

Down beat®

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THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

Phil Woods
Solo from
Grammy-
winning LP

Phil Woods
Alto Chief:
"Street Music Lost
In Education"


George Duvivier
Changes with
The Bass' Role

Anthony Davis
New Music
From Tradition

Wynton Marsalis Profiled

Tal Farlow
Have Guitar,
Won't Travel

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Phil Woods

DARRYL PITT/ENCORE



Anthony Davis

DARRYL PITT/ENCORE

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PHIL WOODS

Chief Alto of the Jazz Tribe

By Dan Morgenstern

When Hal Galper took Mike

Melillo's place in the Phil Woods Quartet last February, it was the first personnel change in the group in seven years—a rare kind of stability at any time in jazz history, but especially today.

"Galps and I go back," said Woods (the pianist first worked with Woods in 1965, when he was in the house band at Lennie's in Boston, and Woods was the guest star for a week). "He's tall, and his last initial is G. We call ourselves *Philipe DuBois* and the *High Gs*. [The group's other members are bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Bill Goodwin, who also are tall, and DuBois is French for 'woods.'] He's just oozed right into the chair. And we've changed the book a bit—we're going right for the jugular now. It's very exciting.

"You shouldn't try to sound like you sounded before, but take what's coming in and use it to its best advantage, and that's been easy with Galps. He fits in perfectly. All we need is a record, and we're working on that. That's the hard part. The band is well known, but it's hard to find us in record bins."

It's ironic—and an indication of the state of jazz recording—that Woods,

winner of the **down beat** Readers Poll for the seventh straight year and Critics Poll for the eighth time since 1970, whose *The Phil Woods Quartet, Volume One* won two Grammy nominations, and whose "*Live*" *From The Showboat* copped a Grammy in 1977, has no recording contract at this writing. While *Showboat* and several other Woods albums appeared under the RCA logo, they were really independent productions marketed by the big label.

Not that Woods is underexposed on records. Everybody knows that he appears on a Billy Joel LP, and he pops up on Carly Simon's *Body And Soul* from her latest album, *Torch*, which is a celebration of the Great American Popular Song. He's also featured on a couple of new releases by the Omnisound label, *Phil Woods/Lew Tabackin* and *Pocono Friends* by pianist John Coates Jr., and some things recorded for Japanese and German labels will be issued here soon.

Woods points out that the Carly Simon album was produced by Mike Mainieri, "who's an old bebopper; that's where the producers are so important. That's where the business has fallen down, by way of the ignorance of the producers and record companies, who've done nothing to advance the cause of art music in this country, near as I can tell. They've probably done

more to set it back than any single force. And National Public Radio has probably done more to advance it than any single cause, and they should get a whole bunch of bows. We always try to cooperate with them.

"But the record companies have abdicated all responsibility. If there's any solution at all, it will come from people who are starting their own small labels. It just can't be handled by a major any more; it needs one guy with the realization that he won't sell a million—don't put it in the same music factory with the other stuff, but realize that it will do your image a world of good because history will thank you for preserving some great music. And it'll sell.

"Concord has done a good job. They've signed Al Cohn and Jim Hall, so even though they turned us down, I'm not bitter. I think Carl Jefferson thought it rather amusing that the record he turned down got Grammy nominations the next year. He said to us, 'See what gray hairs I have,' making fun of himself. Omnisound will occupy that sort of a place on the East Coast, because there's a need for a small company away from Manhattan. The *Tabackin/Woods* album has been very well received."

Omnisound is a label that has hitherto specialized in albums by John Coates Jr. but is branching out. Both the label and the pianist are residents of Delaware Water Gap, a small Pennsylvania town where Woods also resides. According to him, it is special.

"We've been in the Gap for some seven years now, and had our own home there for four. But I knew about the Gap—I'd played gigs there from 1957 to

'68—so I fell in love with it again when I was looking for a place to stay. I've always liked the country. I've never been able to live in New York though I love to come there and work. I prefer to be out of town, with the kids and all that.

"And it's great. We now have three jazz clubs, at least for the winter season: Wednesday night at the Bottom of the Fox, Saturday nights, of course, at the Deer Head Inn with Johnny Coates, and Sunday nights at the Blue Note. Fred Waring Jr. is getting more active with Omnisound; Bill Goodwin is doing some producing—Sibling Productions is co-directed by my lady Jill Goodwin, and her brother Bill.

"So, it's living in the country but getting very exciting. Al Cohn is up the road; Urbie Green is in town. Bob Dorough, of course, has been one of the daddies responsible for a lot of us moving there, as has Bob Lehr, who's had the Deer Head Inn for 28 years. We just initiated a Fred Waring Award at our fourth annual Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts, for outstanding contributions to the community, and it went to the Deer Head Inn. Bob and Dona Lehr were quite touched; they're very low-key people who just believe in the music. A few folks like that, they don't ask for publicity, work hard all year 'round to keep jazz—that's what I call class!

"Then there are all the young musicians who live in Delaware Water Gap or the general area: Mark Kirk, a fine young saxophone player; Wolfgang Knittel, the piano player who did the music for Jacques Brel; Rick Chamberlain, the trombone player with the New York City Ballet, who does Chuck Mangione's gigs and plays on Mulligan's band—he's a councilman . . . and more. So we have this little 52nd Street complex in the Poconos, and it's unique. I don't know if we want all this publicity, 'cause we'll get a lot of cats thinking there's a lot of work; there isn't. In case anybody should think it's a mecca for jazz, it's not. Most of us work outside the area to make a living, unless you're working a resort. So it's nothing you'd want to move your family or transfer your union card to, but we have a great community spirit."

That spirit nurtures Woods when

This band is not on the road, which is sometimes more often than he'd like. "It's been hard keeping the quartet fully occupied. We feel it will change; it is changing. We're being booked by Jack Wittemore now, in case anybody is looking for us. Business is a bit difficult and I don't see it getting any easier, because of the basic economic problems. The clubs are charging about as much as they can. You reach a certain period where you get top dollar and you lay out more to get there and to live. Some groups are working a lot, and we will,

too.

"We're just about to go to Rome for a one-nighter; we just did the Bottom Line [NYC] and Gulliver's, a fine little club in New Jersey, a week at Bubba's in Fort Lauderdale, and a festival in Jacksonville [FL]. I have a few gigs of my own, and so does Bill, and Galper and Gilmore stay busy. When Bill goes to Ireland with Zoot [Sims], I'm going to California to do a concert with the Studio Orchestra—Manny Albam's *Nostalgianica*, which he wrote for me to be played at the Eastman School of Music a couple of years ago. And we'll also do a few things from *I Remember* [one of Phil's own longer compositions, recorded a few years ago].

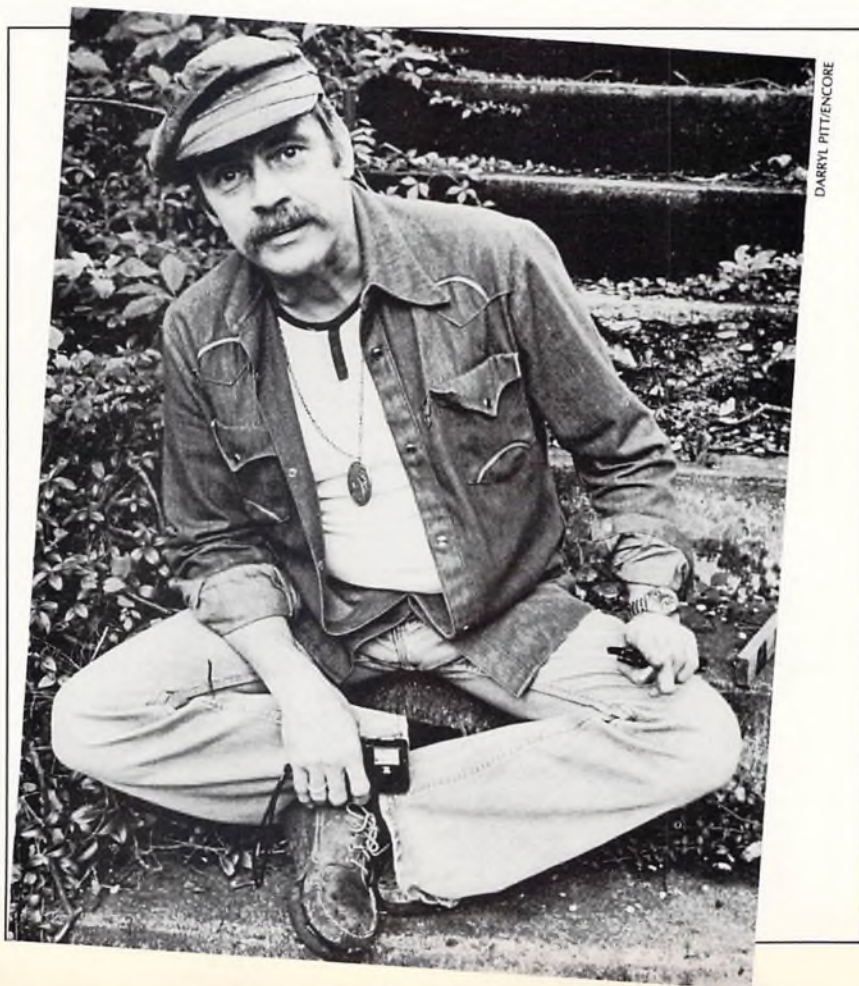
"I'm working on a festival tour for the quartet next year. This summer was rather quiet, but we're due for all the major festivals. It's work, but you can really do it, make your nut, give the cats a good taste. We could use a festival tour every year, but that's impossible, of course; you can't keep going back. But we're due, and the summer of '82 looks great.

"I was very depressed a while back, and the cats were cheering me up, saying 'We're still a band, man. Work doesn't make a band, a band makes a band!' There's that feeling, where the cats could be doing any number of other things—we try to arrange it so that if

they do have other gigs, by all means cop—but their first loyalty is to doing what we're doing. And you can't buy that. It's great.

"We were very hot Saturday night at the Bottom Line. The cats sounded so good; I was proud to be making music with them. It's quite special when it's on; it's awfully hot. We packed them in for both shows Saturday and had a nice quiet audience. With the Jim Hall Trio opposite, it made it an acoustic night. Jim's considering dispensing with all microphones. He's already got the amp, so he doesn't need to put a mike in front of it—then you kind of give up your control of the sound.

"With an acoustic group—there's us and the World Saxophone Quartet—if you have a noisy audience, it can become intolerable. Usually, though, we're not bothered by that. We've had nice audiences, polite and seemingly genuinely interested in what's coming out of the band, not just something to go see because they heard I was with Billy Joel, though I'm sure we get our share of that. We get the same faces throughout the country. We have a lady in San Francisco who hasn't missed a performance of ours . . . if you're out there, I love you! We have a young audience. If I had to depend on the guys who came to Birdland . . . they're all home watching *The Flintstones*.



DARRYL PITTECORE

"I think our group could really do some great master classes in ensemble sound. Whether you like our style or not, what we do is really together—a very tightly knit way of approaching the instruments. It's not easy; it takes forever to get to your instrument; it takes incredible control maintaining that excitement without killing you with sound. So what good would it do us to have somebody crank up the volume? If a group can't project from here to there, you can't call yourselves musicians. It should be just as clear as in somebody's living room. When you get more clarity, it really sounds louder; the ears soon adjust. Some people have trouble [hearing acoustic music live], but once you get the inner ear tuned in, psychologically in tune, then it's fun: gee, you can actually look at the guy who's playing; the sound is actually coming from where he is standing or sitting, instead of from over or out there.

"It's much clearer when the eye is actually telling you where the music is coming from. Those speakers have us confused. It ain't natural, man. There are degrees—you are at the mercy of whatever acoustics the room has, and some are peculiar, in which case I would put a mike on the piano a little bit. We're not adamant. We want the people to hear—the last thing we want is not to be heard."

Woods has picked up an instru-

ment which he hasn't played in years, but on which he won first place in the down beat 1963 Critics Poll, TDWR category. It's the clarinet, of course, on which he did quite a bit of doubling in his days as a New York studio and session player, "because I didn't play flute," he cracks. He played it on both the aforementioned Omnisound LPs, and it's a kick to hear that warm, personal sound again on an instrument nearly neglected in all but the more traditional branches of jazz. Woods has not touched it in years.

"I'd had no interest in playing it, but I took it up to my friend Emilio Leone in Boston, at Rayburn Music, who's the only guy I let work on my horns, and he got me a new mouthpiece and some new reeds and fixed up the clarinet and I just started playing—he did such a beautiful job, it felt so good, that I thought I might give it a go. I'm still looking for colors with the quartet; I was playing some soprano. We've been together a long time with the alto, and it's nice to come down to a double pianissimo with the clarinet, coming out of a real basher. It's a nice area, just a medium standard, a regular sort of Benny Goodman approach to it. Just play a song after doing an original. It makes a nice contrast for the audience, and I'm having fun with it. But I may have to use the mike on it, a little bit. . . ."

Speaking of playing standard tunes brought up a favorite Woods subject: the lack of a common musical vocabulary in jazz today. "When I came up, getting together and communicating was easy because everybody was playing the same language—Stella and Groovin' High. Now everybody has their originals; they couldn't jam together if their life depended on it; there is no vocabulary. They don't know *Body And Soul*. They don't know American songs. How are you going to be an American artist if you don't know that? The strength of a September Song is that you can play it in Java and get the natives to cry. Maybe they saw the movie, with Walter Huston. That was one good thing to come out of the Second World War—the music got around, 'cause it traveled with the Army. Songs opened up a whole bunch of ears. The strength of a Gersh-

PHIL WOODS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY as a leader

MORE LIVE—Adelphi AD 5010
IMAGES—RCA BLG 1-1027
QUARTET VOL. 1—Clean Cuts CC-702
CRAZY HORSE—Sea Breeze SB-2008
WOODS/TABACKIN—Omnisound N-1033
SONG FOR SISYPHUS—Gryphon 782
EUROPEAN RHYTHM MACHINE—Inner City 1002
RIGHTS OF SWING—Barnaby/Candid KZ 31036
I REMEMBER—Gryphon 788
"LIVE" FROM THE SHOWBOAT—RCA BGL2-2202
MUSIQUE DU BOIS—Muse 5037
PHIL TALKS WITH QUILL—Columbia Jazz Odyssey PC 36806
ALTOLOGY—Prestige P-24065
FOUR ALTOS—Prestige MPP-2508
with Carly Simon
TORCH—Warner Bros. BSK-3592
with Billy Joel
52nd STREET—Columbia FC-35609
with John Coates
POCONO FRIENDS—Omnisound N-1038
with Richie Cole
SIDE BY SIDE—Muse 5237

win, a Harold Arlen, a Cole Porter is their universal appeal, and the young cats can't play it, don't even know one Gershwin song!

"And you are, say, a graduate of a jazz program somewhere. It's not hard. You should study Gershwin, study Porter. Learn something, try to find the pop song that you can blow on, and it can still be crossover, and have a latin beat, and be salsa, and you can put some do-wah singers on it, and it'll sell! Seriously, jazz is the tribal language. It's not supposed to die away: improvising on a Gershwin tune or being able to play traditional blues. I don't care, change the rhythm and all that, but there's a basic 12-bar structure I think will always be with us. Just mathematically you can't get hold of anything better by just saying it's 13 bars. They've tried all of that; we've gone down all the alleys of atonality, finding out that that's a very limited language, as it was for all the

cats who aped Schönberg, except a very few, like Berg and Krenek, perhaps a couple of others. But essentially, its es- peranto.

"But the message of a ballad will always be there, with the right changes, a nice rhythmic feel, good tone, and in tune. I think that affects people forever. I really believe that. It's just like playing Mozart well; it'll be forever. Why not? Jazz will be in a state of flux, and it should, as an art. The young cats are not supposed to settle for less—get out and hoot and holler, do whatever you have to. But four years of jazz education, and you can't play one song? Four years of jazz education, and I say 'Play a ballad for me,' and they say 'Huh?' They come for the lesson and I say play a song for me, you're a graduate, play me a song. Not even Shiny Stockings?

"A lot of them say that's over with, it's finished and passe and they are just going to hang up their artistic, creative ability if they bog down their computer with all this useless old information. But all artists learning their craft have to copy something. If you're a painter, you copy all different sorts of paintings; a writer tries to write in different styles; actors try Shakespeare—at least they know the difference. But there's nothing more embarrassing than a guy who calls himself an artist, and he's a dumb m.f. who doesn't realize somebody did this same shit 30 years ago. It behooves you to do your homework. Explore with a more humble attitude, learn all there is to learn, not just about music, but read!

"There's a certain illiteracy among some of the younger musicians. Sometimes I listen to what I'm saying and I think it is old words, but the band buses are not as colorful as they used to be. These kids sit there all quiet, and there's not much color in the performances either. They may have a good band sound, and that's a tradition too, but there's a danger when I hear a good band sound and then the guy gets up to solo and I say, 'Oh God!' Or if they get lost someplace, they never find it again. They would never riff something out if the music blew away—they'd come to a crashing halt. You just feel that. All eyes are glued on the music. I don't want to discourage it, but it's dangerous.

"There's a certain musical need gravitating from the streets to the universities. Jazz is alive and well; why, we have jazz courses in all the schools. It's wonderful. I don't know, man—maybe it is and maybe it ain't. And maybe we should examine it. There's an assumption by the jazz departments that there is a jazz business. There is no jazz business. There's Las Vegas and L.A. They graduate, go out with Maynard for two weeks, realize it's ridiculous, then go back and teach some more cats to graduate and see how ridiculous it is.

"Some of the young music teachers



Philippe DuBois and the High Gs: From left—Goodwin, Woods, Gilmore, Galper.

are fine; they can play, they've been in the trenches, but until we get more of those . . . that's why a lot of jazz players like to visit the campuses and talk with the kids and try to give them a picture of what's going on out there. You've really got to be a musician these days. You've got to be so much more equipped than I was, even with Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music and practice. But you can still know *The Man I Love*, for God's sakes!"

Something else about jazz education that bothers Woods is "a certain spark that's not coming up from the jazz graduates. Jazz is street music and it's coming out of the schools and something is being lost. And the black community isn't into jazz at all; the younger blacks are listening to damn disco or whatever. I've been talking to a lot of black jazz educators; I'm not just making it up. And something that's bizarre, really, is that I've heard some schools say they don't like to deal with black student musicians because they have to teach them how to read. Well, what the hell is the job of a school if you can't teach a guy to read? If you have a blowin' ass cat, the easiest thing is to show him how to read, but that would slow down the stage band for the moment, because rehearsals wouldn't be as fast. It's all being tailored for the ensemble sound.

"Young cats come up to me and ask how they can get into the studios. You're not supposed to talk about that; that's not music. Why don't you open up a jingle office and make some real money? You can't have any meaning to

your life and not have to pay any real dues."

Such attitudes may be among the

roots of the problem why, in Woods' opinion, there are so few young players worth listening to. "I don't understand it. I'm waiting to hear something, but I still listen to the old records, if you know what I mean. I'm all for encouragement, but immediately starting off with a business manager and saying you're a bad cat in front—there's a lot of that stuff, a lot of false cockiness, poseur stuff. It's all being approached from this 'Well, we've got the books, and we understand the music business, and the publishing attitude.' Well, that's great, man, but why didn't I hear something? How come a lot of it sounds the same? I'd rather hear Zoot and Al; it still knocks me out when I hear them live. I've heard a lot of the younger groups, and it's all slick and timed. You'll hear the same set night after night. They're supposed to be creative American musicians, but it's just slick.

"Yet I'm optimistic about the music. It's like waiting for a messiah of some kind, waiting for something instead of making it happen. I don't know if it's from my perspective, from the viewpoint of my own youth, but today we

PHIL WOODS' EQUIPMENT

Phil Woods plays a Selmer Paris Mark VI alto saxophone with a Meyer 5M mouthpiece, and a Buffet Bb clarinet with a Selmer Paris F mouthpiece; he uses La Voz medium reeds on both horns.

don't have the heroes I had—Bird, Bean, Prez, and Bud. Maybe God gave them all to us at once, and now we can't have any! But maybe it's supposed to be that way; maybe only one in 100,000 people has the ability to improvise a little bit. Nobody's ever done any statistical studies on it, but it's a gift, and maybe by encouraging it so much in the schools we're instilling a false sense of confidence.

"So they think they can play, while we had to go up to the Paradise [a Harlem night club] and have Big Nick [Big Nick Nicholas, the tenor saxophonist, who had the house band there and was in charge of the jam sessions] let you go on the bandstand; you had to be cleared there in order to handle the union floor. You'd start off at the periphery sessions, and you knew when you were ready to hit the biggies. There was a whole pecking order—getting your shit together. You didn't just go off half-cocked. That was

the school; you were in school at that moment. I go back to Big Nick, my man, and to Teddy Cohen's loft, and Larry Rivers' pad, and the Open Door. The Pink Elephant in Brooklyn was one of the first New York gigs I had, and I didn't realize 'til later that it was historically important to a lot of guys. Bill Evans was in the house, afraid to come up and play. I didn't know that until after he died, unfortunately. That was a hot joint; free booze and food, you sat in. I guess they're trying to get that back in a few joints. Maybe the Blue Note [a new club in Manhattan's Greenwich Village] will try, I don't know. Anyway, it wasn't like going to some place and being given all the licks you always wanted to know on *Giant Steps* but were afraid to ask.

"But it's hard; how are you supposed to tell the kids that you're supposed to know all of this? It's easy enough for me to sit here and say that because I remember that during my dance gigs I was playing *Moonlight In Vermont* and *These Foolish Things*, they should know the vocabulary of American song. Nowadays, if you're a young cat and working at a Holiday Inn, you're playing a different vocabulary, good songs and bad songs and Top 40 songs, but very rarely do you play any Gershwin on those gigs. So there's no opportunity to learn those songs on the job. It takes you twice as long; you need time to make money, time to practice, and time to learn the tradition. I wouldn't like to be a young musician today; it would be very difficult, and if some cat waved a whole

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A / N / T / H / O / N / Y

NEW MUSIC

BY FRANCIS DAVIS

The music of Anthony Davis—as represented both on the records he has made under his own name and those to which he has brought an organizing intelligence as a sideman—summarizes the last 20 years of innovation in jazz and offers an optimistic prognosis for the future. Named pianist deserving wider recognition in both the 1980 and 1981 *down beat* International Critics Polls, Davis is in the forefront of a new generation of musicians who can claim the hard-won advances of Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and Anthony Braxton as their starting point, who can embrace the distant jazz past without compromising their positions as modernists, and who can borrow structural devices and instrumental techniques from European concert music without jeopardizing their places in the Afro-American continuum.

"But I'm not really a jazz musician," cautions Davis to those who hail him as the most striking and potentially the most important pianist/composer to emerge from the jazz avant garde since Cecil Taylor. "I've never related my own conception of music—or Taylor's music either, for that matter—to the term 'jazz.' To a lot of jazz audiences, the music I play is very alien. They still come expecting to hear solos and *I Got Rhythm* changes, and I'm not interested in that. If I can be

identified more with new music—these are all stupid labels—but if I can be presented in places where new music is heard and not jazz per se, that gives me more freedom to create a highly personal music, and I don't have to be tied down, as I am with the word 'jazz.'"

That the 30-year-old Davis voices such dissatisfaction with jazz and with jazz audiences says a lot, of course, about his own biases and his own ambitions, but it also raises questions about where jazz is headed in the 1980s, and about the audiences it will take with it.

It was a light and fluffy afternoon in early summer, and Davis and I talked over lunch in a French cafe across the street from the west midtown Manhattan highrise where he lives with his wife, the science fiction writer Deborah Atherton, and their two-year-old son. As Davis spoke of his beginnings and his current prospects, several themes kept recurring—his role as a composer in what has always been considered an improvisatory music; the increasingly conservative mood of the jazz audience and of many jazz musicians; the need to establish a new, less parochial audience with whom he can communicate on his own terms; and the ambiguous position in which awakened interest in the jazz past places the innovative black musician.

TRADITIONALIST

D • A ■ V ▼ I • S

Davis' background and subsequently his frame of reference are more cosmopolitan than those of most musicians associated with jazz. The son of a university professor, he was born in Paterson, New Jersey and lived in New York "up on 138th and Madison" until he was five. Most of his growing was done in the campus towns of Princeton, New Jersey and State College, Pennsylvania, except for a year he spent in Italy when his father was awarded a Fulbright scholarship. Children of career officers who follow their fathers from military base to military base jokingly call themselves "army brats."

"Was I an academic brat?" Davis laughed, hailing down my train of thought, "I don't know. I guess. The parents of most of the people I grew up with were involved with the university too, especially when we moved to Penn State. There are a lot of advantages to growing up in an academic environment, though. They had a really good music department at Penn State, so I had the opportunity, while I was still in junior high, to study piano with professors from the music school—great teachers named Gary Brinsmid and Alan Mandel, a pianist—and I was able to get really good classical instruction."

"I was a music major at Yale—finally. I started out in English and Philosophy, but in my senior year I switched, so my B.A. is in Music. Most of my Yale instruction was in classical music, and it didn't really have that direct a bearing on my development, although I did study some things I hadn't known about, like Medieval music, which I still find very interesting. And then I studied at Wesleyan with Amrad Raghavan, a South Indian musician who's fantastic."

Davis remained in New Haven for a few years after his graduation from Yale, postponing the inevitable move to New York until 1977. "I came here because the music's here, the musicians are here, because I wouldn't have been able to make a living as a musician in New Haven. It was an important move. But if I had come here earlier, I think I'd have a far more conservative outlook now. There are many conformist pressures that you face in New York. It goes beyond commercial pressures; it has to do with being accepted by other musicians. If you come to New York with a pretty strong conception of yourself, it's far easier to deal with. Being in New Haven and being able to develop my own ideas, I realized a lot of things I don't think I would have been able to realize had I gone to New York right away. The university setting is a protective place in which to develop your ideas."

Davis has been fortunate enough to find something resembling an academic sanctuary even in the wilds of New York; living in separate units within the same dormitory-styled building as he and his wife are such musicians as George Lewis, Muhal Richard Abrams, Amina Claudine Myers, Frank Lowe, and Ricky Ford, as well as a number of dancers, writers, and visual artists. It recalls the creative company he kept at Yale. Matriculating at the University around the same time as Davis—or living in town—were several other young musicians with whom he was to form enduring alliances: George Lewis, Gerry Hemingway, Wes Brown, Mark Helias, Mark Dresser, Jay Hoggard, Dwight Andrews, and Allan Jaffe. Ed Blackwell and Marion Brown, older, better-established figures from the avant garde's first wave, settled in nearby Connecticut hamlets to teach. But the most decisive influence on the young Davis during his stay in New Haven was the transplanted Chicago trumpeter, composer, and theoretician Leo Smith.

"Leo's wife was director of a school in Orange, Connecticut, so he was living near New Haven. I first got involved

with him when I was a student and joined New Delta Ahkri, an ensemble with Leo and Wes Brown. Leo introduced me to a whole different concept of playing and to the idea of composition being of central importance in the development of music. I think he's one of the most underrated and important composers to emerge in the post-Ornette Coleman period. I think what Leo did, and what Anthony Braxton did also, really laid the foundation for what the music is about now. I think it's a new period now. It's really funny in a way, because the chief way the music's developing is in the area of composition, and not in terms of what people really look for—changes in improvisation.

"Most of my own music is composed—written. I think that improvisation is one compositional tool within the framework of a given piece. The piece and the dynamic of the piece are more important to me, in a sense, than the individual performance. It's almost closer to the classical tradition of interpretation, of realizing a given work of music, than it is to the older jazz-oriented conception of showcasing a soloist or creating a vehicle for a group of different individuals."

When Davis says that most of his music is written, he means literally that—that it is notated—and he is aware that for at least two of the composers he most admires—Charles Mingus and Cecil Taylor—notation is anathema. "I think they were upset with the limitations of notation, with the preconceptions notation brings with it. They were trying to bring immediacy back into the music—that sense of creating in the moment—and also trying to create a collective music. I think that was important in that cycle, but it's important now to reassert some control, because at this point in the music there's been too much random noise. I'm not saying that about Mingus or Cecil Taylor, because they were both very important to my music. What I am saying is that I want everything that's played to be related to what's been played before and what will happen later; when you think like that, you have to deal with compositional form and planning. I find it inadequate just to say 'play like this' or 'play like that,' because finally what you're saying when you try to communicate your ideas that way is 'play something I've heard you play before.'"

At the time I spoke with him, Davis was preparing to record a longer, orchestrated version of *Under The Double Moon* (Wayang No. 4) (a piece from his solo piano album *Lady Of The Mirrors*) with Episteme, the octet he has formed: George Lewis, trombone; Dwight Andrews, woodwinds; Shem Guibbory, violin; Jay Hoggard, vibraphone; Abdul Wadud, cello; Warren Smith and Pheeroan ak Laff, percussion.

"I'm interested in scoring some of my ideas—not only my compositional ideas but my improvisational ideas too—for that kind of ensemble. There's a whole form, a structure to be realized. That structure will involve improvisation—it would have to, because there are some wonderful improvisers in the ensemble—but there'll be an organic link between what I've written and what is played. What I'm trying to do, really, is to take what I've learned as an improviser, take that unified concept one has as a soloist, and communicate that to other improvisers."

Davis said he feels he has reached the stage as a composer where he can write music that doesn't call for his own participation as an instrumentalist—music for solo voice, for example, or for violin, cello, or chamber orchestra. "Eventually, I would like to write orchestral works which would involve improvisation, but scored improvisation, so they could be played by im-

ANTHONY DAVIS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY as a leader

SONG FOR THE OLD WORLD—India Navigation IN-1036

PAST LIVES—Red VPA-134

OF BLUES AND DREAMS—Sackville 3020

LADY OF THE MIRRORS—Ind Nav IN-1047

EPISTEME—Gramavision 8101.

with James Newton

HIDDEN VOICES—India Navigation IN-1041

PASEO DEL MAR—India Navigation IN-1037

CRYSTAL TEXTS—Moers Music 01048

with Jay Hoggard

UNDER THE DOUBLE MOON—MPS 15.562

with Gerry Hemingway

KWAMBE—Auricle AUR-1

with Leroy Jenkins

THE LEGEND OF AI GLATSON—Black Saint BSR-0022

SPACE MINDS, NEW WORLDS, SURVIVAL OF AMERICA—Tomato TOM-8001

with George Lewis

SHADOWGRAPH—Black Saint BSR-0016

HOMAGE TO CHARLES PARKER—Black Saint BSR-0029

with Leo Smith

REFLECTATIVITY—Kabell 2

SONG OF HUMANITY—Kabell 3



provisers and non-improvisers alike. One of my dreams is to write a ballet, and I'd like to compose more film music." (He has scored three independent films, including Carolyn Emons' *Man Around The House*, winner of a 1980 Oscar as best student film.) He also envisions writing a musical drama; one model for it would be Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, which he called "a revelation. It's great music and real theater."

Also on the agenda are more solo piano recitals, although his efforts in this direction will not be totally improvised, as in the manner of Keith Jarrett. "The danger with that practice is that the music can become a progression of clichés. I mean, you go from doing one style you know how to do well to another style you know how to do. I hear him playing within himself; everything's within his fingers. Composed music faces the same barriers; there's always the problem of getting beyond your own limitations, beyond what to you has already become a cliché, but I like to do that through reflection and thought. I think there are moments when you can get beyond yourself in the immediate, but composition can set the stage for that. I've done some things with George Lewis that were hardly notated at all. But even when I'm improvising totally freely, I'm still thinking compositionally, so it amounts to the same thing. The important influences on my playing have all been compositional—Ellington, Monk, Mingus; there were early classical influences too, especially Messiaen, Chopin, and Stravinsky."

Reviewers have compared Davis to Ellington, Monk, and Cecil Taylor not so much because he sounds like any of them (although he has written pieces that lovingly and skillfully evoke them), but because his best writing proposes, as each of theirs did, a formal consolidation of recent improvisatory advances. And he has dared to use the legacy of those pianists as source material in new and startling ways.

"It's natural," he said when I told him I hear echoes of Ellington in his *Crepuscule: A Suite For Monk*, and premonitions of Monk and Taylor in his homages to Ellington, *On An Azure Plane* and *Man On A Turquoise Cloud*, "They're very linked. There's a whole Ellington piano tradition. It extends

from Ellington to Monk to, for example, Randy Weston and Abdullah Ibrahim [Dollar Brand]; Cecil Taylor is another example of someone who's linked to the tradition through Ellington. It goes beyond Ellington too. Historically, pianists have been the best educated of musicians; that sounds condescending, and I don't mean it to, but pianists have had to deal with arranging, harmonies, comping—the whole structure of the music. That's been true from Scott Joplin on, and I think it explains the importance pianists have had as composers. The piano has a long tradition that parallels the history of the music, from the development of ragtime to the later development of stride and onward, and I'm part of that tradition."

Davis' early training in the classical literature and his continued application of that training links him to the Ellington tradition in yet another more ironic way. In 1939 Ellington was branded a social climber by those former admirers who thought they detected the taint of European influence upon *Reminiscing In Tempo*. Over the years John Lewis and Cecil Taylor have also been criticized for their assimilationist tendencies. Now Davis has become a cause for concern among those who fear that black music barter too much of its root energy when it trades with Europe.

"Of course European music has influenced my music," Davis said, "I think Europe has had an influence on everything in the world at this point. But there's an African influence in my music too, and the influences aren't exclusive. Actually, I think there's an American tradition in music, and that's all there is to it. We haven't been a colony now for 200 years. It's ridiculous that anything new has to have some hidden connection to European consciousness. In a way, it advances a stereotypical image of what the Afro-American experience is all about. It's about everything, really. It's unfortunate that in Afro-American music they've used the tradition, which I think is a strong and positive force, as a means of maintaining the status quo, of limiting your own personal connection."

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TAL FARLOW HAVE GUITAR, WON'T TRAVEL

BY LEE JESKE



Following Tal Farlow's career has been a "now you see him/now you don't" prospect for the reticent guitarist's fans, but with a new film documentary, a new record company, and a new (old) group, he's back in the limelight—for now.

He is like Haley's Comet. Every few years Tal Farlow pops up again, electric guitar ablaze. And then, after a taste of press and fan adulation of which few in jazz can boast, Tal Farlow seemingly disappears. Nobody in the history of jazz has been the subject of more "Whatever Happened To . . ." or "The Return Of . . ." articles. One of the most influential electric guitarists since Charlie Christian, Farlow has a technical facility on the instrument few can match. His sense of swing and his excellent taste add to the high regard in which he has been held for some 30 years now. Yet, just when it appears that Tal Farlow is back on the scene for good, he seems to pull one of his disappearing tricks. And when he "returns" a few years later, the same thing starts all over again. People turn out to hear him in droves, and everybody asks him where he's been and why he's shunned the jazz public.

I sense Tal Farlow's overwhelming shyness as soon as I sit down with him, backstage at a New York club where he is performing with his longtime bandmate and friend, Red

Norvo. Born 60 years ago in Greensboro, North Carolina, Farlow retains the air of a farm boy—gentle and unassuming. He answers questions painfully and appears to be honestly surprised at all the fuss people make about his guitar playing and about his so-called reclusiveness. He skirts the question of why—when he could have carved out a continuous career as one of the premier jazz guitarists—he preferred to work mainly around his home in a small southern New Jersey town as an occasional guitarist in local bars and as a painter of signs.

Is it because of his distaste for the fast-paced New York City "jazz life?" "Uhh . . . well, I'm honestly not that crazy about New York City," he answers.

So he turned down offers that continued to come in from club owners and concert promoters, to avoid the city? "I wasn't pursued that much," he replies somewhat unconvincingly. "I wasn't consciously avoiding anybody. I got some offers I didn't think were exciting, and I just didn't take them. I don't remember getting that many calls. Maybe, if you added

them up through all those years, you might call them a lot. It's just that what I was doing wasn't in a place where it got any attention. I chose to stay near my home in Jersey—it's a resort area and, in the summertime, it hops. There's quite a lot going on down there."

But, certainly, there had been offers from Europe and Japan, where the jazz appetite can be particularly voracious? "Well, the tours that were offered to me, I didn't think would be possible. Either that or . . . I've heard stories about the guys who came back, where they pay you so much a day and book you in two places the same day and things like that."

I sense that there is something missing as Tal and I talk about his life in New Jersey as the local musician, sign painter, and sometime guitar teacher; about his current spurt of activity—working with Red Norvo, recording for Concord Records, touring with Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel; and about his early days as a self-taught guitarist weaned on Charlie Christian solos. I feel a patina of wistfulness about the man. I ask if, looking back, he has any regrets. He thinks deeply about the question, as he does about all the questions, and quietly responds.

"Well, there are things that happened, you know. I guess any business you can be in you'll feel, 'Well, there's got to be something better than this.' Perhaps I should have gotten into the pace I'm into now, earlier. But I enjoyed the other time, too.

"You see, not ever having had any training as a musician, it's always been sort of hard for me to feel really comfortable. Like on a record date—these guys are reading stuff which they've never seen before. I can't do that and, you know, I've got to feel a little different. I feel a little inadequate. And so I really haven't called up people and said, 'Do you want to use me on a record date?' I don't do that because I got myself embarrassed a few times. Because when you tell somebody you can't read, especially if I'm working with Red Norvo or somebody, they figure, 'Well, he's got to be pretty good to have worked with Artie Shaw or Buddy De Franco.' It doesn't look too good. When you say you can't

read, it doesn't mean to them that you can't read, it means like, 'Well, maybe I don't read too good,' or 'I could read better,' or something like that.

"But when you have to say, 'Well, what is that note?' or 'Well, let's see, it's on the third string and I think it's somewhere around here . . .' If I say, 'Oh, just play the phrase for me on the piano,' and he plays it, then I can play it. But record dates don't work that way.

"I know one time when I was working with Red, there was a tenor man who was working with Tommy Tucker's band. Now that music wasn't really involved, as well as I remember it. But there was a part in there, and he asked me to do it. I said, 'Louis, you know I can't read.' He didn't know me well enough to know that I couldn't read at all, and he said, 'Well, there's no problem, there's nothing to read anyway.' Well, it turned out that they had me read a flute part. Here I was, and all these guys were thinking, 'Gee, Tal Farlow, he's with Red Norvo.'—young guys—and I couldn't read the damn thing. Finally, they had to give it to somebody else. It's embarrassing. How many times do I have to go through with that? That's

when I got back to sign painting."

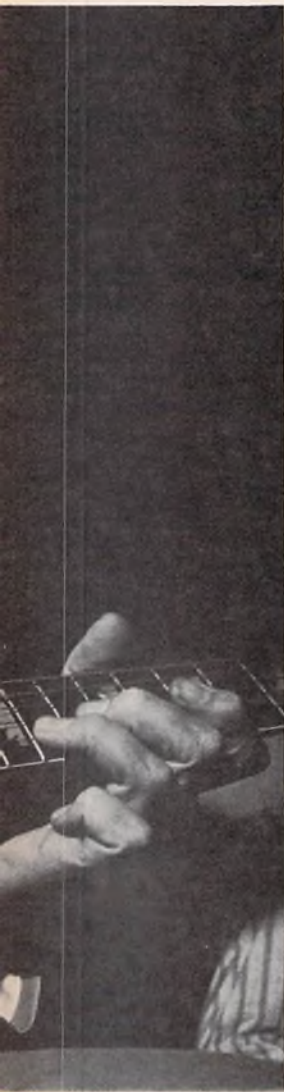
It all falls into place. Tal Farlow, one of the most technically facile of all jazz guitarists, feels "inadequate" over his inability to read music. Basically, he admits later, he is uncomfortable going into a situation with a rhythm section he doesn't know. All those club owners and concert promoters and record producers had to do to lure Tal Farlow the 55 miles from his New Jersey nest to New York City was to offer him a musical situation in which he would feel comfortable: namely, to get him musicians he had worked with in the past and with whom he knew he was compatible—like Red Norvo, in whose influential trio (along with Charles Mingus) Tal first gained wide recognition.

On the day we speak, Tal is in the middle of a tour with Norvo and bassist Steve Novosel. Tal and Red have worked together periodically since the dissolution of the trio (most notably in 1969 on a Newport All-Stars tour), but this is the first time they are purposefully recreating the sound and feeling of the classic unit. Novosel is a fine, rich-toned bassist and, with characteristically low amplification, the three men easily recapture the Tinkers-to-Evers-to-Chance interplay of the trio with Mingus (and, later, Red Mitchell). A typical set starts off with a playful, easy-tempoed *All Of Me*, moves through a gently swinging *Here's That Rainy Day*, into a reflective *Baubles, Bangles, And Beads*, and on through *Cheek To Cheek* and *Sunday*—the three players keeping their eyes fixed on one another. Red's "poop-poop" sound on the vibes meshes brilliantly with Tal's crablike dash over the fretboard, and they occasionally include a two-chorus dual improvisation that is hypnotic. Before the set finishes, Tal will be featured on a drifting, exploratory *My Romance* played entirely in chime-like harmonics. The set will conclude with a blues romp on St. Thomas, an elegant reading of *Sophisticated Lady*, and an all-out, finger-cracking *Fascinating Rhythm*. It is clear from the pixieish grins that the three men center-stage have had as much fun as the audience in the packed club.

Before signing on with Red Norvo in 1950, Tal Farlow had cut his teeth with Dardanelle (who brought him north from North Carolina), Margie Hyams, and Buddy De Franco. Like so many others of his generation, Tal first began to pursue the jazz guitar after hearing Charlie Christian on remote broadcasts. "At that time I was working as a poster artist," Tal recalls. "I made posters for stores and things. I rearranged my hours so I could work at night. The people who owned the sign shop would take the orders in the daytime, and I would do them at night because at that time they were doing these band remotes, like Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. All the good music was on the radio, and they would just do one band after another.

"I could already play the guitar a little bit, but the guitar was, in most cases, a part of a hillbilly band—you know, with three chords. Then Charlie Christian would come on like a sax, and it sort of made me think, 'Now, I've got an instrument here that can conceivably move out-front.' I hadn't tried to play any single-string till then. I got those records and I learned to play those solos note for note."

Before the '40s were out, Tal would fall under the spell of two other jazz masters, Art Tatum and Charlie Parker. His ability to synthesize these various elements helped bring him to the attention of Norvo, who asked him to join the vibes/guitar/bass trio he was about to form in California. "I went out with Red," Tal says, "because I did not have any reason not to. The prospect of working with Red Norvo was attractive, and I had never been to California. Red Kelly was the first bassist, but he left to rejoin Charlie Barnet. Red said he knew Mingus and we located him delivering mail, I think, in San Francisco. We called him up and he came down. We spent two or three afternoons a week at Red's apartment rehearsing. We just rehearsed a lot and worked a little place called the Haig, and it just took off. It might have taken longer than it seems like it did now, looking back over 30 years or so."



STEPHEN FISCHER

It was here that Tal Farlow began to earn his reputation for speed and technical proficiency. "I didn't have any choice," he says, with typical understatement. "I mean, if Red was going to play it this fast, that's how fast it's going to be. It was rough at first. The trio was a product of each of us having little tricks that would fill in for the fact that it was only three guys. In my case, it was playing harmonics and doing a bongo-type effect on the guitar." The trio was a sensation with fans and critics alike and began recording a series of highly successful albums for Savoy.

In Charles Mingus' book, *Beneath The Underdog*, he describes in rather bitter tones the incident that led to his leaving the trio: "So now you've got a job again, boy, in a trio, boy, with a famous name. The leader has red hair, boy, and the guitar player is a white man too, from North Carolina. You're playing in San Francisco and making records and the critics are writing good things. Boy! Boy! Boy! . . . How does it feel when the Redhead's trio is asked to do an important, special television show in color? It feels great. At night you're playing in this first-class club, and daytimes you're rehearsing in the studio. One day during a break you're tuning the bass and you see this producer or somebody talking to the Redhead across the room and they're both looking at you. You feel something is wrong but you don't know what . . . While you're packing up, the Redhead comes over and says something like this: 'Charlie, I'm sorry to tell you but I have to get another bassist for this show. We'll continue at the club but I can't use you here.' What do you say? You ask the name of the new bassist, of course. He tells you. The bassist is white . . . So you quit the trio . . . You wonder and wonder why he didn't tell you face to face or why he didn't walk off the TV job—some leaders would have. He wanted the money too bad. . . ."

"That's inaccurate," says Tal, firmly. "Red tried to get him on it, but what happened was that Red and I had 802 cards and Mingus didn't have one. And, you know, the union was a little bit heftier in those days than it is now. Now I don't think I would have gone for it. I would've said, 'We came as a group, we should stay as a group.' But, whatever the reasons, it had nothing to do with black and white."

Mingus was replaced by Red Mitchell and the trio stayed together until 1953, when Tal left to join Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five. After a year with Shaw, he returned to Norvo and remained until October, 1955. It was then that Tal Farlow would start the shell game that would mark his career for the next 25 years—turning up at a club or on a record, grabbing the limelight for a minute, then retreating back to his nest on the Jersey shore.

Farlow insists he wasn't hiding from anybody during his long absences from the jazz mainstream, nor was he inactive. I'm sure that more than a couple of keen-eyed jazz aficionados did a double take after stopping into some local hole-in-the-wall bar on the Jersey shore and finding Tal Farlow as part of the trio in the corner. During the afternoons Tal wasn't hiding either, he could be found on his back porch, quietly lettering signs, or inside his home, giving lessons to some lucky guitar student—one who learned how to read before he sought out Mr. Farlow.

"I tell them right away that we're not going to get into reading," says Tal. "The guys that I've been trying to teach are already into that. You can play jazz without being able to read at all. I mean, you can play tunes and things like that. Jazz now is in so many different boxes that I guess you have to read to be able to bring some of it off. I certainly don't advise anybody to neglect that. That should be number one. But what happens when you're playing guitar—it's easy to learn to play enough so if you don't get into reading right away, it would become too dull because you can play a lot more interesting stuff than what's written down there for you to learn to read. And, in my case, it was just so discouraging. I was playing stuff that probably wasn't even easy for a fairly good reader to read. That's my cop-out. If somebody was to hand me a transcription of one of my own solos it would take me a little while to

figure out which solo it was."

So Tal Farlow takes students who are already well-versed in the basics. He tries to take them down the road he learned on—listening to solos and trying to develop a *feeling* for jazz. "What I'm trying to do, in the teaching business, is have them utilize what they've learned in the way of scales and modes and arpeggios and things like that. Sometimes they play these things that come out and, to my ear, they don't belong. There are all these things that have an ambiguity to them, that can almost fit anything. But that also makes them sort of not have much meaning. Sometimes guys come and show up and don't have the ability, say, to just stay in meter, who just keep getting lost. That's something that I don't think you can ever learn. If you don't have the ability to just stay with the time, well, you can't play with anybody but yourself."

Those are the students Tal, reluctantly, doesn't accept. He is also quite generous to those guitarists over the years who have absorbed some of his own methods. "I can hear the things they're playing that are from me, but I remember that I also copped things from other guys, so I think it's possible that they got it from the same guy I got it from. In other words, if I heard something that maybe might have been inspired by a Charlie Christian phrase, I couldn't say that he copied it from me when I got it from Charlie Christian."

Farlow credits two things with his current motivation to become more visibly active. In Concord Records he has found a company that, he feels, will help him take care of such things as arranging tours and making sure that he has the musical situations that he likes, both for records and personal appearances. It is they who thought to reunite Tal with Red Norvo. Concord's guitar roster is quite dazzling—Jim Hall, Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis, Cal Collins, Laurindo Almeida, and Charlie Byrd all record for the label—and Tal feels that they will help him sort out the ends of the business he finds less than tasteful.



CAUGHT RED-HANDED: The Red Norvo Trio—from left, bassist Steve Novosel, vibist Norvo, and Farlow.

The other factor that has led to his current activity is the completion of *Talmage Farlow*, a 60-minute documentary on the guitarist's career and unorthodox life by young filmmaker Lorenzo De Stefano. "The fact that he can go out and raise \$100,000, or however much it took to do that, that's inconceivable to me. I haven't had that kind of a colorful life, you know, at least the way it appears to me."

The film shows Tal in his various guises—lettering a boat called Fat Chance, jamming in a local club with drop-in guitarist Lenny Breau, giving a guitar lesson, and appearing with Tommy Flanagan and Red Mitchell in a New York concert. The interest in the film, which quite succinctly wraps up the various sides of Farlow, has opened Tal's eyes a little to the high esteem in which he is held. On the day we speak, Tal has still avoided seeing the film. He is quite sure that he would wince at his guitar playing (of which he is highly critical) and would be deeply embarrassed by the entire experience. (One particularly moving passage has Tal's wife, Tina, recalling one

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ABIDING BASS BY

GEORGE



photos by TOM COPI

DUVIVIER

BY MITCHELL SEIDEL

His name is not instantly recognized by most jazz fans. He doesn't win polls. He rarely solos on record and doesn't lead his own group. Yet, George Duvivier is undoubtedly one of the best bass players around.

Born in New York in August, 1922, he has a "condensed" resumé that runs to three pages—single-spaced. Naming all of his professional affiliations would take so long the *Encyclopedia Of Jazz* uses the phrase "too numerous to mention."

An eight-year-old Duvivier began with violin studies while at the Conservatory of Musical Art in New York, progressing to the Central Manhattan Symphony at 14 and becoming a concertmaster at 16. At the same time Duvivier attended DeWitt Clinton High School. Before graduating he had switched to the bass. "I liked the sound of the foundation that was hitting me in the back of the head," Duvivier recalled of his days in the violin section. "I decided at that point to switch to string bass."

Although originally studying classical music, Duvivier was interested in swing bands and with several classmates formed a group fashioned after Jimmy Lunceford's band. Duvivier's group, the Royal Barons, "tried to do everything right—we had all of the paraphernalia: the derbies, the

mutes, and the doubling on the reeds—we had quite a good orchestra. In fact, we played one dance and came in second to Lunceford, who was also on the program."

His first real professional jazz gig came when he was attending New York University in late 1939. "Strictly on nerve I wrote Coleman Hawkins after he did the record *Body And Soul*, and mentioned that I'd been an admirer of his and I'd like to have the opportunity to play with him. One day the phone rang, and it was Coleman Hawkins with that deep voice on the other end."

Hawkins gave Duvivier his address, told him to bring his bass, and auditioned the young musician while playing piano himself. After the audition, Duvivier explained, "he looked at me and said, 'Do you have a tuxedo?' I said yes. He said, 'Alright, we open at Kelly's Stables Monday night.'"

His four months with Hawkins taught him to play with a variety of vocalists who often shared the bill with the group and also to keep pace with the band's dynamic leader. "I learned more in the four months we were together than I did in the next three years. Musically, I learned all my keys, my tempos, and he gave me solos." Although he once described his trial by fire to db writer Nat Hentoff with the line, "Hawkins threw me to the wolves," Duvivier said the winter's work with the group—which contained Clyde Hart,

J. C. Heard, and Sandy Williams—was “interesting” and “inspirational.”

After spending time as both an arranger and bass player with Lucky Millinder and Eddie Barefield's orchestras in the early '40s, Duvivier entered the army in 1942 and spent two years of World War II as an MP in the United States. During his time with Millinder, he became friendly with several members of the Lunceford band and began writing for both orchestras. After leaving the army he joined the Lunceford band as its main arranger, rewriting some of Sy Oliver's earlier charts. Oliver, in the meantime, had formed his own band and recruited Duvivier to write half of his book as well. He stayed with Lunceford's orchestra until the bandleader's death in 1947.

After a short time with Joe Thomas' group, Duvivier joined vocalist Nellie Lutcher for a highly successful European tour and returned to the U.S. to start a career backing vocalists—especially Lena Horne, whom he toured with and accompanied on several albums during the '50s. Duvivier's status as a sought-after free-lancer found him working with many jazz notables, including Wes Montgomery, Ben Webster, Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Buddy DeFranco, Gerry Mulligan, George Benson, Charlie Parker, Johnny Hodges, Bud Powell, and Eric Dolphy.

At the time he was called to work with Powell in 1953, Duvivier could often be seen playing nightly as part of the rhythm section at Birdland. The pairing apparently worked, because Duvivier went on to play in clubs and on record with Powell from 1953 through '57. Duvivier recalled that his time with Powell taught him a very unusual skill—communicating without words.

GEORGE DUVIVIER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Note: George Duvivier has appeared on hundreds of albums, solely as a sideman. This heavily abbreviated list exemplifies some of his work with especially notable leaders.

with Bud Powell
THE GENIUS OF BUD POWELL
VOL. 2—Verve VE-2-2526

with Gene Ammons
GENTLE JUG—Prestige 24079

with Soprano Summit
CRAZY RHYTHM—Chiaroscuro
CR 178

CHALUMEAU BLUE—Chiaroscuro
CR 148

with Ben Webster
BALLADS—Verve VE-2-2530

**with Eric Dolphy/
Ron Carter**
ERIC DOLPHY—Prestige 24008
MAGIC—Prestige 24053

**with Eddie “Lockjaw”
Davis**
THE COOKBOOK—Prestige 24039

with Jimmy Lunceford
THE LAST SPARKS—MCA 1321

with Benny Carter
LIVE AND WELL IN JAPAN—Pablo
2308-216

“Bud had become almost a total introvert by the time I got to work with him. And if Bud said ‘Good evening’ four or five times in our entire relationship, I would be surprised. It wasn't anything conscious on his part, but he just walked in, took off his coat, sat down at the piano, and started playing. And I might add that there wasn't a single piece of music written out until we did an album which included *Glass Enclosure*. I wrote that song out in bits and pieces as he played it—it was very involved—because I wouldn't want to see anyone else come in there and jump into that and not have any guide at all. Everything that you heard recorded and everything that we played was right off the top of our heads. It was a very difficult job because you had no personal communication—only the music he played,” Duvivier noted, adding that he and drummer Art Taylor decided to work that way with the erratic piano player and “just hang onto Bud's coattails.”

Working with Powell this way was difficult at first, but as the trio began to jell, it was much easier to handle. “By the second or third time we were at Birdland, we had a pretty good idea what was going on,” Duvivier said. “Everybody was amazed, but they didn't know what we went through in the beginning.”

Duvivier was also an important sideman on some Oliver Nelson-arranged recordings with Eric Dolphy. The bassist



MITCHELL SEIDEL

remembered those qualities of Dolphy's that were also present in his own work: the ability to come into a musical situation and get to work.

“He was just a hell of a player,” Duvivier said flatly. “Eric was not an anecdotal type of person; he took care of business. He was a very low-key guy. He'd ease in, warm up his horns, and take off like a scalded cat,” he said with a laugh.

After spending most of his career at the rear of the bandstand, Duvivier is only now getting back to taking longer solos—something he did not do often with groups as a free-lancer. “I spent a lot of time with vocalists, and from that, studio work,” he said. “The only time you get a chance to solo there, is if something's written and you have eight or 16 bars. When you're backing people like Jimmy Smith and artists of that type, they're the stars.”

Duvivier called his current status as a musician “semi-retired.” Semiretired for George Duvivier means working three jobs at once. One week it may be backing clarinetist Phil Bodner in a New York club with a group that includes drummer Mel Lewis and pianist Tony Monte. The next week, it's playing behind Benny Carter during one of his rare New York club dates. After that, it's a one-nighter in Philadelphia and the next week a Swiss jazz festival. “I'm not buried in the studios as much as before,” Duvivier said. “Playing with jazz groups in Europe and Japan, doing festivals and colleges . . . it's becoming interesting. I'm meeting youngsters who claim I inspire them, and they, in turn inspire me. That's the way it's supposed to be.”

One of Duvivier's earliest inspirations was not a bassist, but a guitarist. He credited a surprising name from the '40s with having an early influence on his playing style, both directly and via bassist Oscar Pettiford.

“I think he [Pettiford] was influenced, as I was, not so much by a bass player, but by a guitarist—Charlie Christian. It became more evident when he [Pettiford] switched to cello, as a result of hurting his arm. If you listen to him playing cello, you hear Christian—it's the way he thought. Of course, I never went to cello. My bass lines, I tried to play as much as I could [like Christian], almost unconsciously. And I still do, to a certain extent.”

Milt Hinton, a musician who is still very active today, is also credited as being one of Duvivier's early influences. In an era when shouts of “Slap that bass” were common, Duvivier said Hinton's work with Cab Calloway's band was

continued on page 60

RECORD REVIEWS

★★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ FAIR
★ POOR

PEE WEE RUSSELL

GIANTS OF JAZZ—Time-Life STL-J18:

RIVERBOAT SHUFFLE; IDA, SWEET AS APPLE CIDER; FEELIN' NO PAIN; OH PETER; BALD-HEADED MAMA; I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR YOU; TENNESSEE TWILIGHT; MADAME DYNAMITE; HOME COOKING; THE LADY IN RED; CHASING SHADOWS; CROSS PATCH; LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER (2 takes); TAPPIN' THE COMMODORE TILL; BABY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME?; I'VE FOUND A NEW BABY; CALIFORNIA, HERE I COME; FRIARS POINT SHUFFLE; SOMEDAY, SWEETHEART; AS LONG AS I LIVE; SATANIC BLUES; IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE FOR YOU; SHIM-ME-SHA-WABBLE; OH, SISTER! AIN'T THAT HOT?; (YOU'RE SOME) PRETTY DOLL; JIG WALK; THE LAST TIME I SAW CHICAGO; THAT'S A PLENTY; TAKE ME TO THE LAND OF JAZZ; SINCE MY BEST GAL TURNED ME DOWN; MUSKOGEE BLUES; OLD FOLKS; THREE-TWO-ONE BLUES; I'D CLIMB THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN; WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS; ENGLEWOOD; IF I COULD BE WITH YOU (ONE HOUR TONIGHT); MARIOOCH; PEE WEE'S BLUES.

Personnel: Russell, clarinet, tenor saxophone; with various others including Red Nichols, Red Allen, Max Kaminsky, Bobby Hackett, Wild Bill Davison, Muggsy Spanier, Buck Clayton, cornet, trumpet; Miff Mole, Brad Gowans, Jack Teagarden, Vic Dickenson, trombone; Bud Freeman, Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophone; Adrian Rollini, bass saxophone; Joe Sullivan, Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Jess Stacy, Nat Pierce, piano; Eddie Condon, guitar; Pops Foster, Wellman Braud, Walter Page, Milt Hinton, bass; Vic Berton, Zutty Singleton, Sid Catlett, George Wettling, Dave Tough, Lionel Hampton, Osie Johnson, Jo Jones, drums.

★★★★★

The older ones will tell you, the ones who can remember four or more decades back to the time when imitators were literally kicked off the bandstand. "You either played yourself," they'll recall, "or you went home and woodshedded till you could." It's a sure bet, though, that nobody ever sent Pee Wee Russell home for copying. An individualist to the core, Pee Wee was as unique and inimitable a musician as jazz has ever known. This is, undoubtedly, a heavy accolade to use in reference to a clarinetist so often dismissed by others as a "fake," an overly stylized and technically deficient eccentric who could barely meet the minimal requirements of a big band reed section. True, he lacked the easy confidence and polished facility of a Goodman, Shaw, or Fazola; it is also true that he didn't particularly like to read either. But what he was able to do was something that



LA: RIC HEITZMAN

very few other jazz musicians can claim for themselves: he was always himself.

The Russell style is impossible to describe in words, and for the very same reasons that so few have attempted to transcribe his recorded solos for study—the tools simply do not exist. Pee Wee's tone was unquestionably his most readily identifiable characteristic—totally unlike that of any other clarinetist and beyond all preconceptions as to what constitutes legitimate or "acceptable" sound on the instrument. His tonal range extended from a hoarse, sotto voce muttering in the mid- and low registers to a sometimes jubilant, sometimes anguished shrieking octaves above. To my knowledge, he never played a note above the clarinet's high G (concert F), but within his proscribed range he could run the full gamut of emotional expression. Quite frequently, and much to the horror of his misguided detractors, he chose to spice his tone with a full-throated, bent-pitch growl; but when he did, it was invariably a natural concomitant of his idea pattern at the time.

Easier to convey in words is Pee Wee's way with harmony and rhythm. A contemporary and buddy of the great cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, by the mid-'20s both were committed, each in his own way, to the discovery of a viable synthesis between the vibrant swing and bluesiness of New Orleans jazz and the harmonic richness and lyricism of French Impressionism. Like Bix, but also unlike him, Pee Wee heard differently from those around him. He liked to lean on unusual intervals—fourths, sixths, Major sevenths and ninths, augmented and flatted fifths—in addition to those already common "off-the-

chord" minor thirds and sevenths. Predictably, these purposeful dissonances would add a flavor to his improvisations not again heard in jazz until the advent of Parker, Gillespie, and Monk.

Because of his admittedly limited digital dexterity, Pee Wee became a marvel at the art of distillation. Tempos, no matter how fast, rarely threw him off course, for he had learned early that most of the time less means more. If the beat was flying by so quickly that an eighth-note triplet phrase would have courted a suicidal falter, he judiciously cut his time in half and concentrated on swinging lyricism. No better example of this life-saving device can be found than on Louis Prima's 1935 racehorse version of *I Love You Truly*, a side unfortunately not included here but one nevertheless well worth the searching.

However, what has been chosen for inclusion in this Time-Life tribute speaks surpassingly well for the taste and historical insight of the selection committee. The three 1927 Red Nichols sides that give us our debut glimpse of the then 21-year-old clarinetist are certainly among the best of the period, with the surprisingly agile and already intense Pee Wee more than holding his own alongside such seasoned New York studio men as Nichols, Miff Mole, and Adrian Rollini. But even more distinct presages of the future can be found on the three 1932 jam sides with Red Allen (upon one of which, *I Would Do Anything For You*, he plays an incendiary chorus on tenor) and the three Eddie Condon titles from 1933. It is easy to see, on the basis of the foregoing titles alone, that even at this

early period the basic elements of his style were already forged. The swing era, a la 52nd Street, enters with Louis Prima's combo recordings of *Lady In Red* and *Chasin' Shad-ows*, but also shows how resourcefully Pee Wee could adapt himself to the ill-suited restrictions of the big band setting of Prima's *Cross Patch*. His solo and ensemble work throughout these sides are models of intelligence, wit, and daring. And listen to him play *Old Folks* in the 1956 trio version included here. The first bona fide ballad in the set, it exposes like a raw wound his heartbreaking vulnerability.

Never happy with either restrictions or labels, Pee Wee found a new challenge in the relative freedom of late '50s mainstream jazz. Thus, we can hear in many of this decade's recordings, up to and including the 1962 Pee Wee's *Blues*, growing evidence of his now completely unfettered absorption in daredevil expressionism. A consummate control of unusual intervallic relationships and a highly sensitized ear for tonal nuance combines in these later works with a structural ingenuity light years beyond the conceptual achievements of most of his former dixieland associates.

But these latter day extensions of his basic style do not by any means negate the value of his earlier, more traditional playing. Time-Life has also chosen wisely in this regard as well, for virtually every title, from the 1938 *Love Is Just Around The Corner* to the 1946 *Muskogee Blues*, can be considered a hallmark of mid-period Pee Wee. Great and near great solos by others also abound on these sides, and the improvised ensemble work is rarely short of definitive, but understandably the main focal point throughout is the artistry of the featured clarinetist. As controversial in his time as were Parker, Coltrane, and Coleman in theirs, Pee Wee Russell's stature as a major jazzman is now an accepted fact. It is unthinkable that, with the advantage of today's hindsight, any could now misperceive his genius for fakery. —jack sohmer

RED RODNEY/ IRA SULLIVAN

LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—

Muse MR 5209: *LODPELLIAN MODE*; *A TIME FOR LOVE*; *MR. OLIVER*; *WHAT CAN WE DO*; *COME HOME TO RED*; *BLUES IN THE GUTS*.

Personnel: Rodney, trumpet, flugelhorn; Sullivan, soprano, tenor saxophone, flute, flugelhorn; Garry Dial, piano; Paul Berner, bass; Tom Whaley, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

The Rodney/Sullivan association dates back to the early 1950s, and its highlights include one of the most memorable albums of that decade, *The Red Arrow*, under Rodney's name on Signal. Their reunion at the Village Vanguard catches these two bebop pundits at the nascent stage of their exciting current co-leadership. Recorded in May and July of 1980, Sullivan was guesting on Rodney's gig with just a few day's rehearsal under their belts. Pianist Dial and drummer Whaley

were holdovers from Rodney's short-lived band with Billy Mitchell of the previous six months. As impressive as the front-line soloists are in this band, it's the rhythm section that provides fuel and framework most impressively.

This is not a bebop band per se; rather, bebop is the point of departure in a repertoire of stylistically more modern compositions. Trumpeter Jack Walrath contributes heavily to the book and has three of his tunes represented here. The bop tunes that the band performs almost gratuitously in public are judiciously excised on record in favor of modal and compositionally more adventurous pieces.

Rodney and Sullivan crackle on the trumpet/soprano theme of Walrath's *Lodgellian Mode*. Dial uses a steady, sturdy, two-chord modal vamp as a footing for the soloists. Rodney's trumpet is streamlined and agile, racing up the scale and tailspinning into another gambol. In direct contrast to the darting Rodney, Sullivan's soprano opening is almost meditative, snaking into long and quick-turned middle register lines. Sullivan's soprano tone is always full and round, avoiding thin piping at the top and hard-edged squawks at the bottom.

Dial is a deceptively unalloyed pianist. His technique is anything but flashy, and right-handed single-note runs are all that his solos offer to that end. His own Bill Evans-tinged block chords create a rolling layer of bedrock on movers like *Blues In The Guts* and *What Can We Do*.

It's too bad that Sullivan's trumpet is not represented here because the Rodney/Sullivan duets are instructive for comparing and contrasting styles. Simon Salz' *What Can* will have to suffice with its twin flugelhorns. The liner notes don't say but I'd bet it's Sullivan leading off with the fat-toned thicker phrases and Rodney with the more nimble, high-note declaration. Rodney is showcased on the ballads, taking it slow for a change on the lovely, soulful *Come Home* and playing a smoky Harmon-muted *Time For Love*.

All in all a good album, but the touring since this was cut has added a lot to this band. It remains to be seen whether Columbia Records, which has signed the group, will fully capture their measure.

—kirk silsbee

COLSON UNITY TROUPE

NO RESERVATION—Black Saint BSR

0043: *FAMILY MEMBERS*; *TEACHERS/ WORLD HEROES*; *CLOCKWORK*; *THOUGHT FROM DUKE*; *PATCH NO. 2*.

Personnel: Adegoke Steve Colson, tenor saxophone, piano; Iqua Colson, vocals; Wallace LaRoy McMillan, soprano, alto, tenor saxophone, piccolo, percussion; Dushun Mosley, percussion; Reggie Willis, bass.

★ ★ ½

The Colson Unity Troupe is an offshoot of Chicago's Association for Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), and so it comes as no surprise that they aim for a contempo-

rary sound. The Troupe's approach is moderate; they comfortably synthesize past and present in their tunes, which are written by Adegoke Steve Colson and Iqua Colson. Using standard 32-bar form in a tune doesn't discourage anyone from incorporating elements of free jazz in their solos. Conversely, the free tunes borrow from bebop.

Vocalist Iqua Colson carries the group with her lilting voice. Characteristically, she starts notes straight, then twists them with vibrato. She overworks the nuance, using it to prolong notes that she's having trouble sustaining. Her low range is solid but as she forces her voice up, the sound becomes breathy from lack of support. Despite range restrictions, she succeeds in creating striking stylistic distinctions between tunes. *Family Members*, set in 32-bar form, begins (after a short intro) with two choruses sung by Colson. Here, she swings along easily. In *Thought From Duke* she scats, not always with the greatest fidelity to the changes, but with a captivating spirit. Then in *Patch No. 2* Colson gets to pull some 20th century orchestral music tricks: she sings snatches of children's songs while the rest of the group carries on a compelling dialogue of dissonant malaise.

Patch No. 2 makes a good case for the compatibility of jazz, electronic, and contemporary Western European idioms. The Troupe is at their best playing this kind of music: bassist Reggie Willis and percussionist Dushun Mosley plod elsewhere but pick things up here; saxophonist Wallace McMillan gets in some sassy fills, surpassing his fine work on *Family Members*; and Adegoke Steve Colson drives on piano. Let's hope the Troupe continues to develop eclectic, appealing music of this fashion.

—elaine guregian

JOE JACKSON

JUMPIN' JIVE—A&M SP-4871: *JUMPIN'*

WITH SYMPHONY SID; *JACK, YOU'RE DEAD*; *IS YOU IS OR IS YOU AIN'T MY BABY*; *WE THE CATS (SHALL HEP YA)*; *SAN FRANCISCO FAN*; *FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE*; *JUMPIN' JIVE*; *YOU RUN YOUR MOUTH (AND I'LL RUN MY BUSINESS)*; *WHAT'S THE USE OF GETTING SOBER (WHEN YOU'RE GONNA GET DRUNK AGAIN)*; *YOU'RE MY MEAT*; *TUXEDO JUNCTION*; *HOW LONG MUST I WAIT FOR YOU*.

Personnel: Jackson, vocals, vibes; Pete Thomas, alto saxophone; Dave Bitelli, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Raul Oliviera, trumpet; Nick Weldon, piano; Graham Maby, bass; Larry Tolfree, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Joe Jackson's 1979 debut, *Look Sharp*, was as definitive a new wave (not punk) rock recording as there has ever been. Caustic, arrogant, and sniveling in demeanor, Jackson helped set the tone for the swarm of like bands that have been on the scene ever since. His follow-ups—*I'm A Man* and *Beat Crazy*—varied little fundamentally from *Look Sharp*, though it did seem that, by the latter, ennui was beginning to settle in. Still, it was with tongue neatly tucked in cheek that I suspected Jack-

**TOM GRANT
AND FRIENDS**

son scribbled these somewhat cryptic words on Beat's sleeve: "This all represents a desperate attempt to make sense of rock & roll. Deep in our hearts we knew it was doomed to failure. The question remains: Why did we try?" Surprisingly, Joe wasn't jiving.

Indeed, Jackson has swung about 300 degrees with his fourth release. Digging into the archives of swing and so-called "race" music, he emerged with a boxful of rare and not-so-rare 78s that could always use some dusting off. Jackson's *Jumpin' Jive* is dedicated to those he calls the "Kings of the Jukeboxes" of the '30s and '40s: Cab Calloway, Glenn Miller, Lester Young and, most of all, Louis Jordan. He and his capable band of six have recreated 12 vintage cuts with T.L.C. to spare. But the question remains: does it work?

Of the three Calloway renditions, *San Francisco Fan* proves beyond Jackson's vocal means; his sandpapery voice tears into this tender ballad in a not altogether kind way. This, however, is the album's only real clinker (aside from *Tuxedo Junction*, which is perfunctory at best)—the rest is upbeat, locomotive, and just plain fun.

Jackson jumps all over the Jordan material. *Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby* runs twice the original's length, allowing for Jackson's only vibes solo on the date and also a brief trumpet part by Raul Oliviera. In re-listening to Jordan's and this version, I found Jackson's the more enjoyable of the two. This is hardly the case on any of the other tracks. *Jack, You're Dead*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *You're My Meat*, and *What's The Use Of Getting Sober* are all clever covers, but neither Jackson nor Pete Thomas (on alto) are fair match for Jordan's unmistakably cool vocals and honking horn.

Basically, though, Jackson deserves a round of applause for excavating these classics in the first place. Rock fans (many of whom have already bought this album unwittingly) will never know which bands preceded Chuck Berry and Fats Domino and how they contributed to the development of their beloved rock & roll unless someone like Jackson has the nerve to pull such a stunt. Why bother? Well, as the late Louis Jordan said, "If you ain't got no red corpuscles/Jack, you dead."
—steve bloom

WARREN VACHE

IRIDESCENCE—Concord Jazz CJ-153:

SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; SWEET AND SLOW; BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA; IRIDESCENCE; THE SONG IS YOU; NO REGRETS; THE MORE I SEE YOU; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK.

Personnel: Vache, cornet, flugelhorn; Hank Jones, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Alan Dawson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Roses and diamonds. Mahogany and velvet. Vache and Jones. Duvivier and Dawson. The images speak of genuine articles, things that have acquired a certain reputation of elegance and beauty. So it is with these gentlemen in this setting.

There are many voices in Vache's playing—Bix, Bobby Hackett, Bill Coleman, Ruby

Bruff, Clark Terry, Billy Butterfield. . . Their lyrical nuances underlie Vache's fur-wrapped notes on *No Regrets*, his ecstatic, slowly-flowering intro to *The Song Is You*, and his wistful mood on Jones' lovely title ballad. The burnished tone holds fast at sprightlier tempos, and the flugelhorn quells the old-fashioned vibrato Vache uses on cornet.

Softly, *No Regrets*, and *The More I See You* unfold on the larger horn. The cornet pieces ooze and growl, shake and whinny. *Sweet And Slow* drips with the frying fat of Vache's sizzling timbre, but the title cut and *Autumn* are more patiently seductive. On *Softly*, his minor-key phrases and breezy flamboyance even suggest Freddie Hubbard.

Jones does his usual impeccable job throughout. No one swings as sharply or as cleanly. His chords are diamonds placed in the path of single-note runs and lines in thirds. The slowly turning impressionism of *Autumn* and the romantic reflections of *Iridescence* are especially pithy and spell-binding. Check out his comping in rhythmic consort with Duvivier and Dawson, too. The bassist's tone is the woody essence—no buzzing strings. Time and the deep resonances of his instrument are the messengers of truth. Similarly, Dawson's supple beat, plush tunings, and complementary touch and feeling follow Vache's swinging lead down to the last vibration. The drummer's solo on *Softly* is a model of execution and variety-in-context; he always matches the dynamic level of the group.

This album, then, rings with traditional, melodic playing. The rhythm section is a trio of masters, and the young leader speaks their language cogently and refreshingly.

—owen cordle

ROBERT FRIPP

LET THE POWER FALL—Editions EG EGS 110: 1984; 1985; 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989.

Personnel: Fripp, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BAIRD HERSEY

ÔDO OP8 FX—Bent Records BRS3:

ACROSS THE PYRENEES; THE MINOTAUR; THE NILE; ANGELS; JOURNEY OF THE TALKING BROTHERS; GREAT AND NOBLE BEAST: FIRST LIGHT.

Personnel: Hersey, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ½

Musicians have frequently sought to expand the vocabulary of their instruments and the range of sounds and expressions over which they could have direct control. In recent memory Rahsaan Roland Kirk tackled the problem by playing three horns simultaneously; John Coltrane created the aural illusion of his legendary "sheets of sound" by rapid playing of arpeggios and manipulation of overtones; Albert Mangelsdorff uses split harmonics and singing to blow chords on a trombone. Guitarists in particular, from bluegrass finger-pickers to rockers influenced by Hendrix' distortion forays, have used tech-

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niques and devices that augment their command of multiple lines, textures, and harmonics, without the need of additional musicians or studio tricks.

Robert Fripp and Baird Hersey are two guitarists who have their own means of sound expansion. Fripp, the driving force behind the rock group King Crimson, has been engaged in various projects over the last few years, among them his solo performances of Frippertronics: a tape-loop format (derived from Terry Riley via Brian Eno) in which Fripp feeds guitar lines into one tape machine which records and threads them into a second tape machine that plays them back and re-feeds them into the first tape machine which repeats the cycle in a continuous feedback loop. In this manner Fripp can build layers of sound, create counterpoints, duets, and doubling, thereby orchestrating a complex textural palette over which he has complete control in a real-time situation.

Let *The Power Fall* is another testament to the versatility of Fripp's structure and clarity of vision. The opening track, 1984, is an architectural wonder. Fripp uses gentle sustains that gradually loop into long circular glissandos into which he drops tiny pinpoints of sound like the signal displays of distant stars. He builds it to a point of dervish intensity where endings and beginnings are blurred, at which point he begins a new series while the previous one fades under the mix. At times he lets pieces gently fade away while elsewhere he uses sweeping Doppler-effect washes that obliterate a carefully constructed latticework of sound. There's an erroneous tendency to think of Frippertronics as sophisticated background music, but any serious listening to *Let The Power Fall* reveals a highly charged emotional intensity.

Baird Hersey is a chameleon-like musician who has released albums of funk, big band avant garde fusion, and frantic discordant duets with percussionist David Moss. On the cryptically entitled *ODO OP8 FX* (read: "audio opiate fix") Hersey takes a technological route in expanding his guitar sound for real-time playing. He uses a series of synthesizers and synthesizer modules triggered by his guitar to form sonorous drones over which he plays slow, sustained guitar lines similar to Terje Rypdal. At other points, as on the more energized *Angels*, the synthesizers double the guitar in different octaves and create counterpoints and effects that make for a thicker, almost orchestral sound.

Hersey's playing here sounds similar to the work of several European guitarists, such as Richard Pinhas of Heldon and Manuel Gottsching of Ashra, in creating electronic tone poems on augmented guitar, but Hersey seems constrained on *ODO*. Ideas are often repeated in a riff-laden manner and he never really cuts loose in a context that would seem suited to the energized soloing for which he's been known. Perhaps this is due to the guitar synthesizer's reputed inability to track notes at high playing speeds. While both Fripp's and Hersey's systems have inherent limitations beyond the ones they are trying to surpass, Fripp seems more successful at bending those limitations to his own creative will rather than letting them force a ceiling on his musicianship.

—john diliberto

TOM SCOTT

APPLE JUICE—Columbia FC37419: *APPLE JUICE; GONNA DO IT RIGHT; WE BELONG TOGETHER; SO WHITE AND SO FUNKY; GETTIN' UP; IN MY DREAMS; INSTANT RELIEF.*

Personnel: Scott, saxophones, Lyricon; Eric Gale, Hugh McCracken, guitars; Richard Tee, keyboards; Marcus Miller, bass; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Steve Gadd, drums; Dr. John, vocal (cut 4).

★ ★ ★ ½

BRECKER BROTHERS

STRAPHANGIN'—Arista AL9550: *STRAPHANGIN'; THREESOME; BATHISHEBA; JACKKNIFE; WHY CAN'T I BE THERE; NOT ETHIOPIA; SPREADEAGLE.*

Personnel: Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Barry Finnerty, guitar; Mark Gray, keyboards; Marcus Miller, bass; Richie Morales, drums; Sammy Figueroa, Manolo Badrena (1,3-5,7), Don Alias (6), percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

DAVID SANBORN

VOYEUR—Warner Brothers BSK3546: *LET'S JUST SAY GOODBYE; IT'S YOU; WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER; ONE IN A MILLION; RUN FOR COVER; ALL I NEED IS YOU; JUST FOR YOU.*

Personnel: Sanborn, alto saxophone, saxello, electric piano (1,2,4); Marcus Miller, bass, Moog bass, drums (3), electric piano (3,5,6), piano (7), guitar (3,5,6), synthesizer (3), bells (6); Steve Gadd, drums; Buzzy Feiten, Hiram Bullock (4), guitars; Lenny Castro, Ralph MacDonald (5,6), percussion; Michael Colina, synthesizers; Buddy Williams, drums (4); Tom Scott, flute, tenor saxophone (5); Valerie Simpson, Patti Austin, Kacey Cisyk, Lani Groves, Diva Gray, Gordon Grody, Hamish Stuart, vocals.

★ ★ ★

The fact that bassist Marcus Miller is the consistent thread running through these three releases not only speaks highly of Miller, but indicates the r&b leanings of these fine hornmen. Tom Scott, the Brecker Brothers, and David Sanborn have made careers out of being versatile, exciting to listen to, and accessible to pop-jazz audiences. Such audiences will react positively to these melodious and, to differing degrees, challenging offerings.

Apple Juice is arguably Scott's best album since *Tom Cat*. The disc was recorded live over a three-day period at The Bottom Line in New York City, before crowds that obviously adored the saxman, and his band of bands (this is no *L.A. Express*). Gale, Gadd, and Tee make everything Scott touches sound like "Stuff." Tee's two-fisted gospel sound on piano and organ, Gale's classy clawing and scratching, and the inscrutable, so-sensible polyrhythms of Gadd, adorn beautifully as usual.

Juice never ventures outside of 4/4 time, varying tempos from up tunes like the title track and *Instant Relief* to the ballads *We Belong Together* and *In My Dreams*. There is also a throwaway vocal number sung by Dr. John. The playing on *Apple Juice* could be described as safe, but there are exciting skirmishes, and when Scott turns on the juice, things do start to happen. His fiery solo on the opening number seems to inspire his band as well as his audience. It's too bad the solo couldn't have been a bit longer and the head played less. The bluesy solo Scott blows on *Gonna Do It Right* is soon overshadowed by his soulful soprano searchings on *We Belong Together*. Tee also solos on this tune, in his subtle, chorded way.

Scott saves big excitement for the end of the set, when Miller, MacDonald, and Gadd get their moments in the spotlight. Miller can get any sound out of his funky slaps and plucks, and concentrates here more on rhythmic ideas than melodic ones. His solo, while predictable, is a first-rate crowd pleaser. Ralph MacDonald is the kind of percussionist who could go unnoticed, just because what he does sits so well in the groove. His solo with Gadd is an impressive collage of rhythms, half-times, and individual prowess. Scott seems to have had a fine time with his band, and it's no wonder.

Perhaps the Breckers have given up the hopes of becoming disco stars, which seemed to dominate much of their George Duke-produced *Detente* album. There is no

singing on *Straphangin'*, but there is much fine playing. The Brothers do all the writing and arranging—Randy contributing four, and Michael three tunes. Michael's *Straphangin'* opens the record like a dirge, but is soon cruising greener pastures. Barry Finerty's crisp guitar rhythms and Miller's melodic and strong bass work lead into a classic Brecker Brothers two-horn line. Michael takes a very hot solo, then Randy steps up and burns too. It's an auspicious beginning, one that is backed by solid material the whole album through. *Threesome* is lovely and dissonant at the same time, a 9/8 feel played with slow grace by drummer Morales. *Bathsheba's* latin section sports a ton of notes by Michael, some Gadd-like trapping by Morales, and tasty percussion work from Figueroa and Badrena. Randy's *Jacknife* is a well-constructed funk tune, with some typically blue Brecker chords.

The most adventurous playing on *Straphangin'* occurs on Michael's tune *Not Ethiopia*. Keyboardist Mark Gray doubles the speedy sax line on the tune's head, then accompanies effectively, using a minimum of chords. Morales' rhythms are musical, Alias beats the daylight out of the congas, and Miller's solo is very melodic, not a slapping funk routine. This may not be the best session the Brecker Brothers have ever played, but it is the most consistently appealing album yet from the duo.

David Sanborn spent time with the Breckers a few years back, in and around gigs

with the likes of Stevie Wonder, Paul Butterfield, the Eagles, and John McLaughlin. Sanborn's last album, *Hideaway*, marked his debut as a composer. On *Voyeur* he wrote three tunes, co-authored one with bassist Miller, and Miller wrote the rest. Where *Hideaway* was strong because Sanborn had his hand in all the writing, on *Voyeur* he sounds more distant.

Let's Just Say Goodbye is an encouraging start, as Sanborn's biting alto squawks the melody over Buzzy Feiten's ringing guitar comps. As Feiten starts a solo, Gadd goes double time, and Miller's groove intensifies. Sanborn playfully jabs with the guitarist, and as the song fades Feiten drops out, leaving Sanborn to playfully improvise over the bass and drums. Sanborn's compositions *It's You* and *One In A Million* display the saxman's melodic gift for writing, and are also good examples of his nonchalant, doodling alto style. He rarely plays a melody the same way twice, preferring to bend back the edges or wrinkle it up a bit. It is sometimes hard to tell whether Sanborn is playing the head or soloing, and sometimes it sounds like he's doing neither.

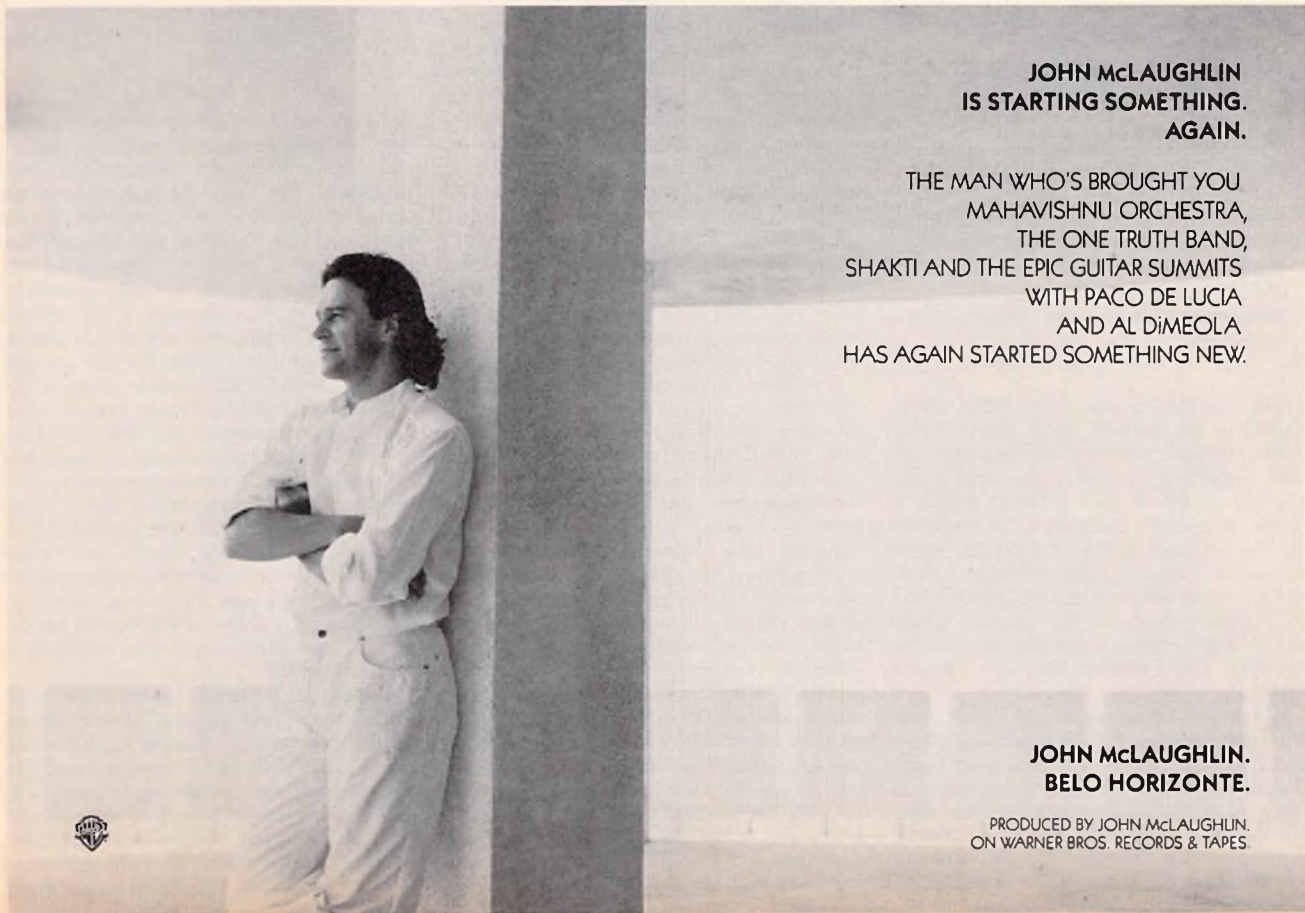
The Miller/Sanborn collaboration *Wake Me When It's Over* features Sanborn on saxello, and Miller playing everything else. The tune sounds more like two thoughts idly hooked together than a unified concept, and it suffers through Miller's rather stodgy drumming. Miller plays bass, Rhodes, and guitar on his tune *Run For Cover*, but benefits

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from Gadd's drumming, and Tom Scott's barking alongside Sanborn. Unfortunately, *All I Need Is You* cannot be saved from its MOR funk sluggishness—not even by Sanborn's passionate playing—and *Just For You*, a piano-sax duet, sounds too much like filler material (especially the quick fade, before the tune can actually go anywhere).

Even with its weaknesses, *Voyeur* is a very listenable record. However, it is not the step forward for David Sanborn that *Hideaway* was. What we need on the next Sanborn album is more Sanborn. —robin tolleson

DEREK BAILEY/ CHRISTINE JEFFREY

VIEWS FROM SIX WINDOWS—

Metalanguage ML 114: *HERE TODAY . . . ; ONE OLD ONE; NOTHING LASTS LIKE THE MAKESHIFT; ONE YOUNG ONE; TWO PART PIER; FOR A DAY OR A STAY; ADRIENNE; WHAT NOW?*

Personnel: Bailey, guitar, ukelele (cut 4); Jeffrey, voice.

★ ★ ★

AMM III

IT HAD BEEN AN ORDINARY ENOUGH DAY IN PUEBLO, COLORADO—

Japo 60031: *RADIO ACTIVITY; CONVERGENCE; KLINE; SPITTLEFIELD'S SLIDE; FOR A*

Personnel: Keith Rowe, guitar, prepared guitar, transistor radio; Eddie Prevost, drums.

★ ★ ★

RANDY HUTTON/ PETER MOLLER

RINGSIDE MAISIE—Onari 005: *Trivia; SET FIRE TO THE A&R MAN; WE'RE GONNA DO WHAT?; THE KID; SHINE ON; WISH I COULD SHIMMER LIKE MY SISTER KATE; FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 265-2150; SPORTS REPORT.*

Personnel: Hutton, guitar; Moller, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★

Though the utilization of the guitar differs widely in the work of Derek Bailey, Keith Rowe, and Randy Hutton, each possesses an acute sensitivity towards the unique orchestral impact of the instrument within a totally improvised framework. Underscored by the intimacy of the duo setting, these recordings comprise a composite portrait of the strategies afforded to the guitarist and the issues posed to the listener when improvisation ceases to be an interpretative medium and becomes the sole creative process.

Along with saxophonist Evan Parker, with whom he spearheaded the legendary Music Improvisation Company and co-owns Incus Records, Derek Bailey is the most venerated figure of England's free music community. For the most part, Bailey, who has nurtured distinct voices on acoustic and electric instruments, dispenses with conventional guitar techniques, choosing instead to ap-

proach the instrument in an almost precognitive manner. Aurally, the resulting style strikes a startling mid-ground between the aleatory and the structured, as the friction created by the spewing of fitful notes and jagged chords is both inevitable and inscrutable. *Views From Six Windows*, which finds Bailey's conundrums in apposition to the more thematically oriented Christine Jeffrey, is a welcomed addition to Bailey's discography, if an unessential one. As part of the MIC, Jeffrey's voice functioned well as a textural highlight; but in the stark terrain of a duet program, she does not provoke the powerful performances from Bailey that Parker, percussionist Han Bennink, and cellist Tristan Honsinger have in previous duets issued by Incus, not to mention the near-monumental dialog with Anthony Braxton recently reissued on Inner City. Despite the brevity of most of the improvisations, there is a rambling, inconclusive quality to the music that, at times, is engaging, but often lets the listener's attention wander. Still, Bailey has enough shining moments—an aching crimped vibrato here, an eerie harmonic contour there, and tart morsels scattered throughout—to satisfy his constituency.

Now pared down to the duo of Keith Rowe and drummer Eddie Prevost, AMM III is a long-standing English collective. Of these three guitarists, Rowe is the most pyrotechnical and the one most concerned with the options of electronics and physical preparation of the instrument. Rowe's personal synthesis of free jazz and art-rock sensibilities on *It Had Been . . .* freshens his investigations of color, tension, and texture. Prodded by Prevost's crisp drumming, Rowe can muster, as on *Kline* and *Spittlefield's*, a splayed intensity similar to that of Sonny Sharrock. Buttressed by Prevost's bowed cymbals and the use of radio broadcasts, Rowe constructs a surreal ambience on the lengthy *Radio Activity* with a deftness that prompts a "there are no overdubs" disclaimer on the jacket. There are moments, however, when Rowe's electronically distorted, blistering runs are more palatable to the progressive rock audience than to the free jazz contingent.

Like their counterparts in the emerging community of eastern Canadian improvisers, the Calgary-based duo of Randy Hutton and drummer Peter Moller have assimilated relevant, world-wide activity to their own ends. Distinguished by what is sensed to be a mutually engendered, sinuous sense of space that leavens their spiky material, Hutton and Moller's episodic music relies neither on tired pyrotechnics or glossy allusions. Hutton incorporates the usual cadre of source materials and then some, pulling European folk forms from flamenco to bouzouki into the weave of the music. His attack varies from moment to moment, ranging from hair-splitting shifts in timbre to full, almost lush, chords. Throughout *Ringside Maisie*, Hutton's interaction with Moller—a capable, wristy drummer—is marked by a deliberate idea flow and consistent articulation. That Hutton, on his first recording, has performed on a par with established figures such as Bailey and Rowe

is much to his credit. Perhaps future installments will bear out his merit even more.

—bill shoemaker

AL COHN

NONPAREIL—Concord Jazz CJ-155: *TAKE FOUR; UNLESS IT'S YOU; EL CAJON; RAINCHECK; MR. GEORGE; THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA; THIS IS NEW; BLUE HODGE.*

Personnel: Cohn, tenor saxophone; Lou Levy, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Jake Hanna, drums.

★ ★ ★

NO PROBLEM—Xanadu 179: *FRED; DANIELLE; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE; ZOOT CASE; SOPHISTICATED LADY; MOOD INDIGO; THREE LITTLE WORDS.*

Personnel: Cohn, tenor saxophone; Barry Harris, piano; Steve Gilmore, bass; Walter Bolden, drums.

★ ★ ★

AL COHN/J.J. JOHNSON

THE NEW YORK SESSIONS (VOL. 2)—

Inner City IC 7022: *WALLINGTON SPECIAL; LISA; SOMETHING FOR LILI; THE THINGS WE DID LAST SUMMER; IF I HAD YOU; BOO WAH; ONCE IN A WHILE.*

Personnel: Cohn, tenor saxophone; Johnson, trombone (cuts 1-3,5,6); Henri Renaud, piano; Jerry Hurwitz, trumpet (1-3,6); Gigi Gryce, baritone saxophone (1-3,6); Curly Russell (1-3,6); Gene Ramey (4,7); Percy Heath (5), bass; Milt Jackson, vibes (5); Walter Bolden (1-3,6); Denizil Best (4,7); Charlie Smith (5), drums.

★ ★ ★

Al Cohn's reputation as a contemporary master of the tenor saxophone has spread steadily since he resumed an active performing career in the mid-'70s. Esteemed by musicians and critics at least since his days with Woody Herman's Herd, Cohn has won renewed recognition with a string of impressive LPs on Xanadu and a busy touring schedule, prompting reissues of some of his coveted '50s sides. The basic elements of Cohn's style, which combines Lester Young's smooth phrasing with Charlie Parker's modern harmonics, have hardly altered in three decades. True, his unobtrusively full tone has darkened to a robust and resonant ripeness, and his repertoire of hot licks and wry quotes has assumed wizardly dimensions. But Al's forte has always been the ability to pour forth endless streams of intricate, bluesy, hard-swinging variations that throb with traditional feeling and continuous invention. Never an innovator, he remains, as Phil Woods has observed, one of the outstanding improvising melodists in jazz.

Nonpareil, Cohn's Concord debut, presents him in his accustomed quartet format, but the West Coast rhythm section of Herman alumni Lou Levy, Monty Budwig, and Jake Hanna plays with uncommon empathy and enthusiasm. Pianist Levy is refreshingly wide-awake, even rushing a bit at times, while Budwig pumps out bottom lines as buoyant as Malibu surf. Al rides the waves with aplomb, particularly on uptempo

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rousers like his own acrobatically boppish *Take Four* and Billy Strayhorn's lilting *Raincheck*, where the soulfully moaning tenorist duets briefly with Budwig's Blanton-esque bass. Cohn's elegant ballad work is dry and unrestrained, but not without passion; generally, though, his flair for tasteful understatement is one of his most engaging assets.

No Problem is Al's latest Xanadu release, a typically solid session that offers few surprises but plenty of spirited and supremely logical blowing. The accompaniment tends toward nonchalance, as pianist Barry Harris comps with glib facility, but Cohn himself is in fine form, loping through complex progressions with resilient vigor. His skills as a tunesmith shines on originals like *Fred* and *Danielle*, but he really cuts loose on Jerome Kern's *All The Things You Are*, personalizing the mellow ballad into a galloping tour de force.

In 1954 the French Vogue label recorded pianist Henri Renaud in New York in a number of ensemble settings with up-and-coming boppers like Cohn, J.J. Johnson, and Milt Jackson. Inner City previously reissued the first collection from those dates, focusing on Johnson's contributions; the second volume spotlights Cohn as principal soloist, composer, and arranger.

Al's horn stylings here are representative of his early playing—smoother, less emphatic, more obviously Prez-oriented—yet his effortlessly floating, gracefully contoured phrases are already mature and distinctive. Jackson performs a single shimmering solo, Johnson's trombone spots are subtly low-keyed, but as for "leader" Renaud, it is just as well that his timid Bud Powell-ish tinkling is relegated mainly to the background.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Renaud sessions is Cohn's arranging for the seven-piece combo tracks that make up half the album. Light and witty, his charts bring the Basie sound into the age of cool with deftly riffing mini-sections that blend sweetly into big-band sonorities. Although Al worked primarily as an arranger for some 20 years, his recent recordings have represented him almost exclusively as a player and occasional composer. Cohn's early success in joining orchestration with improvisation suggests possibilities for contemporary projects along similar lines. —Larry Birnbaum

putting a stylistic tag on it. As one who doesn't know new waves from old waves, the closest music to this I am aware of, in the jazz world, is the harmolodic work of Ornette Coleman and his progeny. Certainly, there are elements in the compositions and instrumentation here that brings *Prime Time* to mind, yet there is a sexy, 1950s B-movie quality that sets this apart and gives it a sharp edge.

The band is tight, the tunes are likable, and the entire production is clean-as-a-whistle. The strength of the Lounge Lizards seems to lie in the composing and alto saxophone work of John Lurie and the intriguing urgent quality to Anton Fier's drumming. Lurie sounds to these ears like a major talent—his alto work pops, boils, and swings, Fier's drumming is alive and afire; he has obviously absorbed a great deal from contemporary jazz as well as good old rhythm & blues. The rest of the Lizards fit snugly between these two, but, like frozen yogurt or Grape-Nuts, they can more often be appreciated for their texture than their taste. Often they have just the right noirish quality, especially when Evan Lurie is playing organ or Arto Lindsay is clawing his guitar behind a gritty alto solo. Solo-wise, however, they fall short and things tend to falter whenever they're used for anything but a backdrop.

Most of the compositions on the album are by John Lurie and display a very effective use of space and dissonance. The inclusion of the two Monk standards point up Lurie's compositional sprouting from a Monkian bud; *Au Contraire Arto* is no more or less Monkish than the fragmented treatment of *Epistrophy*, which alternates between a slithery crawl and frenetic mine-blasts of sound. The only other non-original on the LP, Earl Bostic's r&b hit *Harlem Nocturne*, is given a standing-still interpretation that never approaches the satire one might expect.

This is urban music: thick-skinned and arrogant. Producer Teo Macero seems to have worked extremely well with his elements here: if the guitar work sometimes seems like traffic noise, I have the feeling that's exactly what it's supposed to sound like. The only annoyance is the group's reliance on one fever-pitch tempo which rarely varies. All in all, this is quite an impressive debut.

—Lee Jeske

OURAY

MOTOR DREAM—Taxi Records CAB 102: *BACK ON THE STREETS AGAIN; TOO MUCH TALKING; TRY TO GET BY; GOT THE LIGHT; WHAT'S DONE IS DONE; SHE WASN'T RIGHT; RUN IF YOU WANT TO; HOLD ON; FALLING DOWN; CAN'T GO ON THIS WAY.*

Personnel: Frank Pirruccello, guitar, piano, vocals; Bo Pirruccello, guitar, steel, Leslie steel guitar, vocals; Jeff Perraud, guitar, vocals; "Too Tall" Tom Peters, bass, vocals; Rick Barr, drums, timbales; Warren Paul "Vito" Wiegatz, alto saxophone (cut 5).

★ ★ ★ ★

In the tradition of Styx, Ted Nugent, REO Speedwagon, Bob Seger, Cheap Trick, et al.,

Ouray seems destined to break from their Midwest mold, not via gimmickry or even flashy virtuosity, but rather perseverance and practice. *Motor Dream*, the band's second Taxi release, marks an abrupt move from country-rock to contemporary rock & roll through the noted additions of Perraud and Barr to the original core members—the Pirruccello brothers and Peters. The powerful multiple guitars combined with four-part vocals are showcased in a variety of contexts.

Bo Pirruccello (in collaboration with John Lindgren) and sibling Frank each penned tunes that place the country flavor of the debut LP (*Chrome On The Range*) in a neo-pop-rock format. Perraud mixes things up on his latin-felt *Got The Light* (with lively Barr timbales), and Wiegatz' sax blows further fresh air into Frank's *What's Done Is Done*. Perraud's compositions hold sway on side two; the McLaughlin disciple's blazing and fluid guitar licks are challenged and complemented by the other three original plectrists and propelled into unswerving rock by drummer Barr.

Each songwriter takes a well-aimed turn at the lead vocals (with Frank shining the brightest), and in every case is backed by the perfect harmonies of the others. The tightly constructed double-lead guitar work sizzles, and the interplay amongst the three guitars and bass reflects the epitome of the multiple-guitar genre. A rock-solid bottom, provided by both Peters' vocals and bass, keeps the guitarists down to earth where Barr's drumming drives a steady rockin' beat. The whole affair was slickly produced and engineered by Andy Watermann whose recent credits include LPs by new waver Wazmo Nariz and jazz pianist Judy Roberts.

Ouray (a name derived from either a Colorado Indian Chief of Peace or a hole-in-the-wall mountain town across the peaks from Telluride) has built up a loyal following over years of Midwest touring. In fact, one of the shortcomings of *Motor Dream* is its inability to truly reflect the power of Ouray's live act. Another is the absence of a song from Peters; his *Too Tall To Boogie* (from *Chrome*) is a rabble-rousing hit.

Peters (with the Flock) and Barr (with the New Colony Six) each had an earlier taste of national recognition. With *Motor Dream* Ouray has made a bold and deserving bid for the spotlight (Perraud's pyrotechniques and teen appeal could provide the key), but if rebuffed here, their time will come for—as Lilian Gish says in *Night Of The Hunter*—"They persevere." —Charles Doherty

JOHN ADAMS

SHAKER LOOPS/PHRYGIAN GATES—1750 Arch Records S-1784.

Personnel: (cut 1)—The Ridge Quartet (Krista Bennion, Robert Rinehart, violin; Ah Ling Neu, viola; Jennifer Culp, cello) with Dan Smiley, violin; Judiyaba, cello; Gary Lowendusky, bass. (cut 2)—Mack McCray, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ / ★ ★ ★ ★

The string septet *Shaker Loops* resembles the mind-numbing, hypnotic trance music of

THE LOUNGE LIZARDS

THE LOUNGE LIZARDS—Editions E.G. EGS 108: *INCIDENT ON SOUTH STREET; HARLEM NOCTURNE; DO THE WRONG THING; AU CONTRAIRE ARTO; WELL YOU NEEDN'T; BALLAD; WANGLING; CONQUEST OF RAR; DEMENTED; I REMEMBER CONEY ISLAND; FATTY WALKS; EPISTROPHY; YOU HAUNT ME.*

Personnel: John Lurie, saxophone; Evan Lurie, keyboards; Steve Piccolo, bass; Arto Lindsay, guitar; Anton Fier, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Here is a brash, turgid, utterly refreshing album that pulls together so many diverse elements that one quakes at the thought of

Steve Reich and company, and the piano solo Phrygian Gates sounds like one of Keith Jarrett's megalomaniac meanders—but only at first. Adams offers ultimately more drama, depth, and blood than either influence, intrepidly exploring sonic landscapes that unfold with all the speed, tension, and texture of good film.

Loops, based on short phrases assigned to each instrument and using tremolos, glisses, and harmonics to optimum effect, owes surprisingly little to Bartok or Stravinsky (major sources of nearly all contemporary string writing, it seems), but rather builds feverishly and precipitously, resonating in the mind like a latter-day *Verklärte Nacht*. *Gates*, an excursion through half the circle of fifths wobbling through Phrygian and Lydian modes alternately, gets bogged down in ostinatos and pomp, and seems less satisfactory overall.

Adams, a native New Englander and 31 when he wrote these pieces, gives succinct technical notes on the compositions, but my judgment stands on gut reaction: *Loops* stands among the most univocal and exciting string compositions I have heard in recent years (like Witold Lutoslawski's *String Quartet* and Mauricio Kagel's *Match*), and *Gates* is a worthy addition to the corpus of theory-derived pieces for piano (like Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Adams is writing music like a sentient, sensitive, passionate being.

—fred bouchard

ADAM MAKOWICZ

FROM MY WINDOW—Choice CRS 1028: *BALLAD ON KEYS; I WON'T DANCE; LOVER MAN; LOVER COME BACK TO ME; IF; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY; FROM MY WINDOW; REMEMBERING BILL EVANS; LOVER.*
Personnel: Makowicz, piano.

★ ★

HORACE PARLAN

MUSICALLY YOURS—SteepleChase SCS 1141: *ALONE TOGETHER; MEMORIES OF YOU; MUSICALLY YOURS; ILL WIND; LULLABY OF THE LEAVES; RUBY MY DEAR.*
Personnel: Parlan, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

DUKE JORDAN

MIDNIGHT MOONLIGHT—SteepleChase SCS 1143: *MIDNIGHT MOONLIGHT; DANCE IN PLAID; WAIT AND SEE; MELLOW MOOD; YES I WILL; TABLE CHESS; ORANGE MIST; GABRIELLE'S WISH; JORDANISI; SWEDISH HONEY; DANISH PASTRY; ST. GERMAIN.*
Personnel: Jordan, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★

The first of these solo piano releases, Adam Makowicz' *From My Window*, is easily one of the most disappointing performances in this reviewer's memory. Astonishingly, several years ago Willis Conover hailed

Makowicz as one of the "top 10 pianists in the world today." But judging from Makowicz' playing on *From My Window*, he's hardly a jazz player at all. *I Won't Dance*, for instance, makes its point after the first chorus. Done in a clumpy, Tatumesque bounce, the melody is decked out in predictable, decorative runs that connect neither with anything that has come before nor follows after. *Lover Come Back To Me* turns a torch song into a novelty tune, segueing into a gamboling, pull-out-all-the-stops section: chase music for a silent movie. Those who like musical travesty will probably enjoy Makowicz' cutesy reading of *If*. This piece's monotonous Alberti bass, ricky-ticky melodic statements, and chirping runs may well fire up Liberace's envy.

In spite of Makowicz' at times seemingly deliberate lapses of taste, some of his left hand designs—particularly his use of '40s-styled 10ths with passing chords—evoke Wilson and Tatum at their most graceful. Here's *That Rainy Day* receives a refreshing reharmonization, for example. Do such felicities make up for Makowicz' tricks and posturings? Hardly. We can only hope that this is the worst album this pianist will ever release.

A happy contrast to these pointless pyrotechnics comes on Horace Parlan's *Musically Yours*. Limiting himself to extended explorations of generally brooding ballads, Parlan consistently forges economical, substantial lines, free from gratuitous gestures and informed by faithfulness to his own vision. Even the potentially cloying *Memories Of You* is saved by Parlan's fragile melodic paraphrases. His light, liquid melodic inventions seemingly grow out of themselves. *Musically Yours*, a typically introspective Parlan original, is characteristically all substance and refreshingly free from superfluous embellishment. Parlan's economy of means is evidenced on the remaining tracks of this release as well. *Ill Wind* makes good use of deliberately balanced treble lines. *Alone Together* is coherent and thoughtful, and *Lullaby Of The Leaves* manages a hard, bluesy swing at a drag tempo. But *Ruby My Dear* best sums up the somber caring of Parlan's work: a literal, passionately respectful reading.

Like Horace Parlan, Duke Jordan has strong ties with Bud Powell's approach to soloing. Jordan's *Yes I Will* (all material here is original) employs percussive chordal blocks over idiomatic sevenths and 10ths. *Table Chess*, the most energetic of these tracks, features dense, serpentine lines. Jordan, however, deftly avoids being locked into one strict idiom. His tastes include the nostalgic, nearly Victorian ballad *Midnight Moonlight* and the musty *Wait And See*, both utilizing truncated, nonchalant improvisations. Other curiosities include the aptly titled, Scotch-like drone bass of *Dance In Plaid* and *Mellow Mood*, a clever reworking of Jordan's most famous composition, *Jordu*.

Need it be said that Duke Jordan, like Horace Parlan, gives us here a collection of seasoned performances, both marked by their musical imagination and integrity?

—jon balleras



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FREDERIC RZEWSKI

FOUR PIECES/BALLAD NO. 3: WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?—Vanguard VA 25001.

Personnel: Rzewski, piano.

★★★★★

**WILLIAM BOLCOM/
AARON COPLAND/
FREDERIC RZEWSKI**

BLUES, BALLADS & RAGS—Nonesuch D-79006: *THREE GHOST RAGS* (Bolcom); *FOUR PIANO BLUES* (Copland); *FOUR NORTH AMERICAN BALLADS* (Rzewski).

Personnel: Paul Jacobs, piano.

★★★★★

While American classical music since World War II has been dominated by international trends, there is also a strain of pre-War nationalism which has never really died out. Copland, of course, is our nationalistic composer par excellence; his four piano blues, written between 1926 and 1948, exemplify how he took the feeling of popular music and elevated it to high art. Bolcom and Rzewski don't show the direct influence of Copland—Bolcom's *Ghost Rags* are more closely related to New Orleans ragtime, and Rzewski's *North American Ballads* reveal a spiritual debt to Charles Ives. In their fascination with specifi-

cally American sounds, these works are also lineal descendants of the music of the '30s and '40s.

Bolcom's *Ghost Rags* use the style of Scott Joplin, Louis Chavin, and others to create a subtle, evocative world with a wider frame of reference than the original form. The stand-out of the three pieces is *Graceful Ghost*, a poignant resurrection of a French Creole rag by Chavin. In Jacobs' skilled hands, it sounds heartfelt, but not dated, with novel harmonic twists in the middle section. The nervous, skittery *Poltergeist* has the slightly satirical resonance of early 20th century works such as Ravel's *Valses Nobles Et Sentimentales*. *Dream Shadows*, on the other hand, despite its flirtations with the avant garde, is allied to contemporary cocktail jazz—albeit with passages of quiet beauty that recall a simpler, more innocent era.

While Rzewski frequently draws upon folk music of various nations in his music, nowhere in his oeuvre are his American roots more apparent than in *Four North American Ballads* (1978-79). The Ivesian *Dreadful Memories*, based on a Depression-era tune of the same name, shifts through American song, march, and hymn forms; *Down By The Riverside* and *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* are both based on traditional songs; and *Which Side Are You On?*, sung by unionists during the '30s coal mine strikes, stems from a Baptist hymn called *Lay The Lily Low*. This is not to say that Rzewski's transformations of these tunes resemble folk music. With their

complex, continually metamorphosing meters and rhythms, intricate counterpoint, and unexpected harmonic changes, these ballads often sound more like Liszt, Ravel, or Schönberg than any form of popular music. But the four sets of variations also return more often to recognizable versions of their themes than does Rzewski's magnum opus, the long, brilliant set of variations entitled *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* (1975).

The *Four North American Ballads* were composed for Jacobs, and he plays them with dedication and skill. Armed with a technical mastery possessed by few other pianists, he handles the trickiest passages of these virtuoso pieces with aplomb, laying bare their details with a lapidary precision. His approach seems to work best in the partly sunny, nostalgic confines of *Dreadful Memories* and the sweet, ghostly lyricism of *Riverside*. But there isn't much he can do to save the conceptually crude *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues*, which begins with a too-obvious evocation of a spinning mill, and unfortunately he completely misses the point of *Which Side Are You On?*—the finest of the ballads and perhaps the best piece Rzewski has written since *The People United*.

Part of Jacobs' problem lies in his fear of improvisation; his version of *Which Side's* written score, lasting six minutes, cannot compete in scope or intensity with Rzewski's much longer rendition (over 16 minutes) of the same piece on the Vanguard recording, in which more than half of the music is improvised. Yet, even in the written-out part, Jacobs sounds timid and lacks an overall grasp of the work. This is evident in small details such as the jazzy grace notes in one passage, which Rzewski plays with a brusque, lowdown feeling, but which sound too languid and classical in Jacobs' rendition. Similarly, in a central passage where a rolling ostinato gradually builds into a great Dionysiac sea-swell in Rzewski's reading, Jacobs doesn't even reach a climax. To really appreciate the extraordinary, headlong passion of this piece, one must listen to the composer's recording of it.

Rzewski's *Four Pieces* (1977), which fill up the rest of his Vanguard disc, are in a very different vein than the *Ballads*. For one thing, they're more loosely organized: they are to the *Ballads* as 18th century fantasias were to formal variations. But perhaps they could be better compared to the impressionism of composers like Debussy and Ravel; for while they contain sections which are more atonal than anything those composers wrote, they express the same obsession with the colorations of pure, abstract sound, above and beyond melody.

The first piece is impressionist in a very modern way, its dissonant chord tremolos flung around with a reckless disregard for consequences—this violent music sounds like a natural force, or the irrational workings of the subconscious. The second piece, in contrast, focuses on angular, jazz-like runs taken at top speed, while the third injects a guitaristic melody over a rapid tremolo in its pulsing middle section. The last piece returns to impressionism with a series of repeated chords which descend from the treble

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to the bass register. Out of the cloudy bass resonance comes a syncopated melody which eventually takes over, and then, in a manner that recalls Ravel's *La Valse*, unravels into dissonance again. When the repeated chords reverse themselves, ascending the keyboard, they eerily echo Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*. It's anachronistic—like much of Rzewski's output—but it's also fun to listen to. —joel rothstein

KOKO TAYLOR

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN—
Alligator 4724: *SOMETHING STRANGE IS GOING ON; I'D RATHER GO BLIND; KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HIM; THANKS, BUT NO THANKS; IF YOU GOT A HEARTACHE; NEVER TRUST A MAN; SURE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME LAST NIGHT; BLOW TOP BLUES; IF WALLS COULD TALK; IT TOOK A LONG TIME.*
Personnel: Taylor, vocals; Criss Johnson, Sammy Lawhorn, Emmett Sanders (cut 4), guitar; Bill Heid, keyboards; Cornelius Boyson, bass; Vince Chappelle, drums; Billy Branch, harmonica (4, 6); A. C. Reed, tenor saxophone (3).
★ ★ ★ ★ ½

JOHNNY COPELAND

COPELAND SPECIAL—Rounder 2025: *CLAIM JUMPER; I WISH I WAS SINGLE; EVERYBODY WANTS A PIECE OF ME; COPELAND SPECIAL; IT'S MY OWN TEARS; THIRD PARTY; BIG TIME; DOWN ON BENDED KNEE; DONE GOT OVER IT; ST. LOUIS BLUES.*
Personnel: Copeland, vocals, guitar; John Liebman, guitar; Ken Vangel, piano; Don Whitcomb, bass; Mansfield Hitchman, Candy McDonald (cuts 1, 3, 5), Julian Vaughn (7), drums; Anthony Brown, organ (2, 5); Brooklyn Slim, harmonica (4); John Pratt, Yusef Yancey, trumpet; Garrett List, Bill Ohashi, trombone; George Adams, Arthur Blythe, Byard Lancaster, Joe Rigley, reeds.
★ ★ ★ ★ ½

If blues are your meat, these two recent albums are guaranteed to satisfy. The Alligator set by veteran Chicago blueswoman Koko Taylor is excellent, a total delight from beginning to end. Its chief virtue is its consistency of mood and performance strength; the singer is heard at peak expressive abilities throughout—and this lady can sing, make no mistake—with absolutely top-notch backup work. The band's playing is just what it should be—tight and tough, furnishing a solid rhythmic foundation for her gritty, potent, authoritative vocals. The set is further graced with the stinging, fluently inventive guitar solos of newcomer Criss Johnson. Formerly active in gospel music, he is an absolutely wizardly blues player whose lines possess bite, drive, taste, continuity, and plentiful imagination. Best of all, he evinces real originality of conception; while rooted in the post-B. B. King contemporary blues guitar tradition, Johnson literally sounds like no one else, King included. The set is worth investigating for his playing alone—par-

ticularly his flowing, exciting work on *Something Strange Is Going On*, the lovely, laid-back *I'd Rather Go Blind*, and *Keep Your Hands Off Him*. Harmonica player Billy Branch contributes tellingly to *Thanks, But No Thanks* and *Never Trust A Man*, and the rest of the band disports itself commendably on all the cuts.
Ms. Taylor rises splendidly to the occasion with spirited, convincing vocals, bringing the songs to vigorous life as only she can. This set contains some of her consistently best singing on record, and the program itself

is one of the more interesting she's undertaken. This is something of a "concept" album in that all the songs espouse one facet or another of the distaff life experience. Good idea, and one that's been implemented handsomely. But where it really tells is in the performances themselves: lively, strong, and full of deep conviction. A fine and spirited set, this one.
Copeland Special is an impressive album debut by Louisiana-born, Texas-reared singer/guitarist Johnny Copeland. Aided by a horn section that boasts such contemporary

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jazz players as George Adams, Arthur Blythe, and Byard Lancaster among its members, Copeland turns in performances full of sizzling energy and high spirits. He's a powerful, assured, and thoroughly engaging singer who communicates great involvement with his material, and his playing is strong and exciting, marked by a bright, hard-edged sound and plenty of driving intensity. Not much linear flow but very effective nonetheless.

Copeland is such a gripping and forceful performer that he is able to infuse a program consisting largely of undistinguished original songs with real excitement and convincing emotion. At this stage of his development, none of Copeland's self-penned compositions impresses as being much more than a conventional, workmanlike effort. Some, in fact, betray their basis in the more compellingly original work of his models. Still, the songs are not bad so much as they're simply routine; an original lyric voice will perhaps emerge with time and greater experience.

The contributions of the hornmen loom largest in the individual solos scattered so generously through the set, and it is here the players really sparkle. The ensemble writing, unfortunately, is singularly lackluster and often trite, but does help in leavening the performances with added color and interest. Nevertheless, this is a promising debut by a musician who, if encouraged, could develop into a formidable performer. The raw talent is definitely there, most notably in those powerful, convincing vocals and that blistering guitar. Copeland is one to watch, for sure.

—pete welding

WAXING

01

European Echoes

JAZZ OFF THE AIR, VOL 1 (Spotlite SPJ-144) ★ ★ ★

JAZZ OFF THE AIR, VOL 2 (Spotlite SPJ-145) ★ ★ ★ ½

WOODY HERMAN'S 2ND HERD: LIVE 1948, VOL 1 (Raretone 5001-FC) ★ ★ ★

WOODY HERMAN'S 2ND HERD: LIVE 1948, VOL 2 (Raretone 5002-FC) ★ ★ ★

LENNIE TRISTANO: RAREST TRIO/QUARTET SESSIONS, 1946/1947 (Raretone 5008-FC) ★ ★ ★ ★

JIMMY GIUFFRÉ: TANGENTS IN JAZZ (Affinity AFF-60) ★ ★ ★ ★

SERGE CHALOFF: BOSTON BLOW-UP (Affinity AFF-63) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

MILCHO LEVIEV: BLUES FOR THE FISHERMAN (Mole 1) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

MILCHO LEVIEV: TRUE BLUE (Mole 5) ★ ★ ★ ★

JIMMY KNEPPER: TELL ME . . . (Daybreak D-001) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

VON FREEMAN: YOUNG & FOOLISH (Daybreak D-002) ★ ★ ★ ★

The progress of all art forms is directed and defined by their geniuses, but their extraordinary flights are protected from becoming mere eccentricity by the camp followers who seize upon each new litany to flesh out the skeleton and enlarge the corpus musica. Many of these men and women go on to become important stylists, creating their own spheres of influence within the newly designed perimeters so that the original footpath beaten out by the pioneer soon becomes a turnpike. Thus is the mainstream of the music continually enriched, so that jazz—like all artistic endeavors—is seen to live by its geniuses, but survive by its characters.

This is particularly evident in the rapid diffusion of styles following the iconoclasm of Charlie Parker, and the first two volumes of *Jazz Off The Air* are timely reminders both of the way the new message was carried, and the way it affected the established mainstream. Volume 1 opens with a "Junior Jazz At The Auditorium" concert, featuring the swing-bop trumpet of Howard McGhee and the fluid tenor of Eli "Lucky" Thompson on a date estimated as August, 1946, when the message was as fresh as spearmint. The excitement of communication shines through, with McGhee near the top of his fine form. Drummer Jackie Mills would seem to have been delayed on the way to the gig because he is missing from the first two performances, *Ornithology* and *Hot House*. These are held together by Red Callender's bounding bass, but the absence of drums leads both principal horns to emphasize swing rhythm. Traditional virtues are also retained on *Lover*, where Jimmy Bunn's long piano solo reminds us of the continued importance of Earl Hines' influence on the jazz keyboard.

The album is completed by the famous WNEW "Saturday Night Swing Session," featuring Fats Navarro, Bill Harris, Allen Eager, Charlie Ventura, and a rhythm section largely borrowed from Woody Herman—Ralph Burns, Chubby Jackson and, as maverick, Buddy Rich. The bebop is purer in the hands of Navarro and Eager who came to it without direct roots in earlier styles. Navarro had, it is true, taken McGhee as a model, but it was the boppish McGhee; Eager had drawn on Lester Young, but spiced the influence with Parker's rhythmic and harmonic innovations. Navarro's almost solar energy, his bristlingly clear articulation and soaring sense of melody contrast neatly with Eager's dry, relaxed swing. Both afford an expressive continuity that underlines the relative shallowness of the idiom's chief popularizer, Charlie Ventura. Trombonist Bill Harris, another Hermanite and sadly underrated during his lifetime, plays with particular merit on *High On An Open Mike*. Overall, the music is just short of classic status, though its historical importance is unquestionable.

down beat reported the session that opens Volume 2 as "the greatest concert performance in the bop idiom this writer has ever heard here"—here being the Shrine Auditorium in L.A. It was mid-April, 1949, and the so-called "Stan Kenton All-Stars" name was rather misleading, since only Art Pepper and Bob Cooper were Kenton alumni. The others—Art Farmer, Teddy Edwards, Hampton Hawes, John Simmons, and Chuck Thomp-

son—were just blossoming, though they offer something more enduring than the exuberance of youth.

Edwards offers the most rounded bop tenor, and his solo on *Perdido* (the Wahoo paraphrase) makes his subsequent tenure in the jazz wilderness harder to comprehend. Unfortunately, an AFRS announcer chose to talk through his solo on *The Great Lie*, so it was edited out. Cooper, in contrast, gets caught within the problems posed by Parker. Rhythmically, his phrasing is pure Lester, but it is fractured at random by Parkerish 16th notes that do not fit. The original anonymous reviewer picked Cooper and Hawes as the stars—well, he got the latter right, but it is a pity he missed the point of Edwards' work, and the lyricism of Pepper on both performances. Side 2 finds two swing luminaries struggling with the bebop message. *I Never Knew, Stealin' Apples*, and *WMGM Jump* (a.k.a. *Bedlam or Stoned*) are by Benny Goodman, who was never at ease with the then-new music and was, for all his undoubted preeminence, upstaged by the superb tenor work of the late Wardell Gray. *Apples* has the matchless benefit of Basie-designed tempo and accompaniment. Finally, erstwhile tree surgeon and paratrooper Dave Lambert drops in on the Erroll Garner Trio's working of *Cherokee* from the "Kenton" group's concert. Teddy Edwards sat in, too, and in serious form; Lambert is fun and Garner is both serious and fun, but the parts are greater than the whole.

The **Woody Herman** airchecks on the new Italian Raretone label (not to be confused with Dick Bakker's Dutch label of the same name) are much more variable. Though they, too, show the way bop was permeating the established idiom—and in a band of young men much more receptive than Goodman's—the performances remain swing-based, rhythmically (as did the bulk of West Coast music rooted here and elsewhere). By presenting the band at work in four complete half-hour broadcasts from either the Hollywood Palladium or New York's Hotel Commodore (fragments have appeared on Italian Queen-Disc), they also provide a valuable insight into the stresses faced by creative musicians struggling to keep out of the headline. There is therefore a fair amount of kitsch here, too (*Khachaturian's Sabre Dance* twice, *My Pal Gonzales*, *My Bill*, *Dance Ballerina Dance*, et al.). It all pleased the ordinary folk, and the presence of such material in Herman's repertoire (other bandleaders held similar shots) should put the commercial leanings of some present-day stars in a different light.

The meat is produced by the Four Brothers—tenorists Zoot Sims, Al Cohn (succeeding Herbie Steward), Stan Getz, and baritonist Serge Chaloff (*Half Past Jumping Time*, *Non-Alcoholic*, *Apple Honey*, *Elevation*, *Lullaby In Rhythm*, and *Keen & Peachy*), and the boppish trumpet breaks set against the saxes' velvety backdrop. Brothers itself appears here, too, but in a lackluster performance due to too limp a tempo. Otherwise, the instrumentals are fine alternatives to the better-known studio cuts, notably Sims' *Stardust*, several Getz solos and, especially, Chaloff on

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RECORD REVIEWS

The *Goof & I*, *Non-Alcoholic*, *Apple Honey*, and *The Happy Song*. The latter was only recorded in the studio 10 years later (as *Fire Island*) and also features a fierce fragment by guitarist Jimmy Raney.

The other interesting guitarist in the immediate post-bop era was Billy Bauer who, in 1946, was taking part in some of the most adventurous music-making of the period in Lennie Tristano's trio. *The Rarest Trio/Quartet Sessions* is at least half true, since nine of the performances have not been seen since 78 rpm days. The first seven have been recently reissued—the 1946 *V-Discs (I Can't Get Started, Night In Tunisia)* on Jazz Guild; the 10/3/47 trio date on the *Modern Jazz Piano Album (Savoy SJL-2247)*. The fabric of the music is densely woven, with dancing piano and guitar lines merging and diverging in a dazzling interchange of antiphony, linear propulsion, and harmonic daring. There are rapid shifts in key, so that a tonal ambiguity swims through the music, dramatizing the tension-and-release so basic to creative improvisation.

It is a well-worn canard that Lennie Tristano had rhythmic problems that dictated the use—if at all—only of metronomic drummers. In fact, his rhythmic sense was so virtuosic that he found few drummers who could anticipate or cope with his changes of meter and the cross-rhythms he set up against the bass line without muddying them. There was a great freedom here. Equally, his harmonic alterations, transforming the standard tunes upon which most of his repertoire was based, set him as free from a regular chordal pattern as his rhythmic adventures escaped the straitjacket of bar lines. In the music here, the process was burgeoning in a way far ahead of its time. The trio acted as a unit in a way only superseded by Bill Evans, who himself built an immensely influential style from Tristano's inspiration. The harmonic and rhythmic freedoms were only capped by the innovations of Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane. (Titles: *I Can't Get Started; Night In Tunisia; Supersonic* [two takes]; *On A Planet; Air Pocket; Celestia; Freedom; Parallel; Appellation; Abstraction; Palimpsest*; and, with clarinetist John LaPorta, *Through These Portals; Speculation; New Sound; Resemblance*.)

The aptly-titled *Tangents In Jazz* represents another offshoot from the jazz mainstream, which rejected its drummers' role, though for quite different reasons. This long sought-after collector's item finds Jimmy Giuffre (the architect of Herman's Four Brothers sound) playing clarinet, tenor, and baritone. On the latter, and with Jack Sheldon's trumpet, the pianoless quartet has an air of Gerry Mulligan's contemporaneous unit about it—an entirely superficial impression. For one thing, Sheldon made far more creative use of trumpet timbre than Chet Baker; for another—and in keeping with Giuffre's approach to rhythm—the little-known Artie Anton's drums are confined to sketching in splashes of color. Nor is the basic pulse often carried by Ralph Pena's bass—rather, he improvises and comments rhythmically. The basis of Giuffre's approach is limned briefly in *Scintilla 1*, whose opening is developed in *Scintilla 2* and 3 before all three themes are

coagulated in *Scintilla 4* at the conclusion of the album. Between these bookends is much graceful, poised music-making, creating a much more viable Third Stream than any of the more inflated orchestral concoctions subsequently served up in the 1950s. The antiphony and duophony of the brisk *Finger Snapper* and pert *Chirpin'* Time augur works to come—like *Thesis* (Verve). Folksy "hits" like *The Train & The River* are rooted in the poignant performances here of *Lazy Tones* and *The Leprechaun*, and the earlier experiments with atonality, such as by vibist Teddy Charles, are echoed in the sober *Rhetoric*.

This sort of approach is risky. It occasionally comes perilously close to the preciousness that stifled a significant amount of West Coast music (as on *This Is My Beloved*), and moves too distantly from the vitality of jazz' rhythmic mainstream. Giuffre's clarity of expression—and the excellent musicianship of Sheldon and Pena—are sufficient, however, to preserve the freshness of much of the music here, which is thoroughly absorbing.

Much closer to the heartbeat of jazz is *Boston Blow-Up*, which catches *Serge Chaloff* seven years on from the Herman Herd and falls only marginally short of his masterwork, *Blue Serge*. Although Giuffre sidestepped the jazz mainstream, his abstract baritone playing serves to emphasize Chaloff's profoundly expressive, emotional approach. This 4/4-5/55 session (recorded a month before Giuffre's) is an almost flawless exposition of his art. Whereas Giuffre often found drummers unnecessary, Chaloff seemed to need a particularly forceful percussionist to bring his expressiveness to a peak (e.g. Philly Joe Jones on *Blue Serge*). Nevertheless, his work on this West Coast-styled date is crammed with fine moments—the touchingly tender *Body And Soul*, the brusquely lyrical *What's New?*, the gritty swing of *JR*, the singing fluidity of *Kip*, *Bob The Robin*, and *Sergical*. His improvising is consistently purposeful and dynamic, nicely backed by the underrated Herb Pomeroy on trumpet and Boots Mussulli on alto.

The most expressive of the Californians was undoubtedly Art Pepper, now happily restored to a fresh peak of creativity. Though issued as by Milcho Leviev, the two Mole LPs are in fact drawn from the last weekend of Art's 1980 engagement at Ronnie Scott's jazz haven in London—and they have the indisputable advantage over other recent Pepper recordings of catching him at work and at his best. *Blues For The Fisherman* is a dedication to one of Art's oldest friends and advisers and, like its companion album *True Blue*, presents performances of new and near-new material (*Fisherman, Make A List, Sad A Little Bit, Y.I. Blues*) as well as powerfully evolved expositions of old favorites like *Ophelia* and the omnipresent *Straight Life*. *Fisherman* is a particularly evocative piece of blues playing—Pepper's phrases bunching round the beat the way a caterpillar pulls itself over a leaf. On *True Blues* the phrasing is more asymmetric, reflecting a gradual change in Art's blues playing that dates back to 1960. *Sad, A Little Bit* is a beautifully melancholic ballad. Art's phrases hanging almost motionless in the air to generate a

poignant stillness. It is matched on the second album by his most coherent performance yet of *Goodbye*. The approach is sharply honed, the better for his sparer, more brooding lyricism, 30 years on from the "Kenton All-Stars" concert of 1949. *Make A List* is cultured by that rare ability to mix contrasting emotions—e.g. optimism and despair—an art known to but a few of the idiom's finest improvisers. Of the more familiar material the durable *Ophelia* personifies Pepper's apparent invincibility, the tune's down-turned phrases being the very stuff of teeth-gritting stoicism, linked here in memorable contour. And his "anthem" on *I Got Rhythm* changes, *Straight Life*, rounds out two albums of exceptional alto playing. It is worth noting that, in this regular working group, Leviev's own playing has improved greatly, though he remains a minor voice. *Sad* is probably his best performance.

Finally, we come to two men whose playing is every bit as remarkable as the lack of recording opportunities that have come their way. *Tell Me . . .* is only the fifth LP under trombonist Jimmy Knepper's name in around 25 years, and makes an auspicious start for the new Dutch Daybreak label. Knepper's neglect is extraordinary when each successive recording (whether under his own or Charlie Mingus' name) has reaffirmed his stature as the most creative post-J. J. Johnson trombonist until George Lewis' emergence.

Knepper's is a uniquely conversational style, full of asides, questions, and a witty rhetoric that is never empty. It is expressed in a gruff, opaque tone whose vocal nature is obtained by subtle variations of inflection and timbre. Unlike the broad swathe of bop and post-bop trombonists who hewed to the J. J. Johnson line of saxophone-like fluency, Knepper delved back into the instrument's roots, adapting and consummating its natural facilities as developed by Jack Teagarden, Jimmy Harrison, and Dicky Wells.

Though the others on the date are all Europeans (Eddie Engles, trumpet/flugelhorn; Dick Vennik, tenor; Nico Bunink, piano; Harry Emmery, bass; John Engels, drums), they play with assurance and fire, using imagination to prevent received ideas from becoming anti-climactic. The album is nonetheless dominated by Knepper's rubbery lyricism, with its surprising twists and turns—nowhere better demonstrated than on his former employer's *Ecclusiastics* or on the duet with piano, dedicated to Billie Holiday, *I Thought About You*. His work on *Home*, the impishly-titled *Nearer My God In G*, and the title track are of an equally high standard, so comparison becomes sterile.

Earl Von Freeman's *Young & Foolish*—recorded "live" at Laren in 1977—is even better, and probably the best tenor saxophone album issued in 1981. It is another testament to dues-paying, being only Freeman's fourth

LP in a career even longer than Knepper's. Like the trombonist, Freeman is a uniquely individual stylist with such a personal way of juxtaposing even the smallest number of notes that he is always instantly recognizable. Again, like Knepper, he communicates his emotions unswervingly, but, in addition, he uses immense and constant variations in timbre to shade his message. At the same time he takes such liberties with rhythm and harmony that, though old enough to have locked horns with Parker at his peak, his style has grown continuously from bop to hard bop and on into "free bop."

It says much for the coherence of his invention that the 25-minute *I'll Close My Eyes* (well-chosen, unhackneyed material) which fills side one rarely falls short of being thoroughly inspired. The performance is introduced reflectively in rubato, slipping and sliding over and around the obvious chords through flaring abstractions. When it kicks into a stomping medium tempo, the effect is electric, and Freeman's expressiveness becomes ever more absorbing. Unusually for Freeman, there are no blues tunes here, yet they pervade every chorus—in inflection and in mood. They are the unseen hand guiding the unaffected, almost naked emotional directness of his playing, be it on the wailing *Eyes*, the singing *Foolish*, or the intense *Bye, Bye, Blackbird*. His support, too, is exemplary. Inspiration at this level is contagious,

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Blindfold Test: L. SUBRAMANIAM

BY LEONARD FEATHER

ALTHOUGH HAVING A background as a child prodigy (he began his concert career in India at the age of eight), it has only been in the past year or two that L. Subramaniam has been recognized in and around the jazz world as a violinist of extraordinary virtuosity and adaptability.

Born in Madras on July 23, 1947, he studied with his father, Professor V. Lakshminarayana. He moved to the U.S. in 1973, undertaking post-graduate studies in Western music, and teaching at the California Institute for the Arts. (His brother, L. Shankar, had preceded him to the States and recorded with John McLaughlin's group Shakti.)

After working on sessions

with Larry Coryell and Stu Goldberg, he recorded an album for Trend, *Fantasy Without Limits*, along with Milcho Leviev, Frank Morgan, Emil Richards, and others. More recently he completed an LP for the Crusaders label, with John Handy, George Cables, and Coryell. This was his first Blindfold Test; he was given no information about the records played.



1. **STRING TRIO OF NEW YORK.** *BANG'S BOUNCE (from AREA CODE 212, Black Saint). Billy Bang, violin; James Emery, guitar; John Lindberg, bass.*

I'm very impressed by the technique of the violinist; I'm sure he's one of the older generation. With everybody playing in unison, it sort of reminds me of Indian classical music where when 20 people play, they play it in unison. I'm impressed by the violinist's right hand technique rather than the left hand. With the right hand he has more freedom. I haven't heard any of the newer generation doing this kind of thing.

I'm really very much impressed also with the guitarist, and the bass solo. It sounds like more free improvisation rather than any very strict framework—playing the theme, improvising, then coming back to the theme. It sort of reminded me of Indian classical music where you play one theme, improvise, wander around, do whatever you want, then come back, but still within a strict framework of rules. I'd give that four stars; no, maybe three-and-three-quarters.

2. **SHAKTI. LA DANSE DU BONHEUR** *(from A HANDFUL OF BEAUTY, Columbia). John McLaughlin, guitar, co-composer; L. Shankar, violin, co-composer.*

This is Shakti, with John McLaughlin and my brother Shankar. Once again they're playing the theme in unison, both violin and guitar. The opening is typically Indian; it's what the rhythm players learn, vocally.

Violinistically, we both learned from our father—in fact, there's another brother . . . everybody learned from our father. In this particular instance it's Shankar's solo, so it's more Indian-flavored—though there are some of the Western techniques there, which is mixed together to fit in with the piece.

The composition reminds me of the older, more traditional pieces. So, I know Shakti; Shankar's my brother, I like John and I like the whole thing . . . four-and-a-half stars.

3. **STEPHANE GRAPPELLI.** *WILLOW WEEP FOR ME (from AT THE WINERY, Concord). Grappelli, electric viola.*

Beautiful playing, a lot of warmth. The per-

son who is improvising . . . it's almost free of any hassle. The improvisation just flows very smoothly, which is unusual. Many people when I hear, I can see almost what they are going to do next.

LF: Do you recognize the tune?

LS: It's familiar; I've heard it before.

LF: Do you know the instrument being played?

LS: Either he's using the viola with octave divider, or there's some recording techniques . . . it's not a violin.

LF: It's an electric viola.

LS: The lower note is almost like the cello range. It's beautiful playing—a lot of emotion more than technique. It sounds like he has some classical background. Who is it? It sounds a little bit like Stephane Grappelli. I'd give that four stars easily, maybe four-and-a-half.

4. **DIDIER LOCKWOOD. ASPIRING** *ANSWER (from SURYA, Inner City). Lockwood, violin; Francis Lockwood, piano; Sylvan Marc, electric bass; Jean-MY Truong, drums, composer; Luc Plouton, synthesizer.*

There is no violinist here . . . at least I didn't hear any violin solo. The keyboard arrangement gets a very full color—a round, full, heavy atmosphere. The changes are beautiful, they're subtle, you don't expect them. The melody is also simple, and the rhythm of the bass and drums is very interesting, what they're doing in the opening. It's almost like they laid the foundation in 4/4; initially it's not there, but very interestingly done.

The arrangement . . . everything is thought out and pre-composed. The sound reminds me of some of Jean-Luc Ponty's stuff, the arrangement, the electronic sound. I'd give that four stars because of the harmonics. I was waiting for a violin solo; it would have been nicer with just a break and a solo.

5. **LEROY JENKINS. THE CLOWNS** *(from SPACE MINDS, NEW WORLDS, SURVIVAL OF AMERICA, Tomato). Jenkins, violin; Andrew Cyrille, percussion; Anthony Davis, piano; George Lewis, trombone.*

I'd give that three stars for the reason—it's almost avant garde—without the drums and

the horn it could pass for classical. I'm not that much fascinated by the avant garde playing, especially with the violin. With the violin I like to hear some of the things which are virtuosic or melodic, or with a lot of emotion.

It's hard to guess the violinist, because it's not always in tune; when you're playing avant garde, you can play almost anything pretty much—even though some of the things are written. Some flashes, it reminded me a couple of times of Stuff Smith, one of the older violinists. But other than that, I haven't heard the group.

6. **JOE VENUTI. I WANT TO BE** *HAPPY (from GEMS, Concord). Venuti, violin; George Barnes, guitar.*

Well, that really swings; reminds me of the '40s, that time, that era of music. A long time back I heard one violinist, Joe Venuti—this sounds very much like that. Probably it's him, I'm not sure. I heard him in '73 in Seattle. I was very much impressed by his playing; even then he was pretty old and he was still trying to play a different range.

LF: Do you know how that last chorus was done?

LS: No, I was trying to figure out who the violinist was. Can I hear it again? (After replay) Is it a varying speed record player?

LF: No, it was all live, no overdubbing.

LS: I thought I heard pitch variation . . .

LF: You heard it was all in chords?

LS: Yes.

LF: Well, he put the bow in back of the violin and wrapped the bow strings around it, so he could play chords.

LS: Oh . . . I thought it would be impossible. I never heard him do that. He was probably doing it before I came here. Maybe he had done that before I walked in to his concert. What happened then was that he heard I was there with my brother, and he said "Come on, let's jam." But I told him I came to hear him. His style of playing is totally different from anybody else. One thing he told me was that when he was small he didn't have enough money to buy a small violin, so somebody gave him money to buy a bigger violin. So he started playing higher octaves, and as he grew up, he started playing lower octaves. That's how, he said, he got his technique. Usually you start low and then go up. But he had to start higher because his hand was small. That record is definitely four stars.

Profile:

Wynton Marsalis

BY MITCHELL SEIDEL

When Wynton Marsalis was six years old, his father, Ellis Marsalis, was playing in Al Hirt's band. At that time, Hirt gave young Wynton a horn. Fourteen years later, Wynton has completed one jazz album, plans to record a classical album, is a full scholarship student at Juilliard, and the winner of the 1981 **down beat** Critics Poll for talent deserving wider recognition in the trumpet category. Never let it be said that Al Hirt doesn't know potential when he sees it.

Marsalis' serious approach towards music began when he was in high school where, with the help of several eager teachers, he was playing the classics by the time he was a sophomore. His work at the Eastern Music Festival in North Carolina earned him the "Most Outstanding Musician Award" there in 1977. The next year, he purchased a piccolo trumpet and performed Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* with the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra. He spent the summer after his high school graduation at Tanglewood (MA), playing under the great classical conductors there.

After entering Juilliard, Marsalis also performed with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and was a soloist with the Mexico City Symphony. Since coming to New York in 1979, he has also done Broadway work, putting in some time in the pit band of the musical *Sweeney Todd*. He took a leave of absence from Juilliard to perform with Art Blakey's *Jazz Messengers*, and when he first played New York with the group, music writers there were suitably impressed. A six-week festival and concert tour with the Herbie Hancock Quartet followed during the summer of 1981, and by September Marsalis had his first record for Columbia in the can.

For a 20-year-old given a start like that, Marsalis could probably let success go to his head. He says don't count on it. Marsalis feels his seriousness about music and his drive to combine those elements in jazz that he thinks are important—"spontaneity, melodic ideas, sounds"—coupled with a deep belief in the validity of jazz as a serious music will keep him working at developing his talents. His reasons for playing are simply stated: "I love playing the



MITCHELL SEIDEL

trumpet. I love playing music. I love playing jazz. I want to play . . . to let people know that jazz is just as valid as any other music."

In place of the phrase "any other music," read the word "classical," something with which Marsalis is very familiar. One of the main reasons for his returning to Juilliard is to explode a few myths about jazz musicians not being able to play classical and "to get the degree for all the cats who don't think brothers can do it."

One could make a good argument about Marsalis' musical seriousness coming from his father, pianist Ellis Marsalis. Indeed, Wynton makes no secret that talent runs in his family. His brother, Bradford, has played saxophone with Art Blakey, and another brother, Jason, is a budding trombonist, whom Wynton says has perfect pitch and is going to be "the baddest of them all. It really wasn't my family, though. My father's presence helped me tremendously, but we weren't a musical family. That wasn't the basis of my family life." The advantage Marsalis had, he says, was that "I could always go on jobs and hear my father play, and the records were always available to me."

That trumpet Al Hirt gave him at six was not used much until Marsalis hit high school, where there were a lot of other good trumpet players and "the competition was a lot greater." At that point he also began listening to Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Louis Armstrong, Fats Navarro, and Clifford Brown. His

interest in playing jazz was spurred "especially when I first heard Clifford . . . I didn't know someone could play a trumpet like that. It was unbelievable." Consequently, he began taking lessons from John Longo, who is now playing in the Mercer Ellington stage band in *Sophisticated Ladies* on Broadway.

Though his classical finishing school may be Juilliard, his jazz finishing school is the road. For the spring and summer semesters of 1981, his instructors were Art Blakey, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter. What did they teach him? To put it simply, "everything. I learned a lot of stuff from him [Blakey], but it's not the kind of stuff you learn in school. Art Blakey never told me what scale to play . . . he'd tell me stories about Clifford. I didn't learn anything technical about the trumpet. I learned about playing music." As for Hancock, Carter, and Williams, "There's nothing I can say about them. They're the greatest in the world, period. Herbie Hancock has ears. He can hear. He, Ron, and Tony function as one unit . . . you know what that's like? They understand the history of their instruments—the jazz history and the guys who played before them."

Part of that jazz history, to Marsalis, is the belief that jazz comes from the black American cultural heritage, which is not something you can find in a \$12.98 fake book. "It's not taking a Trane solo and analyzing the notes he plays on the chords, because that's insignificant. It's not saying, 'Oh, all Bird was doing was ii-V7-I's, and sometimes he would juxtapose the augmented fourth on top of it.' That's bullshit. That's not what Bird was doing. Bird was making a very personal musical statement. And it came out of a certain historical movement. That's why I'm saying this is artistic music."

"American people have been taught history in a distorted way. You say Beethoven to most people—[even] if they don't know music—and a certain image is projected in their minds. You say Charlie Parker, [and] the image that is projected in their minds is, 'Oh, he was that junkie.' The music stems out of our suffering in this country—it's our statement—and we as a people don't accept it. Most of the audiences we play for are white, because they recognize the music as a significant contribution to Western culture and civilization."

Marsalis believes it is the conscious recognition in the minds of most white jazz players that they are not black that limits their ability and prevents them from getting "into the meat of the music. There's no way I could compose music—German music—like Beethoven did. It has nothing to do with the color of their skin. It's the fact that they say, 'Oh, I'm white,' and they start trying to act black. Any white guy who tries to act

black will never be a jazz musician. He can forget it. Just like a black guy, trying to act white, being a classical musician. Everybody can play any kind of music," he says, trying to clarify his statements, "but the only way you can do anything is if you understand the concept."

While being critical of white copyists who slavishly repeat Coltrane licks without understanding the feelings behind them, Marsalis is also critical of blacks, whom he says do not give the music the recognition it deserves. Don't expect to hear Marsalis playing funk, which he calls pleasant "entertainment" music. He's too busy trying to develop his jazz chops to the degree that Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Freddie Hubbard, Miles, and the various others he names as his influences have developed theirs.

"I do not entertain and I will not entertain. I'm a musician. I studied the music and my music should be presented that way. I'm serious about what I'm doing. I will not play funk. I like funk, but I am not a funk musician. Funk musicians don't pay the kind of dues that jazz musicians pay to the music."

His recording debut on Columbia, he states proudly, will be a jazz album. It will feature his brother Bradford, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Tony Williams, and others. "I took the route the record company doesn't think is commercially viable," he says of the album. "But record companies aren't musicians, they're great businessmen. I don't tell them how to run a record company. They don't tell me how to play music. If Herbie wants to play funk, if Miles wants to play funk, if Freddie wants to play funk, or whoever is playing funk—I think it's beautiful. But the worst thing is when the record company takes a funk album, puts it out, and calls it a jazz album."

Marsalis soon plans to release a classical album as well. But he still approaches jazz with a healthy respect for those who came before him—people like Wayne Shorter, Lester Bowie, Barry Harris, Clifford Jordan, Sonny Rollins, Duke Ellington, and others—and a wary eye on record companies and his own playing ability. "I can play the trumpet well. My ability to play the instrument is good. So far as being a jazz musician, I have a lot to learn. My playing isn't spontaneous enough. I play too many eighth notes. It's not open enough. I have a lot to learn . . . we all have a lot to learn. Even Trane was looking for stuff until the day he died.

"I'm doing what I want to do: I'm playing jazz, period. And if I get squashed—there's always that possibility—I just get squashed. But I'm functioning on the premise that this is good music and it deserves to be heard. And I am a jazz musician . . . my father was a jazz musician. I play jazz." **db**

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Arco Iris

BY FRANKIE NEMKO

"The sound and spirit of the Americas"—this is the slogan that Arco Iris have chosen for themselves. The core of the group are three members who first met and worked together in Argentina; their name in Spanish means rainbow, and a performance by Arco Iris is indeed a rainbow of colors and sounds.

Arco Iris consists of Danais Wynnycka (vocals, percussion, composer), Ara Tokatlian (woodwinds, flutes, vocals, composer), Guillermo Bordarampe (bass, guitar, composer), and, most recently, Hartt Stearns on percussion. Ara and Guillermo had formed a rock group in Argentina back in the late 1960s and were playing mostly Beatles-inspired songs. Along came Danais, possessed of a spiritual vision for music, and by 1969 changed the fundamental purpose of Arco Iris. Danais persuaded Ara and Guillermo to accompany her on an exploratory journey to the Andes. There the three absorbed not only the culture of the area, but also discovered new sounds and new instruments on which to play their music. They quickly accumulated such rarities as the noxemio (a classical South American bamboo flute), a kuenta (a flute without the usual embouchure), the charango, the sikuri, and many other indigenous music-makers.

Danais, who was born in the Ukraine and raised in Europe, had moved in her teens with her opera singer father and mother to Buenos Aires. Ara is originally from Cairo, Egypt, while Guillermo, a splendid classical guitarist, is the group's only native Argentinian. This amalgamation of backgrounds, together with their insatiable thirst for

knowledge of other cultures, is what makes Arco Iris unique.

Having formed an alliance, the three surrounded themselves with some of the best musical talent that Argentina could offer and proceeded to blaze a trail of accomplishments. During the 11 years since the band's inception, there have been 10 singles and 13 albums in South America; two of the albums went gold: *The Opera Sudamerica* and *Suite Agitor*. Performances of *Suite Agitor*, a ballet, took Ara, Danais, and Guillermo to Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Madrid, and London. During the 1970s they became the darlings of Argentina, playing their homespun music in every conceivable setting.

In 1978, seeking to broaden their musical horizons and having a strong desire to take their special message of brotherhood further afield, Ara, Guillermo, and Danais moved north. They stayed first in New York, imbuing themselves with the high energy of that music scene. Soon, however, California called, and a meeting with Brazilian percussionist Mayuto Correa changed the course of their lives.

Correa, fairly well established in the Hollywood music world, became Arco Iris' producer. The group's first West Coast engagement was at one of the leading Los Angeles jazz clubs, Donte's. It was at that gig that Hartt Stearns first played with the band, an association that has lasted to the present day. Several respected musicians have since guested: Richard Madariaga on guitar; Milcho Leviev and Chris Rhyne (ex-Santana) on keyboards; Chester Thompson and Alex Acuna on drums. Each has brought his own personal quality to a performance. Leviev's Bulgarian roots and intense involvement with odd meters lent a characteristic not found with any other pianist to date. Acuna's sensitive drumming style has always been a plus in whatever setting he is featured.



(l. to r.) Chester Thompson, Hartt Stearns, Guillermo Bordarampe, Ara Tokatlian, Milcho Leviev, Danais Wynnycka, Richard Madariaga.

PETER ASCO

In describing the music of Arco Iris, the term "fusion" can be rightfully applied. This isn't just a fusion of musical elements, but a blending of cultures, of diverse backgrounds and heritages. Ara, Danais, and Guillermo bring the essence of their lives into their music. Ara has said: "We are like melting pots, receiving a lot of information, sounds, and inspiration from many different points. When it comes time to compose, somehow all that we have internalized takes on an individual transformation: the flavor comes out. The important thing about Arco Iris is that behind every note we play, behind every lyric we sing, behind everything we do on-stage, there is something that is the result of our daily human evolution. When I'm performing with Arco Iris, I try to put away my problems. There are many negative aspects to deal with in life, and we feel that we want to cooperate 100 percent with the positive forces."

A typical Arco Iris concert will encompass every aspect of their creative development. They will generally start out with a contemporary piece, played "electrically," as Ara puts it. In other words Guillermo will man his electric bass, the keyboard player will be at a Rhodes, and Ara will play his tenor sax in a Coltrane-inspired style. By about the third number Danais will join them, Ara will most likely switch to the sikuri, (a pan-pipe flute), Guillermo will pick up his guitar-like charango, and one is transported back to the Andean mountains. One of the more typical ethnic rhythms they use is the *chakarera*, a 6/8 beat that is indigenous to Argentina and shows up often in their compositions. Whenever Ara sings, he will punctuate his words with elaborate strikings of his two *bombo legueros*, which resemble upturned bass drums.

Asked how he thought the music of Arco Iris distinguishes itself from that of its contemporaries, Ara said, "We have elements that are different—basically because of the inclusion of all the ethnic instruments—but also when we play pop, jazz, rock, we do not play like Americans, because we are not Americans. Even though the ethnic instruments give us a unique sound, when we don't use them at all, our music is still not the same as American music, simply because we structure our tunes differently than the way Americans compose and harmonize."

Although none of Arco Iris' recordings are available in the United States yet, the impact that their music has had in the three years since their arrival here will undoubtedly generate enough interest on the part of some enterprising record producer. In the meantime, two excellent cassette tapes are on sale at all their performances, and can be obtained by writing to Arco Iris, 433 Kelton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024. ♣

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instance when, "He was so despondent he cried, 'What have I done with my life? What have I accomplished?'"

Nineteen eighty-one was a hallmark year for Tal Farlow: he reached his 60th birthday; had successful engagements with his own trio, with Red Norvo, and as part of a three-guitar unit, along with Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel; toured outside of America for the first time (a month in the United Kingdom); and recorded several times for Concord Jazz. He claims that he has "a little brighter spark of enthusiasm" and is even contemplating leaving southern New Jersey for a home in New York City or southern California. There are still legions of guitar fans who refuse to believe that Tal Farlow is back amongst them for good.

One of the things that will keep Tal Farlow on the scene is his ability to continue to play in musical situations with which he is comfortable, ideally having his own working group. "The difference in the business between the time Red, Mingus, and I worked together and now," he says, "is that then it was possible to make a living and travel around as a group. Now, to put three guys up in a hotel, or to pay them enough money to cover it, you've got a big nut before you even pay them any salary. So now it's gotten to where the artist goes and plays with two guys who already live there. That takes away what little bit you gain by being organized, and the way I like to be is to have a great deal of organization. I always admired that about Oscar Peterson's groups. The product showed that they had worked on it, and it was very interesting. It wasn't a jam session.

"I would like to have, say, a Red Norvo Trio when Red doesn't feel like working, if I could get a vibes player and a bassist, even with the handicap of having to take a lot less money, just to have an organized group, because, to me, that's important enough. Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel, for example, have a book for the bass and, I guess, the drums,

TAL FARLOW'S EQUIPMENT

Tal Farlow plays a self-designed Tal Farlow model guitar, made by Gibson, with medium gauge flat-wound Gibson strings, through a Fender Twin Reverb amplifier; he also uses a frequency divider of his own design which is built into his customized stool.

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and they tour and they say, 'Well, we're going to play this.' Their way of having the thing organized is to write everything down for the bass player. But that'll never come off as good as four guys who work together all the time, like the Modern Jazz Quartet did. I've got enough built-in insecurity that it is a big help to me to be on the bandstand with something where I have some idea of what's going to happen. I'm not going to be surprised by some guy going off on a tangent."

Is Tal Farlow here to stay? It seems a reasonable possibility, but don't put any money on it. Suffice it to say that, at the moment, Farlow is exceptionally content. But at least you know that if he does follow his usual will-o'-the-wisp pattern, sometime when you walk into some local Dew Drop Inn or go to have a "For Sale" sign painted somewhere, there is the possibility that Talmage Holt Farlow will be at your service, in his own inimitable way. db

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an inspiration. "Milt was one of the very few that had studied the instrument and was using proper fingering. He fascinated me. I used to slip into some of Cab's rehearsals . . . and just watch Milt. He never knew I was there. He didn't even know me. It wasn't until years later that I spoke to him and referred to these things, and he broke up," recalled Duvivier, chuckling. The two have been close friends ever since.

Once while staying at a Florida motel in the 1950s, Duvivier said he could hear a second bass upstairs playing lines as he practiced in his own room. This give-and-take continued for a while until finally the other bass player knocked at Duvivier's door. It was Charles Mingus. "We ended up talking for about three hours. He seemed to need someone to talk to, and he just poured his whole heart and soul out to me. So I got to know and understand Mingus very well. Up until the last time I saw him, which was shortly before his death, we still had a warm relationship."

Today, Ray Brown, Stanley Clarke, Hinton, Ron Carter, Eddie Gomez, and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen—whom he respectfully referred to as "the terror from Denmark"—rank among some of his favorites. "Oh, there're lots of them. I don't want to slight anyone by not mentioning him."

Duvivier said he met Carter when the superstar was still a

studio player who used both bass and cello—especially the latter on a record with Duvivier where both backed Eric Dolphy. "We hit it off from the very beginning," he recalled. "He said something very interesting in an article—I think it was in *down beat*—that we got along so well because we listened, which is an art in itself. That's one of the secrets of him as an accompanist. He listens. A very simple thing."

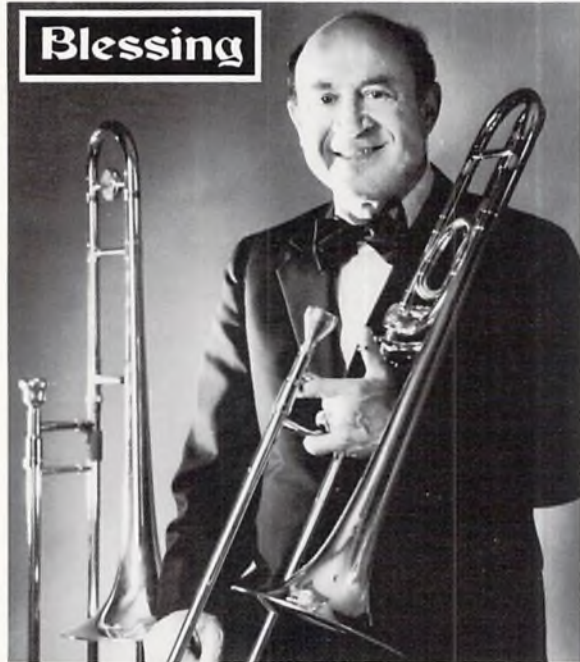
As Duvivier's view of the bass' role in the jazz group changed, so did his playing. In that sense, players like Carter and Pedersen have had a great impact on him. "I've always been able to solo. Of course, in the past years I've been influenced, and justly so, by a lot of the young kids. They've taken things that I've done—and Ray Brown and people in that era—and they've gone on with it. We used to play pizzicato with one finger. No matter how fantastic that was speed-wise, you can't do the things that you can do with two or three fingers. I have been slowly adapting to that format, and it worked very well for me."

His emergence as more of a solo player can also be credited to that changing role of the bass. "Over the evolving years, the bass has become not just the foundation—it has become a solo voice. I can't think of another instrument that has so emerged in a 10-year span as the string bass has."

One of a bass player's most noticeable physical attributes is his hands. Stretched and toughened by years of plucking at the strings, they invariably catch your attention when you meet a bass player. Duvivier's hobbies may seem far removed from playing jazz, but they actually go back to working with one's hands. Although he once professed an interest in watching surgeons at work (he actually accompanied a surgeon on his rounds one morning—by invitation), Duvivier now spends his spare time working with large, scale-model, O-gauge trains in his New York State country house. In his off-hours during trips out of town, Duvivier can often be found at a local hobby shop or railway museum.

With every musician there's always that desire to do something that they've never done. With Duvivier, a man who's done everything from symphonies to bebop, that desire is there. It's just a little harder to define. "The only thing I would like to do, and that is certainly not within my reach in the foreseeable future, would be to organize an orchestra and hand-pick the men—and present good music, just slightly different from anything that's been done. I can't elaborate on it. It's all in my head."

Younger musicians who might be inspired by Duvivier's climb to the top should remember one thing, he said. It isn't easy. "There are no short cuts. When you hear people like Ron Carter and Niels and Ray soloing, and you say, 'Hey, that's what I want to do,' remember, they have studied for years. And if you get into studio work, you have to be prepared to play any type of music in sight. Any rehearsal that you get in the studio is not to help you play the music," he said, laughing, "it's to get a balance and be sure all the notes are written correctly. Hopefully, you'll enjoy it. Because if you don't, it's going to be a real laborious bit of work." ❦



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"There's a lot of emphasis now on doing music from 'in the tradition.' But they've taken the tradition and used it essentially as a vehicle for conservatism, instead of trying to expand it. The truest homage to Charlie Parker isn't to play Charlie Parker, but to do what George Lewis has done, to play something that wouldn't be possible without Charlie Parker. The most important contribution you can make to the tradition is to create your own music, create a new music."

If Davis seems to approach the tradition less sanctimoniously than some of his contemporaries—if he is inclined to view it as a dynamic and not as a totem—perhaps it is because the idea of a tradition isn't so recent an acquisition for him as it is for many of them. He is a descendant of the Hampton Davises, the family that founded Hampton Institute, one of the country's oldest black colleges. His father was Charles T. Davis, author of an influential book on Richard Wright, co-editor of the anthology *On Being Black*, first black faculty member at Princeton University, and Chairman of Afro-American Studies at Yale from the inception of the program in the early '70s until his death in March 1981. In the estimation of Dr. John F. Szwed, Chairman of the Department of Folklore and Folk Life at the University of Pennsylvania and a former colleague of Dr. Davis' at Yale, Dr. Davis established "the strongest and only serious black studies program in the country, with the possible exception of the one at Stanford, which was copied on Yale's model, with Dr. Davis' help."

"My father gave a lot," Davis continues with understandable pride, "and of course, he was very important to me individually too, not only in terms of being very supportive of my career in music, but also in maintaining my interest in other things, in teaching me that music is just part of the whole spectrum of what the Afro-American tradition is about. A whole generation of Davises was involved with the academic world, and I broke away from that at a certain point to become a professional musician, but I'm sort of coming back to it now. I'm teaching two days a week at Yale—Composition and History of Creative Music from 1900—and I'm trying to decide now whether to go on with my education and get some degrees. The university setting offers all kinds of opportunities for a composer, and the students are excited about music and doing things and developing, and I get excited by that too. Teaching also allows me the flexibility to say no, to do only those things I really want to do."

One of the offers to which Davis would say no is the opportunity to play commercial music. "I'm just not interested in that at all. I know there are aspects of my music that are more commercial than others—that sounds funny, but it's something every musician knows—but I want the freedom to present the most experimental aspect of my work, as well as the aspects that are more immediate. I don't want to feel as though I can't play music that I like. I think you have to give the audience your best. Play the best music you can. I'm interested in communicating with audiences on other levels too, through the use of words, text, dance, and visuals."

"Being a musician doesn't make me better than anyone else. I'm a human being and I'm thinking about a lot of things other people are also thinking about. You have your own perceptions as an artist because you're put on this planet to create mystery, but you're put here to unravel mysteries too. So I think you have to trust that the audience will have the sophistication to understand you, and you can't afford to condescend to them. And your ultimate audience, when you think about it, is God—however you conceive it. You're not only playing for people here and now; you're playing for past generations, for the people who have died. When I'm playing or writing music now, I'm thinking about my father, about Duke Ellington, about the contributions they made, and I feel compelled to create to my greatest capacity. I'd be letting them down if I didn't. That's how I feel."

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bunch of bread and said, 'Hey, make me one disco record and then you can do what you want,' and you're out there scuffling, I think I'd go for it too. We didn't have those temptations when we were young; thank God they didn't think of it. No need to compete with the Andrews Sisters!

"Though I've created a dour picture of the music scene, there are a lot of cats coming up who knock me out. Eric Kloss has been around for awhile, but I think he's one of the finest improvising musicians; he's just recorded for Omnison, and when you hear the album, it'll knock your sides off, he's playing so much saxophone and so much music. Tom Harrell, I think, is a genius young player and musician. Wynton Marsalis? He's a fantastic technician; he can really play that trumpet, man. I haven't heard him enough to say more; I just hope he doesn't start putting out a whole bunch of fusion albums. I heard him with Art Blakey's new band. Boy, are they playing some bebop! They were doing *Wail*, some of the old Bud Powell stuff. Buhain's got a whole brand-new bebop book, plus some new stuff. He's miraculous, Art Blakey.

"That's why there'll always be a tradition, the American tradition of jazz music. It's not going to go away. It's got some ills, and a lot of reshuffling to do, but Art's still out there doing it, Zoot's still doing it, Al's still doing it, Budd Johnson's still doing it."

Informed that he was known to the present generation of **down beat** editors and readers as an angry and controversial interview subject, Woods responded that it was usually the interviewer's questions that would make him angry. "They'd ask me some dumb shit, and then I'd project an arrogant image. As for anger, me and Gene Quill got that out years ago. We covered all the anger for alto players. We didn't even leave any for Dave Sanborn. [Gene Quill, Woods said, is ailing in Atlantic City and would appreciate hearing from old friends and fans. Cards or letters sent in care of the Atlantic City local of the musicians' union will be forwarded to him.]

"I'm having such a good time being an American musician. It's taken me 30 years in the trenches, and there's a great deal of dignity and pride in being a good one. I'm still working on that—it takes forever, but it's worth pursuing. In case anyone gets the idea that I'm projecting a negative attitude, I'm just saying that it has to be examined carefully, this life of jazz, for what it really is, and I'm still discovering that.

"If I'm not feeling well, and I play my horn on a gig, I feel okay; it's gone, whether it be a toothache, a hangover, or whatever. Music has therapeutic value,

even a mystic strength, though I'm not into that. There's all of that to explore, plus all the places to see. What a lucky cat I am to have seen so much of the world, from being in Dizzy's band in 1956, from Iran on out—whenever I see Diz, I still yell out to him, 'Aba Dan Dan'—our first stop on that State Department tour was Abadan, Iran. And there's still a lot I want to see.

"Jazz has been good to me, it really has, but I would hate to think that any young man would feel that by copying the Phil Woods sound he could have the same life and career. I never began by imitating. I began by trying to become a musician and an alto sax player. I never thought I sounded like Charlie Parker, though he was an inescapable shadow in the '40s, if you were a sax player, or in the '50s. You couldn't be a musician without having his licks pop up. And without Louis Armstrong, we wouldn't have any jazz licks at all; Bird would be the first guy to tell you that's the truth.

"So it's a lot more than just copying a sound. You got to get your keyboards and stuff together, get into the workshop, the woodshed, really examining this thing called music. That's what I've always done—listened to as much and as many kinds of music as I could. That was the whole idea of coming to New York, of going to Juilliard, going to the record library. That's what I did in my home town [Springfield, MA], take records out. I heard about Bird liking *Pierrot Lunaire*, so I went to the library and copped that. My parents thought I was bananas!

"I went and saw the paintings. I used to read books by the numbers—go through all of Saroyan, then Fitzgerald, whatever—just read them all. I'd go to the library and get culture—it's fun to be a jazzman and get culture—preparing to go to Juilliard and check out Charlie Parker, then having to prepare Mozart. Nobody asked me about a Dorian mode. The path was clear. You'd be a musician.

"You've got to understand your place as a musician in the scheme of all the music on the planet. Steal what you like, all this and all that, but essentially, I'm realizing that traditional improvisation on a song, on an American tune, on the blues, will continue to be a primal thing. That's still happening with the great players, and with some of the great young players."

And of course it is still happening with Phil Woods, one of the great players, the forever-young, rediscovering-themselves-and-their-tradition players, one of the jazz tribe. db

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