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THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

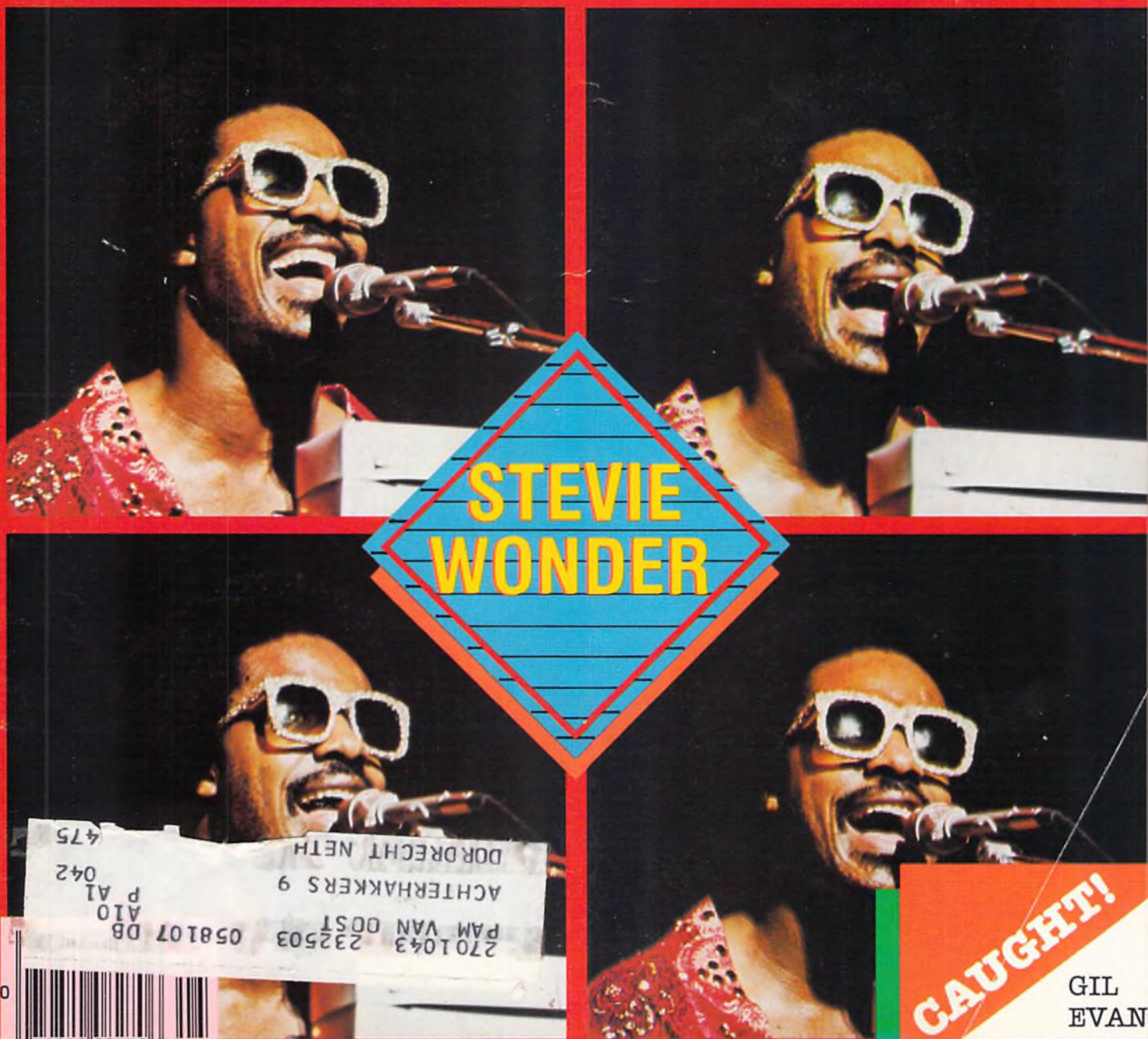
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**STEVIE WONDER: *New Dimensions Out Of A Soulful Past***

**STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Part Two: *An Empty Chair***

**HANK JONES: *A True Spellbinder***

**TERRY RILEY: *Indian Classical Synthesis***



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WONDER

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Color photography of Stevie Wonder by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve. Cover design by Bill Linehan.

# Soul Music Comes Of Age

B Y W . A . B R O W E R

# STEVIE WONDER

**O**n May 13 one Steveland Judkins Morris a.k.a. Eivets Rednow becomes 30 years of age. While this would be a modest age—a time for checking the scorecard on the first leg of a career—for the average working man, Eivets Rednow, er . . . Stevie Wonder, could easily contemplate retirement. After all, he has already logged 18 (going on 19) years in the gruelling, draining—sometimes fatal—world of entertainment. He has accomplished more—21 gold singles, five platinum albums, nine Grammys, a stupendous income, artistic freedom—than most men could if they were cats perpetually landing on their paws for the full nine-year life cycle. Moreover, he has transcended his business, popular music (which certainly has its seamier dimensions) as Muhammad Ali once eclipsed all of boxing. He has become a world-class moral force—a hero—in a time when the personal villainy of television anti-heroes is celebrated, poverty is glibly rationalized, and the ghastly spectre of controlled nuclear holocaust darkens our future.





**LITTLE STEVIE WONDER**  
12-year-old genius

The hallmark of soul music has always been the deep emotional power and expressiveness of its vocalists; its straightjacket has been the limited range of thematic concern explored in its lyric content. With few notable exceptions (i.e. Curtis Mayfield) soul's lyricists have confined themselves to the delights of partying, matters of sex and its sometimes concomitant, love. Musically, soul has sometimes lapsed into saccharine melodrama indicative of its lyric content or lack thereof. Nevertheless, soul's great vocalists have made the genre meaningful, and in some instances have raised it to the level of artistic statement. Stevie Wonder, the Black Bull, is an artist of that caliber.

However, that hasn't always been the case. For the Black Bull was once Little Stevie, a precocious raw talent honed in the image of Ray Charles under the watchful eye of "Papa" Berry Gordy, mastermind of the then-emerging Motown music business complex. He was a small, black, blind kid with an exuberant yet pliant voice who could wail on the

harmonica and played the bongo drums with abandon. Like every other Motown recording artist of the '60s, Wonder was part of a hit-making machine that placed heavy emphasis on packaging the sounds of Black America for a marketplace that was gradually integrating . . . an assembly line carefully geared to produce the "Sound of Young America." As Little Stevie, he generated a steady run of hot dance tunes—*Fingertips Part II*, *Uptight (Everything's Alright)*, and *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*—and puppy love songs—*I Was Made To Love Her*, *My Cherie Amour*, and *Contract On Love*. He even popped up in such surfer boy, crypto-skin flicks as *Muscle Beach Party* and *Bikini Beach*. The Little Stevie years were, in short, full of entertaining but innocuous stuff: juvenile music. Yet the special quality of his voice was unmistakable. Its charisma was like the Midas touch turning even brass to gold, foreshadowing great communicative power and aching for material equal to its potential.

Whatever Motown's limitations, it was the academy wherein Wonder nurtured his considerable talent. His riveting stage presence and uncanny ability to work an audience blossomed as he toured with the Motown Revue. He was surrounded by a stable of clever songwriters as well as arrangers and producers adept at harmonic economy and inventive rhythmic patterns. Motown's studios were like a laboratory full of intriguing apparatus inviting the experiments of an eager student. Once he became serious about music, Wonder spent hours in his lab working out rhythmic phrasing on trap drums and exploring keyboards for new sounds and textures. He began to exhibit the quality of genius prophetically attributed to him on an early album—*12-Year-Old Genius*—and he began to teach his teachers. According to arranger Wade Marcus, Wonder's conductor in the early years, "He would even show Bennie Benjamin, who was the number one drummer at Motown at the time, how to play certain beats for a record. Sometimes they would call him in to lay down a certain feeling on a track after the rhythm track had been cut." To paraphrase an ode to nature which Wonder was to pen many years later, the seeds of his self-sufficient stardom were sown at Motown.

Wonder began to evince that he could be more than merely one of soul's premier vocalists with the first single which he produced for himself. *For Once In My Life*. As Marcus, who did the arrangement, recalls, "That song stayed on the shelf for a year-and-a-half. They used to play all of the new songs for a committee and the committee would select what they wanted Berry to hear. They played *For Once In My Life* at a meeting one day and said no way we can release this record. This record is not the Motown sound. It's too jazzy.



PAUL NAKMIN/PICTO RESERVE

*If Ray Charles is the father of soul music—and James Brown the godfather—then surely Stevie Wonder was the crown prince, assuming his throne with enthusiasm.*

So it stayed on the shelf. We recorded it in 1967 and it wasn't released until the first of January, 1969, when it became the biggest crossover record Motown had to that time."

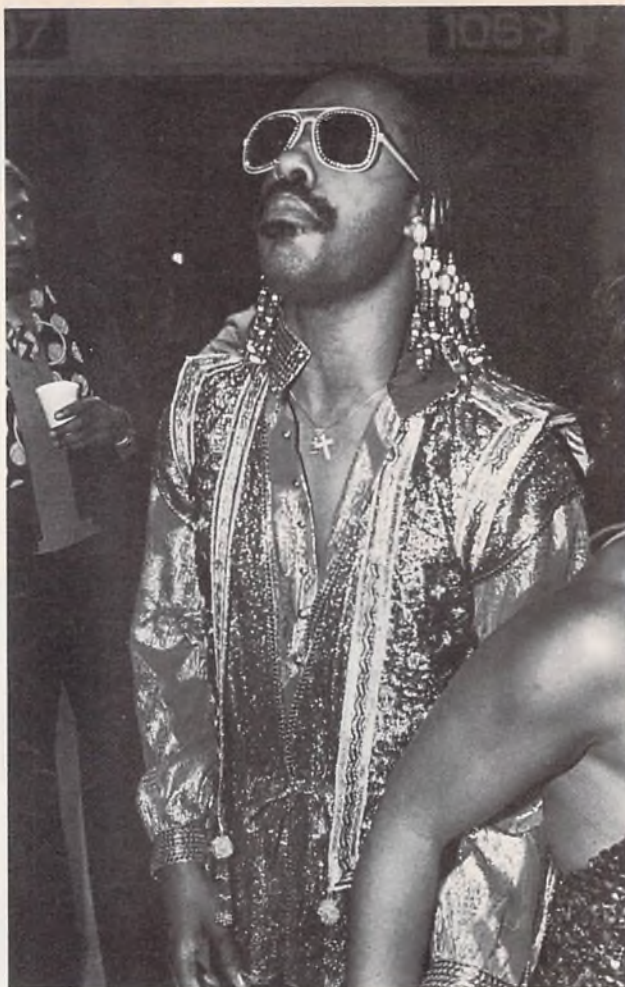
Little Stevie was fast becoming an anachronism. Wonder was poised at the edge of manhood, an innovative mind anxious to strike down the barriers burdening his genre. Wonder's last album as a minor for Motown was entitled *Where I'm Coming From*. The inference should have been clear—Stevie Wonder would be his own man . . . follow his own muse—the Black Bull was stirring in his soul.

Yet to be absolutely fair, Little Stevie was probably blessed to be a subject of the Gordy protectorate during his formative years. Gordy did more than oversee the Motown hit factory; he also ran a kind of finishing school for his proteges, the purpose of which was to polish them for the crossover from the chitlin' circuit to the Copacabana, Vegas, and world tours. Within such an organization, Little Stevie was as sheltered as any prodigy of normal energies and curiosities could be. To Motown's everlasting credit, Wonder's development from child star to adult superstar was uninterrupted by any of the negative exigencies that derailed such fine talents as Little Anthony, Frankie Lyman, and Little Esther. Wonder survived his teens whole and wholesome.

Apparently the powers at Motown weren't quite ready for where Wonder was coming from. After turning 21, he and his lawyer wrangled a new contract from Motown—winning full artistic control in the bargain—valued at \$12 million, an unprecedented figure at the time. Ewart Abner, then Motown president, is reported to have "freaked" at Wonder's terms. But the Bull won and, as he would quickly prove beyond all doubt, was embarked on an historic course. If Ray Charles is the father of soul, and James Brown the godfather, then surely Stevie was the crown prince. And like Peter the Great he assumed his throne with enthusiasm. As Wonder matured, his music—all aspects of it—reached beyond infectious yet purile reverie to the level of art and deeper meaning. Perhaps because his own maturation was so literally entwined with the development of soul music, he was eager and able to incorporate the broader issues of his life and his time into music as few others in the genre have. That this point of view was vested in such a uniquely well-rounded artist—singer, multi-instrumentalist, recording artist, lyricist, composer, arranger, producer—made his creative thrust all the more powerful.

Wonder's breadth of concern and expression would come to approach that of Duke Ellington (the inspiration behind Stevie's *Sir Duke*). Just as Ellington exploded the limits of floorshow composition, Wonder burst through the constraints of his genre. Ellington wrote of *Harlem Airshaft*, *Creole Love Call*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *Liberian Suite*, and *Ain't But The One*. Wonder pioneered a similar thematic sweep in soul music with material like *Living For The City*, *Ebony Eyes*, *Golden Lady*, *Black Man*, and *Heaven Is 10 Zillion Light Years Away*. If Wonder had grown up in a time when stride piano and New Orleans jazz were definitive and the expressive possibilities of trumpets and saxophones were just being revealed, he might well have created in an idiom similar to that of Ellington. But Wonder's direct musical experience has principally been soul and rock. His musical influences, while jazz is prominent among them, are quite eclectic, and for him new frontiers in instrumental timbre, texture, and sound possibilities lie in steadily advancing keyboard technology, synthesizers, and computers.

The Bull's assault on the inbred conservatism of soul began with *Music Of My Mind*, which clearly established Wonder's conception of himself as recording artist. He utilized the overdub capability of modern recording to create—save for one trombone and one guitar solo—an unaccompanied work of full ensemble impact. The studio had become an instrument for the self-actualization of his personal vision. He proved himself able to get much more



STEVE KAGAN/PHOTO RESERVE

than intriguing and atmospheric textural settings out of his electro-synthetic musical arsenal: he was able to make his instruments sing with both melodic poignance and sweetness, displaying an affinity for keyboard and vocal layering as well as the quasi-hypnotic and crescendo effects such construction so effectively enhances. Except for *Evil*—a why-has-thou-forsaken-me pleading—the lyrics all pivot around romance. But in this limited scope he confirms his claim to artistry by avoiding clichéd treatments through the sensitivity and vigor of his verses.

That Wonder intended to expand the agenda of issues explored in popular music became explicit with his next album, *Talking Book*, which was released in March of 1973. While the album's lead cut was *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life* (a song Ella Fitzgerald continues to find worthy of interpretation), it also contains, back-to-back, *Superstition* and *Big Brother*. With those songs Wonder's work began to embrace more than the approved fare of making-up and breaking-up. He was becoming a vehicle for the views, aspirations, and even the suspicions of a godly segment of America, particularly Black America. His detractors have attacked those elements in his work as pedantic, sophomoric, and even naive. But the record shows—both in terms of critical consensus and bottom line record sales—that some of Wonder's strongest and most successful pieces have confronted social justice, Afro-American cultural pride, universal brotherhood, spiritual growth, and the like. *Innervisions* produced *All In Love Is Fair* and *Higher Ground*. *Fullfillingness* featured both *Boogie On Reggae Woman* and *You Haven't Done Nothin'* and from his tour de force, *Songs In The Key Of Life*, you can take your pick. But even his most idealistic miscue transcends the purposelessness, cynicism, and self-indulgent sexism evident in much of today's popular music. Such miscues seem to be history

continued on page 55

# F I D D L E R STEPHANE FANTASTIQUE GRAPPELLI

## PART II: POST-WAR WIZARDRY



JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

B Y L E E J E S K E

**S**tephane Grappelli unbuttons his jacket and settles himself down in front of the tape recorder. One feels almost guilty for forcing this man to sit still; I sense that he'd rather be discussing his life while hurtling through the New York City streets making faces at passers-by. This buoyancy is evident every second—whether it's spent devouring chicken soup or playing Sweet Georgia Brown for the umpteenth time—because Stéphane Grappelli enjoys life with an easy-going urgency. His father was a philosophy teacher and Stéphane says, "I think I'm a philosopher myself—I take the life as it comes and as it will last."

The Quintet Of The Hot Club Of France survived the mercurial nature of Django Reinhardt, but it couldn't survive the outbreak of World War II. Grappelli remarks, somewhat off-handedly, "It was one of those junkets in England. We

were touring before the war, in 1938. So when the war started we were caught there. Django Reinhardt managed to come back, but I was not in the army, I had nothing to do. So I was tired and went straight to bed. But when I wanted to come back it was too late."

Grappelli spent the war years in London where he teamed with a local pianist named George Shearing and enjoyed great popularity. He also re-spelled his name, something which has confused discographers ever since.

"They always pronounced my name Stephanee Grappell-eye. Those idiots didn't know how to pronounce the name right. But they would introduce people to me named Tony, Betty, Harry and I said, 'They don't say Harr-eye or Bett-eye.' So I said, why not me. I'd find that if I put Stephan, without an E, and Grappelly, with a Y, they'd pronounce my

name correctly. I'm half Italian, you see. I was reluctant to do that, you see, because after all, I don't want to insult my father. But I could do nothing else, I accepted it. It was a fait accompli. I accepted that fate, that's all."

Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli were not to see each other for over seven years. "I was living in London and finally the bombs stopped," says Grappelli. "Then, on my birthday in 1946, I arrived at the place where I was playing and Django and Charles Delaunay were there. I couldn't believe it. On my birthday! And, of course, Delaunay was busy organizing sessions. We were with two English guitarists and a bass player I used to play with. The first tune we played was *La Marseillaise*. Just like that. And, of course, in France the purists felt that it was insulting to have the national anthem played like that. But now on every 14th of July (Bastille Day) they put on the air two *Marseillaises*—the Guard Republican, with 100 musicians, and our *Marseillaise*."

In 1946 Django made his only trip to the United States, joining Duke Ellington for a concert tour. There has been some controversy surrounding the tour, which didn't go according to plan. Grappelli accuses that trip of helping to destroy Django's morale.

"I don't want to be unfair to Delaunay [who arranged the American tour], but you know Django Reinhardt had some difficulty when he came here with Duke Ellington. We were invited together with Duke, you see, and unfortunately I had a very bad operation in London at that time so I couldn't make it. So Django came here alone. He said goodbye to me in the hospital where I was and when he arrived here without me, he was completely lost. That's another thing I must tell you, and it's really true. Django always . . . with his little business with me, a bit of jealousy and such, we were like two brothers . . . but always in the difficult times, he was there with me. He came to see me and he was a bit annoyed. First, he was afraid to take the plane and he wanted me to go with him. I said, 'I can't move, you see.' But when he arrived here, Delaunay let him down. And Django alone in New York, huh? He couldn't speak English, he couldn't write. He was late for a concert with Duke Ellington at Carnegie Hall, and some critics were not terribly enamored of him because of that. He started to get lower and lower."

ELLINGTON FAILS TO TOP HIMSELF was the headline of Michael Levin's review of Django and Ellington at Carnegie Hall, in the December 16, 1946 issue of *down beat*. Levin wrote: "Part of the trouble was Django Reinhardt. Billed as star soloist, he simply didn't score the expected artistic effect, even though drawing more curtain calls than any other soloist." Irving Kolodin wrote in the *New York Sun*: "The program relied heavily on the three Vs of jazz: virtuosity, vulgarity, and volume." John S. Wilson, writing for *PM*: "Reinhardt worked out some pleasant and occasionally unusual variations, but never generated the excitement which was evident in some of his work with the French Quintet."

Aside from the fact that Django did not have a shepherd, he was also working on a borrowed electric guitar, having left his own acoustic instrument behind in France.

In the years following the war, Grappelli and Reinhardt would be reunited for assorted concerts and recording dates, though Grappelli continued to live in London. In early 1953 he was approached with an offer to tour America with Django. Stephane set off for Paris to find the gypsy guitarist.

"I went to Paris on the 11th of February, 1953. I remember those dates. I went to the club, the jazz club, in Paris. I found Delaunay who wouldn't help me find Django. I don't want to tell you what he told me. I don't think he knew where Django was, but he didn't help me in any case. He told me just that, 'Well, you know Django the way he is—always late, he never comes. And his records don't sell very well.'

"I said okay. Nobody knew where he was. So I went back to London and I reported that, and I kept on doing my work.



DARRYL PITTENCORE

Some time later I was engaged in Italy, to do some concerts for the symphonic orchestra, playing my music, in Florence. I love to go to Florence, I'm not going to miss that. And when I was in Florence, I heard that Django had died. I received a telegram from Delaunay that said, 'Please come back quick. I'm organizing a big concert in Paris for the benefit of his widow.' I said, 'I'm very sorry, I will go to his tomb. When I come back I will see his tomb. But I can't come now, I can't let these people down.' So I didn't go to France.

"I wasn't surprised, I knew more or less. As I tell you, there was something, an electric feeling between us, and I knew the last time I saw Django he was, to me, looking funny. I was not expecting him to die, but I thought it was the end of his career. He was so affected by his flop in America. He was so affected."

In the years following Django's death, Grappelli stayed in Europe, working primarily in France and England and doing some of the festivals in Italy and Germany. He carefully avoided working in a guitar/bass group, preferring to use pianists and drummers. He spent many years leading the house band at the Paris Hilton, making an occasional record and encouraging a young French violinist named Jean-Luc Ponty.

"I remember Jean-Luc when he was very young," says Stephane. "I remember I was absolutely astonished at his ability to construct something. I did a lot of things with Jean-Luc—Berlin, for instance. I'll never forget, it was a huge affair. The people in Berlin had never heard two violinists. It was such a great success that I remember the promoter was crying when he came to see us. He was so pleased."

Jean-Luc remembers: "I was a classical violinist. I started listening to jazz, but not on the violin. I would say that when I was 19-years-old he was the first jazz violinist I heard of, once I started looking into other violinists. And I was quite impressed with his playing, even more when I discovered he was almost entirely self-taught. He was a model during my first year I started practicing as a jazz violinist.

"We met and became friends right away. He was very kind to me and he encouraged me to go on playing jazz. In fact, I would even say that psychologically he was great. Because at one point I was really depressed—not so much depressed as insecure about what to do, if I should stay in a symphony orchestra and stick to classical music or go on with a career as a jazz violinist. I didn't really know my worth as a jazz violinist and he was the only one to really encourage me to go on. He said that I had created an original style, and psy-



JEAN-PIERRE LELCOIR

chologically that was very important to me. Grappelli was, and still is, a master who cannot be duplicated. So I guess our mutual admiration is stronger than ever today."

As late as 1969, Stéphane Grappelli had still not made his first trip to the United States. He had wanted to come to the States in the '50s to meet the man whom he calls his "god," Art Tatum, but after Tatum's death there was no impetus and no invitation.

"A lot of people said, 'Why don't you go to America, maybe you'll have some success there.' But I was quite happy in my place, why should I go so far away? I finally came here in 1969, when George Wein invited me to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival."

That year Stéphane Grappelli also teamed up for the first and only time with the jazz violin pioneer, Joe Venuti, in a concert in Paris which was recorded and issued on the French BYG label. "I enjoyed very much recording with him, because we are both of Italian descent. He was born in Italy and I was born in France. We were both 50-percent Italian, so I took him to a little Italian restaurant in Paris and he was really happy to get some good spaghetti. Joe Venuti had always been kind of a joker, but with me he was so kind."

The recording with Venuti is only one in a series of recordings that Stéphane has done with other violinists. There was a date with Duke Ellington, which featured Ray Nance and Svend Asmussen, and there have been recordings with Stuff Smith, Ponty and others. Yet it was to be another few years before Stéphane Grappelli would purge himself of his aversion to guitar/bass groups. Twenty years after the death of Django Reinhardt, Stéphane faced the Hot Club instrumentation once again.

"Like the book of Alexander Dumas, *Twenty Years After*, just in 1973 a friend of mine named Diz Disley, an English guitarist, approached me and said, 'Oh, you must come to England. There is a big pop festival there—30,000 people

will be there. And, you know, I have a friend who plays the guitar with me and a bass player.' And I said, 'No, I can't do that. I'm not used to that and I'm too old to play for young people.' It was a young festival. He pestered me so much that I accepted to go to Cambridge. I said, 'Oh well, Cambridge is a lovely town and I'd like to visit. There's always something nice to see there.' And I was so amazed by the success we had with those young people. Suddenly it all came back to me, because Diz Disley has a perfume of Django Reinhardt in his playing and we had another very good guitarist. So since 1973 I've played with the guitars."

Grappelli's output in the past ten years is voluminous. Aside from constant touring, he has recorded in a dizzying number of different contexts. Along with the sessions with other violinists, Grappelli can be found dueting with Paul Simon, playing with Oscar Peterson, George Shearing, Larry Coryell, Gary Burton, and Roland Hanna on various LPs, performing *Mellow Yellow* on a Herbie Mann album, playing *Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desire* with classical flutist Elena Duran on a recent album of jazzed-up Bach melodies, or playing a full album of duets with the adventurous modern pianist Martial Solal.

"You know," says Grappelli, "Martial Solal is not my type of music. As a matter of fact, I'm so pleased that I did the record with him because he's such a genius that he made me play differently than I usually do, and that's what I'm looking for—that's the only amusement I've got in this life. He made me divert from my line, you see, and that's what I like."

"Jazz is not music in a box, you see, that you can just take out. It's a succession. I like to improvise because I had no teacher, it was a way of escape for me. That's why I like to do all kinds of things, like records with people like Yehudi Menuhin and Elena Duran."

One need only listen to the records to see that Stéphane Grappelli is not playing as well as in 1935, when George Frazier wrote in *Hot News* simply, "That boy Grappelli plays a lot of fiddle." He's playing better. His technical and imaginative resources have developed and whatever slight stiffness is present on the early recordings is gone.

Stéphane Grappelli lives, musically, by a tenet of Maurice



DARREY PITTENCORE

Stéphane Grappelli's current quartet



Chevalier's: "You must start very well, finish very well and in the middle it's nobody's business." His solos always begin with authority—frequently with a dazzling scurry to the top range of the instrument—yet, continuing to form a complete statement. He plays the violin like a violinist, although this is something he would deny. While Stuff Smith and Joe Venuti swung close to the beat in short, horn-like phrases, Grappelli stays just behind the beat and his lines are long and legato. He has fearlessly recorded with other violinists and has recorded the same tunes dozens of times in his long career, so it's easy to make comparisons.

For a lengthy and intelligent analysis of Grappelli's style, seek out *Jazz Violin* (Oak Publishing, New York) which, although credited to Matt Glaser and Stephane Grappelli, is really Glaser's own look at Grappelli's style and how it contrasts to those of Venuti, South, Smith, Ponty, and Asmussen. It is brimming with transcriptions and is quite useful.

As to Grappelli himself, there is no stopping him at age 73. He has recorded four albums so far with Yehudi Menuhin, has just begun playing a Barcus-Berry electric baritone violin, and he looks forward to each new project with a youthful zest. He is well aware of his own talents and the admiration others have for him, yet he sometimes speaks with disarming modesty. About a recording session that never came to be he says:

"I met that marvelous saxophonist Paul Desmond. He wanted to make a record with me, but, unfortunately, he died. He came to see me in a club I was playing in New York just before he died, and I still have his telephone number and his address, which I keep. I couldn't believe a man like that asked me to do a record with *him*. I'd say, well, that's certainly a great honor for me."

Young avant garde violinist Billy Bang says, "I'd like to record with Grappelli one day. I like the way he swings, man, I've always liked Grappelli. Always. I just saw him last summer and it was so alive, it still turned me on. Grappelli was flawless to me."

Grappelli's altruistic streak has him constantly showcasing young talent (as he did with Jean-Luc Ponty). His latest find is the young French violin whiz Didier Lockwood.

## SELECTED STEPHANE GRAPPELLI DISCOGRAPHY (Part II)

### as a leader

- UPTOWN DANCE—Columbia 82959  
 YOUNG DJANGO—Pausa 7041  
 AFTERNOON IN PARIS—Pausa 7071  
 I GOT RHYTHM—Black Lion 047  
 JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS—Black Lion 211  
 HOMAGE TO DJANGO—Classic Jazz CJ 23  
 PARISIAN THOROUGHFARE—Arista/Freedom 1033  
 SATIN DOLL—Vanguard 81/82  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Everest 311  
 VIOLINSPIRATION—MPS MC 2254  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Pye 12135  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Pye 12115  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI AND FRIENDS—Philips 6612-039  
 LIVE AT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL—Pye 12123  
 TIVOLI GARDENS—Pablo Live 2308-220  
 TALK OF THE TOWN—Black Lion 313  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Verve 20001  
 IMPROVISATIONS—Mercury 36120  
 FEELING + FINESSE = JAZZ—Atlantic 1391  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI PLAYS COLE PORTER—Festival 240  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI PLAYS GEORGE GERSHWIN—Festival 205  
 LE TOIT DE PARIS—French RCA 740-038  
 GRAND GALA SPECIAL—Exclusive 6201  
 AT THE WINERY—Concord Jazz CJ 139
- as a co-leader**  
 SUPER GIANTS (with Ponty)—Pausa 7074
- JEAN LUC-PONTY AND STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Inner City 1005  
 TWO OF A KIND (with Svend Asmussen)—Polydor 236 502  
 VIOLIN SUMMIT (with Ponty, Asmussen, Stuff Smith)—MPS 5C 064 61227  
 I REMEMBER DJANGO (with Barney Kessel)—Black Lion 105  
 LIMEHOUSE BLUES (with Kessel)—Black Lion BL-173  
 BRANDENBURG BOOGIE (with Elena Duran, Laurie Holloway)—Angel 37790  
 JALOUSIE (with Yehudi Menuhin)—Angel 36968  
 FASCINATING RHYTHM (with Menuhin)—Angel 37156  
 TEA FOR TWO (with Menuhin)—Angel 37533  
 STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS (with Menuhin)—Angel 37710  
 STUFF AND STEFF (with Smith)—Arc. Folk. 238  
 VENUPELLI BLUES (with Joe Venuti)—BYG 529-122  
 HAPPY REUNION (with Martial Solal)—OWL 021  
 THE REUNION (with George Shearing)—Pausa 7049  
 STEPHANE GRAPPELLI AND BILL COLEMAN—Classic Jazz 24  
 PARIS ENCOUNTER (with Gary Burton)—Atlantic 1597  
 OSCAR PETERSON FEAT. STEPHANE GRAPPELLI—Prestige 24041  
 STEFF AND SLAM (with Slam Stewart)—Black and Blue 33076  
**with Herbie Mann**  
 LONDON UNDERGROUND—Atlantic 1648  
**with Duke Ellington**  
 JAZZ VIOLIN SESSION—Atlantic 1688  
**with Paul Simon**  
 PAUL SIMON—Columbia 30750

### Who Is Sitting In Django's Chair?



"I asked Didier Lockwood to play twice with me in Royal Albert Hall, and I invited him to play for a week in Paris. I do my best for newcomers. We're not playing the same, and even if we were playing the same—even if somebody is better than me—all the better for him. But me, I'm sure I've not an *arrière-pensée*, a biting of jealousy, or things like that, because I think it's absolutely ridiculous. My dream will be to work with Jean-Luc Ponty and Didier Lockwood together as a trio, and I hope we can do that one of these days."

Currently Stephane Grappelli leads a quartet featuring two young British guitarists—John Etheridge (formerly of the rock band Soft Machine) and Martin Taylor—and a Dutch bassist, Jack Sewing. The guitarists are given a large amount of solo space, as well as a feature each per night, because their leader won't have it any other way.

"I hate those people who take the whole show themselves," says Grappelli. "You must give your musicians space: it's a question of, maybe, education. It's normal when you get good musicians to show them, because the public understands when you have good musicians, and they would like to hear them as well. It's better to hear four people than only one."

"When I play with anybody, I try to keep behind and give them the chance to do something. You must give a chance to every musician. I enjoy other musicians. I'm in touch with David Grisman now and I think I want to play more and more with him, because his music is so cheerful. I really feel

continued on page 55

# HANK JONES TTT



TOM COPPI

## INDEFATIGABLE ELEGANCE

*The eldest Jones brother effortlessly graces studios, nightclubs, and the Broadway stage.*

BY  
ANDREW SUSSMAN

**L**IKE VINTAGE WINE, HANK Jones just improves with age. Over the years the adjectives used to describe him have flowed freely; he has been called "tasteful" and "lyrical," a "virtuoso" and a "master," "sensitive"—even "impeccable." Certainly one must add prolific and indefatigable.

For the past few years, in addition to conducting and holding down the piano chair of the hit Broadway musical celebration of Fats Waller, *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Hank performs eight shows of the 1978 Tony Award winner every week), Jones has recorded a series of magnificent albums for a half-dozen companies in Japan and France as well as in the U.S. As if that weren't enough, until very recently he had taken on the added task of playing solo piano five nights a week at the Cafe Ziegfield immediately following his theater performances.

All this from a man nearly 63 years old. But when cornered recently after a matinee, he wasn't complaining:

"It's an enjoyable kind of thing," he said. "You don't feel that you're expending energy. I think you may even gain some stamina in the process: it certainly benefits your playing when you play solo, and it's a learning experience. But it does take away some of your sleeping time. You become very much aware that there are only a certain number of hours in a day and only a certain number of those hours are allotted for sleeping. But as I said there are other benefits, and in the long run I suppose it balances out. You know you can't have it all one way—you have to sacrifice a little sleep here and there to attain an end. The end being in this case trying to improve your playing and trying to perfect whatever it is you're trying to do. I've got a long way to go in that respect."

Very modest—but then that's the way Hank Jones is—it's a trademark of his personality. One of the true gentlemen in this business, his persona is gracious, compassionate, diplomatic, literate, and humorous. Similarly, his conversation and playing share an intelligence, wit, candidness, and real joy which is so rare in life... he really is a gentleman.

**T**his rare life started back in Pontiac, Michigan, in 1918—that's when Hank was born, the eldest male in a family of what was to be seven children. "I have two sisters older than I," he noted. "My mother sang, and my father also sang and played guitar. Two of my sisters sing, and I have another brother who plays piano in Detroit but not for professional purposes. So I guess you could say that we were musically inclined." The brother who is still in Detroit, of course, is in addition to the two very famous brothers whose names are among the most respected in jazz: Thad and Elvin. They play trumpet and drums respectively, though that description is hardly adequate, as Elvin practically revolutionized modern percussive techniques singlehandedly during his tenure with the John Coltrane quartet, while Thad went on to become one of the most innovative composer/arrangers around in his work with Count Basie, with the orchestra he co-led with Mel Lewis, and now alone in Europe.

Explaining why he took up piano and his brothers turned to other instruments, Hank noted that "Being the eldest of the boys in the family, I was the one who always, I suppose, got first chance at the piano sitting in the living room. And I was bigger than they were,

so if anybody got near I'd give them a shot.

"I listened a lot to Duke Ellington records, Fats Waller, Earl Hines—and there was an awful lot of blues which seemed to find its way into our house for one reason or another—but mostly I think the big bands: Duke Ellington, Benny Carter, some John Kirby records, Jimmy Lunceford.

"There used to be a radio program in Detroit called CKOK. It actually was in Windsor, Canada, but we got it in the Detroit area, the Pontiac area where I lived, and they used to play 45 minutes of Fats Waller every morning. So everyday before we went to school we used to hear all this Fats Waller. It was fantastic!"

**I**n comparing the past with the current situation, he noted that "today all you have to do is turn on the radio and you're deluged with one kind of music—you're deluged with this sameness—and it's being promoted for all it's worth. Only by careful tuning of the dial can you find perhaps some straight-ahead jazz, traditional jazz... I think this is a mistake. I just don't think that it's being fairly presented by promoters. I think that the promoters have an obligation to present equally all the different types of music, not one to the exclusion of the others. And I think only in that way can the audience have a chance to form opinions about the music.

"I think that jazz has proven itself over the past several decades; I don't think you have to go to any great lengths to prove the validity of jazz. I mean it certainly has public acceptance, if the public has a chance to hear it."

There's much of Fats Waller in Hank

Jones' music today. Not only is he a master of stride piano, but he has captured what he himself called that "happy sound" that Fats used to offer. He might have been talking about himself when he stated that "Some music leaves you either sad or unconcerned or actually with a negative feeling. Fats' music never left you that way. When you got through listening to him, you felt exhilarated."

Art Tatum was another important early influence; in fact, the beauty of Hank's playing lies in his ability to blend many of the best points of Tatum, Waller, Teddy Wilson, and Bud Powell and emerge with his own unique, sensitive style. The first word which comes to mind when discussing Hank Jones is taste: the manner in which he constructs a solo is full of such grace and wit and logic and beauty. Yet it is accomplished with such remarkable technical finesse, such harmonic versatility, such a wonderful sense of humor and melody and lyricism that it's almost as if he sings into the piano, caressing it gently and not striking the keys at all.

"I started with classical training," he recalls. "I was forced to sit down and practice, under the threat of violence. Reminds me of a story that somebody told me about a music teacher up in Boston, I think she was related to Serge Chaloff [the legendary baritone saxophonist], and I understand it was his mother who was a piano teacher. She used to keep a rather large rock, and when one of her students made a mistake, she'd *blam* with this rock. "Well, none of my teachers ever went *that far*... but I never did sit down and practice of my own volition. I always had to be forced. They'd say, 'Hey, you practice that lesson! Teacher's coming next week and you've got four pages to



learn. PRACTICE!' You know—or else."

Mentioning the surprising number of talented artists who came out of Detroit during the time he was there (Lucky Thompson, Tommy Flanagan, Milt Jackson, Barry Harris, Wardell Gray, Roland Hanna, Kenny Burrell—to name just a few), Hank offered no explanation. "I think maybe it's just an accident more than anything else, coincidence, really. Maybe it's because we were hungrier: there's no want, there's need! But the surprising thing about Detroit was that there was no well-known music school. There's the Detroit Conservatory, but I'm sure most of the guys never heard of it.

"I didn't leave until I was about 20 years old, which was rather late, you know, getting into this business. Everything that's happening with me is happening late because I got a very late start. I started playing when I was about ten. Some people started at six, and had a four-year head start.

"I was lucky to go right to work with Hot Lips Page, at the Onyx Club—that was my first job in New York. In fact, that's why I came to New York. Lucky Thompson had played with Lips and I guess Lips had been looking for a piano player, and Lucky heard of it and wrote me a letter. I was in Lansing, Michigan, and he wrote me and said 'Hey, you better come on in. Lips wants you to work with him at the Onyx Club.' So I finally got there and went straight to work."

**J**ones recorded his first album with Page in 1944. Later he played with Andy Kirk, Billy Eckstine, John Kirby, and became a part of Norman Granz' Jazz at the Philharmonic, where he worked with Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Ella Fitzgerald, and many others.

It was also with Hot Lips Page that Hank first performed with Charlie Parker. "Charlie was working at the Three Deuces with Dizzy, either Bud Powell or Al Haig, and either Max Roach or Stan Levey, along with Curly Russell. The Onyx Club was across the street. At some point Bird came in with his horn and sat in and played a couple of choruses and then went back across the street to work with Dizzy. That's what they did. The clubs on 52nd Street were opposite each other, and the guys used to go from one club to the other and play all night long. That's how I first got to play with Charlie.

"I learned a lot, an awful lot, playing with Charlie. Everytime I played with him it was like a 40-year course in harmony, in melody, in harmonization, in counterpoint, everything. You know, the man was a genius. It's just like listening to Art Tatum. I used to hear him live. It didn't matter where he was

playing, after he got off from work he would always go to an after-hours club and play for hours: until daylight the next day. And I used to sit in the middle of those sessions. A 40-year course in everything: harmony, counterpoint, improvisation, taste. How can you teach taste? You don't. You just acquire it. You listen and you have it.

"I feel sorry for the young folk today 'cause they don't get a chance to hear all the good music that has been played, really. I don't know, maybe there still will be some great music. But I've been fortunate enough to hear some of the greatest music played by some of the greatest players."

He has also recorded with most of them, through JATP and a myriad of record labels. But it was through Norman Granz that Hank's first recording as a leader was made. It was playing solo piano.

"It was called *Bebop Piano*, which it was not," he quipped, "but that was Norman's idea of a sales gimmick at the time. Bop was pretty popular and he said, 'Well, let's call it *Bebop Piano*.'" (The original 78s were on Mercury A-61, in 1947.)

Not long after this Hank started to record for Savoy Records. He was used so often as a sideman during this period that he was considered the house pianist, though Hank himself is quick to point out that there were other pianists also working for the company.

After a five-year stint accompanying Ella Fitzgerald, Hank played with everyone from Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman to Johnny Hodges and Sammy Davis Jr. He joined the CBS staff orchestra for 15 years and has probably been heard and seen more than any pianist that ever lived, appearing on more radio and TV shows, movies and record sessions, than would be possible to list. He worked with Barbra Streisand and Carol Burnett, Ed Sullivan and Harry Reasoner, Al Hirt and Jackie Gleason, Harry Belafonte and Andy Williams. He also recorded with Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Oliver Nelson, Ben Webster, Miles Davis, and virtually every other "name" musician you could possibly think of. He was the pianist that everyone wanted on their date. More often than not, he somehow found the time to comply with the demand.

**D**espite all this attention, however, he himself was never really thrust into the limelight, and it wasn't until after CBS discontinued its staff that his own career as a leader began to blossom. So over the past five years he's made up for lost time.

As was and still is the case with many jazz musicians, much of Jones' best LP work was done in the past

decade for Japanese labels, though some of it has been distributed in the United States through licensing agreements. He recorded a brilliant solo piano tribute to Duke Ellington for the Trio label (*Satin Doll*), as well as several discs for East Wind with Ron Carter and Tony Williams where they called the group "The Great Jazz Trio." Most of these have been released domestically on Inner City. In this country he has recorded for Chiaroscuro, Muse, Galaxy, and Pro-



*Why so many talented Detroit jazzmen? "Maybe it's because we were hungrier."*

gressive; in 1979 alone he recorded at least six albums.

"The Japanese are very avid jazz fans," he remarked. "They're pretty avid music lovers. I think the Boston Pops Orchestra has toured, the New York Philharmonic has toured, many musical groups have—choruses, choirs, ballet companies. The Japanese love music, and they love jazz."

Jones just recently returned from a three-and-a-half week tour of Japan, where he performed and recorded with bassist George Duvivier and drummer Grady Tate, as well as with saxophonist Sonny Stitt.

He has made an album of Fat Waller's music with a quintet, a duo album with pianist Tommy Flanagan, another with John Lewis, and recorded two more LPs live from the Village Vanguard with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Al Foster—"The Great Jazz Trio, Chapter Two."

DARRYL PITTS/SCORE

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# TERRY RILEY

BY JOEL ROTHSTEIN

Once in the vanguard of minimalism, Riley dropped out to drop in on Pandit Pran Nath to learn North Indian kirana singing and now combines Oriental ornaments with his own densely textured organ playing.

**T**erry Riley, who startled the musical world in 1964 with *In C*, one of the first examples of what has since been termed "minimalism," has maintained a very low profile in recent years. Of the few records he has released in the past decade, only last year's *Shri Camel* has been issued in America; although he still occasionally gives concerts of his own work, these days he's more likely to be performing Indian classical music with singer Pandit Pran Nath, his teacher since 1970. Yet, while taking him out of the limelight, Riley's Oriental studies have already had a profound effect on his artistic development.

At the time he wrote *In C*, Riley was just barely aware of Indian music. Hailed as a masterpiece by many critics, *In C* showed the considerable variety that could be obtained through improvised phase-shifting within a single key. Like most Classical and Romantic concert music, the work is entirely diatonic and, like nearly all other Western music in a "traditional" vein, is based on a written score.

In contrast, the work he's been doing for the past few years is totally improvised and uses modes and tunings that are more akin to Indian than Western music. The influence of Pran Nath's North Indian kirana singing is strongly felt, but does not form the basis of Riley's approach, either in the pieces on *Shri Camel* or in his more recent projects. Although he hasn't yet performed any of the new pieces in public, Riley says they combine ele-



DIANA RAE GILKERSON

ments of the kirana vocal style, which is highly ornamented and microtonal, with his own densely textured, contrapuntal electric organ playing.

Currently Riley is composing a song cycle, using English translations of the songs which Shri Ramakrishna, a Bengali saint, sang to his disciples. "To me they are very moving," says Riley, "and I'm trying to set the words into a fabric of improvised organ and vocal line. There is a definite melodic/rhythmic form for each song which serves as the basis of improvised elaboration."

Riley met Pran Nath in the late '60s through fellow-composer La Monte Young. At the time, he was performing in Young's New York-based Theatre of Eternal Music. Young and Riley had first heard some tapes of Pran Nath's music in 1967, when one of his students, Shyam Bhatmagar, had brought them over from India. Later, Pran Nath came to the U.S. and both composers became his disciples. Young now studies with Pran Nath in New York, and Riley lives with him during the three or four months a year when the Indian vocalist is out on the West Coast. Both Riley and Pran Nath teach at Mills College in northern

California.

Since around 1970, when Riley began to undergo his formal initiation with Pran Nath, he has also accompanied the singer in concert. He had already been studying tabla for a year before he met his guru. Then, during the first months of his discipleship, Pran Nath took him to India, where Riley studied tabla with some of the players who customarily backed up his teacher. In 1971 he accompanied Pran Nath on the first tour he'd ever made outside of India. "Since that time," notes Riley, "I've done a lot of accompanying on tabla, and now I often sing with him. It's a supporting role, and it's also part of my training, you know, getting launched on my own as a singer."

Asked if he plans to start a career as an Indian classical singer, Riley replies, "Well, I don't know if it's going to be as wide as a career. I've already sung a few times, alone, and I've given concerts of Indian classical music in small situations like private homes and Sufi gatherings, so I'm beginning to venture out in that way. But it's the most difficult musical discipline that I know of. You don't study a little and then just

suddenly appear on the scene. Your training and apprenticeship are long, and you gradually do more and more. . .

"It's a very old tradition, and it's almost impossible to master—mastery in the sense that you can get absolute control of it. This is especially true of vocal music, which is the most elaborate and the original Indian classical music. Instrumental music came later, and actually, the instrumentalists learned from the vocal techniques. Now they have their own kind of style—they sort of branched out on their own. But the old style was the vocal style."

The desire of Riley and Young to become Indian classical singers has raised a few eyebrows in the Western musical community. As John Rockwell put it in a *Musical America* article, "Both men produce performances of quite extraordinary, hypnotic beauty. But one still suspects that if the kirana style of Indian singing is to be handed on to the next generation, his [Pran Nath's] most receptive disciples must of necessity be Indian."

According to Riley, however, "Pran Nath doesn't agree with that himself. His main requirement for a disciple is that he be devoted to the music. One who can feel, understand, and preserve the deep spiritual content of the true pitches and shapes of the original ragas. He feels that music is the universal language and is composed of the same feelings, sentiments, and notes all over the world."

"Pran Nath has brought and implanted an incredible seed in America, and I don't think anybody knows how it will grow, but it's definitely inspired by his work and his tradition, and it will have the essence of the kirana style in it. What will happen to it, I don't know; I couldn't say. But I've heard many of the Indians who study with him, and I don't feel that any of them has grasped his style better than the Americans. If the musician is understanding and perceptive, he can get the idea—although I don't know any musicians who are able to equal Pran Nath's abilities. He's really an incredible genius and the last of his line."

Riley is, of course, prejudiced, but his praise of his guru is not extravagant. Pran Nath is the living embodiment of a tradition that goes back 5,000 years. In concert, he displays a degree of melodic subtlety and a range of expression that place him in a class with the best Western opera singers. Emanating an aura of sainthood, he weaves an intricate aural web, guaranteed to put all but the most obturate listeners under a delicious spell.

He has certainly put Riley under his spell; but, while the latter asserts that he's now "better trained in Indian classical music" than in its Occidental

counterpart, he still respects the Western tradition. "There's an incredible body of literature that could not have appeared in any other culture," Riley states. "It reflects the mind and the feelings, the atmosphere, the architecture—everything in the Western being. It's not as old as Indian classical music, so it probably has to look back toward that for its beginnings. It must have come through the Middle East and Greece. I'm not an historian and I don't have proof of any of these things. But people who do study these things say that music probably did originate in India and in Egypt—the old cultures, anyway—and made its way into the Western world."

By the end of the Renaissance, most of the modes that had characterized the older forms of music had disappeared from Western music. The diatonic, equal-tempered scale, which took their place, was ideally suited for harmonic modulation, says Riley, but restricted the range of melodic ideas.

"Trying to get chords and establish a movement of tonal base seems to be a big focus among Western musicians since the 16th century. Musicians have been trying to move their tonal base

#### SELECTED TERRY RILEY DISCOGRAPHY

IN C—Columbia MS 7178

A RAINBOW IN CURVED AIR—Columbia MS 7315

PERSIAN SURGERY DERVISHES—Shanti #3.501-2

SHRI CAMEL—Columbia M 35164

with John Cale

CHURCH OF ANTHRAX—Columbia C30131

around to get variety. In a sense, it might be a reflection of a homeless quality—not ever establishing a real home, but constantly moving.

"You know, since around the time the Europeans first came to America, man has always been trying to go somewhere. And in music, it's the same thing. Western musicians start out in the tonic and modulate to the subdominant or to some other chord, always trying to establish a change. I think that making a scale that would allow them to do that was a major contribution of Western culture. And, once they did this, they lost the tradition of the modes and melodic subtlety.

"There is a simple law at work here: the more elaborate the harmonic or contrapuntal scheme, the less sophisticated the actual movements and connections of melodic inflection. Nowadays, modality is again popular with [classical] musicians in the West, but it is difficult for them to get the training or exposure that could open up for them its vast potentials."

Of course relatively few Western composers are interested in the com-

plexities of a different musical tradition, and those who step outside the mainstream are viewed with suspicion. For example, in a recent *down beat* interview serialist composer Charles Wuorinen expressed his disdain for those who "equate . . . that sort of doodling around on C Major scales with the kind of melos that exists in Arabian or in Indian music."

Riley, on the other hand, sees serialism as a symptom of Western degeneracy. "The ideas of 12-tone music signalled the breakdown of the system of equal temperament. To continue to invent new uses of equal temperament, composers had to go in directions like serialism, because they were stuck with these same 12 notes. It just means to me that the palette that they're using is very limited. . . .

"What I'm interested in are the actual tunings themselves. What Indian classical music contains is a vast palette of colors of frequency relationships. And once you start studying it, it's just amazing how many new expressions, new feelings, new colors there are in the tonal relationships of different frequencies which we hadn't used in the West. When musicians become more familiar with this, there could be a very good renaissance in world music, which would make things like serialism look kind of pale."

Like La Monte Young, Riley bases the tuning for his own work on just intonation, which is used in many kinds of folk and classical musics around the world. He explains just intonation in terms of harmonics. "When a fundamental tone is sounded," he notes, "it produces a number of 'harmonics' or overtones extending up several octaves above. Each interval of the series is smaller than the one preceding and is represented by an intervallic ratio such as 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, 5:4, etc., the most commonly used and simplest intervals being found directly above the fundamental tone. These ratios can then be arranged within a single octave to form a scale. For each step of the scale, there is more than one choice of intervallic proportion, and it is from this myriad of relationships that the great system of ragas evolved."

Why use a tuning system that is so profoundly different from what Western listeners are accustomed to? "It has a more profound effect, I think, on our senses," replies Riley. "It raises our attention to a finer, subtler sound current. Most organs and keyboard instruments are tuned in equal temperament. When they are adjusted into just intonation, these intervals are actually cleared up, they're put into focus. When you go back into equal temperament, they sound fuzzy and blurred. That's a big difference."

Riley tunes his Yamaha YC-45-D electric organ by adjusting the oscillators. Originally, he had to go inside the instrument in order to do this; later on, his friend and technical advisor, Chet Wood, attached some resistors to the outside of the organ, allowing Riley to tune up more easily. "Now I can tune it variable over about a step-and-a-half for each interval," he says.

Despite his use of just intonation, Riley's tunings for works like *Persian Surgery Dervishes* and *Shri Camel* sound much more conventional than Young's in his magnum opus, *The Well-Tuned Piano*. Asked why this is so, Riley answers, "La Monte has a very ingenious system of tuning for *The Well-Tuned Piano* that includes modulation to other degrees of the harmonic series. The chords that sound 'out of tune' to you are the more radically departing relationships in the scale—some of the intervals that are smaller than half steps. Western ears aren't used to that much radical change in the interval itself. This may sound strange to our ears, because we're used to half step, whole step relationships, and I use mainly that [latter] kind of relationship in *Shri Camel*."

"La Monte's system is a very incredible system of tuning, and one of the major contributions in Western music of the 20th century. His music is about tuning, and he taught all of us a lot about listening to intervals. Without La Monte's work, the whole movement of

### TERRY RILEY'S EQUIPMENT

*Terry Riley uses a modified Yamaha YC 45D two-manual organ, "The Shadow" (a custom-built stereo digital delay system designed and built by Chester Wood), and for live performances a four-channel custom mixing and sound distribution system.*

[Steve] Reich, [Philip] Glass, etc. wouldn't have happened—or wouldn't have happened the same way."

Besides their common interest in tuning, Riley shares one other important characteristic with Young: both of them are improvisers. Riley confesses that he hasn't written down a note of music in at least ten years; *In C*, he adds, was his "last serious attempt at communicating with a group of musicians."

In Riley's view, the main purpose of written composition is to communicate with other musicians. But, as a solo performer throughout the '70s and most of the '60s, he didn't need to do that. Moreover, he notes, "I was getting my inspiration from musicians who were performers—either in the jazz field, like Coltrane, or in Indian classical music, like Pandit Pran Nath—musicians who had come through a tradition of passing music on through the family, from one generation to another, by exposure to the musicians rather than the printed page. And that

really affected me and made me almost unable to write down music anymore, because I felt that this other form was much more living."

The 45-year-old composer first began to improvise when he was working his way through University of California at Berkeley by playing ragtime piano at the Gold Street Saloon on San Francisco's Barbary Coast. After receiving an M.A. degree in composition, he spent two years touring France with a floor show, playing piano at Fred Payne's Artist's Bar in Paris, and traveling around Europe and North Africa.

Among the jazz musicians whom Riley admired at that time were John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, and Bill Evans. "I liked the ones who had good discipline and well-thought-out ideas," he recalls, adding that jazz "had a big impact on my organ playing, especially at first." Also, he points out, "Jazz is what we have in the West as a well-disciplined and defined form of improvisation. It's the only tradition we really have to learn from. So until I got into Indian music, it was my major source of exposure."

Ultimately, Riley chose to become an avant garde composer rather than a jazz musician because "I couldn't find in jazz a viable form to work in." However, he points out that the jazz world is probably tolerant enough to accept his work, "just in the sense that anything improvised with feeling could be con-

*continued on page 63*



SYLVIE D'YVICZAU

# RECORD REVIEWS

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

## ORNETTE COLEMAN

**SOAPSUDS, SOAPSUDS**—Artists House  
AH 6: MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN;  
HUMAN BEING; SOAP SUDS; SEX SPY;  
SOME DAY.

**Personnel:** Coleman, tenor saxophone,  
trumpet; Charlie Haden, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**BODY META**—Artists House AH 1: VOICE  
POETRY; HOME GROWN; MACHIO WOMAN;  
FOU AMOUR; EUROPEAN ECHOES.  
**Personnel:** Coleman, alto saxophone;  
Bern Nix, Charlie Ellerbee, guitars;  
Jamaaladeen Tacuma, bass; Ronald Shan-  
non Jackson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Though Ornette Coleman's *Body Meta* was recorded in December, '75 (and released as the first effort of the ambitious company in which he invested, Artists House), its fresh ambition remains stunning today. Though *Soapsuds, Soapsuds* is Ornette's most recently released LP (recorded in January, '77), it is immediately recognizable as a Coleman classic. Such is the expressive power of Ornette Coleman's musical imagination: to confound and create his unique art anew in each attempt, yet never to forsake the integrity of personal belief from which his music flows.

*Body Meta* was recorded in the same month as the first-issued evidence of Coleman's work with an electrically-modified ensemble, *Dancing In Your Head*. The instrumental context for that album (two extended versions of a sing-song melody that launched myriad soulful sax variations) was a distinct departure from previous Coleman bands: the interplay of Bern Nix's and Charlie Ellerbee's roughly textured guitars with Jamaaladeen Tacuma's (a.k.a. Rudy MacDaniel's) hyperactive bass guitar and Ronald Shannon Jackson's funky, punchy drumming produced a harmolodic force field—leaving rock and even Miles Davis' fusion a ways back.

The shorter takes on *Body Meta* seem like works-in-progress, compared to the cohesion of *Dancing's* 15- and 11-minute versions of *Theme From A Symphony*. The shape of Ornette's jazz-to-come is in evolution here, and the master altoist is less free to develop his own statements on *Body Meta*, as he struggles to evoke from his younger band members their appropriate original thinking.

The album opens with a rhythm lifted from Bo Diddley, and introduces one harmolodically attuned guitar playing an eerie line against the other's harmolodically choked chord. But for Tacuma's overt bass—a lead line in itself—and Jackson's backbeat, *Voice Poetry* is fairly static; Ornette's own theme statement re-emphasizes the song's line interestingly, but continues with less



MARY JONES

inspiration than self-consciousness, until a boldly distorted guitar emerges to join him in loose unison. The piece dissolves, rather than ends.

*Home Grown* works differently: Ornette leads a five-note phrase in strict unison, breaking after six repetitions into a wider ranging line. The altoist lunges on, the guitars try hard to stride beside him, and Jackson pushes from behind (picking up the tempo)—all gather momentum towards a communal tumult that releases Coleman's arching, aching alto to a whirlwind. *Machio Woman* tries a similar opening strategy, with similarly uneven results: the guitars are unsure, hence the work's whole shape grows ungainly; Coleman's gale storm blows in another state, despite Jackson's steady kick and changeable patterns, which attempt to draw all the various aspects of the band's playing together. Jackson also brilliantly supports Ornette's ballad *Fou Amour*, with perfectly chosen funk. Though the guitars occasionally spit Ornette's phrases back at him, it's not until the out-chorus—when O. C. intentionally veers into a screech and the plectrists twang a stretched-out strum over Jackson's free-time cymbals—that the form coheres. *European Echoes* (which appeared on Coleman's 1965 Blue Note *At The Golden Circle, Vol. 1*) begins in waltz time, then all but abandons any plan. As Bern Nix careens over Ornette, Tacuma provides counterpoint and Jackson applies the pounding vocabulary of rock, reggae, and soul, the group finds itself involved in a dense squabble, growing thicker by the measure, and it clears as if by a magic spell conjured up by the sheer will of Coleman's alto: the guitars fall into octave-separated

parallels, and all deliver a striking uptempo tag.

Fascinating in its parts, *Body Meta* seems unfinished. As Coleman has continued to perform and record (though not for release) with the core of this personnel, one studies *Body Meta* for its suggestions, more than for its accomplishments, and enjoys it for its eccentricities, excesses, and momentary disclosures of discovery. A multi-layered work, *Body Meta* becomes more clear, if not more obviously successful, upon repeated listening.

Not so *Soapsuds, Soapsuds*, which invites close hearing and enjoyment from first spin. Ornette and Charlie Haden meet as longtime collaborators and mutual admirers; each brings respect and knowledgeable response to the other. The mock seriousness of the TV theme *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* quickly deepens into tenderness for all plagued yet comic human beings; Ornette fleshes out *Mary* by giving her some rhythm, a clear singing voice, gentle turns of phrase with easy swing, surprising complexities, and an oblique tonal angle, ending with a little-kid-looking-for-mom cry. Haden's not a step behind Ornette, but thoroughly involved, ending with a fat handful of clustered bass strings.

As the album continues with suite-like attention to their particular harmonic relationship, Coleman and Haden swirl about each other like a diaphonous double helix. Coleman grows somewhat looser, using more complex and suggestive strokes, always with a golden-ringing tone which is quite different from his 1960 Ornette On Tenor sound. Haden tries everything he can think of on his instrument, and his thoughts



run not to virtuosic bass stridings, but to deeply felt patterns and subtly intoned touches. *Sex Spy* investigates a feeling of unutterable sadness which could only be linked to the betrayal of intimacy. Ornette offers the broad vulnerability of his trumpet on *Some Day*, which closes still open-ended.

These duets are the participants' most successful to date (both Haden's A&M albums of duets feature tracks with Coleman), and will stand as among the most successful in the genre, along with the Ellington-Blanton duos, and very little else. As Ornette writes: "These performers are playing for the sake of making music for people to enjoy their own concept of hearing." We can all but picture Coleman and Haden listening to each other in the midst of a hush throughout *Soapsuds*, *Soapsuds*, and whenever we're alone, their mutual understanding will provide a compelling reminder of true companionship.

—howard mandel

## AHMAD JAMAL

### GENETIC WALK—20th Century Fox

T-600: *GENETIC WALK*; *SPARTACUS LOVE THEME*; *CHASER*; *LA COSTA*; *PABLO SIERRA*; *BELLOWS*; *DON'T ASK MY NEIGHBORS*; *A TIME FOR LOVE*.

**Personnel:** Jamal, keyboards; Roger Harris, John Heard, Jamil S. Nasser, Richard Evans, bass; Morris Jennings, Frank Gant, Eddie Marshall, Harvey Mason, drums; Calvin Keys (cuts 5, 6), Danny Leake (7), guitar; unidentified horns, strings, voices.

★ ★ ★ ½

### NIGHT SONG—Motown M7-945R1: *WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR*; *DEJA VU*; *NEED TO SMILE*; *BAD TIMES (THEME FROM DEFIANCE)*; *TOUCH ME IN THE MORNING*; *NIGHT SONG*; *THEME FROM M\*A\*S\*H*; *SOMETHING'S MISSING IN MY LIFE*.

**Personnel:** Jamal, keyboards; Calvin Keys, Greg Poree, guitars; John Heard, Kenneth Burke, bass; Chester Cortez Thompson, drums; Ernie Fields Jr., baritone saxophone; Pete Christleib, alto saxophone; Oscar Barshear, Robert O. Bryant Sr., trumpet; Maurice Spears, Garnett Brown, trombone; Gil Askey, Dean Paul Gant, additional keyboards.

★ ★

Ahmad Jamal has always been an iconoclastic, intimate musician. He has moved on cat's feet to his own quiet drum; early on he won the admiration of Miles Davis, Bill Evans, Gil Evans and others; by 1960 he had scored popular triumphs and secured a devoted following. He has also been a survivor, and has made fewer compromises than most. His *Argo* album *But Not For Me* rode the charts over 100 weeks, its smash hit *Poinciana* poised like a butterfly amid heavy air-play juggernauts like Fats Domino and Elvis Presley, and Jamal has kept that same audience hanging on his every aerial filigree.

Touring these days with a taut trio (young Payton Crossley in the demanding drummer's chair), Jamal continues to draw middle-aged black audiences (long after the

majority had silently abdicated artist support to the generation of disco and funk addicts), with very eclectic, personalized music that would be passed off as too difficult in the hands of an artist with a less trusting public. Jamal accomplishes this by coating his sound in elegant garb: deftly etched treble ruminations, commanding chordal crescendi, dramatic dynamic shifts, and glossy, dovetailed arrangements.

Neither of the present unabashedly commercial ventures offers the array of exhilarating originals and gorgeous, offbeat standards that Jamal's trio performances do, but then, many artists have come to expect quite a dichotomy between their performing and recording careers, and Jamal's adaptability to the slick-and-pretty requirements of black MOR radio generally entails a shorter hop for him than for most players. *Genetic Walk*, recorded in '75 but released in early '80, shows less clutter and hurry than Jamal's 20th Century contract-filler, *Intervals* (T-622). Real voices and strings contribute more than color over basic tracks, and are used with discretion, so that Jamal's dry-ice filigree burns through untrammelled (a joy experienced only on the title track of *Night Song*, Jamal's Motown debut). The material here has a high melodic quotient: the extremely attractive Latin numbers, *La Costa* and *Pablo Sierra*, cook happily despite complex overdubs, while *Spartacus* and *Time* show off Jamal's breathtaking linear sense and patented dynamic surprise. *Walk* starts with ominous strings, and evolves into stern but opulent piano statements. *Bellows* (sounding closest to his club dates' music) is a tough tour-de-force for grand piano that allows for stretching out. Whether elaborate or simple, these tracks show Jamal as Jamal, a unique and clear-eyed artist.

Not so in Motown, where Me-generation tactics of diversifying styles may have done well by Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye, Temptations, and Grover Washington, but cramp Jamal's quintessential spaciousness and muddy his clarity with classic overproduction. Jamal ends up doubling trivial piano vamps (*Smile*), wading through endless vapid fanfares (*Touch*, Ross' '72 hit), and elbowing for limelight throughout, against slashing guitar and bludgeoning Fender. Worse are the absences of defined coloration (nearly all textures emerging shrill or blurred) and decent tunes to play (Jamal not even getting one of his tasty originals amid many throwaways). Jamal, expert embroiderer of gossamer variants on good tunes, and master of chiaroscuro, complex moods, gets shut out of both roles here. There are still moments here and there, and all is less pap than most pop. —fred bouchard

## RICHARD BEIRACH

### ELM—ECM 1-1142: *SEA PRIESTESS*;

*PENDULUM*; *KJ*; *SNOW LEOPARD*; *ELM*.

**Personnel:** Beirach, acoustic piano; George Mraz, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ½

New York-born pianist Richard Beirach has worked in the past with Stan Getz, Jeremy

Steig, Lee Konitz, and most notably Dave Liebman. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he projects a very strong classical foundation, and one of the problems with this trio is its lack of energy, excitement, and rhythm.

*Sea Priestess* is a prime example of a composition that drags on without rhythmic energy. The theme is a Keith Jarrett-like trance melody, stated slowly and rather flatly. There is not enough going on for the rhythm section to jell, and the overall sound resembles cleaned up cocktail music, with a dash of Ravel.

On the other hand, *Pendulum*, the second cut, is an example of Beirach at his best. The modal drone of bassist George Mraz, and the intense rhythms of a highly motivated Jack DeJohnette provide a wall of energy to which the pianist must respond. Dullness is replaced with intensity and fire. Right hand piano lines are articulated razor sharp without an over-abundance of pedal.

One of the problems with this record is its recording and mix. The drums are thin and off in the distance, the bass signal is weak, and the piano has been augmented with too much artificial reverb.

Richard Beirach has the technique and dexterity to produce fine compositions. His intensity and fire will come with time and age. —bradley parker-sparrow

## CHARLES MINGUS

### MINGUS AT ANTIBES—Atlantic SD

2-3001: *WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER MEETING*; *PRAYER FOR PASSIVE RESISTANCE*; *WHAT LOVE?*; *I'LL REMEMBER APRIL*; *FOLK FORMS 1*; *BETTER GET HIT IN YOUR SOUL*.

**Personnel:** Mingus, bass; Ted Curson, trumpet; Eric Dolphy, alto saxophone, bass clarinet; Booker Ervin, tenor saxophone; Dannie Richmond, drums; Bud Powell, piano (cut 4).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### SOMETHING LIKE A BIRD—Atlantic SD

8805: *SOMETHING LIKE A BIRD*, parts 1 & 2; *FAREWELL FARWELL*.

**Personnel:** Ken Hitchcock, alto and soprano saxophone, Lee Konitz, Charles McPherson, Akira Ohmori, Yoshiaki Malta, alto saxophone; George Coleman, alto and tenor saxophone; Daniel Block, Mike Brecker, Ricky Ford, John Tank, tenor saxophone; Pepper Adams, Ronnie Cuber, Craig Purpura, baritone saxophone; Mike Davis, Jack Walrath, Randy Brecker, trumpet; Slide Hampton, Jimmy Knepper, Keith O'Quinn, trombone; Larry Coryell, Ted Dunbar, Jack Wilkins, Danny Toan, guitar; Ken Werner, electric piano; Bob Neloms, piano; Eddie Gomez, George Mraz, bass; Joe Chambers, Dannie Richmond, drums; Ray Mantilla, percussion; Paul Jeffrey, conductor.

★ ★ ★

Although Nat Hentoff does his best to convince us otherwise in his liner notes, *Something Like A Bird* is not really a Mingus record. While arranger Jack Walrath and conductor/arranger Paul Jeffrey have constructed some interesting ensemble passages

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around a couple of Mingus' previously unearthed tunes (and under the "Mingus-always-wanted-his-music-played-by-a-big-band" banner), the session ended up as a studio jam featuring a few of New York's hottest players. There are occasional bursts of brilliance, and the medium rating reflects the limitations of an overly structured format rather than artistic flaws.

How can you possibly accommodate as many superstars as this roster offers within the confines of a 40-minute LP? No small task for producers İlhan Mimaroglu and Ray Silva, who must have been rushing chaotically about the studio trying to come up with a solo sequence amicable to all egos concerned. What resulted is a series of confusing choruses and half-choruses in which nobody can really take off, due to time considerations.

Michael Brecker fares best, due perhaps to studio instincts that permit his chops and brain to operate like a combustion engine. Machine-gun Coryell demonstrates, once again, that he doesn't have the slightest bit of affinity for either Mingus' music or the other musicians around him. He's a fine guitarist, but in another studio altogether.

This record would have some lasting meaning if solo-oriented men like Konitz, Coleman, and Knepper had been afforded some breathing space. However, the give-and-take schematic the producers (or the ailing Mingus) prescribed doesn't allow for that. Why not save gobbs of money and whittle this group down to eight or nine pieces, giving the soloists a chance to build their ideas logically? What actual big band writing there is here is lost within a shuffling overkill of semi-solos.

*Antibes*, on the other hand, is a Mingus record, and an essential one at that. It predates the celebrated Candid session *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus* by three months, and as illuminating as that quartet date may have been, *Antibes* is even better thanks to the presence of Booker Ervin.

Sure, Ervin was a somewhat limited player. He wasn't the most flexible of improvisers, but few modern tenorists have ever been able to match his abilities as a blues player, and the blues were at the core of everything Mingus stood for.

Moreover, since Ervin was unsurpassed at playing call-and-response, he was also ideal for the bassist's attraction to stop-time playing.

Listen to the stunning duet Booker engages in with Dolphy on *I'll Remember April*; he flows freely from Dolphy's train of thought into his own and back again. His most convincing testimony comes on *Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting*, as Preacher Mingus shouts encouragement (and orders) to the rest of the congregation.

And there is so much more marvelous playing on these sides! Curson plays very lyrically on *What Love*, compared to the puffy, sputtering antics he falls into so often. Dolphy wails from start to finish, firing jagged contortions of bebop clichés into space with humorous abandon. Hero Ervin's tenor offsets some of the shrillness of the

other horns, another reason *Antibes* is superior to the Candid (most recently reissued by Barnaby).

As advertised, Bud Powell appears, but only for *April*, so don't buy the record if you're under the impression this is strictly a Mingus/Powell collaboration.

Let's not forget that Mingus plays magnificently too, though he asserts his authority primarily as a leader. At this time, 1960, he was entering a new phase of his career, moving away from his blatantly Ellington-influenced approach to ensemble sound, and towards a more frantic, guts-and-blood presentation with less emphasis on conventional time and chord changes. Robert Palmer appropriately calls it "freedom with order."

The *People vs. Atlantic Records* quasi-suit remains before the People's Court. The company has pathetically botched up many Mingus sessions and reissues. With *Antibes*, Atlantic appears to be trying to offer new evidence in its favor. Mingus often introduced tunes in concert saying, "Here's another one that Atlantic never released," so there may well be some unissued jewels sitting on a shelf collecting dust. Let's hope we won't need legal action to get our grubby little hands on them sometime soon.

—arthur moorhead

## CHET BAKER

### THE TOUCH OF YOUR LIPS—

Steeplechase SCS1122: *I WAITED FOR YOU; BUT NOT FOR ME; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; BLUE ROOM; THE TOUCH OF YOUR LIPS; STAR EYES.*

**Personnel:** Baker, trumpet, vocal; Doug Raney, guitar; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME—

Artists House AH 9411: *TIDAL BREEZE; SHIFTING DOWN; ESP; THE SONG IS YOU; ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME.*

**Personnel:** Baker, trumpet; Gregory Herbert, tenor saxophone; Harold Danko, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Mel Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## CHET BAKER/ WOLFGANG LACKERSCHMID

### BALLADS FOR TWO—

Sandra SMP2102: *BLUE BOSSA; FIVE YEARS AGO; WHY SHOULDN'T YOU CRY; DESSERT; SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS; WALTZ FOR SUSAN.*

**Personnel:** Baker, trumpet; Lackerschmid, vibes.

★ ★ ★ ★

Chet Baker had the misfortune of being lucky. More than 25 years ago his affectingly frail reading of *My Funny Valentine* shot him to stardom. Sometimes it seems critics never forgave him for briefly displacing Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie atop popularity polls. They damned him, dismissed him, or praised him in the most curious

ways, draping the albatross of "West Coast jazz" around him.

And Baker sabotaged himself. Only years away from the Oklahoma home of a cowboy crooner father, he found the needle. He disappeared from view for years, then recorded five albums in a single 1965 session. The few faithful proclaimed Baker's re-emergence only to have him vanish again. He cut his last domestic album, a horrific mutation by A&M, in 1977, then returned to the sanctuary of Europe, fading further from the American jazz consciousness.

So why bother declaring Baker's return to vinyl when so many never even noticed he was away? Because his talents with trumpet and voice deserve to be savored. *The Touch Of Your Lips* and *Ballads For Two* provide Baker with what he has needed for so long: a vehicle, a time and place to sound his best, while *Once Upon A Summertime* arrives as a sort of retrospective. This latter release, on the unique Artists House label, allows Baker total creative control, from song selection to the extensive, historical photos and liner notes which declare the album to be one of self-definition.

In the past there has been enough pairings of Baker with big horns like Johnny Griffin or George Coleman just to prove he could bop, enough of bending him to metallic fusion demands, enough, even, of trying to recapture the reedy innocence of decades done. Baker, like few others, defines jazz balladry: nobody is bluer than he. If sentiment limits him, he does possess one of the most personal styles of any jazz musician, and there is nothing at all wrong with mining the lode. These three albums reclaim Baker's position as one of our most sensitive, lyrical performers.

*The Touch Of Your Lips* consists of six standards, recorded in one night. Yet for all the times Baker has played *Autumn In New York* or *Blue Room*, he delivers conclusive versions here. Both his trumpet and his voice sound lower, more controlled than ever: piping adolescence advanced into branded middle age. With long, unadorned notes, he molds phrases into near-words. Even when the tempo speeds, as on the scattish reading of *But Not For Me*, he refuses to chase the pace, rather hoarding all his clarity for well-chosen entrances.

The sidemen match the music for comfort. Baker may have met Raney and Pedersen the evening of recording, but he fits with them like a bandstand crone. Raney is a lilting delight, fashioning lovely, curved notes into directed, melodic runs. Pedersen, time-keeper of the trio, solos much in the manner he supports, welding individual notes together into undercoating for the melody.

Any trio this compatible dares to tempt brilliance, and the title selection comes close to being the masterwork of Baker's career. One scant chord by Raney and it is Baker's song to carry. He sings a chorus with that filament, that membrane of a thin, hurt-filled, voice. Then he loses his finest trumpet solo of the record: a missed note, a breath, two soft, almost unrelated notes, and then quietly gathering strings, rising like barren plateaus. Another vocal chorus,

bracketing the trumpet break, concludes this completely realized statement of sorrow. Nothing for teen angels here—*The Touch Of Your Lips* belongs to battle-weary lovers.

*Once Upon A Summertime* demonstrates Baker's mastery of mainstream settings, no small achievement for an idiosyncratic performer who tends either to shape a group to his style or flounder trying to conform to another. He is certainly challenged here. Gregory Herbert makes an aggressive second horn. Ron Carter anchors a rhythm section that by his presence alone rebukes any notion of "cool," and the five selections resort to balladry only once.

Miles Davis' *ESP* provides the clearest test, in two senses. Not only does the composition confront Baker with the ghost of his overly-influential peer, but *ESP* is a faster, more dissonant Davis than the one (ala *Solar*) whom Baker has chased before. Here, Baker's chops sound as supple as ever. Pushing his pace to match the mixmaster rhythm section, he remains fluid and deep. Neither the cracking found in his past bop efforts nor the whining of his Davis side intrude.

The album's title ballad raises the stakes on an already estimable work. The hollow opening note—stark and eerie as an ice cavern—is simply slaying, and from there Baker bunches notes in fours and fives, before letting out single, frail lines of sound. Herbert's resonant harmonies, Carter's full, plucked accents, and the sparkling, sprinkled piano of Harold Danko all underline Baker's tender touch.

*Once Upon A Summertime* is not necessarily the definitive Baker album, the one to play for someone who never has heard him, but it represents the sort of top-shelf group work he should be producing more of.

*Ballads For Two* arrives as an unexpected treat, defying Baker's detractors and placing him with success in unfamiliar surroundings. Vibist Wolfgang Lackerschmid wrote four and arranged one of the seven songs. His loose, roaming style—derivative of Gary Burton—defines the album's sound, while his compassion as a collaborator finds him adapting his sound to Baker. Whether on a bossa nova (*Blue Bossa*) or a waltz (*Waltz For Susan*), he lays the percussive and harmonic foundations without disruption, leaving himself the opportunity to travel the registers and freeing Baker to select his solo spots. Baker, light as a meringue, floats and sways with the undulations of Lackerschmid's chording. His long, phrase-ending notes cue the vibist to launch his own arabesques. Throughout, Baker and Lackerschmid smoothly trade front and backing roles, hinging on one- and two-bar statements. Only *Dessert* fails. For seven minutes, Baker reincarnates his Miles Davis imitation. Missing the stiletto edge Davis brandished even at minimal volume and with few notes, Baker's muted doodlings meander and dissemble.

A few minor shortcomings hardly dilute albums of such achievement. *The Touch Of Your Lips* sums up Baker's American side, *Once Upon A Summertime* confirms his ability alongside his domestic peers, and



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*Ballads For Two* opens the potential of Europe to the expatriate. Together, they promise growth and hope in a gifted life marred too often by sad sabbaticals.

—sam freedman

## ITZHAK PERLMAN/ ANDRE PREVIN

**A DIFFERENT KIND OF BLUES**—Angel DS-37780: *LOOK AT HIM GO; LITTLE FACE; WHO READS REVIEWS; NIGHT THOUGHTS; A DIFFERENT KIND OF BLUES; CHOCOLATE APRICOT; THE FIVE OF US; MAKE UP YOUR MIND.*

**Personnel:** Itzhak Perlman, violin; André Previn, piano; Jim Hall, guitar; Red Mitchell, bass; Shelly Manne, drums.

★ ★ ½

Around last Christmas time this record was a hot ticket in NYC. The supply just couldn't keep up with the demand. My approach to it was therefore tinged with a good dose of prejudice. Isn't the old adage—"Bastardize the classics, falsify jazz, and you can't miss"—as valid as ever? What, in the name of rhyme and reason, could one expect of Itzhak Perlman, a superstar of the classical violin, whose credentials in jazz are non-existent? And, to raise an apposite question, can anyone imagine great jazz violinists making hit records, unless they follow the example of Stephane Grappelli's *Brandenburg Boogie* with, say, *Bachbeat Shuffle*?

I must say right out that my prejudice was justified.

It was André Previn's idea to have Itzhak Perlman play in a jazz setting. The material consists of eight compositions by Previn. The hand of a craftsman is evident in all of them, but the deftness is used to toss off plain trifles. The slower pieces (*Little Face*, *Chocolate Apricot*) establish evocative moods and are of a greater melodic interest than the uptempo ones, which often fall into a cute and kinky kind of banality (the polemically titled *Who Reads Reviews*).

The title tune, *A Different Kind Of Blues*, is not a very different kind of blues, and as such it serves to exhibit Perlman's total lack of familiarity with the idiom. Elsewhere on the album he tries to acquit himself by relying on his professionalism and virtuosity, although his phrasing is stilted, his tone wiry (I never understood those who describe it in terms of richness and opulence); he simply cannot converse in the language of jazz. In the company of the four jazz masters, he remains an outsider and a distinct liability to the artistic success of the whole enterprise.

Marshall McLuhan was certainly correct when he said that a fake Rembrandt or a fake Van Gogh do not "endanger the world of perception or art, but they do endanger the market." However, in the art of musical interpretation, as well as in the other interpretational arts, fakery functions the other way around.

Were it not for Perlman's presence there would be no question of authenticity, and this would have been a good record representing an isolated effort to revive the West

Coast-style of the 1950s. Even the album design—the cover art, as well as the short, skimpy, and musically uninformative program notes (by Previn)—is in keeping with the then-prevalent LP jacket mode. Previn tells us that Perlman had never played jazz before (no need for liner notes to find that out), that he is an overeater of deli sandwiches, and that in the recording sessions everybody had a good time and laughed consistently. While hearing the album I didn't laugh much, whether out of derision or of delight. The latter account of my laughter was in response to Red Mitchell's marvelous playing all along; to Previn, the pianist (as opposed to the composer) who, despite his years of distance from the worlds of jazz, has not lost his touch (in either sense of the word—his solo on *Chocolate Apricot* is a particular joy), and to Shelly Manne for his solid and swinging beat. But I was let down by Jim Hall's timid and uninvolved performance.

The digital recording is bottom-heavy (as most digital recordings are) yet the bass instrument is lacking in round and clear tones. The drums are over-recorded and Manne, a most subtle drummer, sounds ponderous. The piano's sonority is often cramped and the guitar's muffled. Only the violin comes through in what resembles Perlman's "real life" sound.

In sum, this record is a mixed blessing (or a qualified curse). Unlike most runaway best-sellers, it is not one to run away from, but one to acquire for its pleasurable moments. What reduces it to the state of a curio is none other than Itzhak Perlman, the point and purpose of the project. But then, like the man says, who reads reviews?

—gungor bozkurt

## L. SUBRAMANIAM

**FANTASY WITHOUT LIMITS**—Trend TR-524: *FANTASY WITHOUT LIMITS; FEELING LONELY; MANI TALKS; 5 3/4; FRENZY.*

**Personnel:** Dr. L. Subramaniam, violin; Emil Richards, vibes, marimba; Milcho Leviev, keyboards; David Edelstein, electric bass; Frank Morgan, alto saxophone; Zakir Hussain, tabla, naal, duggis; Bob Forte, drums (cuts 1, 3); Ralph Humphrey, drums (2, 4, 5); Tom Rotella, guitar; S. Vijayashree, tamboura, suramandal.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The blending of East and West in musical forms has been going on for more than two decades now; its popularity can probably be traced back to the late 1960s when those favorites of the pop world, the Beatles, made a pilgrimage to India to be with their new-found teacher, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The success of recordings by sitarist Ravi Shankar followed. Since then many Western musicians have been to the East, bringing back new nuances for their music.

A reverse example was the arrival in the United States, in 1973, of L. Subramaniam, a well-schooled violinist in the classical Indian tradition. He was appointed head of Indian Music Studies at the California

Institute of the Arts, and his interest in jazz began developing. *Fantasy Without Limits* is Subramaniam's first American recording as leader.

The title tune eloquently displays the skillful interweavings of two cultures, introducing the first evidence of Frank Morgan's soulful alto sax playing. While this instrument is not Indian in nature or idiom, it nevertheless captures the essential spirit, and empathizes with the inherent Eastern flavor of the violin. In this, as well as the other uptempo tracks, Subramaniam's extraordinary technique is well displayed in long, facile runs and utterly seamless extensions of the theme.

*Feeling Lonely*, by contrast, typifies the American ballad form which jazzmen have always used as a vehicle for improvisation. Morgan's solo gives excellent indication of his Charlie Parker influence, and Leviev is in a blues bag for his acoustic solo. The leader's violin on this track is more noticeably classical, with pure, clearly defined lines.

All the compositions are by Subramaniam, and have successfully combined the varied elements of Indian classical music and jazz, as in *5 3/4*, which has a rhythmic cycle of five-and-three-quarter beats, producing an insistent pulse throughout. Here, Subramaniam utilizes his specially made violin, which has eight sympathetic strings placed parallel to the original five. This unusual concept gives the illusion of a whole string section.

Both Zakir Hussain and Emil Richards are well-versed in Indian rhythms, and Richards' marimba introduces a searing violin workout on *Mani Talks*, while Hussain can be heard providing subtle accompaniment (as well as taking his own masterful solo, backed by electric bass and tamboura, on *5 3/4*).

The closer, *Frenzy*, has all the ingredients of American jazz, with Leviev's acoustic piano taking off first, and tablas providing sensitive backup. Then comes Morgan's yearning, searching alto sax. There is an unlikely combination of the blues, bebop, and avant garde explorations within the scope of this Indian-tinged work, with a particularly awe-inspiring solo by Subramaniam, who bends and stretches notes, running the full gamut of his instrument's capabilities. Rotella's guitar on *Frenzy* is basically Western jazz (with a few rock licks here and there); however, at times (notably in *Fantasy Without Limits*), he is strongly reminiscent of John McLaughlin in some of the latter's Indian experimentations.

Drummer Ralph Humphrey's several years spent with the Don Ellis orchestra prepared him for odd time signatures and poly-rhythms. His rock-steady beat and affinity with the tablas contribute to the sense of oneness achieved by these disparate musicians.

Though we're well into 1981, on looking back to 1980's crop of recordings, it isn't too difficult to single out *Fantasy Without Limits* as my personal choice for Record of the Year—mainly for its originality, but also for the extremely high standard of musicianship.

—frankie nemko-graham

# RECORD REVIEWS

## STEVE LACY

**STAMPS**—Hat Hut K/L: *EXISTENCE; IRE; THE DUMPS; STAMPS; DUCKLES; WICKETS; THE BLINKS.*

**Personnel:** Lacy, soprano saxophone, Japanese bird whistle; Steve Potts, alto, soprano saxophone; Irene Aebi, cello, violin, vocals, bells; Kent Carter, bass; Oliver Johnson, drums.

★ ★ ★

**THE WAY**—Hat Hut Three (2R03): *RAPS; DREAMS; EXISTENCE; THE WAY; BONE; NAME; THE BREATH; LIFE ON ITS WAY; SWISS DUCK.*

**Personnel:** Lacy, soprano saxophone; Steve Potts, alto and soprano saxophone; Irene Aebi, cello, violin, vocals; Kent Carter, bass; Oliver Johnson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

The biggest difference between *Stamps* and *The Way* is in craftsmanship. Tunes in *The Way* are more thoroughly developed and more neatly organized, and the musicians are technically stronger. Both Steve Lacy and the rest of his group made great progress in the (approximately) two years between these recordings.

*Stamps* and *The Way* were recorded live with the same personnel. One disc of *Stamps* was recorded at the jazz festival in Willisau, '77, the other at Jazz au Totem in Paris in 1978; and both discs of *The Way* were recorded at Theaterwerkstatt Kleine Buhne, Stadttheater, Basel, Switzerland in

1979. In general, the engineering is better on *The Way*—balance is markedly improved—but differences in quality between the two recordings are deeper than that.

*The Way* is a six-piece cycle based on a Chinese text attributed to Lao Tzu. It was written by Lacy and includes pieces (dedicated, variously, to Coltrane, Parker, Ellington and others) for each time of day: dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.

*Existence*, the title tune *The Way*, and *Bone* make up the first half of the cycle. To open *Existence*, a saxophone "lines out" the pitches that Irene Aebi will sing, and they continue to pass pitches back and forth over a static rumbling. The tempo then changes to a midtempo swing, and solo horn lines cut through.

Potts and Lacy open the title cut with a duet at the interval of a perfect fourth. The rhythm section joins them with a lazy beat and in the first moments, while Aebi is outlining a major sixth chord, it's like a fragmentary parody of a cowboy song. The mood quickly changes again, to "new music" sounds including overblowing, scratching, and the use of alternate fingerings. This style of improvisation is akin to Anthony Braxton's in its emphasis on structure. It sounds both spontaneous and well-made, and that winning combination sets it apart from most other music of the genre.

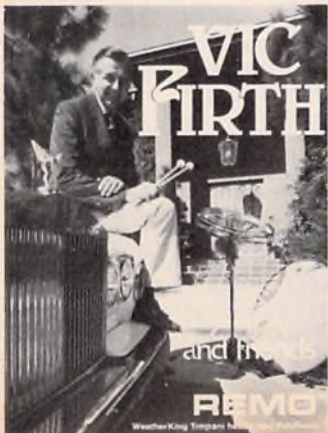
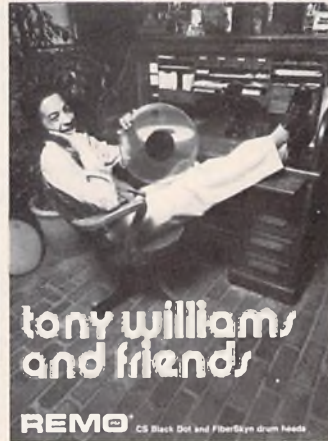
*Bone* signals a return to more traditional improvisation. It swings along comfortably with Aebi matching saxophone lines. Her vibratoless vocal inflection tends to produce

a planar effect. I like the sense of abstraction and distance this gives: she cools the saxophone heat. I wonder if she couldn't sound even stronger if she consistently sang low, rather than moving up where her heavy voice has to strain. She achieves an intensity of effect from reaching high, but perhaps she'd get an even more moving result by staying within a lower tessitura.

Besides her bravura strength, Irene Aebi's most important contribution is her understanding of stress and phrasing. Even more than their rhythmic imprecision, the ensemble's diffidence toward phrasing flaws *Stamps*. A lack of breathing room—that is, of pauses, breaks, of the sense of space that's created by shifting rhythmic patterns—means that the music is caught in an anxious stasis.

The ensemble solves the matters of phrasing and forward momentum in several ways, all successful, in *The Way*. On *Raps*, set in duple meter, a bass ostinato anchors the tune while Lacy solos. Lacy combines harmonically structured improvisation of a post-bop nature with his prodigious extended techniques that serve his imagination well. The steady rhythmic line works to establish a point of departure so that when Lacy goes out, there's still an element of stability.

*Dreams*, atonal and set in free time, is more difficult to absorb. Unlike *Raps*, no one element is structural; responsibility is shared by the ensemble. The shape of Lacy's melodies owe a debt to the wide influence of the Second Viennese School, and sense can be made of them in the midst of this shifting



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rhythmic context because the ensemble pays attention to phrasing. The group is stronger melodically (mostly because of Lacy) than rhythmically; at times the rhythm section isn't tight enough to structure the music as it should. Still the ambitious mixing of styles works well, and this tune is, for the most part, a good example of how two large problems of playing new music can be solved.

Timbre is also a large consideration in achieving a contemporary sound. In both *The Way* and *Stamps*, Lacy's timbral effects are as important as the melodic and rhythmic styles in giving the music a contemporary feel.

In *Names*, Lacy's tone is Eastern in color: nasal and turgid, like a primitive oboe, a drone in the bass circles with a ringing pulsation. The bass' timbre is raw with overtones and well matched to Lacy's, as is Steve Potts' saxophone sound. Lacy is just as comfortable here as he is when running changes or squealing, and the ensemble does well, in *The Way*, at both Eastern-influenced tunes and *avant garde* works. Content of *Stamps* and *The Way* is about equally interesting, once culled, but the superior presentation of *The Way* makes its material cogent.

In his liner notes for *The Way* Steve Lacy writes: "This is the first complete recorded performance of *Tao*. Already, one year later, some parts have been modified, reworked, developed. This music is complete, but lucky for me, unfinished." Lucky for us, too: music as inventive as *The Way* is hard to find, and its development from *Stamps* is an excellent argument for the large potential for growth that arises when musicians become truly intimate with their music. On to the next developments of Steve Lacy and his band.

—elaine guregian

## CECIL McBEE

COMPASSION—Inner City IC 3033: *PEP'S SAMBA; UNDERCURRENT; COMPASSION.*

**Personnel:** McBee, bass; Chico Freeman, soprano, tenor saxophone; Joe Gardner, trumpet; Dennis Moorman, piano; Steve McCall, drums; Famoudou Don Moye, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

## CHICO FREEMAN

PEACEFUL HEART, GENTLE SPIRIT—Contemporary 14005: *FOR THE PEACEFUL HEART AND THE GENTLE SPIRIT; FREEDOM SWING SONG; LOOK UP; NIA'S SONG DANCE; MORNING PRAYER.*

**Personnel:** Freeman, alto, c-flute, soprano, tenor saxophone, b-flat, bass clarinet; Jay Hoggard, vibes; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Buster Williams, bass; Billy Hart, drums; James Newton, bass flute, c-flute (cuts 1, 2, 5); Paulinho da Costa, Efrain Toro, percussion (1, 4); John Koenig, cello (2, 5).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Compassion is the fifth meeting on LP of Freeman and McBee, and they make a great

team, as each responds to the other's exciting lines and phrases with fiery ideas of his own. Yet such excitement frequently does not last, or extend to other soloists (Gardner and Moorman are especially weak throughout). The cuts, recorded on August 3, 1977 at Sweet Basil, range from great to mediocre, with the peak reached on the first track.

Freeman's *Samba* is much the tenorist's act. He's the only soloist and he wails throughout: his twisting, jagged lines evolving into shrill cries and ending with a burning buzz-like sound. McBee continually throbs with a deep, throaty pulse. Unfortunately, the mix puts the bass, drums, and percussion too far forward, though that can't detract from the blazing intensity of Freeman's playing.

Freeman switches to soprano on McBee's *Undercurrent*, playing with less of the inventive flow and tonal range that contribute so much to the excitement of his tenor playing. The tune itself is a bright charmer with a light, bouncy pizzicato bass figure which McBee maintains throughout, sometimes varying it and occasionally racing away from it with a fast stream of notes, only to settle back into that main groove. In his solo, he tosses out ideas like one does when stressing points in a conversation, jabbering out flurries of notes and sometimes holding deep rich notes with determined insistence. Only McBee's playing gives these 11 minutes any real interest.

The title cut, which takes up all of side two, finds Freeman back on tenor, playing with a gentle warmth as he lazily spins out long lines with a seductiveness that slowly turns to soothing passion. But then the cut disintegrates with a disjointed piano solo, picks back up with an intense McBee solo, and cools with a wandering trumpet solo. This track is much too long for its loose structure, although Freeman's solo is well paced. Moye and McCall, as they did on *Samba*, add much background color that provides some strength—but more from Gardner and Moorman would have helped matters further.

*Peaceful Heart* is a far more successful album. Good use is made of varied voicings from the slightly different personnel; for example, *Heart* opens with a bass figure and the other instruments slowly enter—alto flute, piano, vibes, percussion. The sound remains open and airy, in keeping with the tune's gentle, lilting feel. Newton takes flight with a warm, full tone on c-flute, darting through the air. Following a piano solo that brings things back to earth, Freeman tenderly nudges the piece along with his alto flute.

*Freedom Swing Song* opens with an angular line played by pizzicato bass and cello, plucked piano strings, and vibes, with drums and Freeman's bass clarinet eventually joining in. Throughout, instrumental colors clash and contrast; such extremes are even found in Kirkland's piano playing, as a harpsichord-like sound contrasts with crashing chords. Yet despite all the dissonance, the tune still swings, albeit freely, as the title suggests, especially thanks to Hart's cymbal work.

# RECORD REVIEWS

The fat, searing tone Freeman employs on *Look Up* is a display of his Chicago tenor school roots. He tears through this uptempo original with blazing ferocity, as Hoggard's vibes add a soft warm undercushion. Kirkland runs through his solo with exhilaration after which Williams tries to extinguish the spreading fire with a subdued bass solo, but the flames flare up again with the return of Freeman's red hot tenor.

*Song Dance*—a latin-style piece—is Freeman's only turn on soprano, and his tone, which is both sweet and sharp-edged, is fuller, richer, and warmer than on the other album, which was recorded two-and-a-half years earlier. Hoggard, whose strong contributions had until now been limited to the background, takes a long, flowing solo in which his tone ranges from sharp and clear to mellow and marimba-like.

*Morning Prayer* is a gorgeous, plaintive piece that opens with unison arco bass and cello, with c-flute and then bass flute adding additional lines and occasionally harmonizing. Throughout the length of the cut, new material is added, continually exploiting the mournful qualities of the string and woodwind instruments. Each instrumental voice is imaginatively used, showing Freeman to be a talented and sensitive arranger as well as a strong composer and soloist.

—jerry de muth

## RED GARLAND

**EQUINOX**—Galaxy GXY-5115: *It's All Right With Me*; *Hobo Joe*; *Equinox*; *Cute*; *Nature Boy*; *On A Clear Day*; *You Are Too Beautiful*.

**Personnel:** Garland, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

★ ★ ★

**FEELIN' RED**—Muse MR 5130: *It's All Right With Me*; *You Better Go Now*; *On A Clear Day*; *Going Home*; *I Wish I Knew*; *Cherokee*.

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

★ ★ ★

**SAYING SOMETHING**—Prestige P-24090: *Undecided*; *What Is There To Say?*; *Two Bass Hit*; *Billie's Bounce*; *Soft Winds*; *Solitude*; *Lazy Mae*; *On Green Dolphin Street*; *If You Could See Me Now*.

**Personnel:** Garland, piano; John Coltrane, tenor saxophone (cuts 1-7); Oliver Nelson, alto and tenor saxophone (8,9); Donald Byrd, trumpet (1-7); Richard Williams, trumpet (8,9); Jamil Nasser (George Joyner), bass (1-7); Peck Morrison, bass (8,9); Arthur Taylor, drums (1-7); Charli Persip, drums (8,9).

★ ★ ★ ★

Semi-retired in his home town of Dallas for more than a decade, Red Garland, that dapper, driving pianist who rose to prominence in the seminal Miles Davis quintets of the mid-'50s, happily again resurfaces here, with a reminder that hard swinging and tasteful, empathetic playing need not be mutually exclusive qualities. Although this

pianist's vocabulary of voicings and other improvisational devices is limited—perhaps purposely—these limitations convincingly confirm Richard Wilbur's observations that "the strength of the genie comes of his being confined in a bottle."

Garland's principal confinement is his strict system of chord voicing. No one has satisfactorily coined a term for the chiming way Garland arranges notes at the keyboard. "Block chords" or "locked hands" doesn't quite say it, for these terms can just as easily be applied to the Milt Buckner/George Shearing strategy of silkenly voicing all notes within an octave shell. Garland's method sounds brighter, fuller, and swings more percussively. As his right hand plays octaves with a fourth or a fifth added inside for resonance, his left hand lends support with tight snatches of chordal tones in rhythmic unison. This device, one of the catchiest, most driving piano idioms of the '50s, is as immediately recognizable as Wes Montgomery's plucked octaves or Miles' muted trumpet sonorities.

That Garland has remained true to the outlines of his conception is demonstrated by a release like *Equinox*. Recorded in 1978 with bassist Richard Davis and drummer Roy Haynes (with whom Garland worked in the early '50s), this album gives a better than average portrait of Garland the seasoned trio pianist and Garland the musical gentleman.

*On A Clear Day* is a perfect vehicle for Garland's bright, snappy approach. The groove is happy as he spins long, facile lines which pounce from curlicue to curlicue, always landing right side up. And his supportive, energetic comping behind Davis, a series of forward-leaping jabs, never obtrusive, suggests why consummate stylists like Miles were attracted to this urbane, polite group player. There are similar, friendly old sounds on *It's All Right With Me*. Ticked by Haynes' gossamer sock cymbals, Garland runs the gamut of cooking, from simmering to flat-out boiling. After a fat, genial solo by Davis, Garland's patented pedal point riffs call up still more bright, ringing octaves. *You Are Too Beautiful* aptly changes the pace. On this carefully articulated ballad Garland stays respectfully close to the melody, infusing it with charm and feeling.

Less fortunate shifts of mood occur on *Cute* and *Nature Boy*. *Cute*, a played-out novelty tune, can't be saved even by Haynes' clean, clever brushwork. *Nature Boy*, done with arco bass phrased in sighs and moans, is a sentimental performance, one probably best left undone. It's only Coltrane's *Equinox* that makes up for such lapses. Garland's long, tripping lines seem laid back even in doubletime, and Haynes' dancing development of simple rhythmic motifs is listenably intelligent.

*Feelin' Red* is in many ways an analog of *Equinox*. Recorded in the same year, it contains a roughly proportionate number of kicky bouncers and delicate ballads, all seasoned with Garland's two-handed chordal punches and dancing patterns of melodic accents and twists.

After running through another of his



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# RECORD REVIEWS

pedal point vamp intros (by now they all sound similar), Garland cuts into yet another version of *It's All Right With Me*. Passing through an uncharacteristically uncertain bridge, he again redefines those '50s buzz-words: *cookin'*, *burnin'* and *steamin'*, all terms which are further invested with meaning by Al Foster's aggressive, kicky drumming. *Cherokee* also burns, once it gets past its trite, pseudo-Indian tom-tom intro. On *A Clear Day*, apparently a favorite of Garland's, nearly replicates the *Equinox* version of this tune, replete with a similar vamp intro and slices of melody compressed into driving riffs and sock choruses.

Unlike his uptempo chiming, Garland's ballad playing is economical, lightly chorded, and hallmarked by his delicate, controlled touch. You Better Go Now, the song popularized by Billie Holiday, receives a simply charming interpretation. Garland's keyboard glisters even in slow tempos. In contrast, *The Second Time Around* is hipply smoochy, a pretty, insubstantial lapse in taste.

The bulk of the last of these releases, *Saying Something*, is a two-fer looking backwards some 20-odd years to the time when Garland held down the piano chair in Miles' group. Culled from such Prestige masters as *High Pressure*, *Dig It*, and *Soul Burning*, this reissuing joins Garland on most of its tracks with an explosive Coltrane, an edgy, Miles-influenced Donald Byrd, a dependable though restrained Art Taylor, and a well-intentioned though annoyingly thumpy bassist, Jamil Nasser. Admittedly a collection of casual, walk-in-and-run-down-the-tunes studio dates, the principals here, Garland, Coltrane, and Byrd, breeze through a handful of swing, bop, and bop standards. Although the ensemble is nowhere as tightly knit as the group Miles was fronting at this time, the players nonetheless enjoy plenty of space to stretch out in their comfortably divergent ways.

Coltrane commands the most attention. On *Undecided* he's strikingly *decided* as he blends sweeping scalar runs with interjections of bop phrases, wailing held tones, and short flutters. His expansive technique is even more extraordinary on a ballad like *What Is There To Say?*, as his complex vocabulary of slurs, glisses, and blends plus delicate connecting phrases does indeed say something—it's a collection of controlled, nearly subliminal musical statements.

In contrast, Byrd is the extrovert here. On the jumping *Two Bass Hit*, for instance, he squeezes off pinched runs brassily ascending to climactic target tones. More relaxed on the medium-tempoed *Billie's Bounce*, his attack is still rough at the edges. Lots of brassy exuberance, lots of near fluffs.

As for Garland, his playing certainly can't be faulted for inconsistency. His sharp powers of invention come to the fore on his long *Soft Winds* solo. Notes—all the right notes—roll from his fingers. This amazing bit of melodic sleight of hand ends in one final surprise: boogie treble wobbles. Boogie figures also lead into *Lazy Mae*, a relaxed, solidly swinging excursion in which Garland mixes his sassy octave lines with

Silverish blues riffing, building chorus after chorus of earthy grooves.

Throughout, Garland repeatedly relies on his durable stocks in trade, those precisely articulated, expansive runs and those chimy voicings. If these devices define the genie's bottle, a pleasant and energizing place of confinement it must be indeed.—*Jon Balleras*

## DAVE PIKE

LET THE MINSTRELS PLAY ON—Muse MR 5203: *SPIRIT'S SAMBA*; *PROFESSOR PORNO'S ROMANCE*; *GROOVIN' HIGH*; *SWAN LAKE*; *ICARUS*; *RABBI MOGEN'S HIDEOUT*.

**Personnel:** Pike, vibes, percussion; Tom Ranier, keyboards, alto saxophone (cut 3); Ron Eschete, guitar; Ted Hawke, drums, percussion, music box (4); Luther Hughes, bass, cello, piccolo bass (5); Don Williams, percussion; Carol Eschete, voice (1).

★ ★ ★ ★

Vibraphonist Dave Pike has been on the jazz scene so long that one tends to overlook him in the rash of newer, emerging artists. This may be due, in part, to his lengthy absence from our shores, for Dave spent five years in Europe during the early 1970s. Since his return to the U.S. his output hasn't been what it deserves, either in person or on disc.

It was a pleasant surprise, therefore, to hear cuts from *Let The Minstrels Play On* almost every day recently on Los Angeles' jazz radio station. "Dammit, who is that?" was the reaction on first hearing, and then came an immediate need to obtain the album in order to hear the rest.

I wasn't disappointed; Pike himself is in excellent form, and his cohorts on this particular date are no less capable and exciting than the leader. There's a nice balance of moods and styles here, ranging from the opening *Spirit's Samba*, with its bright percussion and effective wordless vocal by Carol Eschete, to an unlikely inclusion of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. The latter really only uses the famous theme at the beginning and end of its nine-and-a-half minute length: everything in between bears no relation to the original. This track, though, is an especially good workout for Ron Eschete, whose interesting and exploratory solo points up his wide variety of styles on the guitar.

Pike's bebop background is evident in his choice of the old Gillespie standard, *Groovin' High*. It is here that pianist Tom Ranier pulls out an unusual double, with a very Bird-like rendering on alto sax, switching half-way through to acoustic piano. His long lines and inventive phrases show he has listened to and absorbed the work of all the great contemporary keyboard masters, and yet has hewn out a singularly distinctive style.

Ralph Towner's composition *Icarus*, a beautiful melody, is the perfect setting for Luther Hughes' cello. To the credit of Pike and company, they have altered the tempo and mood of this work, giving it a personal touch.

Two of Pike's originals are the album's



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rock contributions: Professor Porno's Romance and Rabbi Mogen's Hideout. It would probably be more correct to call these tracks "fusion," since Hawke's drums establish an insinuating rock beat, but Pike's vibes playing never strays far from his innate sense of jazz. Rabbi Mogen I found the least interesting composition, although Pike cuts loose briefly with a rather esoteric solo, sounding less constructed, freer, than anything else herein. However, it didn't last long enough.

This album was recorded back in early 1978 and only reached the market in late 1980. Pike's previous Muse LP, *On A Gentle Note* came out several years prior to that. Maybe Dave Pike would benefit from a change of record company—to one that would keep up a steady flow of his first rate music, thereby ensuring continued popularity with his old fans, as well as garnering some younger listeners who would surely relate to his up-to-date sound and style.

—frankie nemko-graham

## WAXING ON . . .

### Soulful Ladies

**ETTA JAMES: CHANGES (MCA 3234)**

★ ★ ★ ½

**PATTI LABELLE: RELEASED (EPIC 36381)**

★ ★ ★ ½

**IRMA THOMAS: SAFE WITH ME (RCS A-1004) ★ ★ ★ ★**

**ARETHA FRANKLIN: ARETHA (ARISTA AL9538) ★ ★ ½**

**DIANA ROSS: DIANA (MOTOWN M8-936M1) ★ ★ ★**

**DONNA SUMMER: THE WANDERER (Geffen GHS 2000) ★ ★ ★**

**SYLVIA ST. JAMES: MAGIC (ELEKTRA 6E-268) ★ ★ ★ ★**

**MINNIE RIPERTON: LOVE LIVES FOREVER (CAPITOL SOO-12097) ★ ★ ★ ★**

At the height of the disco craze, many non-dancing listeners grew disgusted with the general state of black popular music. Disco also affected the overlapping white and latin scenes, but as funk gave way to formula—a formula of killer bass drums, inevitable rhythm solos, and throwaway lyrics—the style seemed to virtually blanket the black AM/45 market. Naturally there were some inspired moments: the lunacy of Funkadelic's Aqua Boogie, Bobby Caldwell's tender *What You Won't Do For Love*, and disco classics such as Chic's *Dance, Dance, Dance*, and Lipps, Inc.'s *Funky Town*, to name just a few. But these were exceptions in a trend of "party hearty" repetition that was mercilessly done to death. Now that disco is assuming its proper perspective as just another acceptable format, the soul scene is enjoying some welcome diversity.

The eight black women reviewed here range from veterans to novices, from earthy screamers to delicate, ethereal stylists, but they're all rooted in the blues and gospel of the Afro-American tradition. Etta James goes back the farthest: her *Dance With Me Henry* was a lewd mid-'50s reply to Hank (The Twist) Ballard's equally racy *Work With Me*

Annie. Though she commands a loyal cult following, Etta has never achieved real stardom, and her latest set, *Changes*, has ironically not caused any, career-wise. Her strong alto voice is in fine form, at times ominous (*Mean Mother*), plaintive (*Night By Night*), and stirring (*Changes, It Takes Love To Keep A Woman*). These last two numbers have the same sort of depth that brought Gladys Knight hits with *Midnight Train To Georgia* and *If I Were Your Woman*. James is certainly in the same league: the album's problem is not her performance but rather the series of similar, medium tempo funk tunes that blur together after two sides' listening, despite individual high points. Producer Allan Toussaint has been criticized for giving *Changes* an obsolete, late '60s sound in the mix, charts, and instrumentation, though to me the gutsy horns are plenty contemporary. But a singer of Etta's limited range needs varied material to hold people's interest, and this is where the set falls short. Still it's recommended for sheer funk and Etta's bloodcurdling screams. (As a quick aside, when will the Meters' Leo Nocentelli, now New Orleans' ace session guitarist, be featured on an album of his own? Leo keeps a low profile on *Changes* but let him loose and he's as versatile and hot as they come.)

Patti LaBelle's *Released* was also produced by Toussaint at his New Orleans Sea-Saint funk factory, but his concept here was obviously more sophisticated. *Dawning Of Rejection* is a very strong opening cut, featuring terse, pointed lyrics over tense upbeat changes which climax in a strident, catchy, repeated sax figure. Patti's steely vocal and swooping highs combine with stark reverb for building suspense that recalls the Phil Spector/Tina Turner classic *River Deep, Mountain High*. *Don't Make Your Angel Cry* is a sweet, light ballad with tasteful strings and a New Orleans-accented melody. A snappy upbeat tempo and sharp lyrics push *Release*. While *I Don't Go Shopping* follows as an effective ballad with a strong Aretha influence in the climax. In short, *Released* presents an intelligently varied, well-orchestrated, consistently interesting, soulful program. LaBelle's delivery has softened some since the wild abandon of *Lady Marmalade*, but the feeling is all there with in-the-pocket phrasing and a wide range of notes and intonations. Like Etta James, Patti hasn't become a major star but is well established as a mature talent.

We can't leave New Orleans without high praise for *Safe With Me*, the latest set from the Crescent City's "Soul Queen," Irma Thomas. Irma is another fame-eluding cult figure, best known for *You Can Have My Husband But Please Don't Mess With My Man* (currently revived by Chicago blues belter Koko Taylor) and *Piece Of My Heart*, which was a hit for Janis Joplin. *Safe With Me* appears on the tiny Record Company Of The South label out of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Let's hope this outfit keeps going, because *Safe* is the most solidly satisfying, unpretentious and effective album of the eight covered in this review. Backed by a small combo which features gospelish key-

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boards and sax. Irma swings through a set of contemporary Southern soul which bogs down only once, on a dull version of the Four Tops' *Can't Help Myself*. Thomas makes only sparing use of the screams and falsettos employed by James and LaBelle; her delivery is more deliberate, and her mid-range voice doesn't cover a lot of ground. Phrasing and nuance are Irma's main tools, along with a real talent for projection. She can smolder (*A Woman Left Lonely*), taunt (*What's The Matter, Baby?*), party (*Dance Me Down Easy*), or haunt (*Princess LaLa*) as the moment demands. Strings are present throughout but in an understated manner that enhances the tunes without overpowering them, much like the Hi Records sound for Al Green, Ann Peebles, and Syl Johnson. Blues purists may be upset that no 12-bar tunes are present, but the blues spirit is definitely audible. The album's steady continuity is remarkable given that co-producer John Fred—remember *Judy In Disguise?*—and associates used five different studios in as many Southern states.

From a gem by a lesser known singer we sadly come to fluff from a major artist—the Queen Of Soul herself, Aretha Franklin. Apart from odd moments (*What A Fool Believes, United Together*), Aretha sounds tired, detached, and uninterested on *Aretha*. It's not that she's adopted a softer, more subtle style and is being arbitrarily judged by former standards; there's just not much life in this performance. Franklin's voice and innate sense of phrasing are still incredible—she's by far the most talented of the eight singers reviewed here—and when Aretha's cooking she'll make you hang on every word. But listening to this set won't move many people who aren't dancing, and the fault is not with the producers. Slickness and funk are nicely balanced in the instrumentation and mix, there's a varied selection of tunes and tempos, and the original Sweet Inspirations are back as Aretha's chorus. In fact everything is together except for the featured vocalist. No one can fairly expect Franklin to wail out *Respect* the rest of her life, but more involvement is needed to bring Aretha's music above the ho-hum level. While *Aretha* is not a painfully bad album let's hope its pervasive blandness is just a temporary disappointment. Criticism aside, it is getting a lot of airplay.

Superstar Diana Ross fares better on *Diana*, but while her singing is pleasant enough, it's the innovative production that puts this set across. Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers are best known for their work with Chic, which brought us such minor masterpieces as *Good Times* and the previously mentioned *Dance, Dance, Dance*, as well as obnoxious drivel like *Le Freak*. Edwards and Rodgers give *Diana* a spare, layered treatment, with a surprisingly sparse instrumental backing. The strings are used almost percussively, as opposed to their usual lush, sweetening role. The empty space of this "less is more" approach provides the perfect backdrop for Ross' light vocals, which are straightforward and simple—there's no particular flair, style, or dynamism beyond Diana's unique, nasal

tone. Besides their excellent work in the control room, the producers make important contributions as players: Edwards holds a rock-solid groove on bass while sneaking in subtle nuances, syncopations, and hook patterns, while Rodgers provides a definitive display of funky block chording on guitar. Three of Diana's more successful cuts are *Upside Down* (one of 1980's huge hits), *Tenderness*, and *Have Fun Again*. These are all mid-tempo with slight syncopation and basically follow the production style described above. On *I'm Coming Out*, however, Edwards and Rodgers go in an earthier direction. Mean guitar chording anchors offbeat, tantalizingly clipped opening statements from both Diana and the drums, with the latter mixed unusually high. Next comes a very African sounding horn section which might seem more fitting on a Dollar Brand session. Though the body of the tune doesn't match the intro's dramatic build up, it's still striking and does feature Diana's sweetest vocal. *Diana* has some dull songs and trite lyrics, but at their best both she and her producers are quite impressive. Edwards and Rodgers are quickly emerging as a major creative force.

Few voices in pop music today can match the rich purity and sensual fullness of Donna Summer's. Donna is more closely associated with disco than any other singer mentioned here, but her natural talent and potential run deeper than current trends. Summer has changed labels, and at first listening it might seem that she's also switched producers, but this isn't the case. The orchestras (*MacArthur Park, East Dance*) and heavy instrumentation (*Bad Girls, Hot Stuff, Dim All The Lights*) of earlier hits are not much in evidence on her newest set, *The Wanderer*. Mentors Pete Bellotte and Giorgio Moroder are now backing Donna with a simpler sound, basically a small band fronted by keyboards and restrained synthesizers. Donna too is somewhat laid back, with varying success. On the title song she comes on with a throaty, whispered tone that'll make you think you just ate a dozen raw oysters. *Stop Me* and *Who Do You Think You're Fooling?* are uptempo funk with emotional lyrics, and, for Summer, thin, urgent vocals. *Looking Up* and *Running For Cover* hint at Donna's earlier, full style and, along with *The Wanderer*, are the album's best cuts. Though none of this material is especially memorable, the album shows that Summer doesn't have to rely on sensational accompaniment. Up to now she's used her gifts without much conscious artistry, and *The Wanderer* seems to find her in a period of transition, attempting to increase her depth. Given an ambitious project Summer could make some heavy music—maybe someday she'll be turned loose on jazz, and/or material with substantial lyrics.

Sylvia St. James' *Magic* comes from the intellectual end of the soul music spectrum. Many of the carefully chosen, non-original tunes have the sort of lyrical depth typical of Stevie Wonder or Gil Scott-Heron, with themes that are surprisingly political in today's apathetic climate. But don't think

that *Magic* is a harsh polemic with no room for romance. Several love and party songs are programmed in along with the "roots" material, and Sylvia sings them all with verve, involvement, and considerable technique. When excited, her voice bears a strong resemblance to Chaka Khan's in its dizzying ascents and urgent dynamics; at mid-range and in subtle moments Sylvia displays her own bright fluidity, smoky depth, and ability to glide through octaves with soft grace. Her double-tracked membership in the back-up chorus is impressive, especially in a capella sequences, and on *Ghetto Lament* the combination of recitation and singing shows she's an artful interpreter of poetry as well as song lyrics. The production here is smooth, contemporary, and distinctly L.A. in its understated lushness. Harps, ARPs, strings, horns, and voices are given a solid bottom by block guitar chording and a crisp rhythm section. A major part of this funk insurance is provided by co-producer and Return To Forever-alumnus Lenny White, both at the traps and mixing board. This evenly-paced set really does not flag, and the thematically linked mini-epics *Mother Land* and *Black Diamond* are the most notable tracks. Sylvia St. James is not well known (I'm assuming, in the absence of a press kit, that this is her debut), but she is with a major label, so *Magic* stands some chance of deserved success.

Finally, we come to *Love Lives Forever*, a posthumous piece of studio wizardry which is the final statement from Minnie Riperton. Cut down by cancer at 31, Minnie possessed a voice of incredible range. Certainly her high notes rank among the highest ever recorded, yet her tone and control were always immaculate. But Riperton's talent comprised more than upper register novelties. She was a sophisticated pop/soul stylist who conveyed delicate sensuality and vibrant, enthusiastic excitement. Sadly, Minnie enjoyed only two real hits, *Seeing You This Way* and *Loving You*. What co-producers Richard Rudolph and Johnny Pate have done on *Love Lives Forever* is to take some unreleased vocal tracks and build an entire album around them. It was a difficult, ambitious project, and at times the edited seams are slightly detectable. Nevertheless, *Love* succeeds both as tribute and well-crafted, tasteful pop/soul set. Beyond the impressive union of old vocals with an overdubbed band and orchestra, *Love* features such guest luminaries as Peabo Bryson, Stevie Wonder, George Benson, Roberta Flack, Tom Scott, and others who worked with Minnie in the past. Their presence makes this set something of a minor classic. Two standouts are the Riperton-Bryson dialogue on *Never Coming Down* and Wonder's harmonica work on *Give Me Time*. As on Sylvia St. James' *Magic* the production is full, lush, and California-mellow, with charts and arrangements which Johnny Pate rightfully consider to be a highpoint of his career. Some people may find the album a bit too sweet, but let it grow on you, and Minnie Riperton will live forever.

—ben sandmel

# Blindfold Test: JAKI BYARD

BY FRED BOUCHARD

AT 58, JAKI BYARD stands as one of the most versatile and uncategorizable musicians in the history of jazz. His long stints with Maynard Ferguson, Charles Mingus, and Rahsaan Roland

Kirk were as exciting as they were varied.

Perhaps the most telling tribute to his unique genius for synthesizing all conceivable styles within the spectrum of Afro-American improvised music was his getting the call from Duke Ellington to take over

the band's keyboard duties during Duke's final illness.

Byard was given no prior information on the recordings in this, his first Blindfold Test. He eschewed the star system of rating, protesting, "They're all five stars; heck, I'm a star myself."



**1. MCCOY TYNER. *It's You Or No One* (from *4x4, Milestone*). Tyner, piano; Al Foster, drums; Arthur Blythe, alto saxophone; Cecil McBee, bass.**

The playing is very close to the present, it reaches that intensity. It's very good. My guess is, and I haven't heard him for a long time, Eric Kloss, and if it isn't him, then Sonny Fortune. The piano, I don't know, I hear John Hicks playing like that sometimes. The drummer, Billy Higgins? I couldn't hear the bassist too well. Very good, excellent. If I had the money, I'd buy it.

It's McCoy? Reason I said John Hicks is he's one of the few cats who plays that percussive. That was recorded last year? Whew! A lot of my students play that way now. I thought Tyner would sound more like he used to sound, after Trane, when he hit that innovative explosion. Once the innovator plants his seed, others mushroom from it. Al Foster, well I was close!

**2. FATS WALLER. *Oh, Dem Golden Slippers* (from *Fine Arabian Stuff, Deluxe*). Waller, piano, vocal.**

As soon as he started singing, it was obviously Fats, not Bob Howard. That intro, too. My students look for that left-handed accompaniment that Teddy Wilson became famous for: the root, then the fifth or seventh and tenth. You use that for fast tempos, see?

Fats was one of the geniuses of this age, like Beethoven was of his. When they finally find the geniuses of this century, they will be in the art of improvisation, which they erroneously call jazz—or pop, or rock. If my name were Leonard Bernstein, that statement might carry some power.

**3. RANDY WESTON. *Niger Mambo* (from *African Cookbook, Atlantic*). Weston, piano; Ray Copeland, trumpet; Booker Ervin, tenor saxophone.**

It's a Jazz Messengers sort of sound, or maybe Randy Weston. It is Randy! The piano player had that touch, the sound of Monk and Duke, and that cyclic thing, up a fourth, down a fifth, up a fourth, down a fifth is typical of him. Excellent! Who's the trumpet? Not Lee Morgan or Charles Tolliver. The ending lick reminded me of Booker, but he didn't solo. Tenor playing an octave below trumpet was more the Messenger

sound than the Diz/Bird sound of alto and trumpet in unison. I was going to say Horace Silver for a minute, but I never heard him play that kind of dissonance as Randy did on the breaks.

**4. EARL HINES. *A Kiss To Build A Dream On* (from *My Tribute To Louis, Audiophile*). Hines, piano.**

Fatha! I can always tell him! Ha ha! I've been listening to him since his Grand Terrace days around 1940. I've played opposite him and recorded with him. I knew that touch as soon as I heard the melody. He started all that business. Tatum listened to him. King Cole, too. And Peterson. Bud Powell used to sound like Fatha when he first joined Cootie Williams. We used to say: "It's not Fatha Hines, but who is it?" It was Bud Powell, who was beginning his innovative powers.

We played opposite each other at the Village Gate in the 1960s. Every time Fatha came to town there was a strike: blackout, newspaper, then subway! Earlier we'd done a three piano thing up at Lennie's On The Turnpike with Chick Corea. Fatha would put down his old stride thing: "I don't play that way anymore." But he'd work it in.

**5. SADAO WATANABE. *Bird Of Paradise* (from *Bird Of Paradise, Inner City*). Watanabe, alto saxophone; Hank Jones, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Tony Williams, drums.**

Phil [Woods]? It's either Cedar Walton or Hank or Tommy [Flanagan]. That little chromatic figure—it's Hank. I can't get the alto player—James Moody? It's very well played for that straight ahead thing.

**6. WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH. *Relaxin'* (from *Luckey & The Lion, Good Time Jazz*). Smith, piano.**

Is it Duke? No. James P. [Johnson]. Willie The Lion... It is Willie? You see, James P., Willie Duke. Fats, I've heard them all play this line. I thought of Willie, because you know, he was Duke's man and Duke's done things like this, *Portrait Of The Lion*. I knew about this album, but never heard it. Isn't Luckey Roberts on it, too? Play me some Luckey, too. Willie wasn't commercially popular so we only got to hear him on piano rolls. I heard Duke's *Portrait* before I heard Willie himself. I was more into Basie, King Cole's trio. We really had to forget about stride. When I came to New York in the '40s, it was hard to

fit in unless you sounded like Bud Powell. That was all the rage, and guys like Clyde Hart were on the fringe of the picture. For all the young cats coming along—Walter Bishop Jr., Hank Jones, George Wallington—Powell was it. If you played stride, man, thumbs down. Too corny. It wasn't 'til I went with Maynard Ferguson [1959] that I started doing everything, and folks started digging it.

**7. TETE MONTOLIU. *Your Little Foot Right Out* (from *Lunch In L.A., Contemporary*). Montoliu, Chick Corea, pianos.**

I hear Chick Corea. It's four hands, right? I don't know who the other cat is. Well, I'll tell you. The first time I heard Chick and Herbie Hancock play together, they sounded like a couple of Europeans to me, playing European harmonies. Compare them with Tommy and Hank, or Fatha and me, and you'll see what I mean.

**8. SUN RA. *God Of The Thunder Realm* (from *Live At Montreux, Inner City*). Ra, solar organ; John Gilmore, tenor saxophone; Stanley Morgan, congas.**

It's either Sun Ra or Cecil Taylor: play that percussion thing again. Or Sunny Murray. That's Sun Ra on organ, and John Gilmore on tenor. It's an expression of energetic force. It reaches a peak of real intensity, and it's good. But usually they stop, and start again to try to reach that peak. They can hit it two or three times, but then it loses its musical meaning, it doesn't have emotional impact.

**9. CHARLES MINGUS. *I Can't Get Started and Myself When I Am Real* (from *Mingus Plays Piano, Impulse*). Mingus, piano.**

Not Monk? [Mingus speaks an introduction and Byard laughs.] Oh, this is that *Myself When I Am Real* album. I wrote a full orchestra arrangement of this for the Joffrey Ballet and Alvin Ailey. I played that track a hundred times, then put the damn album away. There were plenty of hints that it was Chazz, like those passing tones, but he played percussive like Monk or Randy. Sometimes we'd switch off on the stand and I'd play bass, but if I started getting slick, Ming'd stop me. db

# Profile:



## Chuck Loeb

BY LEE JESKE

One thing that the 1970s did for jazz, what with all the jazz-rock, jazz-funk, punk-jazz and what not, was to focus interest on the electric guitar. The instrument had gained in prominence through the '50s and '60s, but the real boom came in the '70s, when young, budding musicians began emulating such diverse players as John McLaughlin and George Benson.

When guitar student Chuck Loeb unpacked his instrument upon settling into Berklee in 1973, he found 800 other guitar hopefuls, all tuned and ready to pick.

"It's amazing, it's incredible," he says in his Brooklyn apartment. "It's even more so now. The thing about Berklee is, they have 800 guitar players because there's really no hard admission policy. You don't have to have achieved much to go to school there. In fact, I met a guy when I was there who had just bought his first guitar to go to Berklee. He had never played the guitar before, he just bought a Berklee method, a guitar, and he went to college." Loeb left after two years because "I felt like I was very serious about my playing and writing

and I didn't feel I was getting quite as much back as I felt I was putting in."

Loeb, a 25-year-old product of the rock era, says, "Basically I grew up on the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Cream, people like that. I'm still very into Jimi Hendrix. I got my first guitar when I was 10. Actually, my sister got one and kind of lost interest in it, as kids do. It was there, so I started messing around with it. I just taught myself until I was 16. I never did much studying, really, just playing. When I started getting interested in jazz, I realized I'd have to study."

Chuck's jazz studies began when a family friend gave him a pile of records—Wes Montgomery and the like—but it was the influence of John McLaughlin which caused him to turn the corner. "That was kind of like a bridge between rock and jazz," he says. "At that time I started practicing a lot of technique and a lot of things that help in developing jazz playing. I started taking lessons in Philadelphia, but it was hard to get there from my home in Nyack, New York. My teacher recommended Jim Hall to me as a teacher in New York, so when I was 17 and playing in local rock bands, I began taking lessons with Jim Hall. I don't think I was ready to study with him, though. I was very young. I think maybe he saw something, because I was doing weird, but interesting, things

on the guitar—immature, in a way. It was kind of awe-inspiring studying with him, but he was a great inspiration."

The lessons lasted for a year-and-a-half, during which time Chuck continued to play in rock or fusion bands while, at the same time, listening to Wes Montgomery and Pat Martino records.

"Around that time, I started doing some solo guitar gigs in restaurants. That's when I started playing standards and going to jam sessions and stuff." This led to Berklee, as it did for a herd of young plectrists. After two years, it was back to Nyack.

"I realized that in Boston, with 800 guitar players at one school—and that's not counting the people who live in the city—there were no jobs for all of us. I worked more in the first week I was home than in the whole two years I was there. And, to me, working is the best way to learn. I was playing in restaurants and little 15-cent jazz gigs. Anything to be out playing and getting that kind of experience. I was listening mostly to Bird at this time: I was a staunch, conservative bebopper. I was listening to that vast body of bebop that everybody discovers at some point and says, 'Christ, this is what's happening.' If anybody had put a Jimi Hendrix record on, I probably would have gotten angry."

Apparently, Loeb has reconciled his feelings; a photo of Jimi graces a wall in his apartment. His first job with a band began leading him back in that direction.

"It was kind of a jolt from being into bebop. When I came back I joined a local New York band called Exit. They had just gotten a job backing up Gloria Gaynor. We had some problems, because she was more involved with the show biz aspect of it, like how you look when you play rather than how the music sounds. She wasn't exactly thrilled with the band, but it was okay, there were moments."

The job lasted about six months, Chuck leaving to "get my own thing together. After that I started playing with Chico Hamilton. When I joined there were two guitar players, Marvin Horne and myself, Arthur Blythe on alto, Cecil McBee's son C.J. on bass, and Chico on drums. I stayed for about eight months. It was good in some ways, playing with a second guitarist. Chico would play my songs—and that was the first time I ever really got my tunes played—but it wasn't really a full-time gig. I was doing a lot of weddings and bar mitzvahs to support myself. Finally I left and spent a year doing a lot of club dates and weddings."

Eventually Chuck hooked up with

conga-master Ray Barretto: "That was great, it was the perfect band to write for: piano, bass, guitar, drums, percussion, and one saxophone player. It's a shame with Ray, because he's a bebopper and in salsa he's a gigantic star—I mean, a really amazingly big star—and he decided he really wanted to be a jazz player. Well, we'd play in New York, at Hopper's or something, and there'd be 12 people in the audience, and that's hard for him. So, again, he couldn't get a lot of work and I used to have to do other things."

This led to the job Chuck has held down for the past two years: guitarist with the Stan Getz Quintet. "Stan was trying out guitar players. His conga player, Lawrence Killian, went with the Village People, so Stan was toying with the idea of a guitar player. A guy I know in Nyack recommended me. That first day that I played at a rehearsal they were going through some new tunes—Andy LaVerne's tunes—and I said, 'Well, I have a tune,' because I always carry my tunes with me in my guitar case. I got the job. Later Stan told me that one of the reasons he asked me to join the band was 'cause he really liked the tune. He's interested in people who write, because he doesn't write."

"In the beginning Stan said, 'I don't really care what you're doing solowise.' He was concerned with having a big sound in the rhythm section. Now, I get to play on most every tune, unless it's a ballad that features Stan. Stan likes a clear sound on the guitar and so do I."

That clear, clean guitar sound and Chuck's ever-growing chops have added much to the Getz sound. Loeb has absorbed his influences well: when a fusionish tone and style is called for, it is there, but when he's given a chance to display his clearer bop style, he can burn.

The job with Getz has been quite steady and quite rewarding. There are about 20 Chuck Loeb compositions in the current Getz book.

One has no doubt that Stan Getz will find himself in the studios before long and, no doubt, with Chuck Loeb in tow. His relationship with Getz is strong; Loeb calls the gig "a perfect one" and proudly displays pictures of the saxophonist serving as best man at his recent wedding.

It is tempting to ponder where the other 800 guitarists who entered Berklee in 1973 are today. Undoubtedly, there are some who we know of, or will know of, and some who are quietly playing in studios and local clubs. But I doubt if there are many who are getting the exposure Chuck Loeb is getting and, frankly, I doubt if there are very many as talented. **db**

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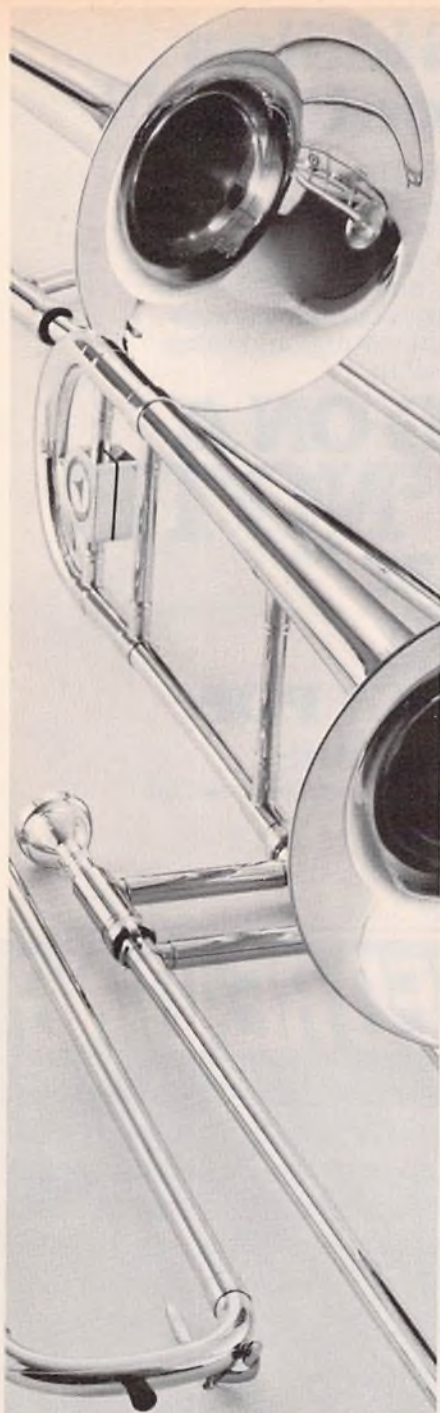
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## EDDIE MARSHALL

BY ROBIN TOLLESON

**I**f, in the past 10 years, a jazz fan on the West Coast has missed seeing Eddie Marshall behind a set of drums, it can't be blamed on lack of opportunities. Through his recording and touring work with The Fourth Way and vibist Bobby Hutcherson—and as first-call house drummer at San Francisco's Keystone Korner—Marshall has single-handedly done his part to keep jazz alive and swinging this side of the Rockies.

Marshall was born April 13, 1938, in Springfield, Massachusetts, and acquired his first professional experience in his father's band. When he was 14, his father's regular drummer had to leave town suddenly, and Edwin Jr. got his big chance. "In my father's band," Eddie recalls, "it was mostly like the standards, whatever the standards were in those days, and I liked that. I hadn't been into Bird and Miles and them until I was 16. My uncle turned me on to Miles and Max Roach, and then I was gone. I didn't want to play any kind of music but that, and I never really had to until the rock & roll age came 'cause I always made a living just playing jazz."

After his big debut, Eddie's parents had to force him to take drum lessons. "Well, after that I thought I was hell on wheels," he laughs. "Only 14 and making \$10 in one night." The teacher they found was vaudeville show drummer Joe Sefchik, a strict technician who knew many of the bebop drummers in New York. Through Sefchik, Eddie was soon studying with the likes of George Stone, Jim Chapin, and Morris Goldenberg, and following drummers like Philly Joe Jones "the way people follow fighters around."

Marshall lists many influences:

seeing Gene Krupa in a movie short, Art Blakey, Billy Higgins, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Lenny White, and Peter Donald—just to name a few. He was fortunate also to have teachers who stressed a high degree of discipline. "When I was a kid, this teacher was really a stickler on that independence thing. We had the Jim Chapin book, and we'd go through it forwards and backwards. That's always challenging to me, to make one part of your body do one thing. And I just practice, I still do. If there's something really hard to do, I'll just sit here all day and keep doing it and keep doing it. Hypnotize myself. Now I'm trying to work on things like starting figures off the beat and ending them off the beat."

Word of Marshall's ability soon spread through New York, and he logged playing time with Sam Rivers, Stan Getz, and Charlie Mariano. One of the first bands Eddie worked with was that of Toshiko Akiyoshi. "Every once in awhile I see this old album we made, with 21-year-old Eddie Marshall. It's frightening," he smiles. "I listen to it and say 'How the hell did I ever play anything that complicated?' You know, she plays these songs in 7/8 and 5/4."

While touring with Dionne Warwick's band in 1967, Eddie and his wife Sundance decided they had better stop in Los Angeles and have their baby. They never moved back to NYC.

Eddie got a phone call from a friend, keyboardist Mike Nock, who was forming a band in the San Francisco area called The Fourth Way. Nock and violinist Mike White talked Eddie into joining the band, which is now seen as one of the very first jazz-rock units. "When I was playing with The Fourth Way, people would say we were selling out because we were playing electronic music. I'd say 'Man, this music is hard to play. It might look like we are just banging and making a lot of noise, but shit, it's hard. I mean, all music is. It's not no picnic. It's just a whole lot of different chops involved.'" The Fourth Way not only brought some different chops out of Eddie, but changed his

playing style too. "I used to always play in the traditional grip, and that gave way to match grip, mainly because I was killing my hands," Marshall recalls. "The music was really a lot louder. So I played that way for about 10 years, and just recently went back the other way. It's really been fun for me, because the last 15 years, the way the music has changed, it's really fun for drummers. I started off just playing back-beat in my father's rhythm-and-blues band, and then playing bebop and funk is nice, too."

During his brief stay in Los Angeles, Marshall had been called by reedman Harold Land to sit in, and worked for the first time with vibist Bobby Hutcherson. Hutcherson moved to northern California, and after The Fourth Way disbanded, he and Marshall began a long playing relationship that has produced albums on Blue Note and CBS Records. While touring Europe with Hutcherson's band in 1977, Eddie was approached by Timeless Records of Holland, with the idea of leading his own session. The resulting *Dance Of The Sun* featured four Marshall compositions, performed with Hutcherson, bassist James Leary, pianist George Cables, and saxman Manny Boyd.

Since that album, the Eddie Marshall Quartet has been formed, and performs club dates around the Bay Area—that is, when the leader can make the gig. Marshall still performs often at Keystone Korner, where over the past 10 years his melodic drumming has propelled artists like Dexter Gordon, Toots Thielemans, George Benson, and Charles Lloyd. In addition, Eddie has recorded with John Klemmer, Benny Maupin, John Handy, Larry Vuckavich, and Pharoah Sanders; he's making plans to record his quartet, which includes pianist Paul Nagel, guitarist George Cotsirilos, and bassist Rob Fisher.

Marshall uses two different drum sets for his various work: an odd-sized collection of Ludwigs that he's had completely refinished, and a Gretsch set. He's been tempted by the masterful drum engineering of companies like Yamaha, but concludes "Gretsch drums sound good, and they're not as heavy. I was thinking of trading them in and getting a set of Yamahas, but I'm going with America, like the K-Cars. Let's bring America back—besides I can't afford the Yamahas anyhow," Eddie continues—laughing.

Laughter comes easily from Eddie Marshall, and with it comes a bit of the joy that he brings to musicians and audiences alike. Marshall the drummer is equally dynamic and restrained, equally expressive and sympathetic in his playing, and he shows no signs of slowing. As he says, "I like to be out there hittin' it." db

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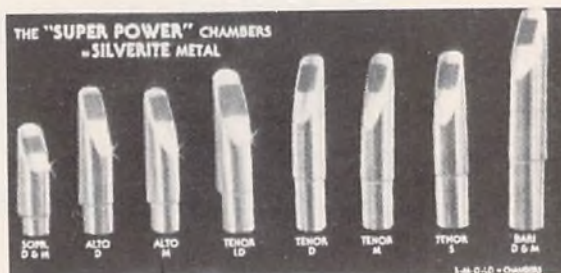
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