "When I'm at a party, and I'm relaxing, I don't want to hear *People In Sorrow!*") Yet for a listener like me (who, without hesitation or shame, will admit to being a jazz listener), it is difficult to endorse Weather Report without qualification, just as it has been for most of its ten year history.

When Weather Report was launched in 1971 under the joint leadership of Zawinul, Shorter and bassist Miroslav Vitous, the electric instruments, rock drum patterns and lack of conventional solo choruses immediately marked the group as a "jazz-rock" band. In truth, however, the music was surprisingly close to the collective mode of many acoustic "new music" ensembles. Much of the writing on the first two albums was quite sparse, serving merely as a starting point for group blowing, and even the more scripted works like Zawinul's *Unknown Soldier* left room for heated improvising. In the studio, Shorter and Zawinul's penchant for coloristic inserts surrounded by long breathing spaces, as op-



posed to extended linear development, lent a tentative feeling to their work, while in person, with Eric Gravatt's explosive drumming and Vitous emphasizing acoustic bass, the whole band was more likely to cut loose and soar. Surely much of their 1972 Tokyo concert (part of which appears on *I Sing The Body Electric*, and all of which can be heard on the Japanese import *Weather Report In Tokyo*) would pass for amplified avant garde.

This all changed rather quickly with the appearance of *Sweetnighter*, the band's third album, in 1973. Zawinul, convinced that Weather Report's primary strength lay in his and Shorter's compositional skills, shifted the focus to orchestration at this point and emerged as the band's primary personality. The music's foundation became more fixed in recurring rhythms, synthesizers and electric bass grew more pervasive, and Shorter's improvisations began to be squeezed out by intricate melodic patterns. It took another year for Zawinul to absorb the potential of multi-keyboards and multi-tracking, yet on 1974's *Mysterious Traveller* the elements had fallen into place. By then, Weather Report was Zawinul's instrument, as the Ellington Orchestra had been Duke's, and the mature Weather Report style was fixed.

Duke Ellington's name is not dragged into this discussion gratuitously, for Zawinul the writer displays several Ellingtonian tendencies. He commands wide arrays of colors from his various instruments, and constantly arrives at distinctive new blends. He can (often simultaneously) produce melodies with the common touch and complex overall structures. Then there are WR's primordial pieces like *Badia* and *Jungle Book* that serve as Zawinul's version of "jungle music," although the composer in this case mixes middle Europe with Africa and the Caribbean.

Ellington's supreme strength, his ability to create music for the specific members of his band, has not always been evident in Zawinul—in fact, in the period surrounding *Mysterious Traveller*, the personalities of the rhythm players often seemed unimportant. Alphonso Johnson, the band's electric bassist from 1974 to '76, was more riff oriented than Vitous; he provided the grounding Zawinul's writing demanded without adding any distinctive qualities of his own. For a period of four years the drum and percussion chairs in the band were in constant flux. As the melodic material grew



Wayne Shorter, melodic focus of Joe Zawinul's dominating keyboards, gets a chance to blow.



Jaco Pastorius plays electric bass with conviction. The two jam with Z (inset).



more stylized and the bottom more circumscribed. Weather Report threatened to lose much of its spontaneity.

Jaco Pastorius' arrival in 1976 as Johnson's replacement was just the boost Weather Report needed. Here was an electric bassist who felt rock riffs and straight 4/4 with equal conviction, who had the tonal presence to act as a lead voice, yet could also function in the more traditional role, and who was an audacious soloist and a writer of substance. Zawinul quickly capitalized on Pastorius' talents in 1977's *Heavy Weather*, where the bass parts on pieces like *Birdland* and *A Remark You Made* carry new weight. The added definition and range in the music was unmistakable.

The drumming situation was, and is still, in the process of resolution. Peter Erskine joined in mid 1978, and Weather Report operated as a quartet for the next two years, although percussionist Robert Thomas Jr. was added in late 1980 (for a tour of Europe and the newest recording, *Night Passage*.) Erskine's extensive experience with Stan Kenton and Maynard Ferguson made him a logical choice for a small band that operates orchestrally; the drummer's recent recording sessions with George Cables, Joe Farrell and Bobby

Hutcherson prove that he can swing in the tradition more comfortably than most of his predecessors. Whether Zawinul will take advantage of Erskine's flexibility, and whether Erskine can restrain a tendency to overplay, remains to be heard, although there are some encouraging signs on the band's new album.

And where is Wayne Shorter? Still present, but a decidedly secondary force in the band. Once among the most extravagant of jazz personalities, Shorter has pursued a "less is more" approach, beginning in his years with Miles Davis and on through the last decade with Weather Report. There have been some stunning moments along the way, but hardly any in the '70s (VSOP and his own LP, *Native Dancer*, excepted), and even a few suggestions that this once most startling of improvisers has fallen into routine (compare his *Black Market* solos on 8:30 and the first *Havana Jam*). Shorter is surely the most self effacing great musician of the past two decades, and the hope remains that he will eventually decide to reassert himself as both composer and player. At least his tenor gets a bit more blowing room on *Night Passage*.

If Shorter has not made Weather Report his own, he has served as a melodic focus for Zawinul's images—a Johnny Hodges for Zawinul's Ellington. *Dream Clock*, on the new album, is a beautiful example of Zawinul writing to Shorter's expressive strengths (and Pastorius' as well), of simplicity and complexity perfectly merged in a glowing emotional statement. There are other moments on *Night Passage* of buoyancy, power and soaring spirits. The range of moods and the rich scoring recall *Heavy Weather*—but why couldn't there be a little less riffing (especially on the title piece) and a lot more Shorter? Weather Report still doesn't deliver everything I want in a "jazz group"—but I'm willing to give them another ten years.

db

#### WEATHER REPORT DISCOGRAPHY

- WEATHER REPORT—Columbia PC 30661 (1971)  
 I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC—Columbia KC 31352 (1972)  
 SWEETNIGHTER—Columbia KC 32210 (1973)  
 MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER—Columbia KC 32494 (1975)  
 TALE SPINNIN'—Columbia PC 33417 (1975)  
 BLACK MARKET—Columbia PC 34099 (1976)  
 HEAVY WEATHER—Columbia PC 34418 (1977)  
 MR. GONE—Columbia JC 35358 (1978)  
 8:30—Columbia PC2 36030 (1979)  
 NIGHT PASSAGE—Columbia JC 36793 (1980)

charles

WUORINEN

# Atonal Tonalities

By Kenneth Terry

Charles Wuorinen, 42, bearded and beginning to bald, finishes typing up a neat business letter as I wait in the adjoining alcove of his Upper West Side apartment. Then, apologizing for the delay, he sits down with me and regards me with a quizzical look, which, I later discover, reflects his deep-rooted distrust of all journalists.

The composer's wire rimmed spectacles give him an air of intellectuality; his tendency to lecture—interrupting his main line of thought with numerous asides—recalls several of my college professors. But, although he has taught at Columbia, Princeton and the New England Conservatory, Wuorinen hasn't held a full time teaching post in many years. Unlike the vast majority of his colleagues, he supports himself mainly with foundation grants and commissions for his music, which has been performed by major orchestras, chamber groups and soloists since he was 18. That one's work is so often paid for and performed is extremely rare for an American composer, even for one who, like Wuorinen, has won a Pulitzer Prize. Although such composers as Philip Glass and Steve Reich tour frequently with their own ensembles, one can think of only a smattering of

modern U.S. composers—among them Aaron Copland, George Crumb and John Corigliano—whose work is at all regularly performed by “establishment” musical ensembles.

Wuorinen's success in this regard points to his thoroughgoing acceptance by important institutions and the respect of fellow musicians; yet his uncompromisingly atonal music has long been disparaged by some of our leading critics. Wuorinen blames this situation partly on the desire of certain newspaper journalists to “change the characteristics of the compositional world” by rejecting 12 tone music and embracing “accessible” forms of neotonalism.

“What you read in [their] accounts is that everybody is so tired of the stupid stuff [12 tone music]—it's so ugly and cerebral—that they've finally decided it's no good, and now they're going to go back to the sweet songs of yesteryear which we all know and love. That, of course, is a complete lie. All that's happened is that certain utterly reac-

tionary composers who've been doing the same thing for years are now suddenly being touted.”

One of these composers, avers Wuorinen, is Frederic Rzewski, although he terms Rzewski “a special case. He's typical of many political artists who start out, as the unfortunate Russians did after the Revolution, thinking that political and artistic radicalism went hand in hand. They very rapidly discover that the great masses you yearn to be one with don't want to hear avant garde music; they want to hear what they've already heard, and they don't want it to be too complicated, either.

“So there comes an abrupt switch, in Rzewski's case, to absolutely unvarnished 19th Century pianism of the sort that used to belong in the salons of the pretentious bourgeoisie. And then, this move, which was made out of political and artistic concerns, suddenly makes him, and certain others like him, the darlings of the most reactionary elements in the cultural



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

establishment. Critics find it adorable, the blue haired ladies in the Lincoln Center audience love it. I find this very

"Once again, all this crapola masks a very real and significant phenomenon: while there have been many radical

and, while his work is certainly distinctive, none of it stands out in the contemporary foreground the way Ter-

amusing, in the sense that it really keeps his artistic and political activity separate—but he's quite skillful."

Wuorinen's compositional approach is quite different from Rzewski's. Whereas the latter has reintroduced improvisation into so-called serious music, Wuorinen writes out all his scores down to the last detail; whereas Rzewski is wildly eclectic, Wuorinen looks to the mainstream of 20th Century music for inspiration. Essentially a conservative, he views himself as a consolidator of the innovations conceived by such composers as Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that he believes that this tradition—and not left field ideas like minimalism, colorism and neo-tonalism—will prevail in the long run.

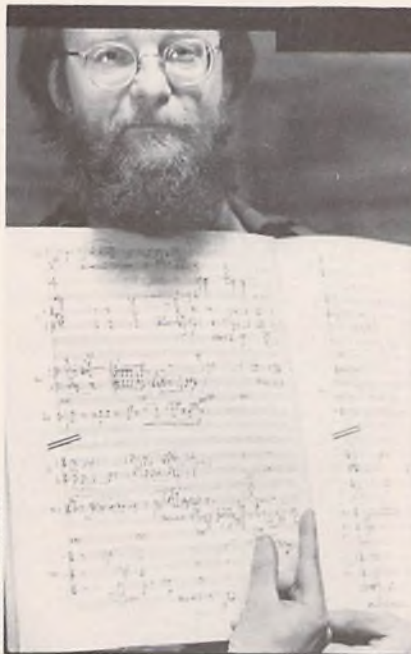
"We're not talking about a tradition that's a mere 80 to 100 years old," he explains. "It goes back to something that's terribly ancient—it's almost 1000 years old. I think it's preposterous to suggest that certain fringe ideas that have been brought in to surround this tradition—usually with a less secure footing in that tradition—will somehow displace it."

When I point out that such minimalist composers as Steve Reich and La Monte Young reject the mainstream tradition because of its fixation on Western music since 1700, Wuorinen shoots back, "That's bullshit. These people don't know anything. By and large, they don't know musical history. The articulate, known tradition of Western music, with identifiable composers of great worth and magnitude, goes back 750 years. And don't tell me about Indian music. We can say that we go back to the Greeks, which indeed we do. Our musical tradition is every bit as ancient as any other in the world, if not more so. And to talk about contemporary music in India, for example, as if it were a direct descendant of a 2000 year old practice, is just as ridiculous as to say that we're straight out of Pythagoras. It simply ain't so."

Wuorinen says that he doesn't dislike minimalism. "In fact, I've performed some of it." But he feels that its links with world music have been overstated. "To equate that sort of thing—that sort of doodling around on C major scales—with the kind of melos that exists in Arabian or in Indian music is very insulting to those musics, which are highly sophisticated and well developed and which necessitate a performing skill that is far, far beyond most of the people who perform the C major doodles on electric organs . . .

innovations for a number of decades—since the turn of the century—you cannot have that go on forever. It never does. And it's only a very foreshortened and narrow view of history which thinks there will just be more and more revolutions.

"There must be consolidation, and that consolidation began a long time ago. I think it expresses itself most importantly and clearly in the sense that the things Schoenberg and his followers did turned out not to be antithetical to the principles of the tonal system. And there's a wonderful



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

coming together of these principles which might make some recent music sound as if it were tonal or pitch center based. That's a real thing, and it's a very important development. But it's totally buried under a superficial 'return to tonality' theory."

Interestingly, the same critics who, according to Wuorinen, are behind the "return to tonality" hype have also described him as an "academic" composer and his music as "grim," "dry," "freezing" and "austere." When reminded of these reviews, Wuorinen chuckles and says, "They didn't use to call it that. When I started out, my music was always characterized as being 'explosive,' 'chaotic,' 'barbaric,' 'angry,' etc. Which makes you wonder about the status of these reporters, since the same stuff is being talked about in both cases."

The "stuff" in question is essentially 12 tone music with suggestions of tonality. Much of it is dry and cerebral, showcasing virtuosity for its own sake:

ry Riley's *In C* or George Crumb's *Ancient Voices Of Children* does.

Yet Wuorinen's music does have significant merits. The lucid, witty style, for instance, of *Time's Encomium*, the electronic work for which he won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize, marks a vigorous and original talent. In this virtuoso piece, which was composed specifically for the recorded medium rather than performance, shifting timbres, dynamics and time values are constantly juxtaposed to create a kaleidoscope of rapidly altering moods and contexts. In Wuorinen's *Percussion*

**“While there have been many radical innovations since the turn of the century, you cannot have that go on forever. It never does. And it's only a very foreshortened and narrow view of history which thinks there will just be more and more revolutions.”**

*Symphony* (1976), he contrasted different classes of percussion instruments to create a subtle, evocative sound, as richly varied as any orchestral music. And the fluid, antiphonal structures of his *Piano Sonata* (1969) express a sharp anguish in the cool serenity of abstract shapes.

Nevertheless, despite the undeniable brilliance of these and other works, Wuorinen has not received as much attention as some other composers who left serialism behind them. His dilemma, in short, is that he's trying to refine a tradition in an age when all traditional styles are disintegrating.

Wuorinen's obsession with the past began in childhood. The son of a Columbia history professor, he grew up in the shadow of the university. His earliest musical models were Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and his first compositions were imitations of the classics. It was not until he was in his teens, in fact, that he was even aware of Stravinsky. One summer, he

recalls, a piano teacher introduced him to *Petrushka*, and it had a terrific impact on him. "I had no awareness at all about the 20th Century until then," he states.

Although he had been taking piano lessons since he was six, Wuorinen never wanted to become a performer until his 20s, when he realized that he was the only one who knew how to perform his own music properly. In 1962, along with flutist-composer Harvey Sollberger, he co-founded the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia "as a way of improving my situation as a composer and the situation of my colleagues." Still in existence, this ensemble is one of the most important outlets for new music in New York.

At Columbia, Wuorinen's mentor was Otto Luening, whose influence, he says, was more philosophical than musical. Unfortunately, Luening's friendship eventually proved to be a source of acute discomfort for the younger composer. "There is a long tradition of hostility between composition and musicology in the Columbia music department," he explains, "and in particular, a lot of people were very bitter against Otto Luening. He had retired, and I, being sort of his successor, became the victim."

It was as a result of this intrigue, claims Wuorinen, that he was denied tenure at Columbia. Naturally, he feels it was all for the best: he had, after all, been a professional composer since the age of 16, when he'd won a New York Philharmonic award, and he didn't need to teach to make a living. What he needed, most of all, was to compose, and that he proceeded to do with a vengeance. To date, with a good part of his career still ahead of him, Wuorinen has composed 136 pieces, including symphonies, concertos, choral and chamber pieces, and solo piano works.

Wuorinen's latest completed composition is an "enormous oratorio for chorus and orchestra," commissioned by the choral society of a midwestern college, which will be premiered in April. He is also writing a piano work for Ursula Oppens, who will perform it in Tokyo next May. After that, he plans to write something for the New York New Music Ensemble, which recently received a foundation grant; another piano composition for Robert Miller; and a piece for the New Hampshire Symphony, due to be performed next year.

Curiously, although he used the medium so superbly in *Time's Encomium* (which was commissioned specifically as a recording by Nonesuch Records), Wuorinen has written only a handful of electronic works.

More in this vein, however, may be on the way, as he is currently experimenting with digital synthesis on Bell Laboratory computers. While he won't reveal specifics about the pieces he's developing, he says they're based on the "organizing of randomly generated material," and that, despite their arbitrary origins, the resulting works sound "fully composed."

In the acoustic area, the most direct influences on Wuorinen's compositional style have been Milton Babbitt's theory of relating time intervals to pitch relationships, Elliott Carter's simultaneous use of different tempos in various instrumental parts, Edgar Varese's percussion music and Stravinsky's later works. "Stravinsky's 12 tone pieces had a profound influence on me, in many ways much more direct than Schoenberg and Webern, the original developers of the 12 tone system," professes Wuorinen.

#### SELECTED WUORINEN DISCOGRAPHY

SPECULUM SPECULI—Nonesuch H-71300  
TIME'S ENCOMIUM—Nonesuch H-71225  
PERCUSSION SYMPHONY—Nonesuch H-71353  
SONATA FOR PIANO—CRI SD 306  
PIANO CONCERTO—CRI 239 USD  
STRING TRIO, BEARBEITUNGEN UBER DAS GLOAUER LIEDERBUCH, GRAND BAMBOULA FOR STRING ORCHESTRA—Nonesuch 71319  
CHAMBER CONCERTO FOR FLUTE & TEN PLAYERS—Nonesuch 71263  
CHAMBER CONCERTO FOR FLUTE & TEN PLAYERS—CRI S-230  
RINGING CHANGES FOR PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE—Nonesuch 71263  
VARIATIONS FOR BASSOON, HARP AND TIMPANI—New World 209

Stravinsky's use of percussion in early works like *The Rite Of Spring* and *Les Noces* has also been a signpost, not only for him, but for other composers, Wuorinen notes. But he adds that this is just one of several factors which led to the interest of contemporary composers in percussion.

"There's the awareness of non-Western music, in which such instruments or relatives of such instruments figure very prominently. That kind of opening of musical horizons has definitely had an impact. Then there's also the interest in sonic exploration, which arose at a certain time when people were uncertain about how they should organize notes. That involves music using less common instruments. There is perhaps also—although it's not true in my case and was probably true in Varese's case—the desire to escape from or sidestep a heavy weight of tradition in

the literature for certain instruments, such as string literature."

Does the use of percussion sidestep the dilemma of tonality vs. atonality? "No," states Wuorinen. "My use of percussion is always very pitch oriented. I use non-pitched instruments that are organized into continua that are like approximations of scale steps, or I use them as correlations of pitched sounds, most of the time. Varese, of course, didn't do that. *Ionization*, I think, is an extraordinary piece from that point of view. It's one of the few works in the literature that satisfy me which use relative rather than absolute pitch. But it's only five minutes long."

For Wuorinen, pitch is "the fundamental principle on which everything else is based. Which is another way of saying that music cannot exist unless it's made up of sounds that have some kind of palpable, defined and useful relationship to each other. Because if you broaden the definition of pitch to include certain kinds of noises, such as those which come from percussion instruments—so that, instead of talking about pitch vs. noise, you have a continuum of definite pitch and less definite pitch—if you talk about that, music has to be defined by relating one sound to another, and the most useful, tried and true way of describing that relationship is pitch. Everything else follows from that."

Wuorinen also admits the importance of instrumental color, but notes that "these dimensions are never separate for me. When I write something, my ideas come fully formed, so that to write down one thing is to write down everything, which only demonstrates that there's no separation between color, harmony, rhythm and whatever other characteristics my sound might possess. But I believe that having the right notes has to be prior in importance to having the right instruments. You may get the impression that I'm indifferent to such things, but I'm not."

Even silences are crucial in Wuorinen's scheme of things. "Taken one by one," he explains, "sounds mean almost nothing. As many composers learn to their sorrow, you cannot make a piece just out of a nice sound. So the whole meaning of a piece—the intellectual content, the expressive values, whatever—is the result of the relations amongst the notes. In a certain sense, it is the frequency distance and the time distance between musical attacks that define the meaning of the piece. And so, in a very real sense, notes or sounds only define locations and time and pitch space. It's the intervals in between—the emptiness, the distances—that make the thing work."

db

# RED RODNEY

## His bite is back

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

"I'm most grateful for being a survivor and entering the 1980s to celebrate my 35th year as a jazz musician. Those of us who have survived are now healthy, playing and doing well. From where I sit now, the scene looks beautiful. I'm back in jazz full time, the gigs are starting to come in and the money is getting a little better, so everything is working out."

Best known as the trumpeter who replaced Miles Davis in the 1949 Charlie Parker Quintet, Red Rodney today is back in the limelight as co-leader of his own critically acclaimed quintet with multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan. In Chicago last fall for Joe Segal's annual Jazz Showcase Parker tribute, the two capped their weeklong engagement with an appearance at the Chicago Jazz Festival to commemorate Bird's 60th birthday. The occasion was something of a reunion, for in place of their regular rhythm section, Red and Ira were joined by drummer Wilbur Campbell and bassist Victor Sproles, their former colleagues in the house band at Chicago's legendary Bee Hive Lounge. The group was clearly having a ball, and Red's playing never sounded better, for reasons he was quick to elucidate.

"Up until two years ago I had no chops and no teeth. I was having all kinds of dental problems and I was not able to play. I was working in Las Vegas in the show bands, hidden in the trumpet section, and I was barely able to play third or fourth trumpet. Finally, I came back to New York and I lucked out. I found a dentist who immediately started me on a whole program—he sent me to a periodontist for gum work and an endodontist for implants—and after a lot of money and pain, the implants were put in. The very next day, my chops were better than they had ever been in my life, better even than when I had my own teeth. It was almost like a miracle."

After four years of tribulation, it appears that fortune has smiled on Red Rodney at last. A chance encounter with his old friend Sullivan quickly blossomed into a solid partnership, and within a few months they had taken the Big Apple by storm. "I hadn't seen Ira since 1957, when we recorded *The Red Arrow*. He had gone to Florida, where he built the jazz scene almost singlehandedly. I was booked down there last February as a single, and the house band turned out to be Ira's. When we got together it was just electrifying; it was magnetic and spirited and we had a tremendous week."

"I was supposed to go into the Village Vanguard with a quintet shortly afterward and I asked Ira. He was very hesitant but I sent him a ticket and kept calling him up. It was his first time playing in New York for an audience, although he had recorded there. So he came up and we rehearsed a few days and we recorded live at the Vanguard. We had all new music, today's music—not what we would have done 25 years ago—and that first week was a beautiful success; in fact, Max Gordon, the owner, brought us back six weeks later and we did another recording session. All told we had three nights of recording, and the album is called



LAUREN DEUTSH

*Live At The Village Vanguard*. I think it's the best thing I ever did in my life.

"I first met Ira in 1950 or '51. I was still with Charlie Parker, but we had no work at the time and I went with Charlie Ventura's big band. We played at the Silhouette Club on the north side of Chicago, and Ira came up and sat next to me, so that was how we got to know each other. A few years later we worked together in Chicago as the house band at the Bee Hive—Norman Simmons was the piano player at that time—and we recorded two albums, *Modern Music From Chicago on Fantasy*, and *The Red Arrow*.

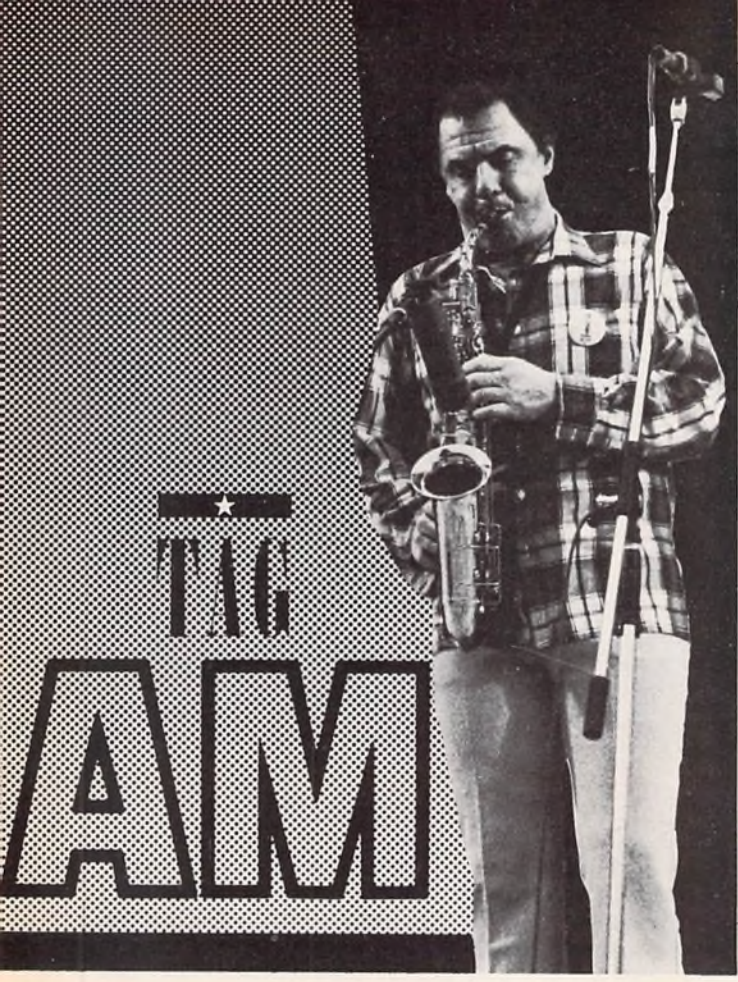
"Ira has a different approach to every instrument—it's phenomenal. His flugelhorn is entirely different from his trumpet, his tenor is entirely different from his alto, his soprano is tremendously modern and his flute is gorgeous. He can be as free as any of the so-called freedom players, but his music is always lyrical, it always has a melodic strain to it, because I believe he's got a song inside of him whatever he does. Playing with him has given me the same excitement that I got playing with Bird. I'm not trying to compare Ira to Bird, but the same spirit is there, and listening to him on every instrument every night is fabulous.

"We have a young rhythm section, Garry Dial on piano, Paul Berner on bass and Tom Whaley, from Tennessee, on drums, who, more than anybody, has taught me how to play with the new young rhythm sections. When I went down and played with Ira, I saw that he had really gotten into the new music, and I knew that I wanted to associate myself with the younger musicians playing contemporary music. I didn't want to become a recycled teenager or an old hippie, but I felt that there were many things in today's music that I could embrace. Jack Walrath has written a lot of our book—it's a combination of modal, bebop and newer forms of jazz and it's really jelled."

Rodney's comeback can be said to date from 1972, when he suffered a paralytic stroke while playing on a TV show.

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LAUREN DEUTSCH

# IRA SULLIVAN

## Multi mystique

BY NEIL TESSER

times when you get off the set and you want to withdraw, just be quiet, get your nerves quiet, and people don't realize that all the time." But that's not Ira's way in any case: "I'm sort of a gregarious person. I don't mind spending some time with people, if they want to come up and talk to me; they may need to talk to me. . . ." And sure enough, any Sullivan set is notable not so much for the well wishers and conversationalists at every turn, but rather for the time and attention each receives. Frequently, Ira just never makes it back to the dressing room between sets because frequently, he never gets the chance.

But—wait a minute. Look what's happening here. Ira Sullivan is sitting over a cup of coffee, in a Chicago diner that's so down-to-earth it's practically subterranean, and he is matter-of-factly tearing down the idea that he has a "mystique"—except with every word, the damn thing's getting a little stronger. I don't know why, but something about Ira's entire personal style is contradicting the content, belying the point he's trying to make. It's no use: he's got it, he's stuck with it (and anyway, if you could tell exactly where it was coming from, it wouldn't be mystique).

A good bet, though, would be that the heart of the issue rests in Ira's ceaseless, sanguine iconoclasm. Ira does things differently from the way they're normally done, and not out of some perverse wrongheadedness; he sees, and hears, in wholly individualistic ways, and he can't be swayed by anything so trivial as the weight of tradition or the pressures of conformity. For example: in the '50s, when most Chicago jazzmen were either hustling to New York or using Chicago as a base for steady national touring, Ira contented himself by remaining around town. Deservedly, his reputation grew, and it was widely assumed that he could go to the Apple and knock 'em dead. (Ironically, that's just what happened in the summer of 1980, when the quintet co-led by Ira and Red Rodney booked into the Vanguard; the original prophecy was only 25 years early.)

But in the '50s, Ira stayed in Chicago. "I'm not a nomad, like some of the cats," he says now. "I never went on the road more than one, at most two months. My wife used to say, before we left Chicago, 'Ira, so many people know you, and you don't ever go anywhere, you don't travel to New York.' So I went somewhere. I went to Miami"—which could reasonably be considered something less than the optimum move for greater recognition.

For another example, Ira Sullivan would prefer that those attending his performances all but sit on their hands: "I don't know what that applause does for people's egos, but me, I like it to be quiet, so I can play; I don't really need that after every solo. Norman Granz started that years ago, at Jazz at the Philharmonic, and it's still the silliest thing I've ever seen in music. That's what keeps jazz on a lower level, where it's not treated like symphonic music.

**M**ystique. As the word suggests, the thing itself is, well, mysterious: that little-understood, hard-to-pin-down phenomenon that permits some of us to command a veiled but no less certain interest among others. It isn't idolization, exactly, and it's different from charisma—but how? Where does it come from? In what ways does it manifest itself?

Of course, if you could answer those questions, it wouldn't be mystique.

The matter of mystique lurks nearby—now cautious, now bold—whenever the subject is Ira Sullivan. Ira doesn't know why; he wishes it would go away, in fact, and in conversation he often takes pains to hurry it along. "Mystique?" says Ira. (He has just been reminded that former colleagues in his hometown Chicago—from where he moved to Florida 18 years ago—still tell stories of his multi-instrumental prowess, of his sage advice about music and life, of how the best of the touring beboppers would hit town in the '50s and immediately send word for Sullivan.) "I never thought of it as mystique; you're just hanging out, you're just with musicians."

So Ira is reminded of the liner notes to his 1976 Horizon LP (his first recording after a decade's hiatus): "He and the Everglades are south Florida's great, wild, mystery-shrouded landmarks. . . ." And of a previous write-up in *down beat*, in which Don DeMicheal alluded to Ira's shadowy, forceful impact on Chicago's jazz scene: "When you get to Chicago, be sure to hear Ira Sullivan—if you can find him." And Ira's explanation is disarmingly simple: "I was never in the shadows; I was always running around too much trying to get a gig. Maybe that's why people thought I was in the shadows.

"I mean, Miles has got some sort of 'mystique,' maybe because he doesn't talk a lot. But then, I've heard people tell me that Miles, or Stan Getz, that they're ornery because they won't sign an autograph. See, I can understand that; there are

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## RODNEY *continued*

leaving him temporarily disabled, financially drained and not a little embittered. "As jazz musicians, we've been cheated, we've been cheated all along the line. We never had the benefits that other people in American life do, the hospital insurance, even Social Security. The only thing that's held us together is the music—that was the most important thing and it still is, no matter how old you get." Red decided to leave the commercial grind and re-dedicate himself to jazz.

Soon thereafter, Ross Russell's Parker biography, *Bird Lives*, brought Rodney renewed notoriety with its detailed account of Red's early career and drug-saturated escapades with the Yardbird. "I think Ross wrote a very informative biography," Red says, "one of the best I've ever read on any jazz musician, but some of the facts were overstated or embellished upon." An interview with *Village Voice* critic Gary Giddins (soon to be re-published in Giddins' book *Riding On A Blue Note*) related further "Adventures of the Red Arrow" as an addict and con man, including a hilarious caper in which Red impersonated an Army general.

The publicity was not altogether welcome. "Many people, whether rightfully so or not, are doing better now because of revealing their past, their troubles, their drug addiction. I've had a lot of that written about me, and some of it is my fault for being stupid enough to admit to some of those things. Suffice it to say that there was a period in my life when I wasn't too healthy. More importantly, I overcame that period, and in some ways the adversity made me stronger. I'm glad to say that I don't see any drugs at all among the younger generation of jazz musicians. Those of us who survived put that behind us years ago and the younger ones learned from us not to experiment. Curiosity didn't kill those cats."



LAUREN DEUTSCH

Born in Philadelphia in 1927, Red, named Robert Chudnick, played bugle as a child in a Jewish War Veterans marching band. He received his first trumpet as a bar mitzvah present and enrolled in the Mastbaum school, where John Coltrane was also a student. "By the time I was 15 there was a war on," he recalls, "and all the good trumpet players were drafted. The bandleaders reached out to get the kids who were draft exempt or too young, like me, so I learned by playing in some name bands, like those of Jerry Wald, Jimmy Dorsey and, for a few months, with Benny Goodman. Then I came back to Philly and played at the radio station for a year with Elliot Lawrence's orchestra. That's when I met Dizzy Gillespie and that's when I was really turned on to jazz.

"Prior to that, Harry James was probably my favorite trumpet player: I was mainly just playing charts and whenever I had a solo I'd try to play it

like Harry James. I liked Roy Eldridge, but I really didn't know that much about it. Then I heard Dizzy and started hanging around where he was working. Dizzy was like a mentor to me, and one weekend he brought me up to New York to hear Charlie Parker—they had just started working together. After I heard Charlie Parker, that was it—I knew what my direction was going to be. Diz and Bird went to California in 1946 to play at Billy Berg's, and I joined Gene Krupa's orchestra. I'd gotten the offer and thought about it a lot, but when I heard that Krupa was going to California for a month, I immediately grabbed it just to be near Bird and Diz. After we finished at the Palladium every night, I'd go over to Billy Berg's where they were playing.

"After about a year with Gene Krupa, I came to New York and started working on 52nd Street, learning how to play. I was sitting in and then I got a week's job with Don Byas and another week with Ben Webster. Then I went with Woody Herman, the Four Brothers band. I stayed there a little better than a year and then Charlie Parker called me.

"I play a Martin trumpet that's made by Holton; it was an experimental horn and I don't think they've marketed it yet. I like the horn but I don't know if they're going to make it or not. I wish they would—I'd even buy it." Red at the Chicago Jazz Fest '80: left, onstage with Ira; top, backstage with Paul Serrano.

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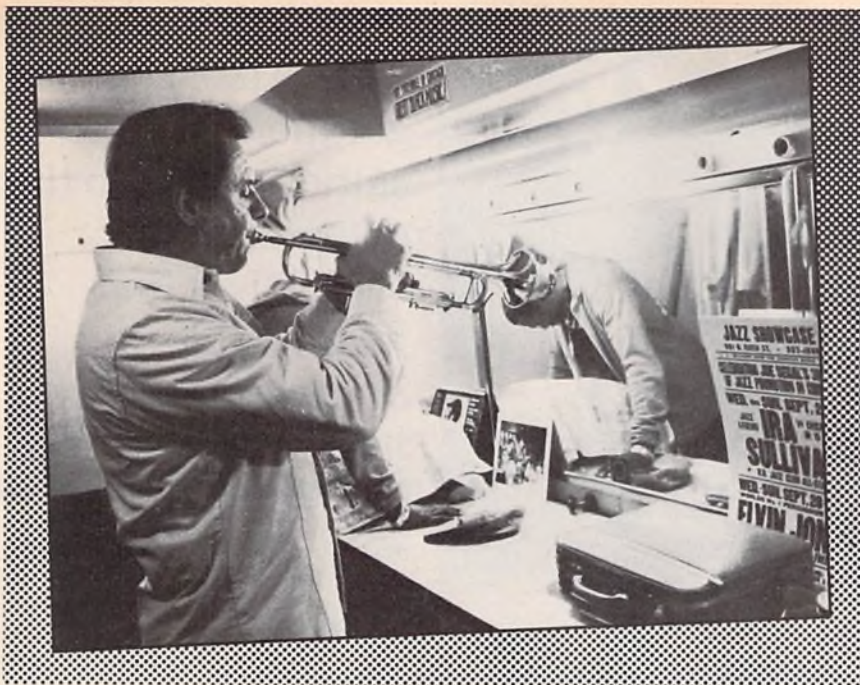


LAUREN DEUTSCH



LAUREN DEUTSCH

HERB NOLAN



## SULLIVAN *continued*

"Now, I don't mean everybody's supposed to be uptight; but the way I play down in Florida, or other places where I'm really in my own setting, I go from one tune to the other. I tell the people, 'Look, we're going to play for an hour, maybe an hour and 40 minutes. You don't have to applaud; in fact, a lot of time you won't know when our solos end,' because we keep it criss-crossing. I don't think in terms of 'soloist number one, soloist number two'; I try to divorce myself from all that. I'll play colors, on the flute, or do this or that behind a soloist; we try to intermingle it, solos, ensembles, the way it's been done for years, the classic approach to making music.

"Also, then, I'm trying to get the audience to approach our sets as a total piece of music, rather than several songs that have to be applauded. And it works—so much so that a musician, when he first comes to one of these gigs to start playing with me, will sometimes get uptight because the audience is so quiet: he thinks they don't like it. He gets off the stand and says, 'Wow, what is it with these people, man? They're dead out there.' And I say, 'Oh, you mean no applause? Don't worry. I told them to do that.' And he looks at me like I'm crazy. I say, 'Don't you like it? It just centers you on yourself and your creative energies.' Everybody says they're so creative. Well, there it is, baby, be creative. Or do you need a big crowd to make you creative?"

And then there is the evidence contained in the deceptively simple quote a few paragraphs above, evidence

that ought to hit home even if your knowledge of musical matters is nugatory. After all, how many of us, having just finished work and looking to relax, will nevertheless make time for someone who "needs to talk"?

But it is Ira's choice of musical tools that provides the best example of his unorthodoxy. Actually, "choice" is misleading: the word implies selecting one over others, but Ira hasn't done that. Instead, he merely adds. He began with trumpet, and soon added tenor sax, in contradiction to the conventional musical wisdom, which held it all but impossible to master both brass and reed instruments, since the different embouchures would in time develop mutually inimical mouth muscles. But there was no one to tell Ira that this was impossible; he certainly wasn't going to hear it from his father, who instructed Ira on the trumpet and

who himself played trumpet, trombone and sax. So for Ira, it wasn't impossible at all: before leaving Chicago in 1962, he had added bari and alto saxes, as well as flugelhorn, and, once in Florida, proceeded to bring soprano sax and flutes into the fold.

Most important is the judicious discrimination with which Ira approaches this instrumental arsenal. Onstage, his juggling of horns—he usually travels with trumpet, flugel, one or two of the saxes and a flute—bears no trace of gimmickry: Ira simply decides upon the horn best suited for the particular piece at hand. If that means some instruments remain untouched for an entire set, fine: this isn't a freak show, it's music.

Accordingly, Ira treats each instrument as if it were the only one he owned—at least, during the time it's in use. He knows them all inside out; he has examined their "essences"; and he is way past the point of merely translating the same ideas from one instrument to another. "When I pick up a saxophone," he states, "I don't even remember the trumpet. I never tried to mix and match. In fact, when I'm playing alto sax, I have no conception of the tenor: it's totally different. I think different on the C flute from the way I think on alto flute, and the flugelhorn is different from the trumpet."

Listening to Ira Sullivan describe his various instrumental voices is a bit like hearing the Man of a Thousand Faces provide the life history and personal habits of the characters he impersonates. The trumpet remains special: "It's always been the trumpet; these other things I have are like hobbies. I mean, the saxophone has always been part of my career, since those days in high school when I found I could play it. But I've always just wanted to play the trumpet; I really find it the greatest challenge even to this day to pick up that trumpet and try to play it right."



HERB NOLAN *continued on page 25*



## RODNEY *continued*

Miles had quit and Kenny Dorham had other commitments and couldn't stay. I was nervous and I knew I wasn't worthy, but we were friends by then and I had played with him a few times, so I went, and that was the greatest musical experience of my career. It was like going to graduate school, standing next to this colossal genius every night and hearing the outpouring from his horn. Naturally, it's going to make you play better—and it did."

One of Parker biographer Russell's most "colorful" tales concerns Parker's tour of the South, where Rodney was obliged to masquerade as an albino. "I hate that story and everybody does it," he moans, "but unfortunately it is true. We were booked down South and the booking agent said, 'Well, you can't take Red.' So Charlie said, 'Don't worry about it, I'll call him an albino and nobody will know the difference.' But Charlie had neglected to tell me, and when we got there I saw the billing, 'Charles "Yardbird" Parker, the King of Bebop, featuring Albino Red, Blues Singer.' I was very angry, but I learned the lyrics to one blues and that was all I needed." Elsewhere Russell takes factual liberties, as in his graphic description of Parker requiring Rodney to perform "flunky work." "That's not true," Red insists. "That was really made up. Bird was not the kind of man who would ask you to do that."

Twice busted for drugs, Rodney ended his tenure with Charlie Parker, whom he'd rejoined after his venture with Ventura. In 1952. For a year he led his own successful group in Philadelphia before again running afoul of the law. The mid '50s found him in Chicago, where he and Sullivan played for Joe Segal at the Bee Hive. "After that period," says Red, "I wasn't in the jazz

business anymore; I was playing commercial music in order to make a living." Returning to Philadelphia, he worked with a catering service, playing weddings, bar mitzvahs and society parties. "I was making money, but naturally I was very unhappy with the music, and I didn't like living in Philadelphia, so I in 1958 left and went to San Francisco."

The jazz scene in San Francisco was moribund, and Rodney scuffled for a while until moving to Las Vegas in 1960. "I had an aunt who was living there already, so it was easier for me to come right in. There weren't too many musicians out there at that time, but there was a lot of work and I had two children who were growing up, so I took it." Troubles continued: in 1963 his dental ordeals began when two cops knocked out his teeth. Musically stifled amid Vegas glitter, he told James Moody, "This is a place for musicians to either retire or die."

"You play concerts with good musicians," he says, "they're all good bands playing for the stars in the shows, but there's no jazz there—it's a desert."

In 1973, having recovered from his stroke, Red returned to New York for the Newport Jazz Festival and cut *Bird Lives*, the first of a series of albums on Muse, for producer Don Schlitten. "I remember on that album I literally had no chops, no teeth—I was playing on gums. Then I had dentures and things like that which were difficult to play with. The spirit was there, the willingness was there, but the ability to play wasn't."

Following Newport, he toured Europe with George Wein's tribute to the Musical World of Charlie Parker and settled in Denmark for several years. "I enjoyed being in Europe; that was my re-entrance into jazz again and it was nice. I was still having a lot of difficulty with my mouth, but at least I was

"It was like going to graduate school, standing next to this colossal genius every night and hearing the outpouring from his horn."

playing. There was work and I was traveling all over Europe and living in Copenhagen. Dexter Gordon was still there and I used to see him all the time; I worked quite a few dates with Dexter there. But I missed America very much; to me, the most sophisticated audience is the American audience, without a doubt. I know some musicians might disagree, but our audience knows much more about the music, and being an American, I prefer to live here." In 1978, he returned to the States, played Vegas for the last time, then came to New York where he found his miracle cure.

"I guess I can be called a journeyman jazz musician," Red concludes, "because I've been around a long time and I've done a lot of things. Thank goodness, toward the latter part of my life I straightened it out a great deal. Now there are things happening, there's work coming in, and everything is turning out beautifully. I recently married again and that's very nice, so I'm living a good life. That's important, for a musician to have a good home life and a happy atmosphere, because you play better, with fewer neuroses and anxieties. I hope the band will start to make a little better money so we can afford to continue working on the road, but we're not rushing it and we're not too hungry—we're waiting until everybody in the band can get what he needs." db

### SELECTED

#### RED RODNEY DISCOGRAPHY

LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—

Muse MR 5209 (featuring Ira Sullivan)

HOME FREE—Muse MR 5135

RED, WHITE AND BLUES—Muse MR 5111

THE RED TORNADO—Muse MR 5088

SUPERBOP—Muse MR 5406

BIRD LIVES—Muse MR 5034

YARD'S PAD—Sonet SNTF 698

THE RED ARROW—Onyx ORI 204

with Charlie Parker

THE VERVE YEARS (1950-51)—Verve 2-2512

He cites several early influences—Buck Clayton, Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, even his current co-leader Red Rodney—but the first name he mentions, although not necessarily the most influential, is Benny Carter, the only man before Sullivan to play both saxophone and trumpet without having to compromise on either one.

"Saxophones," says Ira, "are comparatively easy; but it's not easy to master 'em. There's a lot of people who can play alto that figure, 'Well, you can just normally play tenor.' Wrong. Ask an alto player. I mean, there's the same mouthpiece, but a bigger mouthpiece; same fingering, but a bigger horn, a different airstream. It's the same with tenor players: a lot of them sound great, but they pick up an alto, they don't get the essence.

"The alto, to me, is a more vocal quality, like singing; it's a different, more open feeling in your throat. The alto is very flexible to me, whereas the tenor is flexible, but also tubby in a way, because of the sound of it. And I've played many different sounds through the years, as has every other sax player; I used to love to get the sound of the Lucky Thompson-Paul Gonsalves school, and of course I grew up listening to Gene Ammons. The first one that inspired me to even fool around with the tenor was Illinois Jacquet, on the first Jazz at the Philharmonic recording, before he was doing his commercial shtick. Naturally, as tenor styles changed, I had to taste them all. And then you watch your own voice evolve.

"Back then, tenor was good for swinging, for being able to push a rhythm section around. See, you could take rhythm players that really weren't the heaviest swingers in life, and you could sort of guide them, with the tenor: you can boot the sound in there, and rhythm sections respond to it. Remember, I wasn't playing with heavyweight beboppers at that time. That was one thing I liked about playing tenor: when I got frustrated playing the trumpet—because I didn't like to play trumpet in the style where you had to 'swing.' I don't like to have to play obvious rhythms on the trumpet if I can help it. I like to get a little, oh, slipperier. But unless you had a fine rhythm section, you couldn't do that; because if you did get slippery on 'em, then the rhythm would fall apart."

(All of which offers valuable insight into the real Ira Sullivan and his current music. Interestingly, his tenor work over the years has grown "slipperier," growing also into an often introspective, at times burry tone; hear *I Get A Kick Out Of You* from the



Galaxy LP, *Peace*. It could be argued that this represents Sullivan's complete control of the tenor, in that his true musical self can now be expressed on it. The proof that here, indeed, is Sullivan's true self can be found in the fact that this "slipperiness" was originally reserved for the trumpet. In other words, only the trumpet—his first and enduring love—remained pure in the face of such prosaic details as keeping the rhythm section intact; the dirty work was left for the tenor saxophone.

(For the record, Sullivan's trumpet playing must now be ranked among the handful of top styles in the modern mainstream, and his work with Rodney has revealed him as an absolutely brilliant straight bop player at the most superheated tempos. Unfortunately, it seems that Sullivan never records a studio date to match his live performances, and even as good a performance as *Girl From Ipanema*, on his Flying Fish LP, falls short of his best trumpet work. A Muse album, entitled *Live At The Village Vanguard* and released under Rodney's name in November, 1980, may help alleviate the problem.)

As for the soprano sax, Sullivan explains, "It's just like people. The soprano is in the same family [as the other saxophones], but it's got a totally different personality. I like it because it's almost a combination of playing the sax and trumpet, because the airstream is straight, like a trumpet. And I like my soprano in particular, because it gets an oboe-like sound to it. The horn does it, not me; I'm aiming for that because I found it in the horn. I've tried other sopranos, with my mouthpiece, but I can't emulate that sound." (It should be noted that Sullivan's soprano, which was made by Conn about a half century ago, produces a sound more purely oboeistic than the excessively nasal, twangy tones which characterized the rash of Coltrane imitators in the early '70s.)

The trumpet-flugelhorn dichotomy offers an especially clear view of how subtle, yet important, the instrumental discrepancies can be: "Pauli Cohen, the lead trumpet player who's been with Basie in recent years, sold me that flugelhorn, and he heard me after I'd had it about a month, and said [his voice assumes a mock sternness], 'Ira, it's not a trumpet, man. Don't try to play it like a trumpet.' He was trying to make me think different. He told me, 'You've got to get the right blow; it's a different blow.' So I worked on it, and finally Pauli told me, 'Ah. Now it's starting to sound like a flugelhorn.'"

It figures that learning the flugelhorn's real personality would be the toughest such lesson for Ira; he had to get past his intimate knowledge of the flugelhorn's chipper relation, the trumpet, which he'd been playing since he was four. "That was when I knew I wanted to be a musician. My father taught me trumpet—he was in business, but he played for relaxation."

The year was 1935, and in the mists of the Depression, young Ira Brevard Sullivan Jr., born in Washington, D.C. but reared in Chicago, was learning

**SELECTED IRA SULLIVAN  
DISCOGRAPHY**

- THE IRA SULLIVAN QUINTET* (featuring Johnny Griffin)—Delmark DS-402
- NICKY'S TUNE* (featuring Nicky Hill)—Delmark DS-422
- HORIZONS*—Atlantic SD 1476
- IRA SULLIVAN*—Horizon SP-706
- IRA SULLIVAN*—Flying Fish FF-075
- PEACE*—Galaxy GXY-5114
- with Red Rodney**
- THE RED ARROW*—Onyx 204
- LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD*—Muse MR 5209
- with Roland Kirk**
- INTRODUCING ROLAND KIRK*—Argo 669
- with Red Garland**
- RED ALERT*—Galaxy GXY-5109

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# DAVE BURRELL

COLLIS DAVIS/SHAI DA

## CANDY GIRL'S SON MAKES GOOD

BY LEE JESKE

"Hawaii has a new musical star on the horizon. He doesn't play slack key guitar or strum a uke. He speaks Hawaiian like a native.

"Hawaii can claim him, even though he's playing the 'new music' of jazz and not *Lovely Hula Hands* or *Lahainaluna*."

So wrote the Honolulu Advertiser on May 22, 1967 in a feature story about pianist Dave Burrell, who for the past two years has been working on a full scale opera, *Windward Passages*. With libretto by his wife, Monika Larsson, Burrell's opera tells the story of Peter, the young son of the first black professional family in Hawaii. Sarah, Peter's mother, is a musician who "gave her beautiful gift to her son." Peter and his friends form a musical group at the same time that Hawaii is becoming our 50th state. Using much Hawaiian mythology, the opera relates the conflicts between those favoring statehood and those favoring independence, along with the personal maturation of Peter, a native and yet an outsider.

"We decided to make it a semi-autobiographical work based on Dave's period in Hawaii," explains Monika Larsson, who has spent time in the islands since leaving her native Sweden. "This story starts in 1955; simultaneously, Peter is reaching maturity and Hawaii is becoming a state. It's a subdued social-economical portrayal of a paradise."

How does a budding musician get to Paradise in the first place? "My father was a professor at Fisk University and the University of Wisconsin," says Burrell, who lives now in a West Side Manhattan apartment. "He was also doing research on race relations. During World War II, he was in an authoritative position to decide on the rights of blacks and Japanese who were thrown into a factory situation. He had to make sure that the factory turnover to the war machine was done equally and fairly; if the treatment of the American Japanese wasn't good, he was supposed to make sure it improved. While he was doing this, he met some Japanese people from Hawaii who said they were going back to a settlement there and that he was very welcome to come and bring his family. When he went out to see if he liked to work out there and finish a book he was writing on race relations, he brought me and I insisted that we stay.

"I had been living in the projects in Cleveland, and I remember feeling that in Hawaii I could run barefoot and just be totally free. The friendliness of everyone was also a strong factor. I also felt, a lot of the time, that I was different. The kids would let you know that you were different. It wasn't always bad to be different, but when it was, that was the sad part. My situation was totally different from all the other kids growing up in Hawaii, and it was special because I was an entertainer. I

used to sing and play the piano."

Like Peter in his opera, Dave comes from a musical family. His father still sings with the University of Hawaii choir. His mother was the stronger musical influence. The July, 1961 *Ebony* carried a feature headlined "Hawaii's Candy Girl."

"One of the busiest women in Honolulu, Hawaii, is Eleanor Burrell, an effervescent mother who is also a teacher, student, opera singer, actress and community leader. She is best known, however, as a disc jockey on KNDI (Candy), a former all-girl radio station. Mrs. Burrell, who is the wife of the director of traffic education of the city of Honolulu, was one of the original 'Candy Girls' of the station which went on the air for the first time last year. She now handles a popular Sunday morning program which features religious music from all faiths (Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish)."

"My mom, besides being a mezzo-soprano, played piano and organ," says Dave. "She used to play a bit with Red Callender and she was asked to join the Delta Rhythm Boys, so she was always encouraging my jazz.

"First I had a rock and roll band. My drummer is now a movie star—Don Stroud [who played the drummer of the Crickets in *The Buddy Holly Story*]. Don and I would make sure that my group, the Quintones, named after my favorite rhythm and blues group,

was doing the intermissions of high school proms and things. We never thought that we were so far away in Hawaii. We had rock concerts in the Civic Auditorium once a month—Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, the Platters, the list goes on and on. We were right there in the front row all the time.”

I think the first jazz I became involved with was when the singers Herb Jeffries and Tempest Storm had dinner at our house. Anyone who came to Hawaii during those years would seek out this family that was musical. We met a lot of people who were stopping over, going back from the Orient, and somebody had given them our phone number. Herb Jeffries, the Ellington vocalist, was going to do a few weeks in a club down in Waikiki, and he said, ‘I would get you to accompany me if you knew your changes and some more chords. You sound real good, I like your feeling, but you don’t know too much about chords.’ And I thought, ‘Yeah, you’re right.’

“I was starting to write a little bit and I didn’t have anybody to show me—I reached this dead end. I think I had

sphere where everyone was as serious as me. There was talk in the hallways and at breakfast about music and melodic lines and chord progressions and I thought that was so fantastic, to just walk around talking about music with everybody all the time, and writing chords on the walls—everything.”

At Berklee, Burrell began developing his intensely unique piano style—combining ragtime and stride in the left hand with mostly post-bop technique in the right. It’s an amalgam which is somewhat the rage in 1981, but it wasn’t 20 years ago.

“I always wanted to play some stride and some ragtime. I felt at that point that I wanted to have a style and I listened for a long time during those years to Horace Silver and Thelonious Monk and Bill Evans. I felt that the only pianist who was using any amount of left hand who was popular with the students there, was Monk. When we looked back to the ‘20s, ‘30s and ‘40s, it was real hazy. As a community of students, the accent wasn’t on anything like that, and I knew I would secretly like to explore that some more—boogie woogie and left hand stride as well as free im-

Hawaii.’ So finally I stopped saying that.”

Louis’ Lounge led to the Businessman’s Club, which catered to sports figures, particularly the then Boston Patriots. The club stayed open all night, then Dave was off to his classes in the morning. “Around the clock: jazz, jazz, jazz,” he says.

After graduating from Berklee, Dave found himself in New York’s East Village, the budding home of the New York avant garde scene. But Dave was confused—he wanted to play traditional jazz, but came in contact with mostly free players; he wanted to spend time practicing, but found himself being coaxed into playing situations.

“Work was hard to come by, but I wasn’t really looking. I wanted to stay in the shed for a number of years, but I was being sought out by older musicians who wanted a pianist. So I couldn’t stay in seclusion, but in many cases I came out and ran right back, because it was something I wasn’t ready to do. I felt that my projects were of uppermost importance and being pulled away from my arrangement of *West Side Story*—my project of that time—into someone else’s group as a sideman took my direction away a little. I would make some money and get some exposure, but it would sometimes frustrate me to be away so long from my music.

“I was thinking, also, that if I got a little more experienced I could move on up into a traditional spot. I wanted the traditional and I wanted the contemporary and I thought that if I stayed and dwelled long enough . . .”

Dave Burrell’s main group experience has been Archie Shepp, with whom he recorded 18 albums. His desire to be involved with more traditional forms of jazz in tandem with newer forms led to the formation of the 360° Music Experience with Beaver Harris. This eclectic organization, which is Harris’ alone now, included Ron Carter, Hamiet Bluiett, Doc Cheatham, Cecil McBee, Maxine Sullivan, Azar Lawrence and Herb Hall.

Burrell’s first solo performance came in 1972 as part of an “Evolution Of The Piano” concert at the Village Gate featuring Barry Harris, Roland Hanna, Harold Mabern and Willie “The Lion” Smith representing the old, and Dave Burrell representing the new. “I always remember that I played too short then,” says Dave with a sheepish grin. “I only played about 15 minutes and I thought it was a long time. But when I went to sit down everybody said, ‘Well, why’d you stop so fast?’ I remember Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith being escorted into the Village Gate; he was walking very slowly, and I got a chance to shake his hand. That was great—it was a great evening.”

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With stride and ragtime in his left hand and post-bop in his right, Dave Burrell may have the trickiest combinations since Sugar Ray Robinson.

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COLLIS DAVIS/SHANDA

heard something on the radio that I wanted to play, but couldn’t figure out how the bridge went. I stayed that way until I went down and asked Ernie Washington, who was playing piano in a club, how I could broaden my improvisation. He became my teacher. People were always coming through to sit in with Ernie since he was the only jazz player in residence consistently.”

Dave traveled to the continent every summer to visit relatives and bring back news of the music world to his friends in Hawaii. At 20, he left Hawaii for Boston and the Berklee School of Music.

“Berklee was a good school for me because I never had been in an atmo-

provisation and so forth. There was always a real feeling that I was a little different in Boston, because I would employ the ragtime with the free jazz, sometimes in the same gig and sometimes in the same composition.

“My first real gig was as music director for a club in the ‘combat zone [Boston’s red light district] called Louis’ Lounge, which booked acts like Maxine Brown, Aretha Franklin and Gene Chandler. We had a spot of our own. They used to introduce me as ‘The music director, from Hawaii, Dave Burrell.’ Some people would say, ‘Man, you’re not from

# RECORD REVIEWS

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

## STEVIE WONDER

**HOTTER THAN JULY**—Tamla T8-373MI:  
*Did I Hear You Say You Love Me; All I Do; Rocket Love; I Ain't Gonna Stand For It; As If You Read My Mind; Master Blaster (Jammin'); Do Like You; Cash In Your Face; Lately; Happy Birthday.*

**Personnel:** Wonder, vocals, keyboards, drums, harmonica, producer; session groups, background vocalists.

★ ★ ★ ★

Oh yes!—and ever so much hotter than Stevie Wonder's *Journey Through The Secret Life Of Plants* that last year made us hold our breath in nervous apprehension about Wonder's directions. But only for a moment: *Hotter Than July* is one of Stevie Wonder's best albums, containing at least two masterpieces, several very strong songs and just one or two slips. There is something very appealing, something truly happy about the ease with which Wonder here moves on, leaving us behind, as it were, holding the bag with the belabored plant life experiment. In this generosity and the endless freshness of Wonder's talent one senses his music's source and essence. At best, expresses irresistible vitality and excitement.

Take *Master Blaster*, for example. A reggae—with none of the dourness of the authentic product—it is set in just the right medium to uptempo that since *I Was Made To Love Her* (1966) has suited Wonder better than any other, because it allows him to unleash his driving rhythmic style. As *Master Blaster* intensifies, Wonder's performance builds to an improvised rhythmic orgy of jagged accentuations, inflections, modulations and aggressive contractions. The momentum from Wonder's fervor, recorded with a slight echo for an extra edge, against the locked-in reggae patterns is overwhelming and the song is one of the most riveting Stevie Wonder has done.

That Wonder has the capability and ingenuity to improvise, or jam as he calls it, on a hit release is one of the reasons his best music seems so fresh and instantaneously conceived. Another, of course, is his undiminished inspiration as a writer of catchy songs whose various parts fit together seamlessly and with fleet energy, as in *All I Do*, the other true masterpiece of the album.

Pulled from Wonder's Jobete backlog where it has been stored since 1966, *All I Do* is enhanced by touchingly direct lyrics and a bittersweet tone that the singer picks up and further projects in a rendition exquisitely tender, teasingly melancholic and pleadingly in love. His moans and whoas are both thrilling and penetrating. Again, Wonder's surprising accent shifts and unique emphases stand out. The song's first three



lines, contrasting staccato and legato rhythms in an emotional appeal, are pure genius—an immediate, spinetling hook.

Not far behind in quality come *Rocket Love*, *I Ain't Gonna Stand For It* and *Happy Birthday*. The first is distinguished by a clear-as-a-bell synthesizer introduction (one of the album's very few instrumental efforts) and a resurgent chorus, while *Stand For It*, in a balanced touch of humor, is informed by Western overtones, mock lyrics and a strangely evocative arrangement of male background vocals. The tract, *Happy Birthday*, celebrating Martin Luther King, is very successful, both as a rallying point and as a contagious message and greeting.

The balance of *Hotter Than July* may not have quite the same level of excellence, but it is not quite filler material. *Did I Hear and Read My Mind* both border on repetitions without getting off the ground. In addition, the latter contains the album's only harmonica solo, which turns out to have a curiously childish sound, reminding one of *Fingertips*, etc. *Do Like You* again is a strong tune, but the song about Wonder Jr.'s prowess on the dance floor is too private for comfort, just as the adult tune does not connect with the lyrics' point of view of the child. *Cash In Your Face* deals with racial issues. I must confess that I find it hard to believe that affluent and educated blacks still face housing problems, but I am probably naive.

The nadir of the album though, is represented by *Lately*. Stevie Wonder has always been fond of the Big Ballad (he used to have a special ballad writer, Ron Miller), but

*Lately* is not grand, just bloated and howling in the dark. Still, *Hotter* forecasts sunny '80s for Wonder.

—gabel

## JACK DeJOHNETTE

**NEW DIRECTIONS IN EUROPE**—ECM

1-1157: *SALSA FOR EDDIE G.; WHERE OR WAYNE; BAYOU FEVER; MULTO SPILIAGIO.*

**Personnel:** DeJohnette, drums, piano; John Abercrombie, guitar and mandolin guitar; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Eddie Gomez, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

That Jack DeJohnette could begin the 1970s as de facto house drummer for CTI and close out the decade in a similar capacity for ECM says enough in itself for the breadth and depth of his individual talents. He has repeatedly shown himself able to function creatively within any context encompassed by those acronyms of extremes, but what sets him apart is his ability to remain melodic in settings like this group and the Gateway band (ECM 1061, 1105). Nobody else can maintain as high an energy level on traps with as little noise.

The same can be said of his cohorts here on their own instruments; the peculiar and particular grouping of New Directions puts Dej in the company of peers more productive than his other recent rosters, and a performance recording is most appropriate for this band because, as in all DeJohnette-led ensembles, the music is that of process



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as well as content. It seems significant that New Directions is, besides Gateway (which also includes Abercrombie), the only lineup with which DeJohnette has recorded more than one album.

New Directions' collective heritage is stupendous (what other group can claim as members alumni of both Bill Evans' trio and the Art Ensemble of Chicago?), and it can be argued that eclecticizing heretofore unfused traditions is what this unit is all about. Indeed, it could be said that that's what most of DeJohnette's music is about, but there's more to it than just that, even if it's only the finesse with which these players toss some often bizarre complexities among themselves, while not seeming to be any more obsessed than kids trading baseball cards.

As musicians' musicians are wont to do, they create no dearth of esoterics. Fortunately, and somewhat uniquely, this doesn't get out of hand. There is an ongoing coherence, intelligible even to ears less knowledgeable or adventurous than Manfred Eicher's. Abstraction is the order of things, but it is satin as well as spartan. Solos abound so that each musician—and they all have the chops to get away with it—can move to the fore at will without eclipsing the others.

Dynamic and textural parameters are virtually unlimited, but this should not be confused or equated with anarchy. In this rare grouping, method and madness are interchangeable in practice as well as theory. This characteristic comes across more often and more forcefully than on their debut album, a studio date from a year earlier which has the customary ECM clarity but not nearly as much magic of the moment, that quality of live music which can, and in this case does, result in circumstantial perfection. If New Directions is shooting from the hip, it's got damned good aim.

Fever and Wayne are repeat titles from the studio album, but there is little repetition. They formed the weaker side of that first effort and work more convincingly here. What previously seemed at once driven, constrained and forced, sounds more relaxed yet no less energetic here. There is more empty space, which gives the full portions more emphasis. DeJohnette's placidly lyrical piano introduction leads into Fever much more agreeably than the original version's no-time-to-waste hop-to-it, and everyone sounds more comprehensive and fully self-expressed on the lengthier conclusion to Wayne. Space is used more wittily and wisely, if not more economically. The tunes go on forever (only one is under 12 minutes), but the wandering is in search of a shared goal; there is little meandering, and the tangents explored are usually imaginative, always logical.

Salsa gives Gomez plenty of spotlight chances, in which he plays with uncanny precision all up and down the strings. He also passes the torch around generously, setting up runways from which all the others take off in turn.

Multo Spiliagio, a group composition—all the others are the drummer's—is a looser conversation than his tunes, and with a different message. Oregon and the Art

Ensemble pull these things off with an aplomb which comes from years of playing together; New Directions can handle it, but not without some backtracking or laying out by everyone at some point. It is, though, an enjoyable and telling exercise in fine-tuning to each others' frequencies.

All four of these guys have at least as much brains as brawn, and this context allows them to make good use of their taste as well as their virtuosity. The group sound is an expectable improvement over the better moments of their first album, and the loosening of compositional contours to accommodate ongoing suggestion works beautifully. Here, beauty is seldom pretty, but the coolly futuristic atmosphere is nicely polished. They take you out but don't leave you out there.

DeJohnette seems intrigued with the question of whether or not inside and outside must be mutually exclusive, and this album is a strong argument that they don't. He is in excellent company for getting a fully informed answer.

With so many lines in the water, how does he keep pulling in so many big ones.?

—hinely

## WEATHER REPORT

**NIGHT PASSAGE**—Arc/Columbia JC 36793; *NIGHT PASSAGE; DREAM CLOCK; PORT OF ENTRY; FORLORN; ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM; FAST CITY; THREE VIEWS OF A SECRET; MADAGASCAR.*

**Personnel:** Zawinul, keyboards; Wayne Shorter, saxophones; Jaco Pastorius, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Robert Thomas Jr., hand drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Now that the notorious one star controversy over Mr. Gone is finally fading into history, here's a new studio Weather Report for critics to kick around. Just kidding. But seriously, folks, this is no easy album to analyze. Much of the new Zawinul and Pastorius music is surprisingly subdued, in contrast to the rockier edge they've unleashed recently. And yet, as always, there are secrets emerging from this Weather Report album with each subsequent listening. Hot, sudden breezes of change . . . followed by calm reconsiderations of where contemporary jazz has taken us.

That Zawinul in particular is reexamining a portion of his jazz roots on *Night Passage* there can be little doubt, most obviously on the remake of the Ellington-Mills-Carney classic *Rockin' In Rhythm*. Here Shorter solos impressively on tenor while Zawinul impersonates Duke's entire orchestra with his "section" of throaty synthesizers. The emphasis is on swing, with Erskine and Pastorius pushing along gamely, Zawinul taking a rare and appreciated acoustic piano break, and the whole ensemble putting the big band sound into a remarkably futuristic perspective.

Likewise, cuts like *Night Passage* and *Fast City* contain traces of what might be dubbed "mod-bop," their snappy upbeat attitudes and distinctive chord changes giving flight to improvisation. The title track opens the

# RECORD REVIEWS

album with Erskine in high gear but Zawinul in slow motion, creating an offbeat, casual effect amid the hubbub. More straightahead is *Fast City*, designed in part to give Shorter his chance to blow. The famous tenor, of course, is still in fine form.

Shorter's own *Port Of Entry* (with live concert sound effects) and Zawinul's *Madagascar* (taped live in Japan) continue a Weather Report sound dating back to the *Black Market* days and beyond: ethnic folk rhythms and melodies out of which arise celebrations of worldwide culture, eclectic combinations of the primitive and the technological. Pastorius, like Shorter, contributes only one piece to this set, *Three Views Of A Secret*. Tenor sax elaborates on the bluesy lead by Jaco's bass, but again this is a strikingly mellow contrast to flamboyant Pastorius exercises like *Teen Town* and *Punk Jazz*.

The often sparse instrumentation on *Night Passage* is most pronounced on two very intriguing cuts, *Dream Clock* and *Forlorn*, both by Zawinul (no longer using his first name?). *Dream Clock* seems to suspend time with floating synthesizers and cymbal pings, Zawinul emoting "dream." Erskine ticking away like a clock. Pastorius introduces a colorful melody, then joins the rhythm section while Shorter unveils images with first his tenor, then the soprano. It's a beautiful, spacy six and a half minutes. *Forlorn* is equally unhurried in its reflections.

Overall, the album stays relatively low key and avoids sensationalism. Aside from perhaps *Port Of Entry*, *Night Passage* seems to lack the kind of showstopper that has been so conspicuous on studio albums right up through *Mr. Gone* and the new material debuted on last year's live *8:30*. But if *Night Passage* represents a momentary breather, even a look back amid Weather Report's race into the future, this band's sidelong glances contain more depth and soul than much of what we call jazz in the '80s. —henschen

## KENNY DAVERN

**THE HOT THREE**—Monmouth/Evergreen

7091: *FIDGETY FEET*; *CHIMES BLUES*; *SHIM-ME-SHA-WABBLE*; *LIBERTY INN DRAG*; *SOME OF THESE DAYS*; *BALLIN' THE JACK*; *SEE SEE RIDER*; *IT DON'T MEAN A THING*; *TENNESSEE WALTZ*; *MY BLUE HEAVEN*.

**Personnel:** Davern, clarinet; Art Hodes, piano; Don DeMicheal, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

What a joy it is to hear Kenny Davern in the type of setting he has always preferred! At his best as a soloist, the single blemish on his 25 year long recording career is the fact that his exultant sound has forever had to share the mike with others. From his virginal 1954 session with Jack Teagarden to his more recent ventures with Bob Wilber, Steve Lacy and Flip Phillips, the versatile reedman had been invariably cast as either a sideman or co-leader. This date, then, represents the first time that he has ever been permitted to shine completely on his own.

A very long time ago, during the throes of an uninspiring but long-tenured dixieland gig, the customarily self-assured Davern astonished this writer by announcing his forthcoming retirement from music . . . that is, if he did not succeed in "making it" by the age of 30! What the term "making it" means is, of course, highly subjective. But to all apparent indications at the time, the 23 year old clarinetist was certainly "making it" on his horn. However, the years of the late '50s were fraught with conflicting directions: trad jazz was still putting up a brave if somewhat withered front; and the resurgence of the newly dubbed "mainstream" style was once more opening the doors for such previously submerged giants as Hawkins, Webster and Eldridge. But even more to the point was the growing acceptance then being accorded such seeming renegades as Monk, Miles and Pee Wee Russell, and with their rising status inevitably came a corresponding re-evaluation of basic improvisatory procedures.

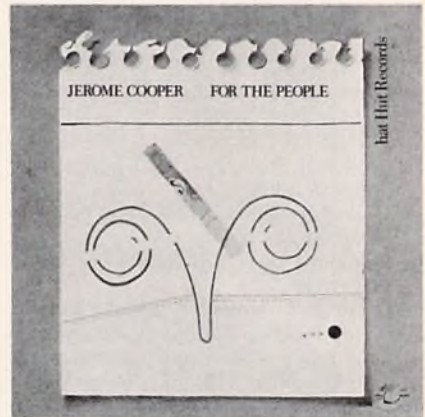
Slickness was out. And clarinetistic devices—born of equal parts Goodman and DeFrancoism—were to be shunned as something alien to the purity of jazz. So, in what direction was a well schooled but gutbucket inclined clarinetist to go?

Though befuddling to many, this stylistic conundrum was to be solved in time by the gifted, though as yet not completely solidified, young clarinetist Davern. Re-entrenchment in basic New Orleans fundamentals was, of course, to prove the ultimate answer, but Davern did not stop there. To the luxurious sweep of the grand masters—Dodds, Noone, Bechet, Nicholas, Bigard and Simeon—he added the peppery bite of Teschemacher, Russell and Cless. But throughout all of his stylistic investigations and incorporations, there has always remained the impress of the player's own personality.

Of all of the traditionally inspired clarinetists, Davern still ranks as the supreme individualist. To be sure, like the others, he continues to stand on the shoulders of many; but his own inviolable streak of irreverancy, his own affectionate disturbances of long unstirred shores, will ultimately mark him as one of the most unique players of this genre of jazz. This trio recording presents him at his best to date. In Art Hodes, he has a pianist whose roots go back to the very dawn of swinging jazz. Though never a virtuoso himself, Hodes has had long experience in compensating for the absence of a bass—indeed, with a player like him, it is almost a preferred condition. Moreover, his solos are exemplary, as always, for not only their Yancey-like incisiveness, but for their cake walkin' strut as well. DeMicheal, a former editor of *down beat*, may surprise older readers with his revealed competence as a drummer; but musicians have always known that there are mightier tools than the pen.

Davern has recently recorded two other trio albums in the company of pianist Ralph Sutton and drummer Gus Johnson. May he always sound as good in threesomes as here! (From M/E Records, 1697 Broadway, NYC, NY 10019.) —sohmer

## COMING AND/OR RECENT RELEASES



JEROME COOPER  
in duet feat. OLIVER LAKE  
FOR THE PEOPLE  
Recorded live May 12, 1979/New York N.Y.

HHHR07



DAUNIK LAZRO  
THE ENTRANCE GATES OF TSHEF PARK  
Solo recorded live November 5, 1979 Paris  
Duet with J.-J. Avenel recorded live  
November 24, 1979/Clichy

HHHR11



BURTON GREENE/ALAN SILVA  
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# RECORD REVIEWS

## SARAH VAUGHAN

### DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK TWO—

Pablo Today 2312 116: I AIN'T GOT NOTHING BUT THE BLUES; BLACK BUTTERFLY; CHELSEA BRIDGE; WHAT AM I HERE FOR; TONIGHT I SHALL SLEEP; ROCKS IN MY BED; I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD; EVERYTHING BUT YOU; MOOD INDIGO; IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING; PRELUDE TO A KISS.

**Personnel:** Vaughan, vocal; Waymon Reed, trumpet, flugelhorn; Frank Wess, flute; Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, vocal, alto sax; Mike Wofford, Jimmy Rowles, Lloyd Glenn, pianos; Joe Pass, Bucky Pizzarelli, Pee-wee Crayton, guitars; Andy Simkins, Bill Walker, bass; Grady Tate, Charles Randell, Roy McCurdy, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## ZOOT SIMS

### PASSION FLOWER—Pablo Today 2312

120: IN A MELLOW TONE; I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD; IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING; I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART; BLACK BUTTERFLY; PASSION FLOWER; BOJANGLES; YOUR LOVE HAS FADED; DO NOTHING TIL YOU HEAR FROM ME.

**Personnel:** Sims, tenor sax; Benny Carter, conductor, arranger; J. J. Johnson, Britt Woodman, Grover Mitchell, Benny Powell, trombones; Bobby Bryant, Al Aarons, Oscar Brashear, Earl Gardner, trumpets; Marshall Royal, alto sax; Frank Wess, alto sax, flute; Plas Johnson, Buddy Collette, tenor saxes; Jimmy Rowles, piano; John Collins, guitar; Andy Simkins, Michael Moore, John Heard, bass; Grady Tate, John Clay, Shelly Manne, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## QUADRANT

### ALL TOO SOON—Pablo Today 2312 117:

CARAVAN; SOPHISTICATED LADY; ALL TOO SOON; I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT; MOOD INDIGO; SOLITUDE; TAKE THE A TRAIN; MAIN STEM; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; JUST A SITTIN' AND A ROCKIN'; ROCKS IN MY BED.

**Personnel:** Joe Pass, guitar; Milt Jackson, vibes; Ray Brown, bass; Mickey Roker, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

## CLARK TERRY

### MEMORIES OF DUKE—Pablo Today 2312

118: HAPPY GO LUCKY LOCAL; I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART; COTTONTAIL; EVERYTHING BUT YOU; COME SUNDAY; ECHOES OF HARLEM; THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE; PASSION FLOWER; SOPHISTICATED LADY.

**Personnel:** Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Jack Wilson, piano; Joe Pass, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Frank Severino, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Norman Granz wasn't so closely associated

with Duke Ellington as were Irving Mills or Billy Strayhorn. Yet Granz did work on several projects with Duke, and seemed to pop up "at the various intersections of my road through life," as Ellington wrote, thanking Granz in *Music Is My Mistress*. With these four records Granz, in a way, says you're welcome.

The scope is tightly focused. All but one of the 40 titles was written between 1931 and '47, and all are pop tunes. Granz has avoided, with the exception of *Come Sunday*, works from Duke's major projects of that period (*Cotton Club Parade*, *Jump For Joy*, *Black Brown And Beige*) and concentrated heavily on tunes from the most fertile time of the band, 1938-'42.

So most of the numbers are well known and widely recorded—with some notable exceptions, and those make this series exceptional. There aren't many places to hear *Everything But You*, Ellington's collaboration with Harry James, or *Tonight I Shall Sleep*, a beautiful tune, written for Al Hibbler, which once showcased Tommy Dorsey with Ellington; or the swinger *Bojangles*, or Strayhorn's *Your Love Has Faded*.

The most impressive album in the series is Sarah Vaughan's, a mix of haunting small group pieces, lush string arrangements and big band swingers. It opens with Sarah all by herself, singing the first four lines of *Got Nothin' But The Blues*, before Joe Pass and Mike Wofford delicately join in. The three caress the blues, working through the melody in no hurry, until the piano and bass again drop out and Sarah closes it all alone.

They may pet that blues, but on *Rocks In My Bed* Sarah tries to slink down and grit out an urban blues feel. It's a nice try, but Sarah's pinot chardonnay voice really can't emulate a 98¢ muscatel. The tune doesn't really get down until "Cleanhead" Vinson joins in on alto. Vinson also takes a vocal chorus with Sarah humming behind him. The idea of mixing Vaughan and Vinson may bring shudders—but it works to an extent here.

In contrast, *Tonight I Shall Sleep* and *I Got It Bad* are positively lush. *Sleep* particularly succeeds: Sarah is backed by strings and a chorus is given to Frank Wess' flute.

Wess is back with flute and alto as part of a 17-piece band that takes up one side of Zoot Sims' *Passion Flower*. The arrangements of several standards don't emulate the Ellington sound; Benny Carter has not even included a baritone saxist, perhaps purposefully avoiding comparisons to Harry Carney. The arrangements aren't particularly adventurous, but Zoot is especially strong fronting the band.

This album is most evocative on its small group side, with just Zoot, bass, drums and piano. Listen to *Love Has Faded*, a 1939 tune that featured Johnny Hodges. While Hodges' alto stated the theme with a searing passion, Zoot on tenor plays it with more resigned melancholy, like a sympathetic old friend patting Hodges on the back, saying, "I know, Johnny, I know." Sims and Hodges speak through different horns, but have carried the same message.

This album leaves one wishing that Zoot had worked with Ellington's orchestra, for

his essential romanticism cries to have been directed by the Duke. *Faded* could have been written for Zoot; consider what might have resulted if Ellington had penned parts for him. It is that same romantic quality that makes Jimmy Rowles both a fine interpreter of Ellington and a premium choice as a Sims' sideman. *Passion Flower* delights in many ways.

Clark Terry did work with Ellington, joining the band in 1951 and remaining a mainstay for a decade. But curiously, none of the songs with which he is closely identified appear on *Memories Of Duke*; Terry, too, sticks with the '30s and '40s classics. Best is a version of *Everything But You*, which features some nice, lightly swinging guitar from Pass and interesting exchanges between Terry's flugelhorn and trumpet. For the most part, though, the LP is not very expansive. Frank Severino recalls the Ellington jungle sound on *Echoes Of Harlem*, and Terry, Pass and Jack Wilson ripple through an uptempo *Sophisticated Lady*, but the other widely known tunes here are given lackluster readings.

Pass and Ray Brown move from backup roles with Terry into more prominent positions in the piano-less quartet called *Quadrant*. An all Ellington date without a pianist or brass is an interesting concept. And the realization has its moments—Milt Jackson plays a moving version of *Sophisticated Lady* and lightly swings through *All Too Soon*, a 1940 piece written for Ben Webster. Yet compared to the adventurous efforts on other records in this series, *Quadrant* has little to say. Pass on his own (listen to his unaccompanied first chorus on *Mood Indigo*) is a more eloquent interpreter of Ellington than *Quadrant* together.

You may have to hunt for the really extraordinary moments on these four records, but the ones that occur are truly exciting. This mini-festival of Duke is a good idea, and even when it fails, it shows that there are still untried ways of presenting Ellington's music. It will be more of a success if it spurs other attempts. —dold

## BOB FLORENCE BIG BAND

### LIVE AT CONCERTS BY THE SEA—

Trend TR-523: BE BOP CHARLIE; LONELY CAROUSEL; EVIE; WIDE OPEN SPACES; I'LL REMEMBER; PARTY HEAVY.

**Personnel:** Florence, acoustic and electric (cuts 3.5) pianos; Buddy Childers, Steve Huffsteter, Nelson Hatt, Gene Goe, Warren Luening, trumpets; Charles Loper, Herbie Harper, Don Waldrop, Chauncey Welsh, trombones; Bob Cooper, Pete Christlieb, Ray Pizzi, Bill Perkins, Lee Callet, Kim Richmond, Bob Hardaway, reeds; Joel DiBartolo, bass; Nick Ceroli, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Big bands remain alive and thriving just about anywhere there are 15 professional musicians with a little swing and camaraderie in their blood. New York, L.A. and Chicago have been the hotbeds for rehearsal

bands, with the West Coast logging an increasingly impressive show on records over the past several years. Louie Bellson, Frankie Capp/Nat Pierce, and Bob Florence (yes, and Bill Holman and Ray Anthony among others) are at the helms of powerful, studio pro-studded ensembles, whose captured live performances can tingle the spine and almost blow dry the hair.

Florence's effort sparkles particularly, in part from the extremely crisp digital recording, but even more from his meticulously sculpted and brilliantly articulated arrangements. These concert-length performances, six to ten minutes each, culled from four nights at the Redondo Beach haven, balance limpid, tidy writing with relaxed yet focused solos from top flight big band veterans, at least three of whom (Hardaway, Harper, Perkins) go back with Florence as far as his 1959 Carlton LP. And Hardaway—who takes two amiable choruses to light up the opener, *Charlie*—held down the tenor chair with Si Zentner when Florence was his arranger at the turn of the '60s.

Florence writes and plays a lot. He spaces ensembles neatly (*Party's* sax and trumpet exchanges), and blows Basieish foil for the charts (on the ballads, he provides cushions for superb halcyon statements by Luening and Christlieb), thus avoiding heavyhandedness or overkill. Indeed, throughout the album there is the sense of a gentle and judicious intelligence at work, so that even fortissimo peaks—with ten brass, six reeds and rhythm coming at you—seem somehow polite and chary of expressing hot and dark sentiments like those Bill Holman and Johnny Richards conjured for Kenton, or which Mingus could suggest with five men.

Fine solos come, too, from Perkins and Pizzi, but the band is, after all, Florence's main ax. He carves guess-again contours on the blues (*Spaces, Party*), tongue-in-groove sections effortlessly (*Evie*, a bouncing samba to his wife; the bullish *Charlie* to KKGO's Chuck Niles), and polishes all to a high sheen. Childers and Ceroli, top and bottom, deliver exceptional bite and boot.

—bouchard

## TALKING HEADS

**REMAIN IN LIGHT**—Sire SRK 6095:

*BORN UNDER PUNCHES (THE HEAT GOES ON); CROSSEYED AND PAINLESS; THE GREAT CURVE; ONCE IN A LIFETIME; HOUSES IN MOTION; SEEN AND NOT SEEN; LISTENING WIND; THE OVERLOAD.*

**Personnel:** David Byrne, guitar, bass, keyboards, percussion; Adrian Belew, guitar; Jerry Harrison, guitar, bass, keyboards, percussion; Tina Weymouth, bass, keyboards, percussion; Brian Eno, bass, keyboards, percussion, vocals, producer; Chris Frantz, drums, percussion, keyboards; Jose Rossy, Robert Palmer, percussion; Nona Hendryx, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

Talk about the delightfully danceable Talking Heads album has centered around the music's African origins (underlined by a bibliography in the press kit), but when

David Byrne walks from his loft on Manhattan's lower east side, the box on the black kid's shoulder is more likely to be playing P-Funk than African drums, and that's an equal component of *Remain In Light's* intoxicating aura. While Byrne's scholastic brain frames the album with African designs, putting the listener within a resolutely even and propulsive recorded mix, the band's use of repetitive rhythmic structures to establish a groove is as old as funk. But the Heads also draw from a wider frame of reference that includes the jazz-funk that has flourished in New York clubs through bands like DeFunk and August Darnell's light-hearted Savannah Band spin-offs, and of course, the Heads' own formidable history. Brian Eno, who has helped produce all but their quirky pop debut, *Talking Heads: 77*, is a total collaborator this time around, writing the music with Byrne and making his own *Here Come The Warm Jets* another logical reference point for the new work.

Songs like *Born Under Punches* and *Crosseyed And Painless*, with words co-written by Byrne and Eno, blossom from a tight weave of rhythms and spices, from a broad spectrum of vocal and instrumental colors. Snatches of melody are spread atop a thick bed of bumping basses and shuffling percussion, with guitars scratching out clipped rhythms and occasionally, as on *Adrian Belew's* solo on *Crosseyed*, stepping out with the harsh beauty of the best rock. The words, like the songs' structures, spin back onto themselves like a cat chasing its tale, with Eno-dominated harmonies adding an ephemeral taste to the Heads' sound that complements Byrne's questing (albeit continually brooding) persona.

"Sometimes the world has a load of question," Byrne sings on *The Great Curve*. "Seems like the world knows nothing at all." Byrne is still the confused outsider, but he's shed the claustrophobic paranoia of *Fear Of Music* for the open-ended and self-aware view of somebody unwilling to accept simple poses as answers. In these songs, truth is most likely to be found in "water flowing underground," which is to say, in continuity, and in the inter-locking rhythms that take us down to the river.

What's more, Byrne's quicker to laugh at himself. *Once In A Lifetime* sketches beautiful-wife-bougeois-bliss, but when Byrne sings "And you may ask yourself—Well . . . how did I get here?" he sounds like nobody as much as Middle America's favorite yokel, Steve Martin.

There are a couple of misfires on *Remain In Light*, most notably the impossibly earnest *Seen And Not Seen* which sounds like avant garde Donovan, but the exceptionally rich recorded sound calms the listener until an image like "the wind in my heart" from *Listening Wind* catches one in trance-like absorption. In concert, the Talking Heads have consistently proved themselves the most rhythmically deft of the new wave, but *Remain In Light* is their first album to revel in that process. In this sense, then, old Talking Heads fans might be surprised to find that their new music is not a radical departure, but the truest Talking Heads of all.

—milward

## AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS

**SONG FOR MOTHER E**—Leo LR100: *I'M*

*NOT AFRAID; 3/4'S OF 4/4; HAVE MERCY UPON US CHANT; SONG FOR MOTHER E; THE REAL SIDE; THE IMMORTAL; INNER DESTRUCTION; I'M NOT AFRAID, REFRAIN.*

**Personnel:** Myers, piano, organ, giggle stick, voice; Pheeroan ak Laff, drums, gong, little instruments, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**POEMS FOR PIANO: THE PIANO**

**MUSIC OF MARION BROWN**—Sweet

*Earth SER 1005: TOOMER TRIPTYCH: SWEET EARTH FLYING, NOVEMBER COTTON FLOWER, EVENING SONG; SUNDAY COMEDOWN; GOLDEN LADY IN HER GRAHAM CRACKER WINDOW; SIENNA MAIMOUN; GOING HOME.*

**Personnel:** Myers, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

It's an understatement to note that from time to time, and not coincidentally, jazz has been informed by genuine spirituality. The music of Ellington, Mahalia Jackson, Mary Lou Williams, Dollar Brand, John Coltrane and McCoy Tyner, to cite but a few examples, has been illuminated by flames of another world. Now comes Amina Claudine Myers, who, like her progenitors, seems infused with other-natural powers.

*I'm Not Afraid* sets the tone of the first of these albums, as primeval piano chords and motifs move over a hypnotic bass line. *Have Mercy On Us Chant*, a cosmic hymn, is this album's longest and most elaborate piece. Ethereal organ resonances melt into open lines, then descend to a bass figure complemented by a sotto voce vocal refrain. A musical analogy of Blake's *Marriage Of Heaven And Hell*? Whatever, it's a moving, universal excursion. The most spiritual tone, though, is strikingly delineated on *Song For Mother E*. A spiritual (literally), it's one of those pristine pieces in which there's no wasted note or gratuitous gesture; every note falls naturally into place.

Throughout, Myers' playing is marked by determination and conviction, recalling again and again the stance of John Coltrane on releases like *A Love Supreme* and *Impressions*. *The Real Side* again pits purposeful voicings over a deliberate bass figure, and *The Immortal* is pure, celestial music, in the broadest sense. *Inner Distraction* moves one step further outside, as the music of the spheres comes close to being the cacophony of the spaces.

*Poems For Piano*, the second of these releases, takes us from the sacred to the secular as Myers interprets six compositions for piano by Marion Brown. Unlike Brown's experimental, sometimes fiery small group work, his piano music is ingenuous, often built on childlike bass patterns supporting fragile, song-like melodies.

The three pieces comprising *Toomer Triptych* were inspired by the Harlem Renaissance writer Jean Toomer, whose poetry Brown values for its lyricism. *Sweet Earth Flying*, an etude in singing, carefully delineated passion, evokes one of Brown's avowed

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keyboard influences, Erik Satie. November Cotton Flower is contained agitation; Myers progressively moves into dense, rhythmically jagged clusters, hallmarked by her clarity of purpose and execution. The third segment of this triptych, Evening Song, uses a circular bass pattern over which Myers carves technically excruciating runs, never losing the spirit of Brown's composition. Sunday Comedown continues Brown's strategy of employing simple bass patterns to support treble structures of varying density. Here Myers plays churchy cadences, gradually heightening their intensity until they pounce off the keyboard and recall the spiritual depth of the first of these releases.

Amina Claudine Myers won last year's International Jazz Critics Poll on organ in the TDWR category. The scope and intensity of her music portends even stronger showings in years to come. —balleras

## DAVID MURRAY

### LIVE AT THE LOWER MANHATTAN

OCEAN CLUB, VOLUME 1—India Navigation IN 1032: NEVADA'S THEME; BECHET'S BOUNCE; OBE; LET THE MUSIC TAKE YOU.

**Personnel:** Murray, tenor and soprano saxophones; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Fred Hopkins, bass; Phillip Wilson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

### LIVE, VOLUME 2—India Navigation IN

1044: FOR WALTER NORRIS; SANTA BARBARA AND CRENSHAW FOLLIES.

**Personnel:** as above.

★ ★ ★

### SWEET LOVELY—Black Saint BSR 0039:

CONEY ISLAND; CORAZON; THE HILL; HOPE/SCOPE.

**Personnel:** Murray, tenor saxophone; Fred Hopkins, bass; Steve McCall, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Tenorist David Murray is best known for his work with colleagues Oliver Lake, Julius Hemphill and Hamiet Bluiett in the World Saxophone Quartet. The 25 year old California native has also pursued a solo career, performing mainly with artists of the Chicago/St. Louis "out to lunch" axis. Sans regular tempos or chord structures, his brand of third generation "new" music places extraordinary demands upon players' creative ingenuity and powers of concentration. In his discursive, two volume concert with Lester Bowie at the Lower Manhattan Ocean Club, Murray seems to have stretched beyond the limits of his improvisatory resources, often resorting to baldly imitative borrowings from Coleman, Ayler and Shepp. His blowing on the trio album, Sweet Lovely, while still somewhat derivative, is tightly focused and compact, spotlighting Murray's omni-timbral dexterity in a cohesive rhythmic context.

Bowie frequently dominates the Live sessions, but he too rambles on at length, falling back on his familiar repertoire of halve-valve squawks and smears. The rhythm duo of Fred Hopkins and Phillip Wilson, far more effective on Murray's debut, Low Class Conspiracy (Adelphi), is largely at fault:

bassist Hopkins is unaccountably listless and groggy while Wilson fails to supply even a latent pulse, Surely the two sets could have been packaged together or condensed into one, avoiding the awkward sequencing of two long pieces on the second volume, following the four shorter ones, including the apparent finale, on the first.

Nevada's Theme begins with an amiably nostalgic waltz, but soon bogs down in aimless horn meanderings over amorphous drumming and a rubbery, almost literally monotonous bass. Bechet's Bounce is a cheerful dixieland strut a la the Art Ensemble, with burlesqued vocalisms and earthy folk motifs, but Murray's squealing soprano is less an homage to Bechet than an inadvertent parody. Murray descends into pensive obscurity on Butch Morris' jumpy composition Obe, then rises from the murk with war whoops and guttural bawling.

Morris also contributes the moody tribute For Walter Norris that opens Volume 2, an arhythmic concatenation of foghorn blasts, mouse squeaks, birdcalls, horselaughs and extended flutters. At long last Hopkins and Wilson build up a head of steam on the bluesy Santa Barbara And Crenshaw Follies as Murray digs in for a multiphonic cascade; unfortunately, the inspiration flags long before the final bar.

The studio setting of Sweet Lovely proves far more congenial with the groping, lost-at-sea quality of the Live session nowhere in evidence. Hopkins, lackluster at the Ocean Club, throbs buoyantly here in the company of Air-mate Steve McCall, whose precise and empathetic percussion firmly supports Murray's spacy lyricism. Murray's diversely intoned tenor is masterfully eloquent through a broad spectrum of moods and meters, from the loping modulations of Coney Island to the phosphorescent melancholy of Corazon, the morose questings of The Hill and the effusive fury of Hope/Scope.

Perhaps it is merely a matter of youth, but despite his technical finesse, Murray has yet to fully integrate the influences of his mentors and peers, repeatedly suggesting various AACM and BAG artists with a fidelity that approaches *deja vu*. In the inspirational setting of the WSQ, Murray has been able to extend his vision into unexplored territory, and that unit remains his most creative forum. —birnbaum

## JUDY ROBERTS

### THE OTHER WORLD—Inner City 1008:

THE RIVER MUST FLOW; THE OTHER WORLD; LAST TANGO IN PARIS; THE ROADRUNNER; IT'S ALWAYS 4 A.M.; SENIOR BLUES; NO TURNS; RAINBOW IN YOUR EYES; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT.

**Personnel:** Roberts, vocals, acoustic and electric keyboards, synthesizers; Neal Seroka, electric and acoustic guitars; Michael Fiorina, electric bass; David Derge, drums; Tony Carpenter, congas, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Here's some well chosen, purposefully executed pop and jazz material from Judy

Roberts, the Chicago-based keyboardist and vocalist who for over a decade has somehow escaped the full attention she deserves. Perhaps this, her second release, will substantiate her talents both as a shaper of polished music and as an equally serious jazz musician.

Indeed, there's much here to take seriously. Leon Russell's *Rainbow In Your Eyes* evokes Robert's sardonic twists on its trite lyric, elicits a dancing electric piano solo and ends in bright, intricate vocal/synthesizer unison scating, as lightweight pop becomes substantial artifact. *The Other World* is similarly livened by Roberts' Latinish vocal doublings. Horace Silver's *Senior Blues* gets a peppery resurrection as Roberts slyly draws life from bland lyrics. She then lays into functional blues lines which lace into tense, freshly voiced chordal passages.

There's no problem at all with the lyrics to Gato Barbieri's *Last Tango In Paris*. Taking the piece in a deliberate, smoldering tempo, Roberts first reads through Dory Previn's Sartre-like, underworldly setting of this melody. Lines like "Don't you know that the blood in your veins/ Is as lifeless as yesterday's rain?" cut to the bone. After an otherworldly electric piano solo, Roberts returns to debut John Tomme's lush French translation of Previn's lyrics. A haunting performance.

It's Always 4 A.M., an obscure Sammy Cahn and Ron Anthony torch song, continues *Last Tango's* despondent mood as Roberts intones its worldly, grim lyrics in breathy phrases. Another midnight song, 'Round Midnight, receives a surprisingly literal interpretation, saved by Roberts' fragile vocal lines and sensitive accompaniment. Neal Seroka, whose guitar style shifts between country-tinged picking and sophisticated modal patterns, contributes two bread and butter tunes. *The Roadrunner*, a freewheeling two-beat stomper with nutty guitar/vocal unisons, is complemented by the ironically titled *No Turns*, a downhill race skidding on longish, Lorberish lines.

Judy Roberts' first album made some tantalizing promises which *The Other World* keeps while raising provocative speculation about what may lie ahead for her. —balleras

## GEORGE CABLES

### CABLES VISION—Contemporary 14001:

MORNING SONG; I TOLD YOU SO; BYRD-LIKE; VOODOO LADY; THE STROLL; INNER GLOW.

**Personnel:** Cables, piano, electric piano; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet, flugelhorn; Ernie Watts, tenor and soprano saxophones; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Tony Dumas, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Vince Charles, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

This may be George Cables' first solo album, but it strains definition to consider it his first as a leader. For a coming-out party, *Cables Vision* comes off more like a Muse or Bee Hive style blowing session, with only titular direction from the "leader." There is nothing wrong with such equanimity when it is intended—but that doesn't seem to be the case here. After choosing his band and

selections and writing copious liner notes lauding both. Cables takes an oddly low profile on vinyl. This good album does little to vault Cables into the ranks of leaders, rather reinforcing the prevailing image of him: virtuoso sideman.

Cables has put in tours of duty with the polar likes of Lenny White and Dexter Gordon, but it is fitting this album reunites him with a third ex-boss, Freddie Hubbard. For, like Hubbard, Cables has wandered through styles proficiently without getting a fix on his own direction. In the case of *Cables' Vision*, he sets out bookends of fusion (album-opening *Morning Song* and -closing *Inner Glow*) and, between them, acoustic styles ranging from bop to Caribbean to pensive duet. For all that diversity, the results seem less a deliberately eclectic display, à la Tony Williams' *Joy Of Flying*, than a scattershot, albeit enjoyable, sampler.

*I Told You So*, perhaps the finest cut, also is the most paradoxical. Here is a fine tune, in a shimmering, delicate arrangement: Hubbard, marvelously controlled, playfully slurs the melody, ending phrases with chromatic splashes; Hutcherson mixes light double-stops with rapidly staggered scales; Watts and Dumas contribute strong solos. And yet the questions remain: why has Cables chosen a composition he recorded less than two years ago with Gordon? And why has he limited himself to a brief solo, leaving even the initial theme statement to Hutcherson?

One could make similar queries about several other cuts, except one or another sideman invariably steps in to carry the burden. Hubbard—sifting bop through his own cool sieve, balancing spitfire and grace—delivers his Byrdlike. Watts rescues *Inner Glow*, essentially just a fusion riff, with the volume dynamics and unadorned emotion reminiscent of Grover Washington Jr.

Cables isn't exactly missing in action throughout. His single note line on *I Told You So* indicates his roots run as deeply to guitarists like Charlie Christian or Jim Hall as to any pianist. His spare, deftly placed chords on Byrdlike evoke Basie. And his dissonant version of stride piano—unpredictable change hiding at the close of each phrase—steals *The Stroll* from Hutcherson, its composer.

But the sum of those solos doesn't negate the curious sabbaticals Cables takes between them. Cables is an empathetic sideman but a reticent leader: everybody's best friend who doesn't dare losing buddies by asserting himself. *Cables' Vision*, more than being a glib pun, hints at an irony: the absence of cogent, whole vision here. —freedman

## HADEN/GARBAREK/ GISMONTI

**MAGICO**—ECM 1-1151: *BAILARINA*; *MAGICO*; *SILENCE*; *SPOR*; *PALHAÇO*.

**Personnel:** Charlie Haden, bass; Jan Garbarek, saxophones; Egberto Gismonti, guitars, piano.

★ ★ ½

Conceptually, *Magico* is an exhibit in the case of World Music, a heady, moody collaboration between musicians of three

continents. Technically, it is a fine and carefully—perhaps even cautiously—played session, honed to a razor's edginess. Emotionally, however, I can't get next to it: it is as arcane and fey as much of the ECM corpus, and is imbued with a studied hush and false intimacy that ultimately cloy and bores. To give the label and artists their due, all three have performed more convincingly on ECM: Garbarek with Keith Jarrett, Haden with Old and New Dreams, Gismonti on three other dates, notably with percussionist Nana Vasconcelos, who might have relaxed and highlighted this sleepy yet circumspect date. *Magico* holds the delicacy and fine texturing of Gismonti's other albums, but lacks the intimate fire; compare *Café* from *Sol Do Meio Dia*, where Garbarek and Ralph Towner infuse the performance with erotic sway.

Side one has some life to it and dances, especially on *Bailarina*, the opener, the longest track and the sole non-original. Its languid theme is keened intensely (and, as usual, varied but little) by Garbarek in his classical, vibrato-laden upper register, while bass and guitar keep a lovely, pulsating flow of delicate arpeggios and shifting counterpoint. Gismonti solos with nervous arpeggios over woody tabla-like accents on bass and guitar, and Haden draws from his soul-well a symmetrical, shimmering cadenza to end it. The title track again has some superior bottomsounding by Haden, his descending line being more memorable than the tune. Gismonti duets with himself, the omnipresent arpeggios balanced, for once on this album, with a brief, lyric line, his long suit on earlier albums. He is muct too self-effacing throughout.

Side two plods relentlessly, a torturous soporific: three dead-slow ballads which neither move nor are moving. Haden's *Silence* is a 16 chord skeleton of a tune which not even the masterful bassist manages to leaven. It's an unvarnished ostinato diatonic progression, and it falls flat. *Spor* opens with Gismonti noodling around the lyrical theme, which he leaves to Haden, then Garbarek. *Palhaço* is a pretty tune, but that's all. Gismonti and Haden have led vital dates in the past so extremely well, it seems a shame that their first collaboration frees their penchants for heavy classicism and hallowed introspection—to such a degree that half the album dies stillborn.

—bouchard

## MICHAEL MANTLER

**MORE MOVIES**—Watt/10: *MOVIE NINE*; *THE SINKING SPELL*; *MOVIE ELEVEN*; *WILL WE MEET TONIGHT?*; *MOVIE THIRTEEN*; *THE DOUBTFUL GUEST*; *MOVIE FIFTEEN*; *MOVIE FOURTEEN*; *MOVIE TEN*; *MOVIE TWELVE*.

**Personnel:** Mantler, trumpet; Gary Windo, tenor sax; Carla Bley, piano, organ; Philip Catherine, guitar; Steve Swallow, bass guitar; D. Sharpe, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

More audio movies means more of Michael Mantler's keen sense of the dramatic. Like his Watt Records companion *Carla Bley*, Mantler is slowly developing a large body of

work that shows a fascinating creative evolution from one album to another. Mantler's new music will no doubt appeal to surveyors of the frontiers between jazz and experimental rock.

*More Movies* is an obvious sequel to 1978's *Movies*; even the packaging is similar. The casting, though, is slightly different. In episode one, Mantler, Bley and Swallow were aided by Larry Coryell and Tony Williams, both of whom turned in great performances. This time, Coryell pal Philip Catherine slides into the guitar spotlight, D. Sharpe attempts to understudy Williams, and enter the leading tenor, saxophonist Gary Windo, late of Carla's wild and crazy big band and Pam Windo's *Shades*.

Despite the addition of Windo's gritty horn (Carla played some tenor on the last one), *More Movies* is about as dynamic as the first run *Movies*. Again, Mantler's mini-soundtracks are alternately foreboding and relieving, with the group working well together. Subtle, somber tones do indeed provide a kind of visual effect for the listener. You have a protagonist and a psychological plot, with no easy resolution. Of course, Mantler and Bley have always had a passion for the theatrical arts of Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Edward Gorey and the like.

Comparatively, the earlier of these two discs had more impact simply because its concept was new, and also because of particularly sincere efforts by Coryell and Williams. *More Movies* is more of the same though, so if you raved about the first one, you'll undoubtedly want to sit through this rerun. It's just not all that often that we get bold, unedited fusion anymore.—henschen

## DUKE JORDAN

**LOVER MAN**—Steeple Chase 1127: *DIG*; *DANCER'S CALL*; *LOVE TRANE*; *LOVER MAN*; *THEY SAY IT'S WONDERFUL*; *OUT OF NOWHERE*.

**Personnel:** Jordan, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**CHANGE A PACE**—Steeple Chase 1135: *CHANGE A PACE*; *I THOUGHT YOU'D CALL TODAY*; *DOUBLE SCOTCH*; *MISS KISSED*; *DIAMOND STUD*; *IT'S HARD TO KNOW*.

**Personnel:** Jordan, piano; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pederson, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

**DUKE'S ARTISTRY**—Steeple Chase 1103: *MIDNIGHT MOONLIGHT*; *MY HEART SKIPS A BEAT*; *THINKING OF YOU*; *LADY DINGBAT*; *MIDNITE BUMP*; *DOIDGE CITY ROOTS*.

**Personnel:** Jordan, piano; Art Farmer; flugelhorn; David Friesen, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

It would be easy to indict Americans for equating creativity with the obvious pioneers of "brave new perspectives," while ignoring the subtle creative contributions wrought within more traditional boundaries. Unless our art grabs us, we tend to pass it by. That's why a great American mainstream jazz pianist like Jordan—whose music is packed with unique nooks and crannies—must depend on Europeans and

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the Japanese for the recognition he deserves. And why we must depend on foreign-based labels like SteepleChase to document his music with any regularity.

These albums graphically illustrate that Jordan has been in excellent form since the mid '70s, after the rather lean '60s. On one hand we hear Jordan as the master bop stylist full of blues oriented uptempo improvisations that are forceful and hard swinging. Here his music is effervescent and exciting. But he also has a quiet, extremely lyrical side, defined by the introspective minimalism of his delicate ballads. Taken together these two perspectives paint a portrait of one of the most interesting, well rounded and creative mainstream pianists alive.

If you only remember Jordan as the potent bop pianist of Bird's classic Dial and Savoy recordings, *Lover Man* shouldn't disappoint you in the least. Of the three releases this is the best representation of Jordan's full range. Opening with Miles Davis' *Dig*, the pianist channels a vital flow of interesting phrases and flawlessly driving swing into a timeless bop solo. And because the trio had already warmed up that day by recording the quintet date *Duke's Delight*, the group is highly relaxed, inspired and lucid. Wryly, Jordan next bounces into the funky off beat accents of *Dancer's Call*, where he proceeds to demonstrate the capsulization of a wide variety of pianistic approaches into one convincing solo. Churning out two choruses of gutsy blues lines, he immediately changes pace with two more choruses marked by elegantly sinuous 16th note runs, leading directly into two choruses of gritty barrelhouse block chording. The master bassist Jones shines on *Love Trane*, creating a beautiful solo using the rhythmic contours of Jordan's melody for material. But by attempting a similar construction, the pianist gets somewhat caught in repetition.

In nice contrast to side one, the second side features a more serene aspect of Jordan's music. Bringing the tempos way down, the trio explores the pastoral ballad settings of the title tune and *Wonderful*. Majestically supported by Jones and Foster, Jordan renders a distinctive version of the standard *Out Of Nowhere*, taken at a brighter tempo than Parker's classic interpretation. Jordan's *Lover Man* and *Nowhere* are classics in their own rights—two of the best renditions of each I've ever heard. The bittersweet longing and lush chord voicings conjure *Lover Man* with just the perfect feel for the tune. Overall, this is one of the most compelling piano trio recordings I've come across in years—and it's no coincidence that a number of the others are also on SteepleChase.

*Duke's Artistry* and *Change A Pace* are basically journeys into Jordan's beautiful but often painful world of ballads. Although Farmer's soft attack and often cool flugelhorn style would seem an apt complement to Jordan's ballads, the pianist creates the most dense numbers with just bass and drums, especially with the magnificent understanding of NHOP and Hart behind him. Unfortunately, Farmer is not at his best; his playing becomes tentative and technically unsound at points. The other basic problem with

*Duke's Artistry* is that it gets too somnambulist after a while. For a better date with horns I recommend *Duke's Delight*.

Conceptually, Jordan's ballad melodies refuse to stop at the head, extending through his improvisations. His solos become indigenous parts of his overall composition, preserving the emotional and thematic integrity of the melody. *I Thought You'd Call Today*, *Miss Kissed* and *It's Hard To Know*, from *Change A Pace*, beautifully illustrate the essence of a Jordan ballad. He uses simplicity as an intrinsic virtue, and the sophistication of his music lies in the gradually lyrical contours of his melodies, his superb choices of harmonic structure and the way he weaves horizontal and linear considerations into such seamless fabrics. Add to that Jordan's ability to pull much emotion from his ballads, and you have one of the best balladeers in jazz. I've simply never heard anything quite like the way he captures a lover's melancholy anguish without being sentimental on *Call Today*. *Change*, *Double Scotch* and *Diamond Stud* come to one's emotional rescue, as pick-me-ups spaced between the ballads. Jordan's playful shifts of meter between 3/4 and 4/4 are particularly effective.

Jordan's music may not unfold in initial impact, but stay with it and you will find that the subtle textures and flavors will soon seduce you. —tinder

## CARMEN MCRAE

**I'M COMING HOME AGAIN**—Buddah B2D 6501: *I'M COMING HOME AGAIN; BURST IN WITH THE DAWN; I NEED YOU IN MY LIFE; COME IN FROM THE RAIN; I WON'T LAST A DAY WITHOUT YOU; WON'TCHA STAY WITH ME; MR. MAGIC (TWO VERSIONS); EVERYTHING MUST CHANGE; SWEET ALBIS; THE MASQUERADE IS OVER; I'D RATHER LEAVE WHILE I'M IN LOVE; NEW YORK STATE OF MIND.*

**Personnel:** McRae, vocals; Hank Crawford, alto sax; Jorge Dalto, piano; Cornell Dupree, guitar; Freddie Hubbard, Virgil Jones, Lew Soloff, trumpets; flugelhorn; Hubert Laws, flute, piccolo; Grover Washington Jr., soprano sax; Alex Foster, tenor sax; Tom Malone, Janice Robinson, trombones; Buster Williams, bass; Errol "Crusher" Bennett, percussion; Mario E. Sprouse, Rhodes piano, arranger, conductor; *The String Reunion*; background vocals.

★ ★ ½

## ANITA O'DAY

**LIVE AT THE CITY**—Emily Records 102479: *P'TOWN; BLUE SKIES; WHAT ARE YOU DOING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?; IN A MELLO-TONE; HERSHEY BAR; EMILY; LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE; CLOSE YOUR EYES; SHAKIN' THE BLUES AWAY; FOUR BROTHERS.*

**Personnel:** O'Day, vocals; Greg Smith, baritone sax, flute; Norman Simmons, piano; Rob Fisher, bass; John Poole, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

The only things of any distinction and

character on McRae's two record set are her voice and Laws' flute (he appears on four cuts). Those aren't enough to save these mostly nothing tunes and undistinguished arrangements, and so this is a routine McRae album. Her usually fine sense of choosing quality tunes—even little known ones—as well as her characteristic level of musicianship, are better displayed on the two record Atlantic set *Great American Songbook*, where she is accompanied merely by a piano trio led by Jimmie Rowles. Here, she often sings with pleasing intimacy, but on *Magic* (first try) and *Masquerade* her voice often sounds strained. However, she does strengthen *Leave* with some pleading passion and *Magic* (number two) with relaxed warmth.

Each of the 12 songs is by different writers, yet none really stands out from the others. All come, if not from the same mind, from the same state of mind—that dull, superficial romanticism that characterizes most ballad writing today. The melodies never do anything unexpected that would implant them in the memory. (Interestingly, although the selections suggest a commercial appeal, the titles are not listed on the front or back covers.)

Instrumental solos (and on *Alibis* Williams is even painfully flat) are unmemorable except for Laws, who again shows he is the greatest thing to ever happen to flute playing in jazz. He puts real life into the 14 minute second version of *Magic*, with a solo that follows a switch to disco, with vocal chorus, more than nine minutes into the track. His tone is rich and pure, his range extensive, his phrasing swings with both force and subtlety, and his ideas flow smoothly. The beat and rhythmic phrases beneath are repetitious, but Laws isn't. This version of *Magic* has a lighter, looser feel than the first, and McRae's voice has none of the tightness that mars version one.

But the overall length of *Magic II*, like so much about this release—two records when one would be sufficient, the arrangements which stick in strings and occasionally a choir—is overdone. The violins, typical of jazz use of strings, are too sweet, although they do have a nice dark sound beneath the winds on the opening of *Home*. Except for that one solo by Laws, this album, although not offensively poor, tends to drift unnoticed by the ear.

A self produced album on one's own label, as a matter of economics, avoids such over production, although it can be self indulgent in other ways. O'Day's San Francisco club recording of October 1979 is marred by patter that one would never want to hear a second time—discussions of tempo, what is going to be sung next, whether the recording engineer is ready, a false start, verifying tones. When the singer starts to sing, all is forgiven. O'Day has more strong points than any other jazz singer today—a fantastic sense of time, the most musical scattling of anyone, sensitive handling of words, a flexible, richly husky voice—and this extremely varied program shows off her every aspect to best advantage. Even *Rest Of Your Life* comes across with a fresh depth, aided by Smith's flute behind her vocal.

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Blue Skies is lightly swung, complete with a scat chorus; Close is done as a bossa nova with Smith playing a bit of Tin Tin Deo on baritone as a background riff; Johnny Mandel's Hershey Bar is scatted in unison with bari; Emily is done with a warm lilt; Four Brothers is scatted joyously in harmony with Simmons, and so on.

But O'Day and the material aren't the only strong points about this album. Pianist Simmons, especially with a tasteful flow of notes on Close, shows that he deserves an album of his own and Smith's baritone work has a deep yet dancing sound, with little of that awkwardness that characterizes all too many baritone players. His flute playing is less secure.

Everything here—from the Little Orphan Annie radio theme song of the '30s to Four Brothers—is sung with moving musical insight. Ms. O'Day could probably even bring life to some of those songs that drown Carmen McRae. It's a shame that O'Day, who began as a big band singer and made some great LPs with full orchestra in the late '50s, can't show that side of her talent today, as well as her combo sound. —de muth

glistening professionalism, the LP is almost totally dull and unswinging from start to finish. And that is a real problem. Baltazar is a fine, fluent player without any strong or distinctive qualities to set him apart from other first class reed men. His approach to ballads is to rely heavily on double and triple time arpeggios along with a lot of grace notes. His tone is strong and declarative, but doesn't convey warmth. On pieces such as A Train, he swings with a nice blend of intensity and relaxation. Unfortunately the band sounds a bit cool and mechanical, except for a few brief bars toward the end where the reeds really start to take wing.

Well intentioned blandness is not necessarily a sin these days, certainly not when so many groups are passing off a lot of fusion LPs as if they were jazz. But I find it difficult to find any basis on which to strongly recommend this record, aside from the fact that it's well crafted. Sorry, craftsmanship is not enough. —mcdonough

## FREDDIE HUBBARD

SKAGLY—Columbia FC-36418: HAPPINESS IS NOW; THEME FROM SUMMER OF '42 (THE SUMMER KNOWS); CASCAIS; SKAGLY; RUSTIC CELEBRATION.

**Personnel:** Hubbard, trumpet, flugelhorn; Hadley Caliman, tenor sax, flute; Billy Childs, keyboards; Larry Klein, electric and acoustic basses; Carl Burnett, drums; George Duke, Clavinet (cut 4); Jeff Baxter, guitar (4); Paulinho da Costa, percussion (3,4); Philip Ranelin, trombone.

★ ★ ½

Listening to Freddie Hubbard's new album points up that there is indeed a West Coast and an East Coast sound. I hate to categorize, but there's no getting away from Skagly being a perfect example of that laid back California style of jazz.

Hubbard's work is never second rate, nor is it uninteresting. However, here one waits for something more to happen. There is never a moment of real fire, none of the intensity that has characterized Hubbard's best playing—mostly in his pre California days. Is this the result of his finally recording with his regular group? Up until now he has either been featured with his contemporaries, or has drawn together several compatible musicians for each recording date.

His current compadres are all longtime Californians, and may have a propensity for the mellower sounds. Although they exhibit empathy, nobody really seems to stimulate anyone else. Only on Cascais, when Paulinho da Costa Latinates an otherwise straightahead beat and Ranelin adds his trombone to the tenor and trumpet, so a hint of the old Jazz Messengers (of which Hubbard was a member in the early '60s) can be detected. In the trumpet solo, Hubbard runs the full range of his instrument, with characteristic shivers and quivers.

Surprisingly, Hubbard seems most at home on the title track, which has all the ingredients of pure funk. Some moments are reminiscent of those first forays Miles Davis made into the land of rock and electronics.

## GABE BALTAZAR

### STAN KENTON PRESENTS GABE

BALTAZAR—Creative World CW 3005:

WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME AGAIN; WHAT'S NEW; GABE; TIME FOR LOVE; TAKE THE A TRAIN; LOVE SONG; SPANISH BOOTS.

**Personnel:** Baltazar, alto sax; John Audion, Ray Triscari, Conte Candoli, John Madrid, trumpets; Tom Shepard, Gil Falco, George Roberts, trombones; Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, Bill Green, Jack Nimitz, Bill Perkins, Phil Ayling, reeds; Vince DeRosa, Richard Perissi, Art Maebe, George Price, french horns; Peter Jolly, piano; Chuck Domanico, bass; Tom Tedesco, guitar; Dale Anderson, percussion; Steve Schaeffer, Earl Palmer, drums; 12 strings and harp.

★ ★ ½

Gabe Baltazar was a Kenton sideman during the early '60s. Since those far off days little has been heard of him save by residents of Hawaii, where he has spent most of his career. But evidently the late Kenton thought well enough of him to bring him to light via this album. The large orchestra is not billed under anybody's direction in particular, least of all Baltazar's. Instead, it seems to be merely an ad hoc studio lineup assembled to provide backup for Baltazar and try out a few arrangements which may or may not be newly prepared for this project.

It's a stellar piece of work by all concerned—big band craftsmanship of the highest order, generally well recorded, except for the drums. The handful of breaks on A Train and Spanish Boots sound like someone pelting flour sacks with wet paper towels. There is no resonance or openness to give a musical quality to the sound. But aside from that, there is little room to fault the care and quality of the work.

The only real problem is that for all its



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Freddie has often been compared to Miles, and maybe his direction these days bears this out, but then he, too, mined that vein during his CTI tenure.

Billy Childs is a sensitive pianist and he is well featured acoustically on *Theme From Summer Of '42*. Here, Hubbard's flugelhorn is most controlled, although one senses the man's innate humor in his laugh-like trills. Caliman, who has led many of his own dates, is in fine form on tenor and shows an entirely personal flute style on *Cascais*.

In fact, taken separately, all of these musicians give first rate performances—but nothing ever seems to get off the ground. Even the guest appearance of George Duke does nothing to enhance the character of the

ensemble. The choice of material may be a major factor. Only two of the compositions are Hubbard's: *Skagly and Happiness Is Now*. Of the others, bass player Larry Klein's *Cascais* is one of the more melodically interesting. *Rustic Celebration*, by Childs, is the only tune that offers something different in terms of odd changes, unusual pauses and transitions. Although Freddie's solo on this is fluid, it never jumps out, remaining quite low key throughout.

Judged purely for commercial appeal, Skagly scores—but it's not the Freddie Hubbard I prefer. He can be very challenging to the ears and the soul. But Skagly just doesn't do it; it's more easy listening background music. —nemko-graham

## AL JARREAU

**THIS TIME**—Warner Brothers BSK 3434: *NEVER GIVIN' UP*; *GIMME WHAT YOU GOT*; *LOVE IS REAL*; *ALONZO*; (*IF I COULD ONLY*) *CHANGE YOUR MIND*; *SPAIN (I CAN RECALL)*; *DISTRACTED*; *YOUR SWEET LOVE*; (*A RHYME*) *THIS TIME*.

**Personnel:** Jarreau, all vocals; Michael Omartian, string synthesizers; Greg Mathieson, acoustic piano, string synthesizers; Tom Canning, acoustic piano, electric piano; David Foster, acoustic piano, electric piano; George Duke, electric piano (cut 7); Larry Williams, electric piano, synthesizers (6); Abe Laboriel, bass; Ralph Humphrey, Carlos Vega, Steve Gadd, drums; Oscar Neves, (1), Earl Klugh, (9), gut-string guitar; Dean Parks, Jay Graydon, electric guitars; Jerry Hey, flugelhorn, trumpet; Chuck Findley, trumpet; Bill Reichenbach, trombone; Lon Price, alto sax (7); Les Thompson, harmonica (5).

★ ★ ★ ½

## MICHAEL FRANKS

**ONE BAD HABIT**—Warner Brothers BSK 3427: *BASEBALL*; *INSIDE YOU*; *ALL DRESSED UP WITH NOWHERE TO GO*; *LOTUS BLOSSOM*; *ON MY WAY HOME TO YOU*; *ONE BAD HABIT*; *LOVING YOU MORE AND MORE*; *STILL LIFE*; *HE TELLS HIMSELF HE'S HAPPY*.

**Personnel:** Franks, lead vocals; Tennyson Stephens, Don Grolnick, electric piano, Clavinet, acoustic piano; Neil Jason, Dennis Belfield, bass; Rick Marotta, drums; Andre Fischer, drums, percussion; David Spinozza, acoustic, electric guitars; Rick Zunigar, Hugh McCracken (cut 3), George Sopuch (5), Eric Gale, guitars; Ray Armando, percussion, congas (3); Lenny Castro, percussion; Larry Williams, synthesizers; Jerry Hey, flugelhorn; Eddie Gomez, acoustic bass (8).

★ ★ ★ ½

## VAN MORRISON

**COMMON ONE**—Warner Brothers BSK 3462: *HAUNTS OF ANCIENT PEACE*; *SUMMERTIME IN ENGLAND*; *SATISFIED*; *WILD HONEY*; *SPIRIT*; *WHEN HEART IS OPEN*.

**Personnel:** Morrison, vocals; John Allair, keyboards; David Hayes, bass; Peter Van Hooke, drums; Herbie Armstrong, acoustic, electric rhythm guitar; Mick Cox, lead guitar; Mark Isham, trumpet, flugelhorn; Pee Wee Ellis, saxophone, flute, arranger.

★ ★ ★ ★

Al Jarreau, Michael Franks and Van Morrison are all singers of distinction (meaning they are immediately recognizable); Jarreau is certainly the most gifted of the three while Morrison has proven over the years the usefulness of his limited vocal ability as Franks, but in a much less formidable way. Hence, it is not surprising that Franks has produced the most commercial records in terms of pop and airplay. Jarreau does not lag far behind in this category, though he has never been one to make a fool out of himself. Morrison, on the other hand, has always seemed to do exactly whatever he pleased, which has been as much responsible for his cult following as it has for his lack of recent chart success. This in mind, the albums each have released of late are hardly startling.

Jarreau's *This Time*, his fifth album, is on commercial par with last year's *All Fly Home*, though neither compare to the Milwaukee native's gut-wrenching 1975 debut, *We Got By*. Somewhere in the studio shuffle, Jarreau's uncommon brand of emotionalism has been, if not lost, swept under the proverbial rug. This is, however, not to say that there are not heart rendering moments on the date. Alonzo features the singer sitting alone, center stage, on a stool, the spotlight zeroing in on his profile; as strings swirl by, Jarreau repeats, "Alonzo declared he must reach to heaven—for heaven," each time breathing new meaning into what is at best an ambiguity. On the jazz-pop front, no other vocalist so effectively converts schmaltz into sentiment; Jarreau's uncanny ability to pull off five other fill'n'luff-type numbers on the record further attests to that.

There are also genuinely solid tracks here: *Love Is Real*, for its tongue in cheek play between a scatting Jarreau and Jerry Hey's Sawwind horns; *Distracted*, for its car-radio funkiness, and *Spain*, for a glimpse of what Jarreau is really about, are worth the list price. On the latter, he discards the Arp programming and straitjacket arrangements that characterize Jay Graydon's silk-glove production in favor of an acoustic interpreta-

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tion that amounts to a bravo performance—comparable to his languid cover of the Beatles' *She's Leaving Home* on *All Fly Home*. The shame is that Al doesn't exercise his voice in such fashion more often.

Franks will never suffer from this kind of criticism. The whispery (bordering on wimpy) singer/songwriter and champion of the microwave-and-quiche set, who frighteningly depends on so-called commercial jazz outlets for airplay, has acquired a sizable suburban following on the strength of cutely-titled and coyly-written love songs. Double entendres are his favorite ploy as with two tracks here: *Baseball*, an overstated pairing of our two national pastimes, and *Still Life*, a more clever match of art and romance, both reminiscent of his earlier kitchen kitsch, *Popsicle Toes*. Franks leaves Iraq and Iran to the newscasters; his lyrics are more suited for the midday soap crowd.

*One Bad Habit* is danceable, at times, and, thanks to the capable group of studio funksters on hand, even gets down. *All Dressed Up* and *He Tells Himself* are side orders of sophisticated funk that would make Quincy Jones proud. Arranged by Seawind's Larry Williams and, again, Jerry Hey (who've recently been working with none other than Q. Jones on projects for Michael Jackson and Rufus), they are easily the liveliest cuts on an otherwise too-laid-back-for-your-own-good album.

Van Morrison's *Common One* is laid back, too, even mellow (Van mellow?), but that's where the analogy stops. As he has aged, Van has increasingly begun to muse—kick back his heels on the front porch, dog by his side, book in hand, just plain contemplate it all. Van is a '60s survivor and though he never mentions this, a smile seems to project itself deep from within his music, a knowing grin that says, "I've made it." So Van goes on doing whatever cockles his Irish blood. That is one explanation for this LP, which will not produce a single meant to propel album sales, nor will it bullet on the charts. But it will sell, not only because the music is so strong, but because Van the Man has, indeed, survived.

The two 15 minute suites that dominate each side, *Summertime In England* and *When Heart Is Open*, are the guts of the record. Both trek through hill'n'dale, dropping pianissimos and crescendos at a variety of signposts until they fade: cellos beckon, Stax horns call in response, an organ riffs the blues and all the while Van, the scoutmaster, is crying out, his gravel-voice whirring in low gear, "It ain't whywhywhywhywhywhywhywhywhywhywhy why, jus' is." Then Pee Wee Ellis, a former Famous Flame with James Brown and arranger of this date, comes along and plows the field with his horn until every last blade is cut. Ellis' role in *Common One* reminds me of Clarence Clemons' in Springsteen's *Born To Run*. (And it was said that every good white singer needs a black horn player—the root—to hold onto.)

Actually, much of the 54 minutes here (phew!) is a throwback to the forgotten '60s; the organ, the jutting soul horns, the bluegrass strings a la Beatles circa *Lady Madonna* and *Hey Jude*, the whole country-ish feel, the entire epic proportion of this

project. *Common One* was not designed with radio programmers in mind and, of course, that's a compliment. So Van doesn't rock'n'soul much anymore, so he's mellowed a touch since *Moondance*. What's most important is that he's survived and is still making good records, which is a helluva lot more than you can say for Joe Cocker.

—bloom

## ALAN SILVA

**THE SHOUT (Portrait for a Small Woman)**—Chiaroscuro CR 2015: *GOLDEN FLOWER; THE SHOUT; LA VIOLA PASTEL; IJO; BROADWAY; COMMUNICATIONS; STEPPING.*

**Personnel:** Silva, conductor, composer; Georges Menousek, alto sax; Georges Gaumont, soprano sax; Jo Maka, alto and soprano saxes; Francois Cotinaud, tenor sax, oboe; Jouk Minor, baritone sax, contrabass clarinet; Denis Colin, bass clarinet, octocontralto clarinet; Robert Garrison, Pierre Sauvageot, Bernard Vilet, Itaru Oki, trumpets; Adolf Winkler, Michael Zwerin, trombones; Pierre Faure, flute; Jacques Dolias, Catherine Lienhardt, Bruno Girard, violins; Helene Bass, cello; Pierre Jacquet, bass; Armand Assouline, percussion; Michael Coffi, Muhammad Ali, drums.

★ ★ ★

This expanded ensemble is the reincarnation, with lesser known personnel, of the all star Celestial Communications Orchestra which composer/bassist/cellist/violinist Silva led briefly at the end of the turbulent 1960s in Paris. The earlier model seemed slightly more dependent upon improvised section work in addition to solos, while the '78 vintage seems to rely more on notated parts; nevertheless, both groups possess a sound and furious orchestral sensibility quite unlike any ensemble I've ever heard—a sound which must be attributed to Silva's arrangements, which are at the same time structurally intriguing and tonally exasperating.

The opening notes of *Golden Flower* are characteristic of each of the seven pieces of *The Shout*—an extremely dense texture created not by unison playing according to choirs of instruments with similar timbres, but instead with one-to-an-instrument parts which occasionally come together but more often than not overlap. The resultant harmonies are close and naturally dissonant, and the themes are usually oblique. Individual details seem to float out of the flux; however, the overlapping voices tend to obscure much of the internal material, and even the various soloists have trouble projecting through the aural fog.

The compositions are, for the most part, either impressionistic ballads, such as *Flower* and *La Viola Pastel*, or ferocious polyphonic explosions, as in *Shout*. *Ijo* consists of a quirky ostinato riff in the low, nearly subterranean reeds, which vies for attention with juxtaposed fanfares by the rest of the ensemble, ultimately resolving into tremendous, tremulous trombone glissandi by soloist Zwerin in front of collective

reed and brass warbling. *Broadway* is a freebop line, phrased with a vengeance by the staggered instrumental voices, which frames Jo Maka's saxophone and Adolf Winkler's trombone solos much in the manner of Michael Mantler's early Jazz Composers Orchestra *Communications*, though without Mantler's dynamic subtleties or textural variance. The cacophony of Silva's brief, similarly titled *Communications* resembles the Globe Unity Orchestra at its most chaotic, and includes a strong solo a la Rudd's 'bone by Jouk Minor. *Stepping*, meanwhile, is a relatively simple vamp, with slight echoes of Sun Ra, which goes nowhere during its two minute length.

Silva's writing is original and intriguing; I just wish one could hear more of what's going on. Taken in small doses, this musical deluge is quite effective; too much, and it all starts to run together.

—lange

## PHILIP GLASS

**DANCE Nos. 1&3**—Tomato TOM 8029:

**Personnel:** Jon Gibson, flute, soprano saxophone; Iris Hiskey, voice; Jack Kripl, flute, piccolo, soprano saxophone; Richard Peck, flute, alto saxophone; Michael Riesman, keyboards, bass synthesizer.

★

Fashionable artists have a lamentable habit of over-recording themselves, and Philip Glass is no exception. After *Einstein On The Beach*, he had obviously said all he had to say with certain concepts and instrumental combinations. Yet here they are again, with figurations that were derived, not only from *Einstein*, but from his sequence of short pieces collectively titled *North Star*.

Now, one may argue that all composers recycle musical ideas, either consciously or unconsciously; and some composers have even built masterpieces around specific themes from earlier works. But when Beethoven elaborated upon the theme of his *Choral Fantasy* in later life, he created something that was qualitatively different: the finale of his *Ninth Symphony*. When Glass draws on his earlier concepts, however, he's just being redundant.

He could still be forgiven on this count if *Dance* at least lived up to its title. But, despite some catchy cross-rhythms, there's nothing very danceable about this music; Copland's ballets and Bernstein's show music put Glass to shame in the toe-tapping department.

There isn't much difference between *Dance Nos. 1* and *3* except that the flute and piccolo of No. 1 is replaced in No. 3 by the somewhat more insistent alto and soprano saxes. The saxophonists' repetition of a single note is particularly annoying, recalling car horns in a traffic jam on a steaming summer afternoon.

Although sections of this piece, like Glass's previous work, exude a raw vitality, it is a mindless exuberance that never probes beyond a simple affirmation of life. There's nothing wrong in that; but, with all the pop songwriters trying to outdo each other's bromides, one yearns for a composer with new insights into the human psyche.—*terry*

# Blindfold Test:

Pat Metheny



BY LEONARD  
FEATHER

IT IS A SURE INDICATION of success when an artist finds himself accused of having sold out to Mammon. It is a sure bet he hasn't when his response is to stretch his chops, conception and audience. Pat Metheny is such an artist.

I doubt that Metheny can

fairly be said to have sacrificed any of his values, either with the admirable group he has headed for three years with Lyle Mays, Mark Egan and Danny Gottlieb, or on his ECM two-fer 80/81, with Charlie Haden, Dewey Redman, Mike Brecker and Jack DeJohnette. Metheny won a **db** scholarship to the National Stage Band Camp at age 14; within a very few years he

became a teacher there, then at University of Miami, and subsequently at Berklee College, where (at 19) he joined the faculty upon Gary Burton's invitation. He later toured with Burton's band, remaining for three years before beginning his own Pat Metheny Group.

Metheny shows signs of becoming to the '80s the kind of influential force that John McLaughlin was in

the '70s. On his first Blindfold Test, Pat had no information on records played.

## 1. LEE RITENOUR. MARGARITA (from CAPTAIN FINGERS, Epic). Ritenour, guitars, composer.

I'm sorry to say I don't know who that was. Typical of a lot of records by younger guitar players these days, the guy's obviously a real good player. It reminded me of Robben Ford a bit, somebody who is more or less a studio player who may have made a record.

It didn't seem he had a real individual voice, which is what I'm primarily concerned with when I listen. I like to say, within a note or two, 'Wow, that's somebody who has his own distinctive approach.'

I can think of ten people it might have been. And it's not so much for the playing as for the sound aspect. On a solid body guitar put through an amplifier, turned way up, it's very difficult to distinguish one player from the next. The same problem is true of a Rhodes piano: you're dealing with a highly electronic sound and the only things that can make it distinctive are the note choices and the phrasing.

I didn't notice anything unique about this record. Three stars.

## 2. CHARLIE BYRD. JITTERBUG WALTZ (from BLUE BYRD, Concord Jazz). Byrd, guitar; Joe Byrd, bass; Wayne Phillips, drums; Fats Waller, composer.

I recognized the tune—I can't remember, something like Butterfly Waltz or Jitterbug Waltz. I remember scuffling through this tune early in my career with Ira Sullivan, and having to learn it real quick on a bandstand one night, because it was one of his favorites to play.

The guitar player might be Charlie Byrd; as a classic guitar in the setting with bass and drums, he's used that format for a long time, I know. But it seemed much more aggressive than I would normally think of Charlie Byrd.

It sounded recorded in an unusual way, possibly direct-to-disc. The guitar sound was really different than I have heard classic guitar recorded. I'm not sure I liked it, either; it sounded a little bit compressed. The rhythm section wasn't really happening somehow—it didn't seem like they were functioning as a group as much as I would have liked if it was me playing. I'm very much involved with playing with the people in the band as closely as a unit as we can.

It's very difficult to play guitar, bass and

drums, and this particular player's approach was to fill it out as much as possible. My inclination is, when it is guitar, bass and drums, to approach it more like horn, bass and drums, as opposed to making it like a piano trio with guitar instead.

It's not exactly my kind of thing; I'd give it two stars.

## 3. RALPH TOWNER. IMAGES UNSEEN (from DIARY, ECM). Towner, 12-string classical guitars, composer.

That's unmistakably Ralph Towner, somebody I hold in high esteem for what I was talking about earlier, the ability to find your own voice on the instrument. This is from *Diary*, which was his solo record.

I have been knocked out with Ralph ever since *I Sing The Body Electric*, which was his guitar debut on a Weather Report album years ago. The first time I heard that I was stunned. I'd never heard anybody play anything even remotely similar, let alone improvise with such freedom on a 12-string guitar, which is one of the most cumbersome instruments, very difficult to play. I'm always amazed at Ralph's flexibility and the power he can get. He's got incredible touch.

Also, although this was obviously a free tune, I see Ralph as one of the best composers around; his songs are incredible little gems of musical logic. Every time I hear a new piece he's written, I say to myself, 'Why didn't I think of that?' The way he resolves chords and goes from place to place harmonically is really amazing.

The first time I heard *The Body Electric* and also a duo record he did with Glen Moore on ECM, I had a vision of this morose, monk-like person sitting in a dark chamber playing this weird guitar, when in fact Ralph is one of the goofiest personalities around, almost the exact opposite of what you'd think from his music.

## 4. JOHN McLAUGHLIN/CARLOS SANTANA. FRIENDSHIP (from JOHNNY McLAUGHLIN, ELECTRIC GUITARIST, Columbia).

Sounds like Carlos Santana and John McLaughlin together, both of whom I hold in high regard, for finding their own voices.

McLaughlin to me is the most important, certainly the most influential voice in the last decade on the guitar, without a doubt. In a way, he's been misrepresented by his

imitators; so many people have jumped on his bandwagon that we sometimes forget what an amazing contribution he made. He really turned things around; there's hardly a young player around that doesn't play like him. I find that a bit distressing; I try to avoid it, as much as I love his playing. It's almost a cliché, that real fast playing. But the missing element is his incredible soulful feeling. It's more than the notes, more than he's the fastest gun . . . it's that he's an incredibly dynamic, strong personality on his instrument; the same for Carlos Santana.

Again, he's one of the strongest voices around—you can tell it's him in two notes. I admire both of them and I really like this performance; it was so loose, and almost free-sounding. The beginning reminded me of an Ornette Coleman thing, sort of approximate unison a little out of tune. I'd give that five stars. That's some of the best I've heard from either one of them.

## 5. KENNY BURRELL. BODY AND SOUL (from WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW, Concord Jazz).

Really excellent. I think that was Ed Bickert . . . if not, someone influenced by Jim Hall.

That tune is extremely difficult to play because of its legacy. You instantly imagine a saxophone playing that melody, always: Coleman Hawkins. It's extremely difficult to introduce an element of breath to the guitar—kind of like piano, but with piano you have the advantage of the sustain pedal. With the guitar, once you hit a note, it's gonna die. To play a ballad, especially with just guitar, bass and drums, is one of the hardest things. This guy really pulled it off. Also, the element of swing and time and that stuff I was talking about earlier was really clear and strong. I'd give that five stars.

## 6. LARRY CORYELL. TORONTO UNDER THE SIGN OF CAPRICORN (from GUITAR PLAYER, MCA).

That reminded me of something Larry Coryell might do. I had trouble getting into it. It didn't seem like there was any real structure or form, and the improvising didn't seem to go any place—it didn't seem to have much direction to it. The guitars were recorded very poorly in my opinion; you couldn't get the feel of the instrument, which made it even more difficult for me to understand what was supposed to happen.

I just didn't understand it; no stars.

# Profile:

Vinny Golia

BY LEE UNDERWOOD

**I**n 1970, at the age of 24, Bronx born Vinny Golia lived in Greenwich Village and bought his first soprano saxophone with the money he earned painting the picture used on the cover of Chick Corea's LP, *Song Of Singing* (Blue Note, BST 84353).

Today he still paints, but he also plays soprano, tenor, baritone and bass saxophones; E-flat, B-flat and bass clarinets; piccolo, C-minor, alto and bass flutes; various recorders; and sho (a set of wooden pipes from Thailand). As well, he has four albums out on his own Nine Winds label, and is one of the leaders of the thriving improvisational avant garde in Los Angeles, where he has lived since 1973.

After graduating from the New York Institute of Technology in 1968 with a degree in Fine Arts, Vinny found himself living in the same building with three of New York's finest: Corea, bassist Dave Holland and reedman Dave Liebman, all of whom became his close friends and mentors.

Sitting in Slug's or the Village Gate, Golia improvised in colors what jazz musicians played in sound: Chick, Holland, Liebman, Miles Davis, Sun Ra, McCoy Tyner, Bennie Maupin, Lee Morgan, Archie Shepp, Larry Coryell. "One night I painted Cecil Taylor right in the club. I had a whole table. People wouldn't sit near me because I was splashing and thrashing paint on the canvas."

In his own room, he listened to John Coltrane's *Meditations*, *Expression* and *Coltrane* through earphones while painting, developing techniques he today applies to his music. "I would look at a plant, for example, and abstract the parts of it, seeing it for what it is, but also figuring out how I personally perceived it, how I personally felt about it, what it meant to me. I would fragment the image, add things to it, take out certain colors and put them into different shapes.

"Living in the same building with Liebman, Holland and Corea was incredibly mind-expanding. Soon I found myself wanting to play music. I'd have long talks with these guys, and people were coming in and out of the house all the time. There was constant music, like a conservatory. Chick would be practicing. Holland would be working out with maybe five bass players. One day on the top floor, Liebman was playing with John Surman, Mike Brecker, Steve Grossman, Randy Brecker, Richard Beirach, Bobby Moses—that session lasted two days! New York was full of musicians who were breaking new ground, and they had a tremendous influence on me: Miles Davis, John McLaughlin, Wayne Shorter, Jack DeJohnette. It was like a Who's Who of Jazz, and I was sitting right in the middle of it. I got fired up and wanted to play music, too. I bought my first soprano. Dave Liebman and Anthony Braxton showed me the basics. I began to practice constantly."



When he moved to L.A. in 1973, he again saw Chick Corea, who arranged a painting show for Golia. "I painted while musicians played what I painted. Each night for two weeks I had a different band. Anthony Braxton and Dave Holland played the first night. A lot of L.A. musicians played subsequently, including John Carter, Ernie Watts, Dave Pritchard, Tom Canning, Mike Nock, Marty Krystal, and my bassist, Roberto Miranda. As I painted, they played music, reacting to the strokes, the various colors, the different levels of energy."

Over the next couple of years, Vinny gigged with a variety of straight-ahead jazz groups, then met the man who is at the heart of the new music scene in Los Angeles, synthesizer player Lee Kaplan. Kaplan's dedicated and unflagging managerial efforts have kept the doors of the Century City Playhouse open to the avant garde since April of 1976; Kaplan has been largely responsible for turning Los Angeles into a major new cultural center for contemporary improvisational music.

Through Kaplan and the Century City Playhouse, Golia once again found himself surrounded by the creative cream of the crop: Bobby Bradford, David Murray, Oliver Lake, Julius Hemphill, Glenn Ferris; as well as five who have recorded with Golia: clarinetist John Carter, trumpeter Baikida Carroll, guitarist Nels Cline, percussionist Alex Cline and bassist Miranda.

"In 1978, Anthony Braxton gave me my first really big break when he hired me to go to Europe with his 20 piece Creative Orchestra. I was in there with Anthony, George Lewis, Leo Smith, Kenny Wheeler. Braxton was tremendously helpful, sometimes giving me four solos a night, which was great for experience and exposure. Meanwhile, I had been adding wind instruments, and today play over 15 of them.

"The more I got into playing this kind of

music, the more colors I heard. I've carried over what I was doing from the medium of painting into the medium of sound. I'll tell percussionist Alex Cline, for example, 'I want something metallic and bright red here.' A visual artist himself, he understands exactly what I mean.

"By 1977, I wanted to break that Catch 22 thing where club owners say they can't hire you because you don't have a record, and record companies say they can't sign you because you don't play anywhere.

"I formed my own Nine Winds label, recorded *Spirits In Fellowship* (NW 0101) with John Carter, Miranda and Alex Cline. I've since recorded *Openhearted* (NW 0102) with Baikida Carroll, Nels Cline, Miranda and Alex Cline (Nels' twin brother); *The Vinny Golia Trio* (NW 0103) with Roberto and Alex; and most recently, *Solo* (NW 0104) with just me. As a result, we have gained exposure, we have gigged live up and down the West Coast; and we hope to appear soon back east.

"I don't usually sit down, compose a song, and then just have the instruments play it. Instead, I'll work from the colors of the instrument. In my mind, I'll hear an instrument playing something, and I'll write it.

"Some of the tunes are based purely on the interaction between players, rather than on melodic or rhythmic preconceptions. *Five In Front [Trio]*, for example, is just five long notes. What we're dealing with is just how we work together as three human beings. One Canadian critic called it 'chamber music at its best.'

"On *Voices [Trio]* we use a repetitive rhythm to build up a pulse, then return to the head, where everybody plays independently.

"We play charts spontaneously, dealing with how we play with each other. We play music that's alive, in-the-moment. It's not slicked down, processed, multitracked and

packaged. It's sometimes rough, angular, jagged, but there's enough beauty in it that if it could be heard, it would move people. When I say 'beauty,' I mean things like tone, melodic invention, colors. The people I play with—Nels Cline, Bradford, John Carter—can also play ballads that make you cry.

"Listen to *Thoughts [Solo]*, *The Human Beings* and *Haiku [Spirits]*, *The Cave [Solo]*, or *Improvisation #4 [Solo]*. There's beauty in these pieces. They're legitimate music, and I know people can relate to them. If you like John Coltrane, well, *Attunement [Solo]* is somewhat in his later style. If you want to swing, *V.A.R. [Trio]* utilizes a very swinging 3/4; *Song Of [Trio]* is in 6/8; *Before The Doorway [Trio]* is in six, too. *Lament [Trio]* is a beautiful ballad: it's taken a little out, but when you lose somebody, you don't feel particularly happy about it; you feel rage, because they're not there anymore.

"What we have is humanness. We are basic human beings, spiritual people trying to reach out to other people with love and understanding. That's a basic belief, a basic feeling we have: people can and will relate to the music as long as we present it positively.

"We are not into that attitude of 'This is what we're gonna do, and we know you won't dig it, but we're gonna do it anyway and see how long you can stand it.' We just like to play, have a good time, swing hard, and come across as fully human human beings who want to share that.

"That music is spontaneous music, so not just some of the emotions are there, but all of them. Right along with joy, tenderness, warmth, longing and humor is anger, rage, sadness, ferocity. It is music in which we give of ourselves, rather than fitting ourselves into safe, easy to listen to music that is preconceived and designed to merely entertain people or gloss over their deepest emotions. I think that is important.

"We've all played regular songs with hummable melodies, standard chord changes and foot tappy rhythms the way everybody else does. But I want to do something that hasn't been done. I'm always looking for something new. The basis of how I write comes from how I take things apart and put them together in a unique, personal extension of my own humanity.

"I'm on a continual quest to explore myself and humanity and the universe ever more deeply. Music is not only a vehicle to explore these things. It is also a vehicle to bring back what I find and share it with others. The more I dig in and explore ideas, colors, textures, the more comes back to me. All my life, I've been surrounded by exciting, talented people who delve deeply into what's happening. I need to do that, too, so I do it, and my life is all the fuller for it, constantly expanding." **db**

(*Golia's records are available in some record outlets, or by mail: Nine Winds Records, 11609 Pico Blvd., L.A., Calif. 90064*)

## Jazz Members Big Band

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

"We're a band that was conceived in a college framework and stayed together and kept growing," says trumpeter Steve Jensen, co-leader of Chicago's Jazz Members Big Band. "One of the dilemmas that young players face is that after a good college music program where they spend a lot of time getting it together, they graduate and find themselves out on the street playing bar mitzvahs. But we're a group of guys who have gotten the musical thing together and don't want to let go of it."

Jensen and trombonist Jeff Lindberg organized the 17 piece Jazz Members band in 1978, shortly after departing the pastoral confines of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where former swing violinist John Garvey directs the outstanding jazz program. Arriving in Chicago, they recruited from among the sizable contingent of Garvey alumni already in residence, including such fixtures of the Lincoln Avenue pub scene as pianist John Campbell and saxophonist Ed Peterson.

The dream of transforming a collegiate big band into a full time professional touring and recording ensemble might seem far fetched at best, but the Jazz Members have come a long way in two years. From non-paying gigs and occasional club dates, they have gone on to perform at the annual Chicago Jazz Festival and presently hold down the Tuesday night spot at the Jazz Showcase. Visiting drummer Barrett Deems,

a veteran of the Goodman and Armstrong bands, pronounced them "the best big band I've played with in Chicago," and major record labels have begun to show interest.

"We like to think that our roots are in the Basie-Ellington era, and we take it from there," says Lindberg. Perhaps two-thirds of the group's repertoire consists of vintage charts by such luminaries as Ellington, Billy Strayhorn and Benny Carter, although, says Jensen, "We're not at all opposed to avant garde or new music," a claim born out in the band's venturesome original material and intrepid solo work. "Thad Jones played in Basie's band for years and then went out and did his own thing. That's more or less what we're trying to do," avers Lindberg.

"The term mainstream is a restrictive concept," he continues. "I don't like to label any music in terms of time or period, because it implies a certain trendiness—I think that the music defies being anchored to a particular time." Jensen concurs: "There's a vast repertoire of music, some of which was created many years ago, but which is still very much alive today. The Chicago Symphony will play Mozart and then they'll play Stravinsky. I don't like to think of Mozart as old fashioned."

Unlike so many college bands, the Jazz Members shun the typical Kenton-Ferguson sound that Jensen ascribes to the "North Texas State influence" in favor of an eclectic approach that ranges from Basie to bebop, modal and free form styles. "The Champaign players always went after the basic elements of jazz," says Jensen. "It was really a tremendous musical environment."

Lindberg and Jensen are optimistic that their music will find an audience. "The Akiyoshi/Tabackin band is a very hot band and they're making it, so the audience is definitely there," Jensen affirms. "The estab-

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*Jazz Members Big Band: John Campbell, piano; Dan DeLorenzo, bass; Randy Salman, Tom Trinka, Larry Gianneschi, Edward Peterson, Barry Winograd, saxes; Joel Spencer, drums; Larry McCabe, Scott Bentall, Jeff Lindberg, Mike Young, trombones; David Urban, Mark Curry, Steve Jensen, Jeff Kaye, Art Davis, trumpets.*

lished names have been around for a long time, and now Duke is gone and Basie is in semi-retirement. But Basie's band is not the same as it was. Mercer's band isn't the same and Woody's band isn't the same, although you've got to give him credit for staying on the road all of these years. I'd like to get on the road like they have, and I think we will."

"It's my philosophy that there is a large number of educated people who appreciate jazz and who will respond to the band," opines Lindberg. "I think that people are getting more interested in sophisticated music and I believe that they can be educated." "People just have to hear us," seconds Jensen, "because there's nothing in

the world like the sound of a big band live. I think that there is a trend back to romance, like there was in the Glenn Miller era. It's time for a nice lush ballad to become a hit."

"We plan to get out and play for high schools and colleges soon, because we've found that students respond like crazy," Lindberg adds. "We might even play a couple of funk charts, as long as they're nicely written. We don't say that that type of music is no good, it's just that we listen to a certain kind of music and we'd like to develop it from there."

"I didn't start getting into jazz until my college days. I was classically trained and so was Steve, and we were into classical music because it was great music. Then we got involved in jazz, but I still aspire to conduct an orchestra someday. I'm attracted to any great music—Ellington-Strayhorn ballads, for example, because in terms of original compositions for big band, those are a highpoint of the art."

"Ever since we started, things have been getting better and better. If enough people hear us, eventually the word will spread, so that's why we're plugging away. The guys in this band have a real commitment to staying in Chicago and creating a viable scene here." Jensen is equally confident. "I think it's just a matter of time before we have a record out," he assures.

Queried as to the difference between college trained and non-college musicians, Jensen says. "The college people have experienced music pretty much for music's sake, rather than for the sake of making scale or paying the rent. Guys that work their way up tend to be more concerned with what the gig pays, what are the hours, and when do you get off. But one thing that college doesn't teach is how to make a living. It's hard to keep the same people in the band if there's no money coming in."

"The college life is real nice," agrees Lindberg. "It's comfortable and you don't have to play crap." "It's rough in the real world," concludes Jensen. "There's a lot of competition and everybody's not always nice to you, but you've just got to get used to it."

db

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strength and feeling; he's a finer improviser than one can tell from his albums.

Hannibal coaxed a palette of gentle hues from his horn, aided by Haynes' scintillating brushwork. With a straightahead hard bop reading of *What's New*, Fortune answered not much. Bartz reprised *Can't Get Started*, his late arrival preventing him from realizing that the tune had already been played—to much better advantage.

This night was a fitting tribute to Haynes,

who tastefully has spanned from Pres to present. Thanks to people like Kleinsinger—jazz fans foremost—the jazz year is filled with a number of highlights.

The evening culminated with a scorching *Night In Tunisia*. Fortune's solo, filled with unexpected twists and turns, was one of the best of the night. Hannibal followed with a solo that whirred, but not much else, and Bartz, aided by Gomez's brisk trot, brought it down with a sinewy bop line while Haynes

laid out. Urbaniak played a frenetic strain, and Barrelli displayed a fuzzy, rockish tone, playing too fast and loud.

It was up to the man of the hour to put the head on everything. Beginning with a quote from *Manteca*, Haynes played a flashy, melodic solo on his tuned tubs (I swear he's tuned his rims, too). Roy soloed on bass drum, scratched the bottom of his snare, kicked and growled and—as usual—proved to be his own best tribute. —lee jeske

## MAGIC SLIM AND THE TEARDROPS

BIDDY MULLIGAN'S  
CHICAGO

**Personnel:** Morris "Magic Slim" Holt, lead guitar, vocals; Coleman "Daddy the Rabbit" Pettis, rhythm guitar, vocals; Nick Holt, bass; Nate Applewhite, drums.

It's Saturday night at Biddy Mulligan's, that college bar turned blues joint on Chicago's far North Side. Such choice local blues artists as Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells and Son Seals, and a variety of out-of-towners including Sleepy LaBeef, Gate-mouth Brown, Albert King and Carl Perkins have played here recently. Tonight, Magic Slim and the Teardrops are close to packing the house before the first set's started. In Chicago, blues is a serious business.

Magic Slim, whose *nom de blues* was reportedly bestowed upon him by the near

mythic West Side blues figure Magic Sam, has dressed country for the gig. In cowboy hat and vest, he towers over the crowd, his size making his guitar seem a toy.

On the surface, Slim and his band might seem no different than a hundred other stripped down, workaday Chicago blues bands. They've no tricky rhythms, only the standard slow grind 12/8, a backbeat shuffle, and a medium funk beat. Unlike some of the slick, tightly orchestrated blues bands around town, the Teardrops forego complex arrangements and tight unison passages in favor of a continuous, businesslike chug. Slim's vocals are felt, but not extraordinary; and Daddy the Rabbit's rhythm playing and matter of fact singing could hardly be accused of flashiness.

Where, then, is the magic? It lies in Slim's homemade, possibly unique guitar style. For example, on *Walkin' The Backstreets And Cryin'* he'll run through the obligatory guitar preachin', with wails and dexterous blues runs. But by using two picks, one on his thumb and one on his index finger, he's also able to approximate country slide guitar rhythms. By picking thirds on his instru-

ment's two highest strings, he gets effects that range from twangy chordal jabs to shimmering glissandos sliding over four or five frets. And by using alternate picking on his low E string, Slim can rip off motorcycle like thumps, as well as doing his brand of country-western finger picking throughout the range of his guitar.

As the evening went on and Biddy Mulligan's now SRO crowd got further into the blues oozing from the bandstand, Slim brought out some even more idiosyncratic slights of pick. On a Muddy Waters tune in praise of "champagne and reefer," he spun off a jackhammer, vibrato-tremolo effect that pulsated his guitar, and, seemingly, the entire stage. A very funky *Mustang Sally*, one of the band's tightest tunes, elicited more descending, finger picked tremolos from Slim. Yet another country tinge showed up on *Stranded On The Highway* as Slim mixed pentatonic lines with busily plucked chordal passages.

Slim's paradoxical c&w-urban blues mix couldn't have been better summed up than by his clever original, *Teardrops*. Opening with bravura obbligatos, the band clicked

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into a slick boogaloo groove. After stating a blues melody, Slim tossed off some lines straight from Nashville, kicked along by his thumb picked bass figures. Fully chorded, volcanic passages and shrill, single note cries alternated with percussive, muted guitar syncopations. If anyone at Biddy's wondered why Magic Slim got his nickname or why he was decked out in that cowboy hat, here was the answer. —jon ball'ras

## BERLIN JAZZ DAYS

### —BERLIN, WEST GERMANY—

Maybe all of the bad reviews (not solely by this writer) of the past several years were not in vain; this year's program responded to some festival critics' complaints.

One big surprise was the Ganelm trio from Villnius in the Lithuanian Republic of the Soviet Union. With three musicians playing approximately 15 instruments with a breathtaking intensity, building their set to a euphoric climax, it was the wildest and yet the best organized and most professional free jazz I've heard in years. Many listeners perceived this music as a cry for freedom. They asked themselves: How much suffering must you endure before your rebellious cry assumes such proportions? And still another question: How together, how mature do you have to be to tame and to structure such a cry? In any case, please, let's hear more jazz from the Soviet Union (however, the other Russian band presented in Berlin—saxophone player Alexeij Koslow's "Arsenal"—offered a cheap fusion copy of the worst kind.

One festival highlight was the duo of pianist Martial Solal and alto saxophonist Lee Konitz. The two have seen and heard and done so much together, there is so much to talk about, that there is just no time to waste on trivialities. Solal's playing, especially, was an endless chain of spirited surprises—full of wit and humor.

Solal and Konitz appeared in a memorial to Lennie Tristano who, 15 years ago, had appeared on this stage in an unforgettable piano evening with John Lewis, Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson, Bill Evans and Jaki Byard. The idea was a good one, but two of the five groups had nothing to do with Tristano. One of them was the excellent German Frey-Tiebold Quartet. One musician asked: "Tristano? Who is he? He must have died a long time ago." And Ran Blake stated: "My roots are in Monk, not in Tristano." Blake, as usual, omitted everything that wasn't absolutely necessary and, consequently, gained more substance and depth. Connie Crothers (who opened the Tristano concert) has been classified wrongly. Although she sometimes uses bass lines à la Tristano, what she plays on top is all her own.

Konitz himself praised an aggregation of Warne Marsh on tenor, Sal Mosca on piano, Eddie Gomez on bass and Kenny Clarke, still sounding as masterful as always, on drums. Marsh, again, proved to be one of the great individualists on tenor—sardonically dry and fluent, pouring out timeless messages. And it's amazing that Gomez fits perfectly in so many different contexts.

The other highlight, for this reviewer, was Arthur Blythe's "In the Tradition" quartet. Its

intensity and message is in the great tradition of jazz, but the sound is new: the alto saxophone on top of Bob Stewart's tuba and Abdul Wadud's cello. The tuba-cello sound is a true discovery—solid and yet wide open. Bobby Battle swings the band beautifully. Blythe has been called the "Bird of the '80s," and that's what he is. This musician really hits his listeners!

Now the not-so-happy events: Mauricio Kagel, a famous composer of contemporary "classical" music in Germany, sat on stage in front of an old record player listening for 12 minutes or so to an old record, and for another 12 minutes he noodled around on a kazoo like instrument in a dilettantish manner. Any amateur blues band can do this better. What Kagel did was an arrogant mockery of black music; he and his band received 10,000 German marks for this bad joke.

The concert in which Kagel appeared was titled "Optic-Acoustic Phenomena." Almost everything about it was artificial and pretentious. East German drummer Baby Sommer, one of the best percussionists we now have in Europe, played in a white tent because he wanted his listeners to see nothing and to just concentrate on his music. So what's "optical"? Black American dancer Elisabeth Clarke danced to the duo improvisations of trombone player Günther Christmann and percussionist Detlef Schöenberg, but as lovely as she looked, there was little communication between her and the two musicians, and the usual togetherness of this great duo fell apart. And Mike Westbrook and his British big band presented a large work based on poems by William Blake. This was a far cry from Westbrook's beautiful suite, *Cortège*, which he presented at the Moers Festival earlier this year. The new Westbrook work is superficial, and its pathos sounds empty.

Thad Jones presented his great new big band from Copenhagen, with mostly young Scandinavians (and a few Americans such as Sahib Shihab on alto and Roland Hanna on piano) sounding like a band of great American pros. Especially moving was Leonard Feather and Oliver Nelson's *I Remember Bird*, with the young saxophonist, Jörgen Nilsson, performing Parker like excursions. Jones had to accompany Dee Dee Bridgewater who, ten years ago, used to sing beautifully with the old Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band. But the last jazz she sang, she said, was in 1974, and you could hear it. But the main problem was that the set was badly organized and rehearsed. Neither Dee Dee nor Thad seemed to be able to agree on enough songs for a well rounded set.

Only when Dizzy Gillespie appeared in the seventh concert of the festival did the revered Berliner Philharmonie swing with a festival like happiness. After all the previous head music, a feeling of togetherness occurred between audience and musicians that had been lacking in the festival up to then. I have heard Dizzy almost annually in recent years. The band he presented in Berlin is the best he's had in a long time—with Ed Cherry on guitar, the very swinging Tommy Campbell on drums and James Moody, that great, wise master of the alto saxophone and flute.

Another happy event was called "French Connection," a suitlike presentation of seven leading jazz musicians from France in duos, trios, quartets, solo, quintets and septets bound together by the great French

drummer, Daniel Humair. Francois Jeanneau—as composer and tenor player—sounded as he did on his record *Ephemere*, which won five stars in *down beat*. Henry Texier on bass swings like a modern Slam Stewart. And young virtuoso violinist Didier Lockwood was, as wherever he performs, the darling of the audience.

The final highlight was Oregon, which—as they did every evening during their 19 day European tour—treated the audience to one of their chamber music, round-the-world tours with well apportioned visits to wherever good music is being made. One of the best segments was what could be called the "Oregon String Trio," with Ralph Towner on guitar, Collin Walcott on sitar and Glen Moore on bass—truly one of the most fascinating string sounds ever!

Of course, there was lots of German jazz: as usual, Albert Mangelsdorff towered high above all. He played in duo with piano player Wolfgang Dauner, and among all the many duo partners Albert has had, Wolfgang really seems to be the most fitting, a true soul brother. However, the surprise success among the German musicians was the duo of pianist Christoph Spendel and vibes player Wolfgang Schlüter. They have been inspired, of course, by Corea and Burton, but are more vital and percussive—with a few clichés.

Baird Hersey's "Year of the Ear," with its great choral like horn collective, is really pointing toward new directions for big band jazz. Stanton Davis is the fantastically powerful trumpet soloist, but the singer of the band, Lee Genesis, although effective, offers hardly more than a copy of Stevie Wonder or George Benson.

In general this year, it was not so much the critics as the audience which voted against the Berlin Jazz Days. Only the seventh and eighth concerts were sold out. On the average, 1000 of 2300 seats in the Berliner Philharmonie remained empty, and the festival's gross was less than half of former years'. Some people talked about higher subsidies, but the Berlin Jazz Days is already the world's most heavily subsidized jazz festival. There is a fantastic jazz boom in Europe now. Never before has jazz attracted so many people. Never before have so many festivals succeeded in making ends meet and, at the same time, presenting attractive programs.

Never before were there so many fights behind the scenes of the Jazz Days as there were this year. "Quarreling at the Jazz Days" and "Jazz Days in a Crisis" read the headlines. The two organizers, Ralph Schulte-Bahrenberg and George Gruntz, blame each other, but the true crisis lies in the programming. It is ridiculous to say in Berlin that the "tension between business and art" is "unbearable." This tension exists and is endured everywhere. The more energy the Berlin people invest in their fights (and even court cases!), the less will be left for the music. The new development of 1980 is this: new festivals in Europe are pushing aside the old ones—Willisau in Switzerland, Saalfelden in Austria, Freiburg in Germany, etc. They seem to be able to solve the problem which baffles the Berlin programmers—to present new, daring programs and yet attract enough people. These festivals are the hip ones.

—joachim e. berendt  
translated by joe weisel



Currently, Dave is almost completely involved with his opera, *Windward Passages*. He does frequent performances in Detroit, where he heads a group with Roy Brooks, Marcus Belgrave and David Thomas, or solo, like a recent concert at New York's Public Theatre. He usually plays selections from his opera, just as he does on his most recent Hat Hut release, called (what else) *Windward Passages*.

The Public Theatre recital brought out the best in the tall, cleanheaded pianist. He mixed booming stride and ten finger chords with lush operatic sections, lots of ragtime and thick, dirge like classical elements. He played double time boogie, a hand over hand percussive roar, some turn of the century blue wobble and a lot of right hand trilling.

How this music actually translates into opera remains to be heard, but Dave has great expectations.

"Every time I take a look at the opera at Lincoln Center, I feel that I'd like to see my opera placed there or somewhere with that kind of atmosphere. As I look at the Metropolitan Opera schedule, I realize that it's very seldom that they do a contemporary opera and I've never seen them doing any opera with improvisation or a jazz opera. So I thought that, as a goal, some other aggregation would probably be more realistic, but I definitely want it to have the most professional treatment possible. There will be choreography also. I'd like to have a film made, not only on the finished project, but on the work in progress—how to make an opera.

"I'm about three-fourths finished. I think the next phase of work will be on problems like arrangements for the singers, synchronizing the play with the music, and so forth."

Dave Burrell, at 40, has come to terms with his background in Hawaii and his approach to jazz. He credits his music to his family life.

"I think it's really from having a black household that was preserved in a unique way. After the three of us (I'm an only child) would be out all day, we'd come back and rejoice. Sometimes it was happy, there was a lot of clowning around, and sometimes it was sad, there'd be some religious or spiritual records on. And, of course, all the records that my parents had from school were the only records we had out there, and they were Jimmie Lunceford and Louis Armstrong records. There were things that seemed to be kept intact, as if we were living in the South. My high school and University of Hawaii years were good preparation for coming out."

(Incidentally, Dave and Kenny Burrell can trace no common relatives, though the Burrells in both families are from Vicksburg, Mississippi. Dave's father still lives in Hawaii; his mother passed away a number of years ago.)

In a 1968 article in Hawaii's *Star Bulletin And Advertiser*, Eleanor Burrell told of her trepidation when Dave left Hawaii for Boston:

"I told him, when he went away, that some people have forgotten what it's like to be mean, but that there are those who will be mean to others who look different."

"Recently, his parents received a letter from Dave in which he commented on the race bitterness on the Mainland.

"He wrote us, 'I couldn't possibly hate anyone. My efforts are all focused on conveying my message through jazz, through the interpretation of my music,'" said Mrs. Burrell.

"He'll be all he knows he can be."

db

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more than trumpet: he was being inundated by the joys of making music. "My dad came from a very large family, and all his brothers and sisters played music. I had an aunt who just had a snare drum and a pair of sticks, and she'd keep time on the snare drum while the rest of the family played. Every time we had a family reunion, we'd cook for four or five hours; the groaning board would come out; everybody would eat; and when we'd run right in the front room and start playing music, all the neighbors came in. It had to be improvised, I guess, since there was no music around; we just played standards, tunes everybody knew. One aunt played piano, another would sing, another played violin; one uncle played clarinet, trombone, trumpet, another played cornet. . . . That's what I've known since my earliest memories.

"As far as I'm concerned, when I decided I wanted to be a musician, it was then, when I was four, when I started playing. I mean, I haven't stopped since that time."

His exposure to the saxophone came early, too. Listening to Lester Young records around the house, Ira was especially taken with the false fingerings Prez used to "syncopate" a single note, and he taught himself to do the same on his father's C melody sax. But it was luck—and a sure eye for the pragmatic—that led the teenaged Ira to the tenor.

"One day, the high school band director said, 'Oh my gosh, we've got a program coming up, and we've only got two tenor players.' Well, I was one of 17 trumpets, so I said, 'Let me take the horn home and try it out.' I'd been dying to get my hands on a tenor, 'cause I figured that if I had a tenor, I could go out to some sessions and jam a little bit. So I took it home, got the school part together, and after that, I could sign the tenor out when I wanted to, take it home, and then I started taking it to sessions.

"And then, lo and behold, when I started working clubs around Chicago, they always wanted a tenor player with a quartet: never a trumpet player. Too brassy. If you had a quintet, they'd hire a trumpet player. After all, Chicago's always been a big tenor town. So I started learning a couple tunes on tenor, and someone would call and say, 'Gee, Ira, there's this little club where we can work on weekends; can you play enough tenor to get the job?' And I'd ask, 'Why don't you hire me on trumpet?' And it was always, 'No, he wants a tenor.'

"That's how it started. But one thing that came out of it was, I could relate to

the saxophone players; when I was playing trumpet with a saxophone player, I knew all the problems he had. I knew, if he wasn't phrasing right, how to match the phrasing, and that opened another door for me. I could be empathetic with the sax players.

"We used to have a story about the clubowners, how they always wanted to hire something less than you had. Like, you would work up a tight little quintet, playing good bebop, and audition, and the clubowner would say, 'No, that's too many guys. Do you really need the trumpet? Besides, Ira, you can play trumpet in addition to your tenor, and I've only got enough money for a quartet.' So you'd become a quartet, and the owner would say, 'Look, this is a quiet place, my customers don't want too much; couldn't you get rid of the drums?' So now you're a trio, and he says, 'Hey, business is a little tight, and I think we could do without the bass.' So now we're a duo, just tenor and piano, and you just know he's gonna come up and say, 'You know, we only really need one musician here'—and keep the pianist!"

By the early '50s, of course, that was absurdist humor, because Ira was already en route to a virtual hegemony of Chicago jazz. He worked a variety of gigs, taking calls for show bands, dance bands and the like, but always jamming (and expanding his influence, musically and personally) in the free moments. In addition, he was making converts: dozens of musicians, scores of listeners, heard his great, shadowy sets, the stuff of legends, and began stockpiling memories. In 1955, he met up with Red Rodney, who was booked into Chicago's famed Bee Hive club, where Ira led the house band. It was then they recorded together for the first time, for *Fantasy*; 1957 saw a sequel to that session, the *Red Arrow* dates (made re-available on Onyx).

It's difficult to get Ira to speak of those days, of the noteworthy gigs and the places they occurred. "To me, nothing is memorable; I don't remember any of it until somebody brings it up. I don't think of any of that, because I don't live in the old days. When I hear somebody talking about 'the old days,' or how it was years ago, I find that very strange—because life isn't lived like that, life is lived at the moment, and then there's always tomorrow.

"But a lot of people seem to think that the old days were better than the present. A lot of people you hear say, 'Boy, remember 20 years ago? When it used to be happening?' To me, that means their present lives must not be full enough. I guess it's like youth, when people say, 'Oh, don't you wish you were 16 again and knew what you know now?' And I say, 'Oh, man, I wouldn't like to go through that again.' I've never had any compulsion to want

that youth thing again, because I don't feel I've lost it, I don't feel the flow of the years. It appalls me to hear people, members of my own peer group, say, 'It was sure great ten years ago; remember those little clubs we used to go to?' I mean, I know what days they're talking about, because I was there with them, but I don't know why they feel those were better."

Those attitudes find reflection in Ira's music as well: specifically, in the music he makes with his own groups, and in the time since he left Chicago for Florida (he now lives in the Miami area, working about six months of the year at Bubba's, where he leads the house band in tandem with each week's visiting soloist). As you'd expect, there are a number of extant explanations for why Ira packed up his family and headed south in 1962; his is that "I went down to visit my folks for a few weeks, and through a series of strange events—health tragedies and things like that—I ended up staying much longer. I got a lot of work, and I liked it, and so I decided to move."

The trek had religious overtones: Ira won't volunteer the information, but when pressed, he'll explain that this was a time "when the Lord came back into my life very strongly. I had what you'd call a spiritual rebirth. I wouldn't say 'born again,' though; I've never used that phrase myself, and I certainly wouldn't use it now that it's become a catch phrase, being used on billboards to advertise, oh, hair wash, anything. To me, that denigrates the scriptures." And once the subject has come up, it becomes a recurrent theme in Ira's conversation: without a trace of misplaced evangelism, he nonetheless peppers his speech with Biblical quotes.

Perhaps the best way to understand Ira Sullivan's music of the '60s and '70s is to recall this anecdote, which appeared in the liner essay to his 1967 Atlantic LP *Horizons*: "I like to mix things up," Ira said then, "to get into different bags. Playing free is fun. A lot of guys resist it. Somebody said to me recently, 'Man, it took me 12 years to learn how to play bebop. You mean I've got to start learning all over again?' I told him, 'Yeah—that's right. That's exactly what you have to do.'"

"As much as I love to play bebop," Ira says today, "as much as bebop is a part of my upbringing and my education, I never in my life felt that that was the end-all and be-all of music. Music's just too vast."

Ira wasn't long in Miami before his mystique—or his reputation, or unique talents for informal tutelage, whatever—began to manifest itself once again. To begin with, a number of Chicago musicians followed him down there, and while each—drummer Steve Bagby, guitarist Joe Diorio, pianist Ed-

die Higgins—may have had his own reasons for heading south, they all shared the desire to work with Ira. Then there were the new converts, who arrived on a steady basis simply because Ira was conducting business as usual: taking young musicians under his wing; training them; watching them leave to start their own groups, or hustle the Apple, or go off with some touring "name" player; and bringing in somebody new.

For several summers, he was the co-director of Jerry Coker's intensive, three week jazz camp at the University of Miami. He began playing, on a once a week basis, at a Unitarian church buried beneath the palm trees in some remote corner of suburban Dania—a place all but impossible to find—which only helped fuel the mystique. Through all this, he came in contact with a number of the hot young players at the U of M for brief periods—including Pat Metheny, Danny Gottlieb and Mark Egan (three-fourths of the Pat Metheny Group), and Jaco Pastorius. All speak highly of their time with Ira.

As for the music itself, it bears no false witness to Sullivan's own claims, diving and darting with something more than the spontaneity of improvisation. Ira's inventions are total, extending to the arrangements themselves, embracing a larger concept of instantaneous composition; you have to see as well as hear a Sullivan set, to fully appreciate the suddenly-seized-upon riffs organized behind one soloist, or the quick decision to segue to this tune at that point in the *a capella* solo, communicated via eye contact and a small measure of telepathy. During one such set, on a November Saturday night in 1979, Ira launched into what was obviously the finale. I glanced at my watch, saw he'd been playing for 45 minutes, and thought nothing of it; the music had been fine, but like most regular music-goers, I don't feel cheated by a 45 minute set, preferring to be left a little hungry to being nauseated by a surfeit of sound.

But something remarkable happened then, as the song dropped away, and Ira's soprano sailed into a dreamy, then forceful cadenza, which became some wholly unsuspected song, which then stretched into another, and another, in a continually unfolding suite. When it was over, I saw that another 45 minutes had elapsed, during which I was too spellbound to have even considered glancing at my watch.

At the moment, Ira is playing precious little of that music, preferring to devote his talents to making the Rodney-Sullivan tandem one of the most ferocious and exciting groups in many years. Well, maybe "preferring" isn't quite the best word—because as much as Ira enjoys the experience; as much as he realizes that it is largely

because of his influence and example that Red Rodney is playing the best trumpet of his entire career; he still hears his own music's siren song:

"Now, you see, I come as a servant—which is all right; Christ honors that, it's really an exalted position. I come as a servant to these people who are calling me to come out and play the music of yesteryear. Stylistically—when I go out and play with Red—Red is a bebop player. I'm trying to broaden him. People are saying that Red sounds better with me than he has in years, and that's fine; I like that. It's like a trade-off; I sound better because I played with all those guys.

"You know, the Scriptures say, 'Seek another man's wealth and not your own.' So I guess that's what I'm doing right now. My wife asks me, 'Why do you go out and make these road trips to play music that you're evidently unhappy with?' Well, because of another man's wealth; if this is helping Red get his career together, then it's a blessing both for me and for him. I guess the last year and a half has sort of been time off from my own thing; playing bebop—you know, there was a time I couldn't get arrested playing bebop. But I never feel I'm reaching my own full thing, getting the full potential of my music."

Admittedly, all that sounds a bit desperate: Is Ira really that unhappy playing this music, which sounds as if it comprises a varying series of fully-felt smiles? "Well," he concedes, "I never met a note I didn't like."

It's time to go, and on the way out of the diner, Ira passes a table occupied by a middle aged woman and her mother. The daughter stops her conversation and addresses Ira: "Aren't you Ira Sullivan?" "Well, yes," Ira answers graciously, and the woman introduces herself (Mrs. Carlson) and her mother, and tells Ira that she saw him once, while visiting relatives in Florida, just once, several years ago, in some out-of-the-way jazz venue, but she remembers him. Ira stops to talk, after checking the time; it's a Tuesday night, he's not working tonight, but he is planning to sit in with the local band Ears, but it's still early. . . .

I go to make a phone call, and when I return, Ira has settled in at the table, where he and the Carlsons mere and fille are chatting and laughing like old friends. I've got to go; but at the door, I turn to view this perfectly fitting scene again, wishing I had a camera—and then realizing it wouldn't matter. What I'd really be trying to photograph would be a man's mystique, and I doubt it would show up on film. db

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