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down beat

THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE



**ANTHONY
BRAXTON'S**
Motto: "PLAY or DIE!"

AL JARREAU
No More Axes
To Grind

**BARRY
ALTSCHUL**
Drives Drums
To Top

CLARK TERRY
Solo Transcription

CAUGHT!
"Interpretations
of Monk" and
Philip Glass'
opera *Satyagraha*

Maria Vasconcelos profiled

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Barry Altschul



Al Jarreau

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BARRY ALTSCHUL'S

DRUM ROLE

BY LEE JESKE

"Now I feel I'm really starting to learn how to play. A certain maturity is happening more in my playing, a certain consistency. It's nice. I'm progressing, but at the same time I'm starting to see how much more there is to be done. I'm learning to have more patience and just be aware of the things that I have to get together. I'm not in a rush. It'll happen when it happens, but I do feel it's going to happen."

So said Barry Altschul some seven years ago in these very pages. At that time Barry had just started working with Anthony Braxton and Sam Rivers, after putting in long spells with Paul Bley and the cooperative Circle (Chick Corea, Dave Holland, Braxton, and Altschul) and shorter spells with such diverse artists as Sonny Criss, Hampton Hawes, Steve Lacy, Johnny Griffin, Gato Barbieri, Slide Hampton, Robin Kenyatta, and even bluesman Buddy Guy, in both the United States and Europe. Since '78, though, he has released five albums as a leader and, most recently, fronted a trio with the unusual instrumentation of drums, bass, and trombone. Has whatever he was waiting for to happen in 1975 happened?

"Yes, it's happening, but I still feel that way," says Altschul, sitting on a sofa in his Soho apartment, his German shepherd, Cymbal, at his feet. "Realistically, I don't really think that one is ever finished. There's always something more to learn, there's always something more to do, there are always other ways of approaching things. But, yeah, I feel that my own growth is happening. I feel that I play different now than I did five years ago—I feel that I play better now than I did five years ago. As a matter of fact, I feel right now that I'm playing better than I ever have. And still getting better."



Barry Altschul was born in the South Bronx in 1943, 11 years before he was to receive his first drum. The drum led to a kit and the kit led to a developing seriousness about the instrument. After knocking around in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, Barry sought out Charli Persip for drum lessons. The lessons began to sharpen his developing technique, and this new awareness led to the beginning of a long relationship with pianist Paul Bley. It was hooking up with Bley, in 1964, that would set Altschul down the path of contemporary jazz and make him realize that there was more to his instrument than keeping time.

"When I met Paul," Barry says, "I was

like a real arrogant little kid from the South Bronx. And the first gig I ever played with him was without rehearsals, without anything. I just got there and he said, 'Do you wanna play some standards? Or would you like to play some of the stuff I'm into?' I said, 'Play anything you want.'

"After that we talked about music. We talked about motions, colors, and things that we tried to project from the music. I played just what I felt I heard from the music. That's when it happened for me. That's when I realized that the drummer is able to initiate and to contribute to the actual music that's going on, rather than just lay back a rhythmic cushion for people to play on."

Barry stayed with Bley, off and on, throughout the '60s. His sensitive, melodic drumming led to various recording dates as a sideman and, in 1970, to his becoming one-fourth of Circle. Containing four such strong, yet individual musical personalities, Circle sought out new ways of incorporating group improvisation into compositional structures. For a band that remained together barely two years, however, their influence has been widely felt, especially throughout the later '70s New York loft jazz phenomenon.

After Chick Corea left Circle to form the hybrid band that was eventually to become Return To Forever, the group's remaining three members (augmented by Sam Rivers' reeds) recorded the memorable *Conference Of The Birds* album under bassist Holland's direction—a venture which was to ultimately split into two separate ensembles sharing the Holland/Altschul rhythm team. From '74-76 (along with trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, replaced during the group's final days by trombonist George Lewis) they formed the Anthony Braxton Quartet, and for an even longer period of time comprised the Sam Rivers Trio—an especially vibrant, intoxicating group. This was to be Altschul's last long-term job as a sideman.

The job with Sam ended rather abruptly. In fact, quite abruptly, just three or four days before Rivers was to do a very important concert called "The World of Sam Rivers" as part of the 1978 Newport-New York Jazz Festival. About the parting, Barry will only say, "It's kind of personal. It was just that time. When we parted company, I looked around and said, 'Well, what do I want to do now? I can either look for another gig as a sideman and hope that I can get into the same situation that I've been in—from Paul Bley through Sam—which was as an equal part of the music. Or maybe, since I've been on the road a long time and I have some kind of reputation, maybe I can try and get some of my own things together.'

"I started to hear a musical concept, so that's pretty much when I decided to be a bandleader. I actually decided the day after Sam and I parted company, at the insistence of my wife. She said to me, 'Why don't you start your own band?' At the time I had nothing but some students. I had already put out both my Muse albums—one of which was an all-star thing and the other was just a series of projects—and I had done a few little things with a quartet while I was still working with Sam. The quartet was myself, Ray Anderson on trombone, Brian Smith on bass, and Anthony Davis on piano.

"I met Ray Anderson backstage at the Bottom Line; George Lewis introduced

BARRY ALTSCHUL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

FOR STU—Soul Note SN 1015
BRAHMA—Sackville 3021
SOMEWHERE ELSE—Moers Music 01064
ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE—Muse MR 5176
YOU CAN'T NAME YOUR OWN TUNE—Muse MR 5124

with Circle

PARIS CONCERT—ECM 1018/9
GATHERING—CBS SOPL-20-XJ
CIRCLING IN—Blue Note LA472-H2
CIRCULUS—Blue Note LA882-J2

with Paul Bley

CLOSER—ESP 1021
RAMBLIN'—BYG 529.313
BALLADS—ECM 1010
COPENHAGEN & HAARLEM—Arista/Freedom AF1901
SCORPIO—Milestone 9046

with Anthony Braxton

THE COMPLETE BRAXTON—Arista/Freedom AF 1902
QUARTET AT MOERS FESTIVAL—Ring/Moers Music 01010/11
FIVE PIECES—Arista AL 4064
MONTREUX/BERLIN CONCERTS—Arista AL 4002

with Sam Rivers

THE TRIO SESSIONS—Impulse IA 0352/2
HUES—Impulse AS 9264

with Chick Corea

SONG OF SINGING—Blue Note 84353
ARC—ECM 1009

with Dave Holland

CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS—ECM 1027

with Buddy Guy

HOLD THAT TRAIN—Vanguard VSD 79323

us. One of the first people I ever played with, when I was a kid, was a trombone player, and I've always loved the trombone. It's like a voice. I've always loved the way it blends with other instruments. Anthony Davis I just met. Some people told me about him and I invited him over to the house to play. We all started rehearsing and everyone had a good feeling so, okay, we had the band."

Brian Smith soon left to be replaced by Rick Rozie, a friend of Anthony Davis'. In February of 1979 that group recorded the only recently released *For Stu*, before Davis left to form a quartet with James Newton, taking Rozie with him. Barry picks up the narrative: "Ray had been playing with Mark Helias. So when Tony and Rick left the band, I sat down and had a talk with Ray and he said, 'Well, you know, I've been involved with just a trio; why don't we try that format? Mark is great for it.'

"So we got together and started to rehearse—and we really rehearsed. I mean, we were getting together four or five times a week for nine months at a stretch. And what started to happen was that everybody started writing for the band and everybody just started to put

BARRY ALTSCHUL'S EQUIPMENT

Sonor drums: A. Zildjian, K. Zildjian, and Paiste
cymbals: 1931 Ludwig Super-Sensitive snare.

all this energy in and the commitment to the music worked out great. So I started to get in touch with all the contacts I had made in Europe over the years, working with Sam and Circle, and things got started.

"I'm really very fortunate to have Ray and Mark committed to the music we play. Because the way business has been, it's very difficult. I feel very fortunate even to be able to say, 'Yeah, we've had the same group for the past three-and-a-half years.' And we've been working, we've gone on six tours and it's been okay. We're not working enough to survive—we all need other gigs—but we're working enough to make the music survive."

The music that the group plays is not easy to categorize. It can be free and frenetic one minute and controlled and lyrical the next. The three men can play outside and inside, upside and down, over and out. They fit very comfortably into that large category of groups that fit into no category. Whatever it is, one thing is for certain: they play jazz—acoustic jazz. Altschul is firm on this point, and when asked whether he didn't consider following in the startlingly successful fusion footsteps of former bandmate Corea's *Return To Forever*, he is direct.

"No," he says, "absolutely not. It didn't appeal to me at all. If I achieve any success or financial rewards from this music, that's great. That's extra, that's wonderful. I mean, I can say that the music has been good to me. I am surviving, I have a family, I have a place to live. I originally got into this music because I wanted to play, I guess; I always wanted to be pure to a certain creative aesthetic that somehow came in on me, and that's what I've done. Playing fusion music does not uphold to that aesthetic. I felt that in order for the music that we were playing to stay alive, the people who can play it had to play it. I mean, that was a commitment—I'm going to show that this music is valid music and that it is an extension of the tradition. Of lots of traditions."

This adamant refusal of Barry Altschul's to play anything other than exactly what he wants to play has led to him turning down several offers—including one from rock guitar wizard Jimi Hendrix. "He called me twice to make a couple of audition-type rehearsals," recalls Altschul. "Some people I knew were playing with him at the time. It was just before the Woodstock Festival, and I didn't do it. I even discussed it with Paul Bley at the time. It was right around the time that Circle was forming, too. Hendrix, first of all, wanted a couple of years' commitment if it really went down—if he really liked me. I didn't want to be involved with

"PLAY_{OR}DIE"

ANTHONY INTERVIEW BRAXTON

BY PETER ROTHBART

Anthony Braxton's career has been marked by controversy ever since he joined the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) in 1966. In the 16 years since, Braxton has continued to shake the musical world with his precedent-breaking solo saxophone explorations (e.g. *For Alto*), novel instrumental combinations (such as his works for five tubas), and his unique structural concerns. Equally adept at composition, his *For Four Orchestras* is a colossal work, longer than any of Gustav Mahler's symphonies and larger in instrumentation than most of Richard Wagner's operas. His current "experiments" (as he calls them) in multi-media production call for such collaborations as four slide projectors coordinated with a symphony orchestra (see *Caught*, **db**, Oct. '81).

Braxton has elevated the art of woodwind doubling (he calls it "multi-instrumentalism") to new heights, in the process giving new life to instruments that had long since fallen into disregard: the bass, contrabass, and soprano saxophones, and the Eb clarinet. Despite Braxton's commitment to music's cutting edge, he places a strong emphasis on tradition. His teaching method is firmly rooted in the classics. His two records entitled *In The Tradition* pay homage to the heritage of bebop.

Although he has won numerous polls—including a dozen **db**ers on three different instruments, while the '77 critics chose *Creative Music Orchestra* (Arista) best LP—Braxton continues to struggle. Though his music is relatively well-documented on record, it has never really reached the mass market. He remains uncompromising, despite the economic difficulties and critical rebuffs he has learned to expect.



Peter Rothbart: What about the accessibility of your music? What would you tell people to listen to in your music?

Anthony Braxton: First of all, in many quarters, my work is viewed as a violation of black creativity because of my emphasis on methodology, my interest in science, my insistence on saying I'm influenced by white or Asian musicians, and the racial makeup of my various groups. The fact that I would pay homage to Caucasian creative people has put me in a very strange position—not only with black musicians, but also with white musicians. Finally, it comes down to the fact that my music doesn't correspond to what jazz is supposed to be. In 1967 my group didn't have bass and drums. At the time we

had that group, it was against the law to have an ensemble without bass and drums. Then the nature of the music, the kind of forms we used, the kinds of languages, was perceived as a violation of the music. When I recorded *For Alto*, which was a two-record set of solo saxophone music, I was put down because that violated the music in the eyes of many of the people who defined terms in that period. The understanding was that you just don't play solo music on the saxophone, especially if the music is pointillistic, and not observing the structure of what jazz is supposed to be. Throughout all these various periods, I did have people who said positive things. I had support, too. But they called it a woodwind stunt when I

moved into multi-instrumentalism. Now it's an accepted part of the scene. We're talking about a 16-year involvement with the music during which I've been challenged as to my right to do it. In every case the verdict has been that the music is not in the spirit of what jazz is supposed to be. In fact, at every junction, what motivates me transcends the present day definitions.

PR: Isn't art for art's sake a very romantic notion?

AB: In this culture we've come to look at creativity as entertainment. Of

commentary. But I disagree with what's really happening with that, because there's nothing that happens that doesn't swing. Everybody has a rhythm and the reality of every rhythm cannot be seated in only its empirical dynamics. You have post-[Anton] Webern creativity that swings. There's no music that doesn't meet the criteria of "swing" if its rhythmic pulse is really understood.

PR: How about the person who is playing it? Can he or she not swing?

AB: There's no person who plays, who, when he or she taps their inner reality or real affinity dynamics or real affinity nature, doesn't swing.

PR: So it's the person who's in touch with certain qualities within . . .

AB: Swings. And I'm saying that that alternative information dynamic would have to be taken into account, when they talk about swing. I'm saying that information dynamics is related to the philosophical hierarchy that it observes. The information dynamics surrounding the essence of post-[Albert] Ayler continuance was significant for what it posed to the black community and for the creative community. But that's never been commented on. It's only been talked about as a musician emotionally rejecting the system. There are reasons why people are in the emotional state that they're in. I don't see that music as only being a rejection. John Coltrane was written about during that period as playing nihilistic [or "hate"] music. He survived the storm of the '60s because of the obvious importance of his music.

PR: Do you think in retrospect that it's still viewed that way?

AB: I think in retrospect, it's not even being viewed. Not only has post-Ayler creativity and post-Webern creativity

Ornette Coleman. Those four musicians solidify a very important step in the music. The significance of that music transcends any one aspect of their work. I go to post-Ayler because when Ayler came on the scene, it had been set up by the four musicians. His work represented a first composite of what these four musicians did . . .

PR: A first distillation . . .

AB: Yes, so I generally talk of post-Webern in the same sense, because [Arnold] Schönberg set him up. Webern kind of crystallized the fact that something different was happening.

PR: Webern is obviously an influence on you. His approach was that a single note could be the entire phrase—a pointillistic approach. You seem to go to the opposite extent, especially in your piece *For Four Orchestras*. You've created a work that is longer than any of Mahler's—which brings up the idea of structural levels. With Webern, one note was crucial. In a work such as the four-orchestra piece, are you looking for the micro- or macro-structures?

AB: It was directional music, sound masses moving. Musicians playing on chairs with the directions choreographed . . .

PR: With the music affected by the acoustical space . . .

AB: Yeah, spatial music. The actual note structure of the music does produce a kind of *klangfarben* [sound colors]. But that's not what I was really looking at. I'm not really interested in duplicating Webern or [Karlheinz] Stockhausen. I was attracted to pointillism in the same way I was attracted to Ornette Coleman's music.

PR: To explore a different direction, what are some of your recent experiments?

AB: I'm working on a series of analyses.

“My motto since I was 11 years old was, ‘Play or Die.’”

course, a given manifestation can be entertaining, but there's another whole reality that's attached to creativity, that being creativity as it relates to a spiritual and information dynamics of a culture; creativity as it relates to positive transformation; as it intertwines with science, spiritualism, and philosophy. That's where I come in. That's the aspect of creativity I was always attracted to.

PR: What do you mean by information dynamics?

AB: The best example would be the concept of "swing" and how it's written about in this period. We've come to view "swing" as when you have a certain kind of empirical rhythm. If it's done right, it has "swing." That's how it's been defined in the annals of jazz

been cast aside, but it's been redocumented in a way that it doesn't have to be dealt with anymore.

PR: You refer to post-Ayler or post-Webern periods often. Why do you choose those as significant milestones? Why not post-Coltrane?

AB: I could go back and say post-Parker. That solidification which we now call bebop was important on a lot of different levels. In this conversation I was referring to post-Ayler because by the time we get to post-Ayler and move into the AACM, we're really coming into another whole chapter in the music. Coltrane wasn't the only restructuring in that period. We can't talk about Coltrane without talking about the significance of Sun Ra or Cecil Taylor or

I just finished three books on aesthetics. My problem now is that I haven't got the money to put them out.

PR: Analyses of what?

AB: My compositions, talking about what I was planning to do, what I was working with.

PR: How are the volumes organized?

AB: The first three books—the ones on aesthetics—are along the lines of the philosophical basis that determines how we deal with creativity, as it relates to world culture, Western art music, and trans-African music. They're structured on three different levels. The first level is the philosophical basis. Level two is a composite, looking at all of world music, and the third level is questions and answers. The next book is the transition



TOM COPI

from Africa to Beethoven to Schönberg.
PR: From a historical approach?

AB: Looking at the philosophical implications of the music and how all of that solidified. What we're dealing with now in this period, from, say, the post-Coleman junction of music to the post-Ayler junction, and later from the post-Webern to the post-LaMont Young junction. The third section of the first book is the post-Ayler continuum dealing with the New York School and the events which took place in the middle '60s.

PR: It sounds as if you don't make a distinction between the Webern school and Ayley.

AB: I look at all these continuums with respect to the individual particulars and with respect to their composite relationship to the total theater. I have always been attracted to the post-Webern continuum and its related projections as trans-African music—so-called "jazz."

PR: Trans-African?

AB: I use the word trans-African in this period to get away from the word jazz. I've never understood what people are talking about when they say jazz, because they've frozen the music and applied definitions to the music in a way that never really satisfied the composite reality of the music. And in doing so, I feel that there are profound distortions surrounding our understanding of what we call jazz.

PR: But why trans-African?

AB: I believe that one of the most important factors that determine the reality of a projection has to do with its vibrational and spiritual significance—what that projection poses to what I call "affinity dynamics." Affinity dynamics has to do with the reality of postulation;

the nature of the being who postulates. From that context, I look at the continuance of a projection, of a total thrust as opposed to isolating one style. For example, bebop is swing music and if you have a C Major seventh, you have to play on top of a C Major seventh, and you have to use Charlie Parker's language. If you don't play this language, then it's not correct. I don't think that from what I'm looking at, there's such a thing as bebop, or the kind of projection we're talking about, because we've isolated it too much. Even though Charlie Parker introduced a dynamic language criteria to the music, it was not that foreign to the music. I mean Lester Young, Don Byas, and Coleman Hawkins had solidified the whole foundation. That music is as important for what it proposed to the transition of the music as Charlie Parker. I disagree with the idea of taking one person and saying this person started this—"He's the god of bebop."

PR: But nevertheless there are certain basic characteristics along this continuum that show why a bebop tune will differ from a dixieland tune.

AB: Yes, but those dictates aren't necessarily empirical. The interesting thing about so-called jazz is that Charlie Parker wasn't trying to play Charlie Parker licks. He was playing his music. There's a big difference there. Everything I've ever read about Parker says that he was more impressed with creative musicians who didn't try to imitate him, as opposed to someone who could play every lick he had solidified for himself. Yet I don't mean to be disrespectful to the different aspects of the music. Look at restructuring. We have stylism, and traditionalism. Look at what has happened in this period for

instance, when people talk of what they call the blues, when present day commentary interprets a given postulation. When it's supposed to be the blues, they talk in terms of minor thirds or sevenths. If you play a given sequence correctly, this is supposed to be the blues.

PR: They're looking for specific traits, empirical information. This can be the pitfall of all theoreticians, their search for basic characteristics. For example, theorists talk of sonata form, yet few sonatas, especially by the master of sonata, Beethoven, fit the form exactly.

AB: That's right.

PR: Nevertheless, there are general traits that you can look for, recognizing that there will be a certain amount of deviation.

AB: That's the same with blues, but it goes down even more than that. In my understanding of blues, we're talking about a vibrational continuum. There's no one kind of blues. There are four-bar blues, eight-bar blues, whatever kind of blues you want to play.

PR: So you're more concerned with how it's being played, then what is being played.

AB: I'm more concerned with what is being played than how it's being analyzed. I'm saying that some of the lower structures which have been imposed on the music run contrary to the vibrational and spiritual dictates of the music.

PR: Let me try an example. While transcribing some Yusef Lateef oboe solos, I found that the harmony hits a dominant seventh chord, yet he always plays a Major seventh which is one of the "cardinal sins."

AB: Paul Desmond does that a lot.

“The present day commentary has gotten to the point where not only is it interfering with the music, but it's defining terms for the next generation of musicians.”

PR: But it works because of the way he plays it.

AB: Because of what he really understands. In other words, he's really playing the blues. That's also true for a musician like Albert Ayler. I disagree with our frozen interpretations—for what those interpretations have done to the essence of the music. The present day commentary has gotten to the point where not only is it interfering with the music, but it's defining terms for the next generation of musicians. Many of the people who talk about themselves as so-called jazz musicians now, are very far away from the spirit of what that music is.

PR: Everybody's a jazz musician.

AB: I really don't understand the terms anymore. As a result I've backed away from it, because one of the problems I've had for the past 16 years has been that I have constantly been challenged as to whether I'm a jazz musician, or does my music swing, or meet the dictates of what the music of the day is supposed to be. But in fact, I never really was functioning with respect to those definitions. I view my activity as a logical extension of my involvement and concern about world creativity.

PR: Can you explain world creativity?

AB: Projections we don't normally talk about, whether it's African music or Asian music, Japanese music, music of the American Indian, music from Sardinia. . . . So I've found in the past three or four years that many of the criticisms that I've read about my work don't even consider where I'm coming from. I'm being judged in the context of, "Is he playing a ii-V-I change like Charlie Parker would play it?"

PR: That's more the fault of the analyst.

AB: Based on the articles I've been reading in the past two or three years, I've been noticing that the post-Ayler creativity is now being talked of as "Those angry niggers got really angry in the '60s and they screamed and hollered, but now they're coming home. The music's coming back. Everyone's getting back to what's really jazz. It's not about hate anymore." That kind of commentary permeates. . . .

PR: Are they talking about hate or alienation?

AB: Whatever they're talking about, they're not talking about the music, because the essence of that music transcended one context, first of all. I think it would be terribly disrespectful. . . . no, not disrespectful. . . . terribly untrue to paraphrase all of the music which has taken place as being only a rejection, or only hate, or only emotionalism.

PR: But isn't music merely a reflection of the status of society, or does it lead society?

AB: I think there's definitely a relationship between music and society. . . .

PR: So wouldn't Ayler mirror society?

ANTHONY BRAXTON'S EQUIPMENT

All of Braxton's saxophones are either Selmer or Conn instruments with the exception of the Eb contrabass saxophone which is made by LeBlanc. He uses La Voz reeds on all the saxophones. His Eb soprano and Bb soprano saxophones are played with Selmer 4* mouthpieces, while all the others are played with Brilhart Level-Air 4* mouthpieces.

Braxton uses Selmer clarinets with stock mouthpieces that have been altered by Kal Opperman. Only his contrabass clarinet is made by LeBlanc. He uses Vandoren reeds.

Braxton also plays a Selmer C flute and an Artley alto flute as well as an Hungarian tarragata and a Chinese musette. He plays the following saxophones: Eb soprano, Bb soprano, Eb alto, C melody, Eb tenor, Eb baritone, Bb bass, and Eb contrabass; his clarinets include an Eb soprano, Bb, contralto, and contrabass.

ANTHONY BRAXTON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

- FOR ALTO—Delmark DS-420/1
THREE COMPOSITIONS OF NEW JAZZ—Delmark DS-415
THE COMPLETE BRAXTON—Arista AF 1902
CREATIVE MUSIC ORCHESTRA RBN/3 K12—Ring/Moers Music 01024/5/6
SOLO LIVE AT MOERS FESTIVAL—Ring/Moers Music 01002
TRIO AND DUET—Sackville 3007
NEW YORK FALL 1974—Arista AL 4032
IN THE TRADITION—Inner City 2015
IN THE TRADITION VOL. 2—SteepleChase SCS-1045
QUARTET AT MOERS FESTIVAL—Ring/Moers Music 01010/11
FIVE PIECES—Arista AL 4064
CREATIVE MUSIC ORCHESTRA—Arista AL 4080
MONTREUX/BERLIN CONCERTS—Arista AL 4002
FOR TRIO—Arista AB 4181
FOR FOUR ORCHESTRAS—Arista A3L 8900
SEVEN COMPOSITIONS 1978—Moers 01066
ALTO SAXOPHONE IMPROVISATIONS 1979—Arista A2L 8602
PERFORMANCE 9/11/79—hat Hut Nineteen 2R19
with Max Roach
BIRTH AND REBIRTH—Black Saint BSR 0024
ONE IN TWO-TWO IN ONE—hat Hut Six 2R06
with Circle
PARIS CONCERT—ECM 1118/9
CIRCLING IN—Blue Note LA472-112
CIRCULUS—Blue Note LA882-J2
with Derek Bailey
LIVE AT WIGMORE—Inner City 1041
with Mural Richard Abrams
DUETS 1976—Arista AL 4101
with Roscoe Mitchell
DUETS—Sackville 3016
with Joseph Jarman
TOGETHER ALONE—Delmark DS0428
with Gunter Hampel
FAMILIE—Birth 008
ENFANT TERRIBLE—Birth 025
8TH OF JULY 1969—Birth 001
with Creative Construction Co.
CCC—Muse 5071
CCC VOL. 2—Muse 5097

Wouldn't Ayler's music reflect the discord that was occurring in our society?

AB: There's a difference between the discord that was happening in white America as it was defined by white writers, and the nature of what was taking place in the black community and what that posed for the black community. For instance, the problem of alien definitions. I most certainly can accept—even if I don't agree with the New York Times or the Village Voice—their commenting about the particulars of our intellectual community, or just the social reality as it is perceived by white Americans for white Americans. But when we talk about the reality of post-Ayler continuance, we can talk about it from the context of how the journalists wrote about it, or we can talk about it from the context of what that music philosophically posed, vibrationally posed, and spiritually posed for the people who were doing it, for its related information dynamics. I see the dynamics of post-Ayler continuance as being directly related to the progression or thrust of re-information dynamics, as those dynamics would relate to alternative functionalism. This is not only for the black community in America, because I'm not talking from only that perspective. I'm talking about alternative information dynamics, alternative functionalism as it relates to humanity—as it relates to the possibility for new ways of living, as it relates to political order, information dynamics, postulation. The continuum that we refer to as post-Ayler music is related to that. It represented a significant move for re-establishing information dynamics, especially in the black community.

PR: Anthony, you've succeeded where other people have failed. You've survived for 16 years and have even prospered. What clues do you give to other people? There are a lot of people who would love to play the music that is true to them, but they're hungry.

AB: It's a hard decision. I have a family now, with two kids. It's not like when I was by myself and just living in the park playing chess for a living. My motto since I was 11 years old was, "Play or Die." If I wasn't able to achieve what I wanted in my life as far as my creativity and my life's growth is concerned, I would feel bad, but not too bad. But I would find it hard to forgive not trying and not giving everything to the struggle. I've always admired those individuals who put their life on the line, whether we're talking about Harry Partch, Fats Waller, or Charlie Parker. **db**

AL JARREAU



**BREAKING
AWAY**

The sound is metallic and airy and generally reminiscent of a flute, but there is no flute. The next sound thumps and boms like a conga drum, but there is no drum. Finally, we are treated to a Brazilian orchestra of snaps, crackles, and pops, but again, there is no orchestra. Ladies and gentlemen, jazz-pop singer Al Jarreau, a human synthesizer of sorts, is simply strutting his stuff.

BY STEVE BLOOM

The place is Broadway—the Uris Theatre to be exact—where Jarreau elated NY audiences during his most recent week-long engagement. It was Jarreau's kind of crowd: they oohed and aahed and shook their heads in approval at just about everything they heard. And this happened not to be one of Jarreau's better performances: the throat seemed worn from one too many days on the road and had trouble challenging the upper vocal range, and the band tried much too hard to make up the difference. But few apparently noticed (with tickets at \$35 a pair you don't really notice). When Jarreau eased down the pace, claimed center stage, and climbed aboard a stool for a stellar recital of Jerome Kern's *All The Things You Are*, I too no longer noticed. As he sustained the song's last note, choruses of "bravos" began cascading throughout the theater. For those who must question, Jarreau had proven that he is more than just a vocal chameleon—he is a consummate jazz singer.

Jarreau is certainly neither Joe Williams nor Mel Torme, and few would argue that he has the scatting ability of the late Eddie Jefferson. He's more of a '70s creation; schooled in jazz but weaned on pop, Jarreau's your basic Top-40 radio baby.

And the radio dividends are just beginning to pay off. His sixth Warner Bros. album, *Breakin' Away*, broke through the Top-10 barrier this past fall and became the hands-down commercial jazz success story of 1981. Enticed by the single *We're In This Love Together*, people went in droves to buy and listen to Al Jarreau. They also watched him perform on all of late-night television's national music spots—the customary record industry prize for across-the-board sales. His visit to NBC's SCTV Network 90 was especially hilarious. In one skit Jarreau starred as *The Jazz Singer*, a black orphan boy who was adopted by a Lower East Side tailor and decides (against his father's wishes) to become a cantor instead of a pop singer. "So, vat about da rhythm and bluce?" his dad cries out at one point, "I should've adopted Barry White." Disowned, Izell (Jarreau) heads out for a life devoted to the Talmud.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

It is already past two in the afternoon, but Jarreau is still a bit groggy due to the lengthy sleep he has rewarded himself with after last night's show (a Broadway gig at the Savoy) and subsequent partying. I am standing in the hallway of a Central Park South hotel, awaiting clearance. A tall, relatively muscu-

lar man in his stocking feet emerges—it is Al Jarreau. We sneak into his manager's empty suite across the hall. As we find seats, he immediately reaches for the phone.

"Hello, room service please," he says with two fingers clamped over his nostrils to effect a nasal tone. "Yes, I'd like an orange juice. One second—would you care for an orange juice?" he asks me. I shake my head from side to side. "Okay, and can I have a coffee with milk and honey?" Again he abruptly calls over to me. This time I shake up and down. "Ma'am, can you please make that two coffees. And do you have any English muffins? Wonderful. I'll have one toasted with butter and jelly." He neglects to ask if I'd care for a muffin and, laughing, cradles the phone.

Al Jarreau is from Milwaukee, is once again on Broadway, and is in a better-than-average mood. I press for some thoughts on his Midwestern roots. "Hey, that's the rest of the world, native New Yorker," the L.A. habitant chides good-naturedly. "Milwaukee's really a work-a-day town, y'know, lots of industry and manual labor. That's what the people do. The mentality kind of matches that thing, too."

Jarreau's dad, a welder by trade, was born in New Orleans (hence the French-sounding surname). Dad met mom in a seminary in Alabama, and from there they trekked northwards as members of the Seventh Day Adventists church, first stopping in Indianapolis, then Flint (MI), and finally, Milwaukee. All six children turned out like their parents: hard-working, religious, and musically inclined.

"My mother played the piano—real fine," Jarreau recalls. "My father was an incredible singer and also played the musical saw—with a bow! We used to do benefits as the Jarreau Family. Everyone else played instruments. I only sang. I remember doing a recital in church when I was only four years old. That was my earliest highlight, and then there were my grade school performances—I sang a lot there, too.

"For P.T.A. meetings they would ask little Alwin and his mother to entertain. They'd serve cookies and tea and little cakes, and I'd get up and sing some little old patriotic or religious song." (Thirty years later, grown-up Alwin has been known to render the National Anthem at sports events, receiving free tickets instead of little cakes.)

I ask him to explain his affection for jazz. "Since dad was from New Orleans, he was kindly to it," he says, "and kindly to secular music in general. That was the music my brothers and sisters liked and brought into the house, and so that was the music I listened to—the music I learned to love."

There was also AM radio music, or as he describes, "the general pop music of the times." Lots of Patti Page, Kay Starr, Frankie Laine, and vocal quartets like the Four Freshman. "I'd listen to them for hours," he recollects. "I learned to sing harmony real early."

"Did you ever get into do-wopping on the corner?"

"Oh, yeah—oh shoo-be-doo," Jarreau bursts. "I did a ton of it. I knew about it, but it never was as exciting as singing *How High The Moon* or *Red Top* or something else that was just so much more consuming."

Jarreau majored in psychology at Ripon College (WI) and then gained a master's degree in rehabilitation and counseling at the University of Iowa. Meanwhile, he was earning grades on the local club circuits doing what he likes to call the "stand-up-jazz-singer-with-a-trio bit. These groups I worked with were well-organized and regularly working groups, and I would just come and fit in. When I look back on it, I see signs of me being interested in coloring the music with extra vocalese, but there really wasn't the room for it. I knew though that my turn would come."

After a service stint in northern California, Jarreau moved to San Francisco in 1965 where he immediately found employment counseling the disabled and vocationally handicapped by day and gigging after dusk. Now, every starry-eyed tale must have its turning point, and this one certainly does. Three years later, San Francisco was crawling with flower children,



ANDY FREIBERG

AL JARREAU SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

WE GOT BY—Reprise 2224

GLOW—Reprise 2248

LOOK TO THE RAINBOW—

Warner Bros. 3052

ALL FLY HOME—Warner Bros.
3229

THIS TIME—Warner Bros. 3434

BREAKIN' AWAY—Warner Bros.
3576

with **Freddie Hubbard**

THE LOVE CONNECTION—Co-
lumbia JC 36015

drug dealers, and rock bands; more important (in terms of this story), singer/rehabilitator Al Jarreau had a career crisis on his hands.

"I was a good counselor, but terrible about the bureaucratic aspects of the gig like filling out reports; and then I was falling more in love with music, and the romance was hot! I was working three and four nights a week—and could've worked more—and was really getting this feeling of accomplishment. I mean, I was definitely one of the singers on the scene."

So Jarreau up and resigned not only his job at the office, but
continued on page 58

RECORD REVIEWS

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

JAMES "BLOOD" ULMER

FREE LANCING—Columbia ARC 37493: *TIMELESS; PRESSURE CONTROL; NIGHT LOVER; WHERE DID ALL THE GIRLS COME FROM?; HIGH TIME; HIJACK; FREE LANCING; STAND UP TO YOURSELF; RUSH HOUR; HAPPY TIME.*

Personnel: Ulmer, guitar, vocals; Amin Ali, electric bass; G. Calvin Weston, drums; Ronnie Drayton, guitar, (cuts 2, 4, 8); Irene Datcher, Dianne Wilson, Zenobia Konkerite, vocals (2, 4, 8); David Murray, tenor saxophone (5, 6, 9); Oliver Lake, alto saxophone (5, 6, 9); Olu Dara, trumpet (5, 6, 9).

★★★★★

If "Blood" Ulmer is, as his press clippings would have it, the harbinger of the '80s, this may prove to be a nerve-jangling decade indeed. Ulmer's "harmolodic funk" is spiky, rasping, sour-noted, gimpy, and rushed. It is also exhilarating, ear-opening, and rivetingly intense, an amphetamine antidote to the torpor of retro-jazz and the formalist petrification of the avant garde.

Sounding as hyperkinetic as any teenager, Ulmer is in fact a 40-year-old journeyman who began touring as a gospel singer when he was seven. From the age of 17, he played guitar in r & b groups and organ combos out of Pittsburgh and Columbus (OH) before seeking more progressive directions in Detroit and finally New York. There he gigged with drummer Rashied Ali and studied under harmolodic mentor Ornette Coleman, who produced and performed on Ulmer's first LP, *Tales Of Captain Black* (Artists House 7). With his own band, Blood made a splash in Manhattan's punk venues, then journeyed to Europe and recorded *Are You Glad To Be In America?* for Rough Trade (England) and *No Wave* for Moers Music (Germany).

Free Lancing, Ulmer's first major-label release, is also his most eclectic. Columbia appears to be hedging a bit, eager to display its Great Black Hope as both spacey conceptualist and post-Hendrix funkster, a la the *No Wave* and *America* albums respectively. Accordingly, Ulmer's basic power trio—featuring drummer G. Calvin Weston and bassist Amin Ali (Rashied's son) is displayed in three settings: alone, with a rock-oriented chorus, and with the neo-jazz horns of David Murray, Oliver Lake, and Olu Dara.

Ulmer's reference points are myriad: Elmore James and James Brown, Ornette's *Dancing In Your Head* and Miles' *On The Corner*, the Art Ensemble and Weather Report, Jimi Hendrix and James Chance. Notions of spaced-out rhythm & blues have been around at least since Captain Beefheart, but Blood transfuses the vanguard genre with a stunningly percussive attack; at times his flailings suggest an electrified banjo.



GILL SMITHERMAN

Blood spurts forth with adrenaline-charged velocity, as Weston's drums set the rampaging pace and Ali slaps a churning maelstrom out of his electric bass. The harmolodic system allows for maximal improvisatory freedom within a thematic structure, enabling the trio to achieve a remarkably lyrical cohesion while it races along the borderline of counterpoint and cacophony. The horn section lasers through the heavy metal barrage in blue unison, intoning fractured Horace Silver melodies at furious tempos. Solos are infrequent, but tenorman Murray (the guitarist's most usual foil) spars and jabs with bluff urgency on *Rush Hour*, and trumpeter Dara blows a fat and sassy tribute to Miles on *Hijack*.

Ulmer has expressed his populist ambitions to interviewers; his call-and-response vocals with the female chorus here are his most commercial waxings yet. His singing and guitar work on these tracks recall both Hendrix and Richie Havens, but his wrenching sincerity and gut-rock prowess distinguish him from such crossover candidates as the cynical Defunkt and the scatologically posturing George Clinton.

Blood may be too rich and recondite a player to obtain the broad acceptance he seeks without further compromise. The implications of his angular style will not be lost, however, on his fellow musicians. Although the fusion movement has foundered, the dream of a new idiom that would subsume jazz, rock, and soul in a transcendent unity remains very much alive, and Ulmer, for all his pop-vs.-art ambivalence, has come closer to its realization than anyone to date.

—Larry Birnbaum

ARNETT COBB

IS BACK—Progressive 7037: *FLYING HOME; BIG RED'S GROOVE; CHERRY; SWEET GEORGIA BROWN; (I DON'T STAND) A GHOST OF A CHANCE; BLUES FOR SHIRLEY; TAKE THE A TRAIN.*

Personnel: Cobb, tenor saxophone; Derek Smith, piano; George Mraz, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★★★

FUNKY BUTT—Progressive 7054: *JUMPIN' AT THE WOODSIDE; SATIN DOLL; GEORGIA ON MY MIND; FUNKY BUTT; I GOT RHYTHM; SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN; ISFAHAN; RADIUM SPRINGS SWINGS.*

Personnel: Cobb, tenor saxophone; Derek Smith, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Ronnie Bedford, drums.

★★★★

In his 63 years, Arnett Cobb has survived enough setbacks to end the careers of three or four musicians. Bad luck and ill health have plagued him, and a car accident in 1956 severely injured his legs and left him permanently disabled. But it didn't stop him—as soon as he could, Arnett picked up his tenor and got back to playing. In addition to his continuing club and concert work, Cobb recorded these two albums for Progressive Records.

Arnett Cobb Is Back was recorded in June 1978, and *Funky Butt* in January 1980. Both records are enjoyable, but *Funky Butt* is musically superior. The material on both is safe and solid—standards and blues—and Cobb plays with authority. The edge goes to

Funky Butt primarily for its superior sound quality: Cobb's tenor sounds reedy on the earlier album, but is full and fat on Funky Butt. Both rhythm sections are excellent, but Drummond and Bedford tend to be less flamboyant than Mraz and Hart. They stick closer to the groove, and the ensemble work is sharper and more authoritative on Funky Butt.

Another major plus for the later album is the inclusion of *Isfahan*, Billy Strayhorn's magnificent ballad. Although Cobb is stereotyped as a Texas blues honker, there is a soft side to his playing that recalls the ballad work of Ben Webster. (Indeed, Cobb is something of a musical split-personality, much as Webster was.) There is a restrained elegance to Cobb's treatment of the tune, but there is muscle behind the airy sound of his sax. The tune is further complemented by Derek Smith's piano: his fills are a perfect foil for Cobb's sax, and his solo is a model of succinct economy.

Cobb is a master of tonal effects and unexpected quotations, and his playing retains the hard-swinging power that made him a major star when he came charging out of Lionel Hampton's orchestra in the 1940s. Arnett Cobb is back—hopefully for a good long time.

—jim roberts

RALPH SIMON

TIME BEING—Gramavision GR8002:

BLOOD OF THE DOVE; *AUGUST 19*;
ENDOMEGADECADE; *JULIA AND JULIUS*;
REGINA GABRIELLA.

Personnel: Simon, tenor, soprano saxophone; Paul Bley, Gene Adler, piano; John Scofield, guitars; David Dunaway, bass; Jabali Billy Hart, drums; Tom Beyer, vibes, percussion; Paul McCandless, oboe, english horn; Ron Alliano, alto saxophone.

★ ★ ★

Ralph Simon's progressive *Time Being* is, for the best part, another welcome attempt at welding the vital and substantive rhythmic elements of straight jazz with contemporary harmonic practices and novel timbral coloring.

The opening *Blood Of The Dove* is illustrative: a multi-sectional piece that outlines a three-part scheme. The first and last are prevailed by delicately descending unison trills between oboe, vibraphone, and acoustic piano. After a short bridge where full ensemble is asserted, a swinging theme is unleashed and allows a wealth of inventive rhythmic and harmonic support underneath Simon's propulsive soprano. Simon's playing is essentially lyrical, and encompasses a liquidy serpentine phrasing with lucid tone and sure-handed technique (at times Eastern in effect) which lends itself colorfully to this music.

Endomegadecade crowns the disc, demonstrating stunning vitality and intelligent sensitivity to compositional form. A swinging subject explodes furiously, then abruptly shifts into a brief yet violently churning syncopation. The strong hint at a second subject is vaporized by Simon's tenor musings—mindful of Coltrane's *Love Supreme* period—but the rhythmic drive returns to

underpin blazing solos by pianist Adler and Simon's tenor. Simon's blowing here, much freer and impetuous, creates a tension that builds to near teeth-grinding level. A recap of the initial sequence of events provides repose, achieving a consummate, satisfying whole—impressive. *Regina Gabriella* features a succession of sparsely textured improvisations that occupy most of side two. An overly pensive and seemingly endless three-chord sequence on piano is the harmonic footing for the solo meandering of Simon, Scofield, and Bley. Despite Simon's inventive moments on soprano, the monotonous founding harmony and sluggish tempo do little to warrant *Regina's* 10-minute length.

Ensemble playing for the greater part of this set is taut and well-rehearsed, with driving rhythm support from Dunaway, Hart, and Beyer. However, Scofield's biting guitar tone and at times questionable intonation becomes a shade obtrusive.

—stephen mamula

TAL FARLOW

THE TAL FARLOW ALBUM—Verve UMV

2584: *IF THERE'S SOMEONE LOVELIER THAN YOU*; *WITH THE WIND AND THE RAIN IN YOUR HAIR*; *MY OLD FLAME*; *GIBSON BOY*; *YOU AND THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC*; *LOVE NEST*; *BLUES IN THE CLOSET*; *EVERYTHING I'VE GOT*; *LULLABY OF THE LEAVES*; *STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY*; *THIS IS ALWAYS*; *TEA FOR TWO*.

Personnel: Farlow, guitar; Oscar Pettiford (cuts 1-8), Red Mitchell (9-12), bass; Barry Galbraith, guitar (1-8); Joe Morello, drums (1-8); Claude Williamson, piano (9-12).

★ ★ ★ ★

CHROMATIC PALETTE—Concord Jazz

154: *ALL ALONE*; *NUAGES*; *I HEAR A RHAPSODY*; *IF I WERE A BELL*; *ST. THOMAS*; *BLUE ART, TOO*; *STELLA BY STARLIGHT*; *ONE FOR MY BABY (AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD)*.

Personnel: Farlow, guitar; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Gary Mazzaroppi, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ON STAGE—Concord Jazz 143: THE ONE I

LOVE BELONGS TO SOMEBODY ELSE; *MY ROMANCE*; *LULLABY OF BIRDLAND*; *MY SHINING HOUR*; *THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU*; *ROSE ROOM*.

Personnel: Farlow, guitar; Red Norvo, vibes; Hank Jones, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Jake Hanna, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

TRILOGY—Inner City 1099: MY SHINING

HOUR; *IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU*; *THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE*; *BUT NOT FOR YOU*; *FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE*; *FLAMINGO*; *ANGEL EYES*; *THE WOLF AND THE LAMB*; *FUNK AMONG THE KEYS*.

Personnel: Farlow, guitar; Mike Nock, piano; Lynn Christie, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

With only a few exceptions, the world of jazz guitar has progressed so slowly since Farlow left it in 1958 that it's as if it stood still in anticipation of his return. Now that he has returned, even after 20 fallow years, Farlow

can still cut most of his guitar competition; very few of today's young turks begin to match his lyric power, the artful logic of his elegantly sculptured lines, or his harmonic ingenuity. But even Farlow himself has a ways to go before he tops the brilliance of his early recordings—works that still help define the boundaries of great guitar playing.

Taking us back to that glorious prime (the '50s), the Verve reissue is classic Farlow and a classic guitar date by any standard. It gleams like the gem it truly is and sings with depth of soul rarely heard on guitar albums. The balance between sparkling jump tunes and sumptuous ballads is perfect; both bands are superbly chosen and Farlow's playing is simply incandescent. Each phrase he plays fits into the overall construction of his solos like they were preordained by a law of nature, and the grace and ease with which Farlow executes these ideas is amazing.

What seems to be missing from the recent releases is exactly this crystal clarity, this controlled flame of his earlier efforts. The recent ideas are still brilliant, his variety of sounds and alternate techniques are even expanded, and he's clearly absorbed some of the better modern teachings, yet I don't get the same sense of ultimate mastery and inspiration. Farlow strains to deliver some of his more ambitious runs, especially on *Trilogy* and *On Stage* (both recorded in 1976), but much of the grace of the Verve date is missing. By the way, whoever thought of adding the horrible Funk to *Trilogy*? What takes *On Stage* one step higher, though, is the marvelous reunion of Farlow and Norvo, and the sensitivity of pianist Jones (especially on *The Very Thought Of You*) and the rest of the rhythm section.

Recorded two years later, *Chromatic Palette* indicates that Farlow had time to work out some technical problems, resulting in playing that is much closer to his potential. Farlow's solos on *St. Thomas* and *If I Were A Bell* are spectacular guitar theses. And it sure didn't hurt to have Flanagan along for the voyage—what a master of the keyboard he is!

Even at less than his best, Farlow is one of the greatest guitarists to grace this planet, and now that he's quickly getting back into full form, his colleagues had better start woodshedding.

—cliff tinder

KEITH JARRETT

INVOCATIONS/THE MOTH AND THE

FLAME—ECM-D-1201: INVOCATIONS—FIRST (SOLO VOICE); SECOND (MIRAGES, REALITIES); THIRD (POWER, RESOLVE); FOURTH (SHOCK, SCATTER); FIFTH (RECOGNITION); SIXTH (CELEBRATION); SEVENTH (SOLO VOICE); MOTH—PARTS I-V.

Personnel: Jarrett, pipe organ, soprano saxophone (cut 1), acoustic piano (2).

★ ★ ★ ★

A couple of years ago Chip Stern, writing in the *Village Voice*, described Keith Jarrett as "the Elvis Presley of high art." This was a just observation, for the ECM pianist's brilliance is as conspicuous as his musical excess, and his popularity is unusual for one so con-

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cerned with music's aesthetic values. Jarrett is a seeker, using his extraordinary improvising powers as the vehicle for exploring the inner consciousness beyond experience and ego. He may never reach his lofty goal, but the spontaneous poetry manifested on a number of ECM and Impulse recordings confirms the progress of his journey. Yet there have been setbacks, notably when he's conscious of the need to be mystical, subsequently attempting grand, profound musical statements. It's easier thought than done though: Sun Bear Concerts, a 10-disc set, is often excruciatingly verbose, while his orchestral compositions (for example, *The Celestial Hawk* and *Luminence*) are often without structure or life, and *Sacred Hymns*, a solo piano ode to savant/conjurer Gurdjieff, is a child's riddle.

The digitally recorded two-disc *Invocations: The Moth And The Flame* is a worthy addition to Jarrett's discography/spiritual literature. Both the pipe organ and soprano saxophone orisons (*Invocations*) and the piano solos (*Moth*) have focus and shape, their beauty unfolding with pointed drama and clarity of expression. The first disc, like *Hymns/Spheres* (ECM 1086/7), features his playing of the Trinity Organ at the Benedictine Abbey in Ottobeuren, West Germany. Again the honorary lay brother equates melancholy with devotion, though this isn't the stifling, droll ceremony *Hymns* was. While the organ fortissimos and tonal effects on *Third* and *Sixth* evoke awe, the cooler, calmer mien of *Second* and *Fifth* implies defiance to the lock of sin and contrition. *Seventh*, the album's final entreaty to the deity, has Jarrett's mournful soprano phrases filling architect J. M. Fischer's magnificent building, comingling with its own echo before silence prevails—disquieting and deeply moving.

Moth is no less spellbinding. Jarrett's long piano lines of cascading notes on *Part One* are in tandem with the harmonic anchor of his left hand (repeated patterns), but when the anchor shifts and breaks, there's disorder—not for long, though, because the piece ends shortly thereafter in gentleness. The impressionistic *Part Two* tugs at the heartstrings by virtue of his mix of forceful and delicate attacks; each note (its tonal color wondrously captured by producer Manfred Eicher's sound reproduction) packs an emotional wallop. His soloing wizardry is further evinced on the more expansive *Part Four* and *Part Five*. He can be forgiven the occasional grandiose (vainglorious?) sweep across the keyboard and the brief interior monologues because his playing is so obviously heartfelt and sincere. —frank-john hadley

AL HOOD

NOT QUIET RITE—Au Roar AU 001: *NOT QUIET RITE; DENSITIES; COME AGAIN; EAST UNIT; THE DUET.*

Personnel: Hood, piano; Bob Gwynne, bass; Jim Paul, reeds; Jeff Ferguson, percussion.

★ ★ ½

I had to put on my headset to focus on this odd, skittish album—bring up the bass, move the balance right of center, try to discover the groove. Seattle pianist and new music guru

Hood runs a democratic band—everyone solos on every track and they often solo simultaneously, as the style is sort of old/new thing, ala early Cecil Taylor/Jimmy Lyons. The stronger voices belong to Hood, an often engaging pointillist and crisp, spare accompanist despite an "out" piano, and bassist Gwynne, whose round, firm stroke, interesting note choices, and dramatic building show best on the otherwise disparate *Densities*. I like Paul neither in sound (pinched, flaccid) nor content (notey, noodly), and Ferguson adds little to ensembles; their brief *Duet*, however, has a bit of punch.

The compositions (all Hood's except Paul's *Unit*) neither jell nor move: *Rite* and *Come*, hasty Ornetoid snippets, barely frame—never mind key—improvisation, and the 16-minute *Densities* is a textural free exercise that has few bright moments. *Unit* starts with a nice, spooky vamp that Gwynne tries to continue, but Hood and Ferguson scratch it out, like bad boys with crayons, and it never returns. Overall, the album's direction seems a bit scatty and production smudged. It's available from Au Roar Records, 252 Fulton, Seattle, WA 98109. —fred bouchard

CHICO FREEMAN

THE OUTSIDE WITHIN—India

Navigation IN 1042: *UNDERCURRENT; THE SEARCH; LUNA; ASCENT.*

Personnel: Freeman, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; John Hicks, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

MICKEY BASS

SENTIMENTAL MOOD—Chiaroscuro CR

2031: *CARAVAN; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; BAHAMA MAMA; ALONE TOGETHER; B.T. AND ME; SAGITTARIUS RISING.*

Personnel: Bass, bass; Oliver Beener, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kwane Zawadi, trombone, euphonium; Chico Freeman, tenor, soprano saxophone; John Hicks (1, 3), Mickey Tucker (2, 4-6), piano; Michael Carvin, drums; Ray Mantilla, congas, percussion.

★ ★ ★

On his album *Spirit Sensitive* (India Navigation 1045)—an act of reconciliation which broadened the avant garde's search for a jazz tradition to encompass loving interpretations of American popular song—Chico Freeman correctly identified the era of jazz ushered in by John Coltrane as the music's Romantic Period. But the shapely, elegiac form of the ballad is only one of the guises the Romantic temperament assumes in post-modern jazz. More characteristically, it pursues boundless feeling even if at the expense of perfect form. It is this wilder, more Promethean aspect of the Coltrane legacy which comes under Freeman's scrutiny on *Undercurrent*, the fiery performance which consumes the entire first side of his new LP.

Freeman has recorded *Undercurrent* before, as a member of a group led by bassist Cecil McBee, composer of this hypnotic cycle of two-chord vamps. But here, despite extended and engaging solos by each mem-

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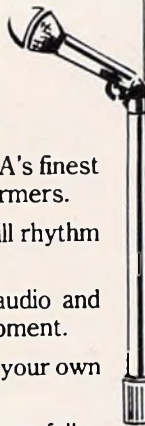
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**RECORD
REVIEWS**

ber of the rhythm section, the piece is more effectively a *bildungsroman* for tenor; Freeman's solo is a maze of superimposed chords and scales of the kind which represent for a saxophonist of Freeman's post-Coltrane generation the same rite of passage that the high hurdles of Parker's *Koko* changes represented for players coming up in the '50s. Freeman meets the challenge with originality and rhythmic ingenuity, especially during a fevered dialogue with DeJohnette in which the miraculous drummer seems to pull bolts of thunder from the heavens to dramatize his points. What lifts Freeman's work here above the efforts of many of the energy players who tried to scale these heights a decade ago is his control, his detachment, his reserve—his classicism, in a word. Freeman isn't storming the gates of delirium, as those players were, but is instead turning up new avenues of exploration in what had seemed a '60s dead end. It is on that level that *Undercurrent* succeeds. Still, there isn't much holding this performance together apart from the quartet's determination to make it cohere, and the piece sustains its length only if the listener is of like mind.

The three Freeman originals on side two, which are shorter, more varied, and more highly structured, offer more rewarding evidence of his maturity. *The Search* opens with arco bass and bass clarinet braying in throaty unison; Freeman switches to tenor for a few choruses of spooky lament before erupting into the raucous, more vehemently articulated (and more vehemently accompanied) passage that takes the track out with no reprise of the theme. Shards of broken rhythm and the haze of suspended chords form a stark backdrop for Freeman's luminous tenor on *Luna*. He solos on bass clarinet only on the interesting and aptly titled *Ascent*, managing to recall Eric Dolphy without seeming overly derivative. Bassist McBee is superb as always on these three titles, and it's a pleasure to hear DeJohnette sounding so unencumbered. Pianist Hicks impresses more as a selfless group player than as a soloist, at least in this kind of outside context. This is a stalwart rhythm section, one whose members have supported Freeman before in a variety of combinations, and one which now anticipates his every move perfectly.

Freeman enjoys a privileged moment on the Mickey Bass LP; Bass' arrangement of *In A Sentimental Mood* is a lush setting for his warm soprano. Elsewhere, however, the mood is far from sentimental—this is no-holds-barred hard-bop with even *Alone Together* cadenced and sent marching along at a militant bounce—and Freeman's tenor solos on the remaining titles are virile, accomplished, and perfectly ordinary. Freeman, like Arthur Blythe, comes off better as the relative conservative in radical surroundings than he does as the sole iconoclast in a more conventional one. Aside from Freeman, the album offers a rare opportunity to hear Oliver Beener and Kwane Zawadi (a.k.a. Bernard McKinney), two veterans who solo competently if not especially imaginatively, and it marks the emergence of longtime Bobby Timmons bassist Bass (no jokes on his name from me) as a promising writer. It's a good record, but it lacks the spark of life the

presence of a Chico Freeman unchained might have given it. —francis davis

ROLLING STONES

TATTOO YOU—Rolling Stones Records
COC 16052: *START ME UP; HANG FIRE; SLAVE; LITTLE T & A; BLACK LIMOUSINE; NEIGHBORS; WORRIED ABOUT YOU; TOPS; HEAVEN; NO USE IN CRYING; WAITING ON A FRIEND.*

Personnel: Mick Jagger, vocals; Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood, guitar, vocals; Bill Wyman, electric bass; Charlie Watts, drums; Sonny Rollins, tenor saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ½

THE KINKS

GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT—Arista AL 9567: *AROUND THE DIAL; GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT; KILLER'S EYES; PREDICTABLE; ADD IT UP; DESTROYER; YO-YO; BACK TO FRONT; ART LOVER; A LITTLE BIT OF ABUSE; BETTER THINGS.*

Personnel: Ray Davies, vocals, guitar, synthesizer, piano; Dave Davies, guitar, vocals; Jim Radford, electric bass; Ian Gibbons, keyboards; Mick Avory, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

THE WHO

FACE DANCES—Warner Bros. HS 3516:

YOU BETTER YOU BET; DON'T LET GO THE COAT; CACHE CACHE; THE QUIET ONE; DID YOU STEAL MY MONEY; HOW CAN YOU DO IT ALONE; DAILY RECORDS; YOU; ANOTHER TRICKY DAY.

Personnel: Pete Townshend, guitar, vocals; Roger Daltrey, vocals; John Entwistle, electric bass, vocals; Kenney Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Call these bands the survivors, godfathers, living fossils, or what you will—but some 16 years after the British Invasion, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, and the Who have each issued fresh-sounding new albums. With original key members mostly intact (excepting the late Keith Moon and Brian Jones), these old masters prove that they're still capable of topping most contemporary bands even if they don't often match their own best work.

It's easy to stereotype each band's charismatic leader: Ray Davies as social critic, Pete Townshend the romantic mystic, and Mick Jagger the raunchy hedonist. Throughout the years, despite using the near-identical structure of the three- to five-minute pop song (Davies' and Townshend's forays into "operatic" form notwithstanding), the thematic content and lyrical invention of each has evolved in strikingly different ways. There's no denying the force and beauty of much of the music produced by all three men, but Davies and Townshend have always tried to penetrate their listeners' hearts and intellects with their lyrics, while it's clear Jagger and the Stones have long since abandoned attempts to communicate on any but the physical level (viz. "It's only rock & roll, but I like it.")

Tattoo You is a reaffirmation of the Stones' power to create straightahead rock & roll after the derivative material found on *Emotional Rescue*. From the staccato handclaps propelling *Start Me Up* forward to the bubbling bass and cowbell beat of *Slave* (with Sonny Rollins' Stax sax overlay) to the effective falsetto of *Worried About You* and *Waiting On A Friend's* Jamaican flavor, the tunes do affect the body relentlessly. Parts of you are dancing even if you're strapped to the couch. But your body is all that's moved: with the exception of *Tops*—a commentary on men who prey on would-be starlets—there's hardly a lyric worth hearing twice.

Give The People What They Want, on the other hand, is another sampler of Ray Davies contemporary mini-essays. Even when the music's heavy-handedness hammers you into indifference (*Add It Up*), these songs have subjects to discuss and points to be made. Around *The Dial*, for example, is an infectious post-new wave sendup with a driving beat and plaintive call to a lost, beloved DJ encompassing the history of rock radio and alluding to a hope that even God's voice may be out there somewhere "on the dial." Similarly, the title track (with its shouted "hey hey hey") wakes you up to the vagaries of the marketplace and the trials within a decades-long career of writing pop songs—"The more they get the more they need/Every time they get harder and harder to please." *Killer's Eyes* is a squeezed-out wail addressing the ever-growing legion of public assassins, while *Destroyer's* frenetic beat echoes past Kinks hits *Lola* and *All Day And All Of The Night* while Ray laments self-destructive paranoia. As usual, Davies reveals his mastery of form and content throughout, setting such lines as "He sits in the armchair, watches Channel 4/But his brain's not expected home for an hour or more" (*Yo-Yo*) in leisurely paced opposition to the song's incessant refrain of the child's toy mirroring the character's psyche.

Pete Townshend of the Who, meanwhile, continues to experiment with varied musical styles in *Face Dances*—in order to explore spiritual destinations and more personal way stations. The chorus of *You Better You Bet* emphasizes the push/pull of romantic entanglements while the body of the song allows Daltrey to hit home with lines like "I showed up late one night with a neon light for a visa/But knowing I'm so eager to fight can't make letting me in any easier." *Don't Let Go The Coat* is a calypso-like hymn to keeping the faith—to yourself, your lover, or Someone upstairs. *Did You Steal My Money* uses a light reggae beat while noticing that since everyone's out to get you, there's no sense in holding it against them. Fast approaching middle age in an industry dominated by youthful fervor and still wanting to make *Daily Records* even if your kids won't understand, triggers these lines: "Got to admit that I created private worlds/Cold sex and booze don't impress my little girls." And following the obligatory John Entwistle heavier-than-thou song (*You*) about being shackled up with a demon, the album closes with the Townshend-penned masterpiece *Another Tricky Day*, which advocates asking the Big Questions without ignoring the daily matters-at-

hand. More incisive than *It's Only Rock & Roll*, Townshend concludes "The world seems in a spiral/Life seems such a worthless title/But break out and start a fire ya'll/It's all here on the vinyl."

—richard friedman

JEROME COOPER

FOR THE PEOPLE—hat Hut Seven 1R07: MOVEMENTS 1-6.

Personnel: Cooper, drums, chirimia, African balaphone, Brazilian whistle; Oliver Lake, alto saxophone, flute, bells, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

DOUG HAMMOND

ALONE—Scarecrow SC-803: *To My Family*; *3 1/2 In Spanish*; *To Cozy And Max*; *Mitsu*; *The Prefabricated Maze*; *For Fiets Feet*; *Alone*; *Ancestors*; *The Bite*.

Personnel: Hammond, drums, piano, slit gong, voice, marimba.

★ ★ ★

Jerome Cooper is best known as a mid-'70s member of the Anthony Braxton quartet and as co-partner, with Leroy Jenkins and Sirone, in the Revolutionary Ensemble. *For The People* and his earlier *The Unpredictability Of Predictability* (About Time AT-1002) were recorded live during a two-month span in 1979. While *For The People* benefits from the incendiary support of reedist Oliver Lake, the beguiling *Unpredictability* was a genuine solo effort. Blending Cooper's simultaneous stylings on chirimia (a small reed instrument), balaphone, and traps, *Unpredictability* made for an exciting synthesis which brought to mind musics of Bali, Turkey, and several points in between.

For The People covers similar turf. Grouped into six unnumbered "movements" of five to 14 minutes in length, the 40-minute performance exudes an invigorating ethnic energy. Lake's flute and the omnipresent Cooper on sock cymbal, bass drum, balaphone, and chirimia sound unison pentatonics in the outer movements. After many repetitions of the first movement's opening procession-like figure, Cooper ventures into self-accompanied musette-sounding chromatics which segue into the pastoral musings of Lake's a cappella flute. At nearly 14 minutes this segment is no monument to economy but it's lifting nevertheless. Movements 2-5 race ahead with greater brawn as Cooper's polyrhythmic shadings whoosh the ears through a roundhouse of churning wheels. Lake's blazing alto, present throughout, ignites post-Dolphy solos of bursting elastic fragments and urgently skipping jagged lines.

For The People has its imperfections. Lake's ragged phrasing and intonation mar the first movement's unison, and, with replays, a troubling sameness undercuts the athletic propulsion of Cooper's traps on the middle movements. Still, Cooper's live performance—a breathing music which invites improvisatory reaching—bears the stamp of vitality and power throughout.

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The studied modular structures of Doug Hammond's LP die on the vine, in comparison, from being overly careful. Alone collects nine studio tracks showcasing the Mingus alumnus on piano, marimba, balaphone, and voice as well as drums. The end-product is an unassuming sampler of tidy set-pieces with just under 30 minutes playing time. Ranging from the latinate 3½ *In Spanish* to the spare, wistful title song, Hammond's outings for piano are pleasant yet undistinguished and guarded in improvisation. On drums he fares better: *For Feitz Feets*, a playful stop-time excursion, contains the most effective solo of the date. Here, as on *The Bite*, one of two additional spotlights for traps alone, one detects an exuberance not widespread within these grooves.

Recalling his duet with Honey Gordon on *Mingus Moves*, I expected Hammond's vocals to be a plus. On *To My Family* and much of *The Prefabricated Maze*, Hammond squanders this potential advantage with hammy, staccato recitation of puerile poetry. *Maze's* rich resonant humming, however, is a wondrous antidote to Hammonds' words, and the closing marimba evokes just the right touch of hauntingness and mystery.

When one subtracts the trivial recitations, *Alone* adds up to an engaging effort that could have been better. Perhaps overdubbing and some additional risk-taking can reduce the monotony next time around.

—peter kostakis

McCOY TYNER

LA LEGENDA DE LA HORA (THE LEGEND OF THE HOUR)—Columbia FC 37375: *LA VIDA FELIZ (THE HAPPY LIFE)*; *JA'CARA (A SERENADE)*; *LA HABANA SOL (THE HAVANA SUN)*; *WALK SPIRIT, TALK SPIRIT; LA BUSCA (THE SEARCH)*.

Personnel: Tyner, acoustic piano; Hubert Laws, flute; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes, marimba; Paquito D'Rivera, alto, soprano saxophone; Chico Freeman, tenor saxophone; Marcus Belgrave, trumpet, flugelhorn; Avery Sharpe, acoustic bass; Ignacio Berroa, drums; Daniel Ponce, percussion; Harold Kohon, John Blake, Karen Milne, Elliot Rosoff, violin; Jesse Levine, Julian Barber, viola; Kermit Moore, Jonathon Abramowitz, cello; William Fischer, conductor.

★ ★ ★

McCoy Tyner knows the secret of making good records. Working with two basic ingredients—his earthy, rhythmic compositions and his forthright, energetic pianistics—Tyner has turned out quality jazz albums since the mid-'60s. To his credit, these albums have sold consistently, a feat the pianist/composer has achieved without sacrificing either his individuality or his artistic integrity.

To keep his records fresh and marketable, Tyner alters the settings for his playing and writing, offering different concepts and instrumental groupings with each successive disc. In the recent past he's been featured with all-star trios, big bands with voices, and even his working band. For *Leyenda*, his CBS

debut date, Tyner has chosen to use a nonet, plus string section, to play five originals, four of which are in an Afro-Cuban vein.

The opening *Vida* is a complex tune with unexpected melodic and rhythmic shifts. Taken medium-up with an Afro-bossa flavor, the melody is played by horns and rhythm section interweaving with piano, vibes, and flute. Hutcherson and Freeman both solo enthusiastically, the hornman getting a light, pleasing tone as he scrambles amidst the changes. Tyner shows again that he's a constantly improving pianist, dashing out rock-hard bass notes and effortless-sounding right-hand lines, propelled by Berroa's bracing trap work—which is excellent throughout the session. *Ja'Cará* is a warm, pretty tune played by piano, rhythm, and strings echoing some of the piano lines. It is brief and quieting. *Habana* is based around four propulsive rhythmic figures. This brisk blowing tune opens with congas and rim-shots on timbales and is highlighted by the leader's rippling lines and D'Rivera's bristling alto. Though not an original stylist—at first he gets a thick, throbbing sound reminiscent of Leo Wright while his wide vibrato and forceful upper register bring Arthur Blythe to mind—D'Rivera is certainly stimulating and fits the mood here.

The only non-Afro-Cuban piece is *Walk*, a 12-bar tune that alternates between minor chords a whole step apart. Here Tyner employs scale patterns extensively and strolls behind Freeman, who wails freely. Bassist Sharpe's lone solo of the date is intense and effective. The album's finale, *Busca*, is centered by an ostinato played by Sharpe, and Hutcherson's marimba and Laws' flute add to the dark, mysterious air the tune exudes.

While Tyner has produced more memorable musical moments, *Leyenda* is still a rewarding listening experience.

—zan stewart

WILLIS JACKSON/ VON FREEMAN

LOCKIN' HORNS (LIVE AT LAREN)—

Muse MR 5200: *POW!*; *THE MAN I LOVE*; *TROUBLED TIMES*; *SUMMERTIME*; *THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE*; *WILLIS AND VON*.

Personnel: Jackson, Freeman, tenor saxophone; Carl Wilson, organ; Joe Jones, guitar; Yusef Ali, drums.

★ ★ ★

While hardly the summit conference that its title implies—Jackson and Freeman actually meet on only one cut—*Lockin' Horns* is a pleasant enough blowing session. The balance of the set presents each tenor ace doing his own respective thing, in typically good if not sensational form. Jackson's solid band provides backing for both artists, more successfully for Jackson.

Willis jumps into side one with a 10-minute swing-shuffle called *Pow!* Pushed by Yusef Ali's press rolls and accents on the head, "Gator" is hot from jump street. He honks, syncopates, runs the scales and testifies, displaying the soulful dexterity, full fat tone, and r&b flavor which are his trade-

marks. Guitarist Joe Jones is next up with a tasteful workout in the Montgomery/Burrell vein, then organist Carl Wilson—simultaneously the set's stomping, fleet footed bassist on organ pedals—fires away in fine fettle. *The Man I Love* gets a varied tempo treatment which runs from ballad to breakneck, quoting a bunch of other chestnuts along the way; in the quieter passages Gator demonstrates his sensual mastery of the lush ballad form. *Troubled Times* is another toe-tapper, shorter than *Pow!* but more intense.

Side two brings on Freeman with *Summertime*. Von kicks it off slightly up, helped by Jones' rich rhythmic chording. Characteristically his tone is thinner than Gator's, with more abstraction in his ideas and phrases; Freeman swings, but not with Jackson's bluesy, rhythmic certainty. Midway through Von slows it down for some heartfelt balladizing, which continues on *The Shadow Of Your Smile*. Long sustained notes blend with fluid runs, enhanced by Wilson's dynamic swells. Freeman takes it alone near the end for a haunting a capella sequence.

Finally we come to the "first meeting of two highly individualistic stylists," a bit of mid-tempo boppish swing entitled *Willis And Von*. Our heroes stumble with the head but find the groove quickly, each blowing several spirited choruses. The intensity escalates with traded fours, reaching a mild climax in back-to-back honking flurries. It's an energetic blowout, but a routine, flimsy cornerstone for a joint debut album by such big talents. Muse would have done better to wait 'til they could issue a complete, well-planned session.

Lockin' Horns' unremarkable outcome is no reflection on any of the players. Given time for true collaboration, Gator and Von could well produce some heavy material. Though individually fine, on this casual, off-the-cuff set they barely had time to say hello.

—ben sandmel

JERRY GONZALEZ

YA YO ME CURE—American Clave 1001: *AGUEYBANA ZEMI*; *NEFERITI*; *YA YO ME CURE*; *THE LUCY THEME*; *EVIDENCE*; *BABA FIEDEN ORISHA*; *CARAVAN*.

Personnel: Gonzalez, quinto, cascara, trumpet, flugelhorn, bombo, vocals; Frankie Rodriguez, lead vocals, quinto (cut 5), bata, checkere; Hilton Ruiz, piano, vocals; Andy Gonzalez, bass, vocals; Carlos Mestre, checkere, tumbador, vocals; Gene Golden, bata, tresgolpe, checkere, vocals; Edgardo Miranda, cuatro, electric guitar; Vincente George, guiro, percussion; Steve Torre, trombone, conch shells, percussion; Papo Vasquez, trombone, vocals; Mario Rivera, tenor saxophone, vocals; Nicky Marrero, timbales, checkere, guataca; Don Alias, drums (5); Milton Cardona, vocals (1).

★ ★ ★ ½

Like most musical traditions that find their way to New York, the Caribbean heritage couldn't resist the alluring pull of the confluence of musics this city nourishes. This amazing diversity, the "collection of realized dreams; dreams of music that I could only

feel being a Nuyoriqueno," as Gonzalez puts it, makes this album a churning, vital, and imaginative release.

Just as jazz assimilated elements of latin music many decades ago, contemporary latin musicians also pride themselves on their fluency in the language of jazz. The simple fact that both traditions share common genesis in the wealth of African music makes Gonzalez' fusion so completely natural. By literally pouring on the latin spices, he cooks up a steamy, picante sauce. The thick layers of cross-rhythms and interlocking percussion parts add new dimensions to the jazzers: the wide range of percussion highs and lows elaborate on Nefertiti's already mysterious nature, while the complex polyrhythms accentuate the quirky rhythmic construction of *Evidence*—my favorite cut. Even Clark Terry would be jealous of Gonzalez' humorous treatment of the Ricardo's own Lucy Theme.

Ruiz, who has impeccable jazz credentials already in his young career, is the most consistent and moving soloist on the album. While Gonzalez' trumpet turns out some choice Miles Davis-isms on *Nefertiti*, elsewhere his attempts at acrobatic Freddie Hubbard pentatonics are strained and tense. Miranda's few solos are tasty, but Rivera's one solo spot, on *Caravan*, is the hottest improvisation on the album (I would have liked to have heard more from him).

Nicely juxtaposed with the "jazz" numbers are more traditional Caribbean pieces written by lead vocalist Rodriguez. Again, the percussion ensemble burns with complex rhythms, while Ruiz, Miranda, and bassist Andy Gonzalez fill out the rhythm section (and how simple the jazz concept of a rhythm section seems compared to what's happening here). All the latin pieces are similar in construction: Rodriguez leading a vocal chorus which lays down patterns that compliment the percussion parts. But each piece has its own distinct flavor.

Conceptually, this album is amazing. For idioms (latin and jazz) that must constantly search for new ideas and perspectives, *Cure* suggests some fascinating possibilities.

—cliff tinder

TERUMASA HINO

DOUBLE RAINBOW—Columbia FC37420:
*MERRY GO ROUND; CHERRY HILL ANGEL;
YELLOW JACKET; MIWA YAMA;
ABORIGINAL.*

Personnel: Hino, cornet, percussion (cut 5); Steve Grossman, soprano saxophone; Masabumi Kikuchi, Kenny Kirkland, Herbie Hancock, Mark Gray, keyboards; Lou Volpe, Butch Campbell, James Mason, Barry Finnerty, David Spinozza, guitars; Anthony Jackson, Hassan Jenkins (3), Herb Bushler (4), bass; Harvey Mason, Lenny White (3), Billy Hart (4), drums; Don Alias, Airtio Moreira, Manolo Badrena, percussion; Sam Morrison, wind driver (3,4); Emily Mitchell, harp (4); Eddie Gomez, George Mraz, Reggie Workman, acoustic bass (5); Steve Turre, didjeridu, shell horns, (5).

★ ★ ★ ½

MASABUMI KIKUCHI

SUSTO—Columbia FC37372: *CIRCLE/LINE;
CITY SNOW; GUMBO; NEW NATIVE.*

Personnel: Kikuchi, keyboards; Terumasa Hino, cornet, Bolivian flute; Steve Grossman, Dave Liebman, reeds; Richie Morales, 'Yahya' Victor Jones, drums; Hassan Jenkins, bass; James Mason, Marlon Graves, Barry Finnerty, Billy Patterson, Butch Campbell, Ronnie Drayton, guitars; Aiyb Dieng, Alyrio Lima, Airtio Moreira, percussion; Sam Morrison, wind driver; Ed Walsh, Oberheim synthesizer (1).

★ ★ ★ ★

SHUNZO OHNO

QUARTER MOON—Inner City IC1108:
*FATBACK; MAY; JEFF; IN THE SKY;
AUTUMN RAIN; THE DAWN; QUARTER
MOON; WE WILL.*

Personnel: Ohno, trumpet, mini-Moog, solina; Jeff Laton, guitar; T. M. Stevens, Marcus Miller, electric bass; Carter Jefferson, tenor, soprano saxophone; Onaje Allan Gumbs, keyboards; Victor Louis, drums; Sue Evans, congas, percussion; Vivian Cherry, Yvonne Lewis, Ullanda McCullough, vocals.

★ ★ ★

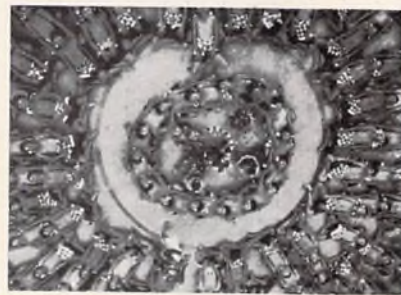
There's all kinds of jazz coming from Japan these days, as CBS and Inner City acknowledge in releases from keyboardist Masabumi Kikuchi, cornetist Terumasa Hino, and trumpeter Shunzo Ohno, with whom Kikuchi and Hino have previously recorded. The influence of Miles Davis (post-Bitches Brew) is especially evident on the Hino and Kikuchi offerings, in the loose arrangements as well as the electric makeup of the bands.

Hino's *Double Rainbow* begins with an organ vamp before launching into a percussion-rich groove that sets the tone for the rest of the album. There is plenty of variation in each player's part, except for Anthony Jackson's steady bass pulse. Drummer Mason is nearly swallowed up by the rattling and shaking of Alias, Airtio, and Badrena, but gets more and more into the groove, laying off the hi-hat to contribute some splashy funk. Hino's solo contains more space than notes as he squeals and dives, and Grossman's soprano work is, in contrast, a well-aimed torrent of sound. Hino's tone goes sweet on the wistful *Cherry Hill Angel*. Backed minimally by his all-star (New York) band, Hino cries out the melody amidst percussion flourishes and light-fingered piano work by Kikuchi and Kenny Kirkland. A cacophony of sounds (Is it Kikuchi's Korg? Airtio's queixada? Morrison's wind driver?) persist on *Yellow Jacket*, an otherwise simple pop-jazz tune.

The album's final two cuts are more interesting. Gil Evans helped arrange *Miwa Yama* into near formlessness. The ethereal effects of harp, wind driver, and Billy Hart's cymbal cushions are augmented by Kikuchi's rich piano chords, while Hino solos with seemingly little regard for any of it. A trio of acoustic bassists give harmonic coloring and a solid low underpinning to *Aboriginal*.

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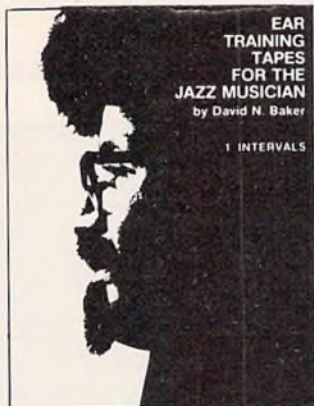
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Kikuchi and Kirkland provide eerie keyboard work, and Steve Turre has an open mike for his didjeridu and shell horn effects. Harvey Mason creates a musical groove with his drum and temple block pattern, and the ever-faithful percussion section rips away behind him. Hino darts in and out of the jam with high pitched screeches, elusive and enigmatic.

Like his countryman Hino, Masabumi Kikuchi draws on a wealth of musical experiences. The keyboarder spent time with Sonny Rollins, Gary Peacock, and Elvin Jones during the '60s and '70s, and was prominent in Miles Davis' unreleased 1978 CBS sessions (on which Miles did not play). Kikuchi acknowledges Miles' influence, and has also been touched by the likes of Ellington and Stockhausen as well as the sculptor Calder. He composed and arranged much of Hino's *Double Rainbow*, and his talents shine brighter still on his CBS debut *Susto*. Kikuchi employs a lot of musicians on the session, including combinations of three guitarists, three percussionists, and two drummers. On the 7/4 vamp *Circle/Line*, drummers Morales and 'Yahya' Jones play identical patterns, while on *New Native* their beats are contrapuntal. Both approaches strengthen the grooves, without cluttering them. Guitar and percussion arrangements are equally heady.

Kikuchi has a penchant for including drastically different rhythmic interludes in his arrangements. It was evident in his work on Hino's album, and is displayed on *Circle/Line* and *Gumbo* here. The former boils consistently while Grossman and Liebman spar with their sopranos, and Hino adds his licks on Bolivian flute. Kikuchi adds synthesizer effects, some musical, some that sound more natural, like running water. Oddly shaped ensemble licks come out of nowhere to punctuate pauses in the long simmering jam. Grossman's fat tenor languishes over the reggae-ish feel of *Gumbo*, before the beat goes triple-time for a brief techno-pop interlude led by Kikuchi's synthesizer blasts.

Hassan Jenkins' bass work is always pulsive, and usually quite repetitive beneath all the changes. He starts *New Native* on its journey with a strong ostinato line, and the rest of the ensemble falls into place, though not where you think they might. The two feels not only coexist, but mesh beautifully. Hino's cornet solo is more pointed than any on his own LP, as Kikuchi comps spiritedly on organ, and Morales and Jones combine to sound like Al Foster. Kikuchi's synthesizer solo could well be described as "industrial noise." His creative use of technology helps keep this set fresh, always alive.

Trumpeter Shunzo Ohno has put together an enjoyable but somewhat inconsistent package on his Inner City release *Quarter Moon*. When the album is hot, it bubbles with the intensity of earliest (post-jazz) Crusaders or Brecker Brothers jams. Other selections are more like "dinner jazz," and are played beautifully, but do little to enhance the session.

The album-opening *Fatback* is an infectious funk tune, with drummer Victor Louis bouncing all over the groove. Scratching guitar lines march alongside T. M. Stevens' popping bass work. Ohno and saxman Carter

Jefferson play with effective restraint, paying lots of attention to the tune's important dynamic changes. Jeff showcases Ohno's reverberating trumpet, as the pulsating rhythm section again gets in some adventurous playing.

Autumn Rain is filled with a myriad of sound colors, and is the most successful of the pop-jazz pieces on *Quarter Moon*. Ohno's trumpet playing is "inside," very melodic—he has a feeling for what kind of playing each song needs. On *The Dawn*, Ohno trades flashy solos with Jefferson, high screeches balancing the fluctuating tenor bursts. This song develops well, beginning with Louis' drum cadence, adding instruments one-by-one, and working up to a definite boil. Sue Evans' percussion work throughout the album adds interesting rhythmic twists as well as support.

Ohno's horn is a very capable lead voice, and he has hooked up with fine players here. His compositions mix progressive ideas with melodic pop-jazz elements, so he should be fairly successful in the modern marketplace. But if you're looking for vision or invention, Kikuchi is your man. —robin tolleson

BUDDY TATE

THE GREAT—Concord Jazz CJ-163: *ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET; WHAT ARE YOU DOING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE; AT SUNDOWN; SOFTLY, AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; BERNIE'S TUNE; I REALIZE NOW; DUCKIE; SHINY STOCKINGS.*

Personnel: Tate, clarinet, tenor, baritone saxophone; Warren Vache, cornet; Hank Jones, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; Mel Lewis (cuts 1,2,4,5,8), Jackie Williams (3,6,7), drums; Paul Tate, vocal (6).

★ ★ ★

TATE A TETE AT LA FONTAINE, COPENHAGEN—Storyville SLP-4030: *STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY; BODY AND SOUL; BUDDY'S BLUES; IN A MELLOW TONE; I SURRENDER, DEAR.*

Personnel: Tate, tenor saxophone, vocal (cut 3); Tete Montoliu, piano; Bo Stief, bass; Svend Erik Norregard, drums; Finn Ziegler, violin (3,4).

★ ★ ★ ½

**BUDDY TATE/
SCOTT HAMILTON**

SCOTT'S BUDDY—Concord Jazz CJ-148: *THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; SCOTT'S BUDDY; SWINGIN' AWAY; CLOSE YOUR EYES; I WANT A LITTLE GIRL; SCOTT'S SOUP; DOGGIN' AROUND.*

Personnel: Hamilton, Tate, tenor saxophone; Cal Collins, guitar; Nat Pierce, piano; Bob Maize, bass; Jake Hanna, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Buddy Tate is a Texas tenor without the melodrama. His playing has a sinewy leanness, but a jazz cry and gritty timbres are prominent, too: his Hawkins caresses and his Lester leaps. He controls a mean falsetto

region. His pacing is blues-climactic. Although Tate's improvisations are uniformly agreeable from record to record here, he responds differently to each group. The rhythmic character of each album largely determines its quality.

The Great Buddy Tate boasts a late-swing era/early-bop rhythmic feeling and Vache's tempered-to-fit-the-moment lyricism (best on the boppish *Bernie's Tune* and *Green Dolphin*). Tate also features the clarinet and baritone saxophone versions of his tenor vocabulary, but he impresses most with the sumptuous tenor ballads *I Realize Now* (sung by his son in a soul-smooth '50s voice) and *What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life*—all breathy entrances, rhapsodic phrasing, and lingering releases. The rhythm section is light and tasty, but perfunctory, without that special heat or spice. Jones does unfailingly well in solo and ensemble turns, and Hinton and the drummers lay down a supple pulse. The true shouting occurs on the 16-bar blues *Duckie* and on the out-chorus to *Shiny Stockings*.

Tate *A Tete At La Fontaine* is a 1975 "live" club date with a pick-up bop/post-bop rhythm trio. Montoliu, who ravishes his solo space, contrasts markedly with the leader's more formal architecture. The pianist's Bill Evans chords and Tatum/Peterson speed-of-light runs leave impressive modern impressions. Tate grabs the crowd with a stomping beat on *Savoy*, some climactic riffing on *Buddy's Blues*, and energetic Texas cooking on *Mellow Tone*. The ballads are handled with gruff Hawkish sonorities. Throughout, bassist Stief walks sturdily, often loosing a handful of snarling low notes, while Norregard chatters boppishly. Violinist Ziegler, who appears on *Mellow Tone* and the blues, begins well in hornlike fashion, but loses momentum in meandering phrase endings.

The solo differences between Tate and his sidemen in no way preclude mutual swinging in the ensembles. Tate's leadership and strong, declamatory voice assert themselves most convincingly in this challenging context where a less-definitive soloist could readily become mincemeat under the pianist's powerful chops.

Compatibility of styles is the hallmark of Scott's *Buddy*. It's back to Kansas City on this one, swinging all the way. Collins' rhythm guitar and Pierce's piano assist immeasurably in oiling the flow. Maize walks like Walter Page (to return to the roots). And have you ever considered how invariably right Hanna is for this kind of music? Time, dynamics, shading, punctuation—you name it—and he's right there.

The tenor tandem sizzles. Hamilton insinuates as much as he states. His solos vaporize out of the beat, slip around melodic corners, intensify with Tate-like accents and growls, and vanish quietly. Tate, with a nod to the younger man, becomes more fluent and graceful than usual—more sensuous. The Kansas City aura of Scott's *Buddy*, *Swingin' Away*, *Scott's Soup*, and *Doggin' Around* extends to swinging performances of *There Will Never Be Another You* and *Close Your Eyes*. Each saxophonist love-whispers a ballad to complete this fine set. The sidemen solo idiomatically. Pierce, who has subbed

for the pianist in the Basie band, assumes a Count-implied role, but speaks clearly of himself, too. Collins essays the proper Southwestern twang and bluesiness.

—owen cordle

CLARK TERRY

FUNK DUMPLIN'S—Matrix MTX 1002:

FUNK DUMPLIN'S; SERENITY; BRUSHES AND BRASS; BEAUTIFUL; SNAVSET BLUES; BAYSIDE COOKOUT; SOMEBODY DONE STOLE MY BLUES; A CHILD IS BORN; SILLY SAMBA.

Personnel: Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocal; Kenny Drew, piano; Red Mitchell, bass, vocal; Ed Thigpen, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

YES, THE BLUES—Pablo Today D2312127:

DIDDLEN'; RAILROAD PORTER BLUES; SWINGIN' THE BLUES; MARINA BAY REDNECKS; QUICKSAND; THE SNAPPER; KIDNEY STEW.

Personnel: Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocal; Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, alto saxophone, vocal; "Harmonica George" Smith, harmonica; Art Hillery, piano; John Heard, bass; Roy McCurdy, drums.

★ ★ ★

The ageless, irrepressible Terry continues to mumble his vocals and chuckle through his horns with an enthusiasm that belies his four-plus decades in music. His hallmark is consistency—in execution, in inventiveness, in vitality. The variation in rating here is due to Terry's support rather than to Terry himself.

Yes, *The Blues*, the more recent of the two sessions (1981), is also the weaker of the two. An all-blues set joining jazz and blues musicians is hardly a novel idea; here, however, the ingredients don't mix well, and the results are spotty at best. Heard and McCurdy are a solid, almost stolid rhythm team; Hillery is adequate. The less said of Harmonica George, however, the better. Vinson's gritty vocals have an authentic gruffness about them; his boppish alto is pleasant but quavering, and at times a trifle rusty. Terry naturally provides the chief interest here. He needs no external power source, and his solos crackle with an electricity otherwise absent from the proceedings. Particularly noteworthy are his relaxed Harmon-muted choruses on *Swingin' The Blues* (why does his solo fade before it ends?) and the hot ride he takes over *Quicksand* (his solo from this tune is transcribed in a Pro Session this issue).

The *Funk Dumplin's* set benefits by better backing. Drew, Mitchell, and Thigpen are a closer match to the ebullient Terry, and the set is more balanced as a result. The title track is a strutting minor blues with swaggering Terry, crisp Drew, and sonorous Mitchell. The session includes two ballads, Drew's *Serenity* (Harmon-muted Terry, lacy Drew) and Mitchell's *Beautiful* (rich Terry flugelhorn). *Brushes And Brass* is Terry and Thigpen on a fast blues; *Bayside Cookout* is the blues with a bridge. Only *A Child Is Born* is not quite up to par, as it's set at a tempo that suggests the birthing of an elephant.

About that manic Delta bluesman, Mumblers: Terry's incoherent alter-ego singer has



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RECORD REVIEWS

been around for the better part of two decades, and one would expect the gag to have worn thin by now. But it hasn't, perhaps due to Terry's basic good humor and his honest feeling for the blues. Like the rest of Terry's playing here, it's familiar but consistently good. —david wild

LESTER YOUNG

IN WASHINGTON, D.C., 1956, VOLUME III—Pablo Live 2308-228: *JUST YOU, JUST ME; SOMETIMES I'M HAPPY; UP 'N ADAM; INDIANA; G's, IF YOU PLEASE; THERE'LL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU.*

Personnel: Young, tenor saxophone; Bill Potts, piano; Norman Williams, bass; Jim Lucht, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Lester Young's stock started to go down during the early '50s, for, according to the traditional barometer applied to the flow of jazz influences—the interest shown by younger black musicians—he was exerting considerably less power than he had in former years. For the most part, as the many recorded documents of his live performances during this period indicate, he was given increasingly to repetitious, simplistic echoes of his earlier triumphs. It appeared to many as if he were merely hanging on. Jazz had been moving in other, more complicated directions for years, and Young made no secret about his discomfiture with complexity. But were his apparently listless distillations the result of disillusionment and resignation, or were they indeed a mature pronouncement offered by a man remarkably changed from the more ebullient Lester Young of yore? No one knew for sure, and speculation among the serious continued for years.

Recently, however, a virtual treasure trove of new live material from this period has surfaced, thanks to the combined efforts of pianist Bill Potts—who was the original recordist—and remastering engineer Jack Towers. We have already seen the release of *Volumes I and II* in this series (Pablo Live 2308-219 and 225), and this latest succeeds in maintaining the same level of musical quality as its predecessors. But exactly what more does this new documentation teach us about Young's latter day attitudes and abilities that the scores of previously available live checks from the '50s did not? For one, they present us with a view of the man in company that he obviously relished. Though much younger than he, his accompanists on this date at Olivia's Patio Lounge did not seem to share their peers' disdain of earlier styles and stylists. Indeed, they were actually in awe of his very presence . . . but not so much that they could not give him the type of support he wanted. They didn't push or crowd the beat, and they didn't give him inappropriate gooses in the rear. Instead they treated him with all the loving care and respect a master of his venerable stature deserved.

As a consequence, Young played the best he had in years. His tone full and confident, his ideas almost as freely flowing as ever, the prematurely aged tenorman seemed as

though he had finally grasped a new lease on life. But club gigs being what they always have been, this one, too, had to end. Later recordings show Young in the company of musicians closer to his own age and experience; however, the feeling and drive that came to him so effortlessly at Olivia's never, to our present knowledge, resurfaced again.

In light of both Young's continued mystique and his unquestionable importance in the development of jazz, it behooves the determined student to hear at least one, if not all three, of these well-programmed LPs. Though all of the selections are frequent inhabitants of Young's wintry terrain, they have seldom been played as well as they were during this short, praiseworthy engagement. —jack sohmer

NEW YORK SAXOPHONE QUARTET

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QUARTET—Stash ST-210: *THREE IMPROVISATIONS; CHANT D'AMOUR; CHANEFLEUR; BACH'S FIREWORKS MUSIC; INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO; THREE JAYS AND A BEE; Q.T.; LA BLUES.*

Personnel: Ray Beckenstein, soprano saxophone; Dennis Anderson, alto saxophone; Billy Kerr, tenor saxophone; Wally Kane, baritone saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★

ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET

AS WAS—Metallanguage 118: *QUILL;*

ESCAPE FROM ZERO VILLAGE; UNDER THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE; PAINT ANOTHER TAKE OF THE SHOOTPOOP; DAREDEVILS.

Personnel: Jon Raskin, baritone, alto, soprano saxophone, clarinet; Larry Ochs, tenor, soprano, alto saxophone; Andrew Voigt, alto, soprano, soprano saxophone, flutes; Bruce Ackley, soprano saxophone, clarinet.

★ ★ ★ ★

WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET

W.S.Q.—Black Saint BSR 0046: *SUNDANCE; PLAIN SONG; CONNECTIONS; W.S.Q.;*

PILLARS LATINO; SUITE MUSIC (THE KEY, BALLAD FOR EDDIE JEFFERSON, PAM-MAW, HATTIE WALL); SOUND LIGHT; FAST LIFE.

Personnel: Hamiet Bluiett, baritone saxophone, alto clarinet; Julius Hemphill, alto, tenor saxophone; Oliver Lake, alto, tenor, soprano saxophone; David Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet.

★ ★ ★ ★

The conceptual stances forwarded by these three quartets are quantum leaps from the classical literature for saxophone quartet which, for the most part, straightjackets the horn's histrionic aspects. As was the case with the ground-breaking solo saxophone activity in the '70s, the creative options presented by the saxophone quartet, as repre-

sented by this iceberg's tip of recordings, will irrevocably broaden the horizons for both composers and improvisers. The open field in which the three quartets operate produces numerous overt differences and subtle similarities in their work.

While the New York Saxophone Quartet performs classical literature with precision and sensitivity—*Chant D'Amour* is a transcribed movement from Albeniz' *Trois Pieces*, and Bach's *Fireworks Music* entwines much Bach material around a canon from *The Art Of Fugue*—the improvised solos and ensemble flourishes in their jazz repertoire have the requisite technical flexibility, and emotional forthrightness. In particular, Billy Kerr's smoldering tenor on Dave Matthews' *Chantfleure* and his own *Three Jays And A Bee* has an appealing, from-the-hip directness. Conversely, many of the intricate ensemble passages, especially Phil Woods' *Three Improvisations*, benefit from the quartet's centripetal, chamber-unit inclinations. The NYSQ's palatable program does not create a synthesis of disparate sensibilities, yet secures a forum where various approaches can stand on their own merits.

The Rova Saxophone Quartet draws upon an almost boundless array of sources in their creation of a thoroughly idiosyncratic music. Still, despite that Rova is as gregarious as the NYSQ is marshalled, Rova's approach is no less studied than the NYSQ's. Even seemingly fractal passages connect concept and

structure. After a frenetic theme that concludes with a suggestion of sirens, *Escape From Zero Village* explores an improvisational area where Larry Ochs is "a camouflaged soloist," his high-register soprano lines tiptoeing through discreetly layered altos and tenor. Ochs flashes a Aylesque persona on *Under The Street Where You Live*, while "sub-soloist" Jon Raskin's baritone excavates a counterpoint beneath the plied sopranos of Bruce Ackley and Andrew Voigt. Yet Rova's chops are as good as their concepts and, at many times on *As Was*, fluent, unencumbered improvisations upstage their well-laid plans.

Most firmly rooted in the tradition of black orchestra sections, the World Saxophone Quartet may be paralleled to the Art Ensemble of Chicago for its use of parody, juxtaposition, and classic norms to blur any disparity between the notions of art and entertainment. The danceable and the inexplicable mingle throughout their compositions and the interplay of their improvisations. Oliver Lake's title composition adheres swatches of funk with a jagged counterpoint and freely improvised highlights. The piquant *Pillars Latino* points up Julius Hemphill's command of stylistic devices as well as the quartet's dramatic subtleties. The quartet also accrues the premium of each member's ongoing individual accomplishments, as evidenced by Hemphill's *Connections*, a string of unaccompanied solos bracketed by elegiac

phrases. However, on Hamiet Bluiett's *Sundance* and *Hattie Wall*, a sense of fun permeates the gloriously wailed riffs, a refreshingly unacademic catalyst that provides an essential balance to the quartet's program.

—bill shoemaker

SHELLY MANNE

DOUBLE PIANO JAZZ QUARTET—Trend TR-526: *SWEET AND LOVELY*; *MAHILYN MONROE*; *THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES*; *STROLLIN'*; *I'LL TAKE ROMANCE*; *LENNIE'S PENNIES*.

Personnel: Manne, drums; Alan Broadbent, Bill Mays, piano; Chuck Domanico, bass.

★ ★ ★ ½

**BOB BROOKMEYER/
BILL EVANS**

AS TIME GOES BY—Blue Note LT-1100: *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE*; *AS TIME GOES BY*; *THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT*; *IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU*; *THE MAN I LOVE*; *I GOT RHYTHM*.

Personnel: Brookmeyer, Evans, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

About the only thing these releases have in common is that they feature quartets fronted by two pianists playing mostly standards.



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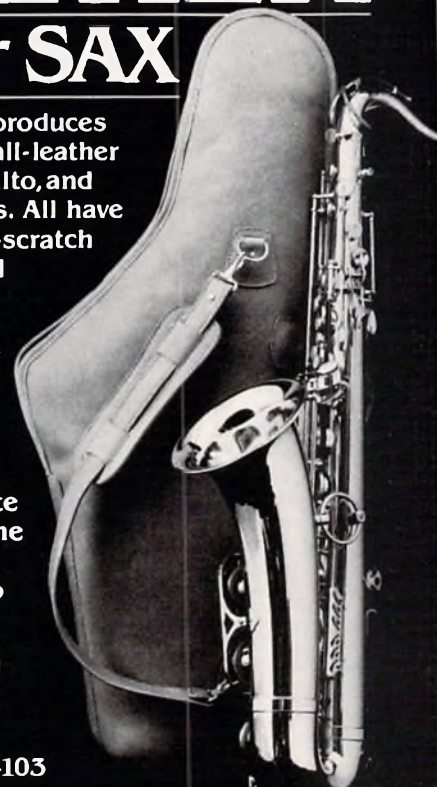
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Shelly Manne's *Double Piano Jazz Quartet*, recorded in performance at a California club, is headed up by a competent piano duo. Alan Broadbent and Bill Mays have little trouble in negotiating tunes like *The Night Has A Thousand Eyes* and that musical obstacle course, *Lennie's Pennies*. There's a happy, kicky version of Horace Silver's *Strollin'* as well as a casually intertwining reading of *Sweet And Lovely*.

Yet, all's neither sweet nor lovely here. Part of the problem is musical: Broadbent and Mays don't seem to listen carefully to each other, and at times they fall into flat-out musical one-upsmanship. And Shelly Manne can't resist joining in the evening's combative spirit. Perhaps his drums were mixed too loudly and too closely to the foreground. Whatever the case, his look-at-me-I'm-really-a-drummer stance brings to mind all those nasty remarks Lennie Tristano used to make about players of this instrument. As for this album's use of digital recording techniques, whatever is gained in clarity and fidelity evaporates in the engineer's apparent attempt to capture this club's sonic ambience. If the tinkling glasses and background voices aren't intrusive enough, we're also treated to a ringing telephone and a band member's voice asking if it's "time to take a break."

Recorded in 1969 and originally titled *The Ivory Hunters*, Bob Brookmeyer and Bill Evans' now reissued *As Time Goes By* neatly avoids the musical and technical problems which snag Manne's album. According to Pete Welding's liner notes, Evans and Brookmeyer arrived at the studio expecting to do a conventional trombone plus rhythm session. Instead they found two pianos in the studio. After running down a few tunes on them, they went on to record a complete album, an impromptu and thoroughly enjoyable collection of dual piano quartet pieces.

Brookmeyer (who happily has returned to the scene after a long absence) is best known as a valve trombonist and arranger, but is also a sly, witty pianist, one who has no problems in communicating musically with a player of Evans' stature. Evans used the term "interplay" in discussing this session, and that says it. *Honeysuckle Rose*, with its follow-the-leader interlocking lines, suggests that both pianists are playing purely intuitively. They trade phrases using everything from dissonant, highly syncopated passages to top octave tinkles, fluttery arpeggios to canon-like passages. They then slide into good natured parodies of each others' styles. This kind of friendly bantering continues throughout this release.

In fact, this is my candidate for Bill Evans' most playful, humorous record. On *As Time Goes By* Evans backs up Brookmeyer's sparse, tentative melodic statements with melodramatic tremolos. Connie Kay in turn backs Evans' solo with appropriately archaic press rolls. *I Got Rhythm* is a similar pastiche. Taken at a carefree medium tempo, the tune features an off-center, Monkish bridge. As Brookmeyer prods Evans into quoting—or misquoting—both the *Mexican Hat Dance* and *Holiday For Strings*, one can only thank Blue Note for resurrecting this minor masterpiece. —jon balleras

ALBERT AYLER

THE HILVERSUM SESSION—Osmosis 6001: *ANGELS; C.A.C.; GHOSTS; INFANT HAPPINESS; SPIRITS; NO NAME.*

Personnel: Ayler, tenor saxophone; Don Cherry, cornet; Gary Peacock, bass; Sunny Murray, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JOHN COLTRANE

BYE BYE BLACKBIRD—Pablo Live 2308-227: *BYE BYE BLACKBIRD; TRANEING IN.*

Personnel: Coltrane, soprano, tenor saxophone; McCoy Tyner, piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ERIC DOLPHY

STOCKHOLM SESSIONS—Inner City 3007: *LOSS; SORINO; ANN; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; ALONE; GEEWEE; DON'T BLAME ME.*

Personnel: Dolphy, alto saxophone (cuts 1, 3, 6), bass clarinet (2, 4), flute (5, 7); Idrees Sulieman, trumpet (3, 6); Knud Jorgensen (1, 2, 7), Rune Owferman (3, 5, 6), piano; Jimmy Woode, bass; Sture Kallin, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

As in previous posthumous albums by these artists, the music is often outstanding; these LPs communicate powerfully today, long after their innovations have become part of the day-to-day mainstream of jazz.

Twenty years ago Eric Dolphy took time off from his rigorous travels with the Coltrane group to gig throughout Europe with pickup rhythm sections. *Stockholm Sessions* is from two dates for a Dolphy TV special—one can only envy those Swedish viewers—and the quality of the music is typical of this well-documented period in his career. Dolphy's free-lancing courted disaster in terms of his parade of unfamiliar accompanists, but while at times one might wish for more stimulating bass and drums here, Jorgensen's harmonic hardness complements Dolphy nicely in *Don't Blame Me*, and only expatriate American Sulieman seems confounded by Dolphy's idiom. Some of Dolphy's originals are retitled: *Geewee* was originally *G.W.*, *Sorino* is another *Serene*, and *Ann* is the popular *Miss*. While he recorded better performances of several of these, the improvisations here are certainly rewarding.

The four Dolphy originals are variations on the classic blues form, and however extended by extra measures or bridge strains, or especially, distorted by altered changes, his themes reveal an exacerbated sense of blues sound and harmony. *Ann*, on alto, is very like an improvised Dolphy line—an alarming theme—while *Sorino* is a twisted view of *Sophisticated Lady*: "Resentful Resignation" is a more accurate description of its dips and curves. *Sorino* proves the better bass clarinet piece, choruses ending in shrieks and cries, until finally self-mockery enters. His unaccompanied showpiece *God Bless* is hurried and nervous—the fine bass clarinet arrange-

ment, in which the line vanishes in the development of decoration, here losing effect. At this point in his career Dolphy's fluting was not at the emotional and technical level of his other horns. Don't has a wonderful interlude of bird calls, but then amidst the wildly fleeting phrases we hear returns to the safety of chord changes. *Mal Waldron's Alone* features some lightning-shaped phrasing, but in the concluding cadenza the occasional fumbled note tells us that this art is not quite perfection—not yet, anyway.

But the alto solos in 1961 were the truly brilliant Dolphy: *Geewee* and *Loss*, both up-tempo, in particular. *Spirits* soar as he plunges and leaps into *Loss*: his ideas are sudden, wildly free. His *Geewee* solo is attractively structured, many kinds of fast phrasing sectioned, alternating with less free-wheeling passages that echo the rhythmic, if not harmonic, character of Charlie Parker. These solos offer all the crashing excitement of this great artist reveling in the wonder of his kaleidoscopic fancy, and these dazzling solos unquestionably make this album valuable.

A year later, probably also in Stockholm, the Coltrane quartet offered these two concert performances. The quartet's complementary qualities had been long established by this time, and if Tyner was not quite the original he soon would become, his soloing is bright and ever mobile; Garrison is big-toned, and the two provide the setting for the powerful interplay of Jones, whose drumming for Coltrane is especially combustible. Coltrane's opening solo in *Blackbird* is one of his very finest middle-period performances, not for its modernity of sound and harmony so much as for a rhythmic variety that had seldom entered his playing after 1957. His theme statement is irresistible in its humor, a whimsical element that reappears again at times in what's essentially a hard-bop solo, theme-based, with a Rollins-like inevitability of phrasing. The final third of the track is Coltrane's second solo, this time over a two-chord vamp, and when his one-man antiphony suggests flagging inspiration, Jones initiates a duet with a rollicking backbeat.

The original 1957 *Traneing In*, from Coltrane's second Prestige album, is one of the crucial moments of his career, the first major occasion of his sheets-of-sound style. It's interesting to compare that performance's excitement of discovery with this new, no less enthusiastic, but darker and more troubled performance. The broken phrasing of his opening choruses walks the thin line between gaiety and obsession. Indeed, much of the fine spirit of *Blackbird* is here, as is the inevitable Coltrane movement into multiphonics and harmonic extremes, so that for over half of this long solo he is exultant, particularly on that chromatically descending bridge. Though the repetitions and the self-made barriers of harmony and rhythm eventually do return him to a more characteristically tragic stance, Coltrane at least views the sunlight beyond the prison of self in this solo. He obviously loved to play these two pieces—indeed, *Traneing In* is an unusually fine blues-with-bridge setting for solos—and it's a pleasure to agree, for a change, with at least some of the liner hyperbole.

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DB

RECORD REVIEWS

Hilversum, Holland in June 1964—the scene of Dolphy's *Last Date* concert—was five months later the location for Ayler's no less great radio performance. This was the essential year in Ayler's music when he finally found freedom through ensembles of players willing to join him in inventing his fantastic idiom. Invariably in Ayler albums, the titles need clarification: this *Angels* is not the *Angels of ESP 1020, C.A.C.* was first titled *Holy Holy* (Arista/Freedom 1018) and then *The Wizard* (ESP 1002—not *Wizards*, ESP 3030), this *Spirits* is the *Spirits of Arista/Freedom 1018* (and not the *Spirits of ESP 1002*), while Cherry's theme *Infant Happiness* is retitled *D.C.* and credited to Ayler on ESP 1020. *Ghosts* is accurately titled, though *No Name* is a new Ayler piece to me, and Ayler probably created all this confusion about song titles because he simply didn't care.

This album is well-recorded, unlike the ESPs, so the listener can appreciate the group's responses to the chaos that threatens from Ayler's unearthly sounds and tornado energy. Peacock seems the one player here who appreciates some degree of space, and while his bass is not really accompaniment, he fills out ensemble sound with phrasing that's sometimes quite complex and fast, other times in half- or quarter-tempo. We hear again what a really ingenious drummer Sunny Murray was with this group. Since he dared not impose meter on the music, his light sound and light colors begin in calm or even silence, growing in waves of cymbal and snare sounds, singly and in delicate combination, almost always cresting in fast, even raps to make explicit the implicit ensemble movement. Unpredictability is the key to Murray, of course: in the two-tempo *Infant* theme statement Murray's line crests right away, while his very detailed playing in *Ghosts* approaches an Elvin Jones-like wildness behind Cherry, adding (with the bass) tides of density behind the trumpet's flow, before joining Peacock's "solo" with cymbals to make a duet.

In solos such as *Ghosts*, after abandoning the comfort of theme tempos for his own whirlwind speed, Ayler was inclined to section his solos, beginning with explosive distortions of his themes; perverted thematic snatches would then introduce successively more extreme sections, and soon low honks that introduce high overtone squeals would serve the same structural purposes. So much happens in his solos that it's hard to accept that even by hard-bop standards Ayler's improvisations are fairly short—like speed reading the Bible in a couple of minutes. *Spirits* has Ayler's lovely out-of-tempo theme statement, and both halves of his fast two-part solo begin with high, long, outside lines that lead to sections of repeated honks, which he develops. As usual, this set has a slow piece as relief from incredible speed, and as usual it features Ayler's most interesting playing of the date: *No Name* is an unusually calm theme, Ayler's gigantic long tones tail off beautifully into silence, and after the gentle droop of Cherry's last solo phrase, Ayler extends it into further theme and variations. Despite the gospel sonority of Ayler's sax, *No Name* is not one of his overtly gospel per-

formances. His solos on this album represent a security of message and medium that would begin to dissipate in two or so years.

Don Cherry had on earlier occasions entered Ayler's music cautiously, even at times drawn into the tenorist's manic fever. The trumpeter's reassertion of his mature style amidst the Ayler band's madness lends these performances a center of lyric gravity even as he'd done for Sonny Rollins two years previously. Unlike the detached Peacock, Cherry directly complements Ayler's emotionality with commentary on the tenor solos, usually in the form of blasts and broken phrases, particularly effectively in *No Name*. When Ayler's statements end, Cherry solos, and his curve of melody in *Angels* is not only appealing for the sweetness of his long tones, it conveys feeling as surely as the tenorist's overstatements of timbre and range. A section of Cherry's fine *C.A.C.* solo is built around many variations of the curve of the main theme phrase. In *Infant*, to contrast with Ayler, Cherry moves from ballad commentary and solo beginning to fast lines, and the sweet cheeriness of this improvisation is an unprecedented element in an Ayler performance, which ordinarily might offer enthusiasm, humor, wit, but hardly such sustained, unmodified optimism.

So in its emotional range the Ayler quartet here reaches the limits of its capacity for variety and excellent playing, exceeding even the long-lost Sunny Murray-led date *Sunny's Time Now*. As with Dolphy and even Coltrane, the sorrow of Ayler's death in mid-career begins with the fact that, for all his great influence in years to come, his success was incomplete. But as in Coltrane's first *Blackbird* solo or some passages of Dolphy's alto in the *Stockholm LP*, this album too presents aspects of Ayler's art that can stand for all time as finished, excellent work. How rewarding to have these albums available at last.

—john litweiler

★ NEW ★ RELEASES

MUSE

Richie Cole, alto (and tenor) madness recorded in Japan w/ local talent, COOL "C". Ricky Ford, up-and-coming tenor in an '81 program of seven originals, TENSOR FOR THE TIMES. Ron Eschete, electric & acoustic guitars in trio, LINE-UP. Mark Murphy, sings dedications to and reads from Jack Kerouac's jazz prose, BOP FOR KEROUAC. Houston Person, lush tenor ballads backed by Curtis Fuller's trombone. Cedar Walton's piano, VERY PERSONAL.

RCA

Charlie Barnet, big band swing session from 1939-40, THE COMPLETE VOL. 3. Tommy Dorsey, trombone leads big band and Clambake Seven in numbers from '38, THE COMPLETE VOL. 7.

Blindfold Test:

LEE RITENOUR

BY LEONARD FEATHER

THOUGH BARELY OUT OF his 20s, Lee Ritenour has a track record of 18 years' professional experience. The Hollywood-born prodigy made his bow at 12 with a band called the Esquires. He studied with Joe Pass and Howard Roberts as well as with classical guitarist Christopher Parkening.

During the middle and late 1970s Ritenour enjoyed a multiple career as a pop, jazz, rock, and fusion guitarist in the studios and at clubs around Los Angeles. Last year, after a recording career that found him as leader or sideman on hundreds of albums, he made the definitive transition into pop stardom with his album *Rit* (Elektra 6E 331), which crossed over into seven dif-

ferent charts: disco, pop album, pop single, r&b album, r&b single, adult contemporary, and jazz. He finds this last item ironic: "It got as high as No. 2 in the trade papers, but it's my least jazz-oriented album. I can't figure it out."

Ritenour was blindfolded once before (*db*, 5/22/75). He was given no information about the records played.



OLEN WEXLER

1. **PAT METHENY. AMERICAN GARAGE** (from *AMERICAN GARAGE*, ECM). Metheny, guitar, co-composer; Lyle Mays, organ, piano, co-composer.

Right off the bat I thought, oh, this is easy, because it sounded like Pat Metheny. Then I began to think this is not Pat Metheny; it may be a younger player who's been influenced by him a lot—and George Benson.

It also could be Pat Metheny. Regardless, I didn't enjoy it too much; it sounded kind of dated. Just a live performance of a basic band with guitar playing on some head and stretching out a little bit. Nothing very creative really. The guitar player had a lot of influences, but was obviously steeped in a lot of jazz—it's mainstream jazz guitar, and there's nothing inherently wrong with that, but I didn't hear really too much of whomever the guy was. I didn't hear a lot of style. A couple of good licks made me know the guy's put his homework in, he's a good guitar player, so I'm not going to say it's horrible.

It's overall fair, worth a couple of stars. The composition was not very strong at all. I have other records of Metheny, where it's more of a chamber group, and I've enjoyed his compositions very much—but I did not enjoy this one.

2. **PETER SPRAGUE. AVENUES** (from *DANCE OF THE UNIVERSE, Xanadu*). Sprague, guitar, composer; Mike Wofford, piano; Bob Magnusson, bass.

Most of the time I do not listen to too much of this kind of music anymore, mainly because so much was recorded during the mainstream bebop period, the '40s and '50s, and this sounded like a newer recording of one of the younger guys, a diehard mainstream bebopper. It could be an established player, but since I don't recognize who it is, and I usually know most of them, I think this is one of the younger guys. There's a great crop of them around. There's a kid from San Diego, his name slips my mind . . .

LF: Peter Sprague?

LR: Peter Sprague, yes; or it could be Joe Diorio or any of these guys on the West Coast, and there's a whole bunch of them on the East Coast. The band was excellent; I enjoyed this record more so than the first one, mainly because if you go back to Wes' [Montgomery] records, and early Joe Pass records, and

Barney [Kessel] and Tal Farlow for this kind of style—even the '60s generation with Pat Martino and those guys—it really said all there was, and this didn't really say anything new. But it said it very nicely; I enjoyed the guitar player a lot. His technique was impeccable and his sound was nice—a jazz guitar sound. A lot of good lines, but I didn't feel like he was that emotionally involved in what he was playing; sometimes that happens with bebop jazz guitar, since it goes by so fast.

The piano player I also enjoyed, and especially the bass player, he had a good sound. And the recording was good, and that's why I think maybe it's a fresher recording. Three stars. I wouldn't give it four or five because there's nothing totally original about it. And I didn't really hear any stylists in the band.

3. **AL DIMEOLA. DARK EYE TANGO** (from *CASINO*, CBS). DiMeola, guitar, composer.

You do have a wild assortment of records for me! This record sounded like it was more fun to make than to listen to. I bet to be on the recording date was a lot of fun. The composition is pretty weak—it's almost non-existent.

At first I thought for sure that it was one of Santana's jazz recordings, but then I'm not sure because this player has some DiMeola in him too, which I don't usually hear in Santana's playing. But it's of that genre, for sure. There was some good guitar playing, especially at the end. His sound didn't kill me, and what bothered me most about the guitar was that it was out of tune—definitely the pitch was a little funny on the whole record. But actually some fairly emotional and creative guitar playing towards the end. Since the composition was weak, and it was kind of out of tune, that's about two stars.

4. **KENNY BURRELL. A CHILD IS BORN** (from *HERITAGE*, AudioSource). Burrell, guitar; Thad Jones, composer.

Really lovely, good guitar player, lovely sound—best sound of the day. Impeccable intonation and phrasing. It didn't give enough away to tell me who it was—I heard one hint of a note that said Kenny Burrell, but Kenny doesn't usually do these kinds of solo guitar things. And I don't think it was Jim Hall because this song's been done so many times, and this sounds like a newer recording. Anyway, I'd give that three stars.

(Later) Because Wes Montgomery was so vibrant during that period that Kenny Burrell was first making his mark also, Wes Montgomery got a lot of the acclaim—naturally so. But myself, and a lot of other young guitar players I know, listened to probably just as much Kenny Burrell as Wes Montgomery at the time. I have 10 or 15 of his albums, and have been heavily influenced by him. I think he's fantastic.

5. **JOHN McLAUGHLIN. FRIENDSHIP** (from *JOHNNY McLAUGHLIN*, CBS). Carlos Santana, first guitar solo; John McLaughlin, second guitar solo; Narada Michael Walden, drums.

That's a weird recording (laughing). That sounds like Sonny Sharrock meets Larry Coryell meets Santana. I didn't enjoy that very much, unfortunately. I like to do Blindfold Tests, and I like to give everybody high stars because I'm basically real supportive of musicians, but this just did not do it for me. I would not put this record on—if I did put it on, I'd take it off immediately.

Again, the composition was non-existent. It sounded like the guitarist was parading as somebody he wasn't—like trying to do a style that he doesn't really have command of. The sustain, the sound, the pitch, the ideas were all nothing. Something remotely said that Tony Williams was playing drums, but I'm probably way off on that. Anyway, one star.

LF: What would you have given five stars?

LR: Since this is for down beat, which is an overall music magazine, but has always been steeped in a lot of traditional jazz, the readers may find this surprising for me to say. I am in no way a new wave or punk fan, and this band was originally touted as such, but they've come a long way in their new album: it's The Police, and the album is called *Ghost In The Machine* (A&M); it's unbelievable. They have a heavy reggae influence. They originally had a lot of jazz experience; you can hear it on the record—especially the last cut, second side—tremendous music. There's a lot of high energy, sort of new wave-ish stuff on the record that doesn't do it for me, but it's the most creative record that I've heard in many years. There's just three guys. There's a lot of political lyrics; you have to really listen to it. It's not a bedroom album. It's quite intense. But the musicianship on it is incredible, and the writing is very creative. *db*

Profile:

Nana Vasconcelos

BY LEE JESKE

Berimbaus, cuicas, gongs, corpos, bells, and shakers. In the past decade these instruments have become nearly as common as ride cymbals and tom-toms. Dozens of groups now feature what looks like a pile of junk store rejects, variously shaken, banged, and rattled by something called a "percussionist." In 1974, thanks mainly to the work of a Brazilian named Airto Moreira, *down beat's* annual critics poll for the first time sported a whole category for percussionists. What resulted was a boom, quite literally. Everybody had to get their hands on one of these new wizards and, more often than not, the results were horrendous. Jazz bands that previously survived very well with just the tick-tuh'tick, tick-tuh'tick of the sock cymbal were now beginning to shake, rattle, and roll.

"The secret of swing is simplicity," says Nana Vasconcelos, easily the busiest percussionist in North America. "I don't play if they don't need it. This is one thing about percussion—you have to really know the importance of silence. I think my best part to play is when I don't play. The more important thing than percussion is the silence. And this is not pretentious or intellectual talk. Sometimes I hit just one bell and that's all, that's it. No need for anything more. For this reason, I don't do many record dates, because sometimes I go to the record date and say, 'Why do you need me to play cuica or play berimbau when they don't have nothing to do with your music?' It's just to say, 'I have cuica,' and this kind of thing."

Nana Vasconcelos was born in Recife, in Northern Brazil. His father, Pierre, was a guitarist and Nana wet his musical feet at an early age. "My father was a professional who did things with small big bands, which, at the time, were very popular in Brazil. It was latin music—boleros, mambos—like Xavier Cugat. They had four saxophones, three trumpets, and rhythm. I started with the band when I was 12 years old, playing bongos and maracas. I had to get special authorization from the police to play in cabarets and things like that. At this time, you didn't really have percussion players. In Brazil you have so many people who just play one or two instruments, like one person will just play



CELESTE DORANGE

tambourine and cuica. I started with bongos and maracas, and then I slowly started to play the drum set. Eventually I became a drummer. I played drums in a bossa nova style.

"Then I went to Rio and in Rio they didn't have percussion players, either. I met Milton Nascimento and I asked him if I could sit in. His music proposed to me something to discover, to try. This was in the mid-'60s. So I started with sounds and then I started buying different kinds of Brazilian instruments. And I put that together and composed original things for the drums to play—because Milton's music is not bossa nova or samba."

Aside from working with Nascimento, Nana found himself in various other settings. As he puts it, "My background is cabaret, military bands, dance halls, symphonic orchestras, theater, and a band that played in the streets—all these different things. And I was listening to jazz, because when I started playing drums I'd buy imported records. I'd be fascinated. One thing that made me famous on drums in Northern Brazil was playing Brubeck—*Take Five* and *Blue Rondo A La Turk*. I understood a lot of that because I understood the Macumba situation, in the north of Brazil, where they have some rhythms like 7/4 and 5/4. In Rio it's all 6/8 and 4/4."

Nana was quite busy in and around Rio. He even accompanied a Brazilian singer at an engagement in Lisbon and toured Mexico with a big band. He also spent a great deal of time learning the berimbau, a Brazilian folk instrument that resembles an archer's bow stuck

onto an Edam cheese. It was Gato Barbieri who would first bring him to the United States. "Gato came to Rio because he was invited to do the score for a Brazilian film. He went to see Milton perform and he asked me to record this film score with him. After that Gato had three weeks in Buenos Aires, and he asked me to come. I finished the theater gig with Milton, and I went for just a few weeks with Gato. While I was there, I learned a lot about the Argentinian Indian music, and so Gato invited me to come to the States. This was 1971.

"I came here to New York and didn't speak English. I'd be in the studio and I wouldn't understand nothing. I recorded an album and played in the Village Vanguard with Gato and at Slugg's. Then Gato went on a tour of Europe—the Montreux Festival and all these other festivals—and I went with him. I was a big success in Montreux because I played the berimbau and they'd never seen one before. I don't know why nobody ever developed that instrument before, it's been in Brazil for years. Even today I find more and more sounds in the instrument."

The tour ended in Paris and Nana remained in the French capital. "I stayed in Paris because somebody asked me to do a record. I thought I'd do that and then come back to the States. I did the whole album in one day and the guy said, 'Now you have to stay here, because the album is coming out and I'll fix performances for you.' So I stayed and started doing TV and radio and theater. Then something very important happened to me. Somebody asked me to come and work with children, with handicapped children. I only spoke Portuguese, but he said that was very good, it would be more important to communicate without words. I worked for two years on that program, and it was fantastic because I learned a lot about myself. And my music changed a lot. I started to realize that I could compose, and I started to work with my voice and my body as percussion. Some of the children had coordination problems so this whole involvement was very important to me. When I worked with the children, I dedicated myself to that. Sometimes, on a special occasion, I'd go and play with Don Cherry, who lived in Sweden. After two years I said, 'I need to get back on the road.' I had stayed in contact with American musicians, because every summer they used to come over to the festivals. I had just done *Danca Das Cabeças* (ECM 1089) with Egberto Gismonti and, in 1976, I decided to come back to New York."

After arriving in New York, Nana had to quickly pack his percussion and turn around—ECM had scheduled a European tour for him and Gismonti to coincide with the release of *Danca*. (The

subsequent association with ECM has been a fruitful one. On the day we speak, Nana is about to leave for Brazil to begin planning his second album as a leader for ECM [his first, *Saudades* (ECM-1-1147), received 4½ stars in *db*, Aug. '80]. Then it is back to the States for a tour with Pat Metheny, followed quickly by a tour with Codona, the cooperative trio consisting of himself, Collin Walcott, and Cherry.) After the tour with Gismonti, Nana settled in New York City. He began working with a variety of artists, from flutist Jeremy Steig to experimental trumpeter Jon Hassell. He became more and more in-demand as a studio player as well, his English improving all the while. His accent is still quite thick, but his command of English is good.

Currently Nana is involved with various projects, almost all of them centering around the ECM roster. The most recently formed partnership is with guitarist Pat Metheny. "Pat invited me at the last minute to do his last album [*As Falls Wichita . . .* (ECM-1-1190)]. Afterwards I went to Brazil and when I got back Pat said, 'Do you want to go on the road with the band?' I said yes, because a lot of times I don't play in a situation with a drummer. It was about four or five years since I worked with drums. It was a whole different dimension for me—finding space between the drums and giving volume to that space. I developed a lot on that tour. For me, Lyle Mays is the sound of that group. And, for my work, I had to concentrate more on Lyle. The ability to work with synthesizers is, to me, fantastic. The main thing is to listen and find your space. And I know about that."

In 1980 Nana made his first trip back to Brazil in eight years. He says that Brazilian music had fallen into a deep-freeze after bossa nova, but he perceives a new generation of young saxophonists, drummers, and guitarists who are forging a new instrumental sound in Brazilian music, as opposed to the lyric-oriented folk music that has been the mainstay of the past decade. For that reason, he is going to record his next ECM album in Brazil. "I'm going to use 12 percussion players. Only in Brazil do they have the kind of material that I need. It's going to be percussion and strings. I need to do something in Brazil."

In the meantime, there is an album with Jan Garbarek featuring Norwegian folk songs. Norwegian folk songs? "It's similar to the music of the cowboys of Northern Brazil," says Nana with a smile. "I'm proud of that album. It's a matter of my listening and understanding. I like to be part of the music, some kind of cooperative thing. Not to just come and go chhh-chhh'chhh, chhh-chhh'chhh."

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Joan LaBarbara

BY DIVINA INFUSINO

“It’s taking the voice beyond the singing of melodies and the usual sound spectrum. It’s letting the voice teach you what it can do, instead of forcing it into traditional modes.”

Through the process called extended vocal techniques, vocalist Joan LaBarbara has expanded the musical and conceptual possibilities of the voice. Abandoning the boundaries erected by her operatic training, LaBarbara instead chose to discover vocal sounds and techniques normally unassociated and unconceived for the voice. Her adventurous musical spirit and vocal experiments have led her into collaborations with composers such as John Cage, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and the recording of three solo albums: *Voice Is The Original Instrument* (Wizard RVW 2266), *Tape Songs* (Chiaroscuro CR 196), and *Reluctant Gypsy* (Wizard RVW 2279). She has performed extensively in Europe, and at The Kitchen Center, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York City. She teaches part time at the California Institute of the Arts and acts as the contributing new music editor for *Musical Heritage/Hi-Fidelity* magazine.

Born June 8, 1947, LaBarbara’s work as an experimental vocalist began in the late ’60s when, after seven years of operatic training at Syracuse University’s School of Music, Tanglewood/Berkshire Music Center, and the Juilliard School of Music, she abruptly interrupted the course of her career: “I was about to attend Boris Goldovsky’s opera workshop in West Virginia when I realized that I was becoming increasingly unhappy with the classical molding process. I could see where it was leading. The road was very well-defined, and I just didn’t feel it was me. So I called the people at the opera workshop and told them I wasn’t coming. That was it. I just made a complete break. I just wasn’t occupying myself the way I thought I should. There was something missing.

“All around me I saw musicians experimenting with their instruments, and I couldn’t understand why vocalists weren’t doing the same. I wanted to discover new possibilities for the voice and broaden the use of the voice. I wanted to use the voice as an instrument and in a more complex way beyond the singing of melodies.”

Her search for non-traditional vocalizations began with jazz. “Jazz helped me free my voice. I started doing a lot of improvisations. I taped all my sessions



so I could go back and listen to the sounds I was making.” She found that she could imitate the sound of instruments and animals. That ability found her working in 1970 with composer Michael Sahl on a commercial in which LaBarbara acted as the voice of a Japanese housewife. “During the course of that commercial, I changed my voice from imitating the sound of a koto to what might best be described as a Japanese Astrud Gilberto. Then, in 1971, when Steve Reich was looking for a singer who could imitate the sound of instruments, Sahl recommended me.”

LaBarbara worked with Reich for three years, performing on his recordings of *Music For Mallet Instruments, Voices, And Organ and Drumming* (DG 2740106). Soon after, she approached Philip Glass. “It turned out that his trumpet player had just left, and so I substituted the trumpet parts with my voice.” She went on to perform on Glass’ recordings of *Music In 12 Parts and North Star* (Virgin PZ 34669). In 1976 John Cage had her premiere and later record his *Solo For Voice 45* from *Songbooks*.

While collaborating with these and other composers, LaBarbara explored and developed further vocal modulations beyond the imitation of specific, recognizable sounds. On *Voice Piece: One-Note Internal Resonance Investigation*, from her first album, LaBarbara intones the multiple facets of one pitch, as she takes one tone through different resonance chambers of the head. With her every breath the tone slips into a different vowel sound and a different color. The most remarkable “internal resonance” that LaBarbara creates are her chords, called multiphonics—the simultaneous intonation and sustain of two pitches. “I sing very quietly, and let my voice drop down to the first pitch I find in an octave below the fundamental. So I end up singing in

octaves with myself. It demands a very relaxed state. In fact, I found out later that the technique is very similar to the Mongolian one-voice chording used by Tibetan monks.”

Inspired by the circular breathing techniques that horn players use, LaBarbara searched for a similar effect for the voice. “Horn players are able to produce continuous sound because their cheeks hold the air while the sound is forced out through the horn. Since the singer’s sound-producing device is located below the cheeks, I found the only way I could achieve constant sound was by singing on the inhale as well as the exhale.”

On *Circular Song* (also from her first album) LaBarbara composed her circular singing technique into a piece that calls forth the visual image of an organic chemical chain. At varying speeds she sculpts one-half of the circle on the exhale and the other half on the inhale, without silent spaces. “Very often I have a visual pattern, gesture, or image in mind that I’m turning into sound. I vocalize the image,” said LaBarbara. Yet, much of her work investigates pure sound, pitch, or harmony, even rhythm. While singing on the exhale as well as on the inhale, LaBarbara produces clicking, fluttering, and percussive sounds similar to those used in 13th century Icelandic folk singing.


Some of LaBarbara’s pieces are very formal in nature, while others are entirely improvised. “I like to do both, because each transmits a different sort of energy. At one point I was performing a piece where I was blindfolded one hour before the show. While still blindfolded, I would have someone lead me out into the performance space. I was dealing with a number of psychological changes such as the impact of moving from an isolated environment to a public one. Once I was before the audience, I had unknown items placed before me. I touched the objects and then voiced an immediate response. The idea of the piece was not to identify the object, but to respond to it in a non-verbal way that would contact a primitive part of the brain.”

But by the time she recorded her second album in 1977, LaBarbara had become increasingly involved with the musical concerns of her work, rather than simply its experimental aspects. In early pieces LaBarbara’s voice was always amplified, sometimes further modified by synthesizer treatment, but always unaccompanied. Now she uses 16 multi-track tapes of her voice, which act, in both performance and recordings, as a kind of chorus. “In my early pieces I was trying to discover sounds, but at this point, I know pretty much what the sounds are and how to use them. Now, I’m more involved with musical questions. The way a composer

orchestrates with instruments, I orchestrate with the recorded tapes of my voice."

The tapes provide timbre motifs and percussive patterns which LaBarbara then sings over. In a gallery setting, she uses tape loops as sound installations: "The tapes allow me to experiment with vocal textures. The pieces are all very different. Some of them are like sound paintings, where you get most of the information within the first few minutes. But as the piece develops you begin to notice the details. It's much the same way that one experiences a painting. At first, you get an immediate impression of the whole. But then the longer you regard it, the more you'll notice things about the form, shape, and specific colors. Many of my tape pieces are designed to be absorbed in a similar fashion. As I'm singing over the tapes, I sometimes bring certain percussive or harmonic elements of the tape forward, to focus the listener's attention. Other times my voice will act as a counterpoint to the taped material. But I also construct some pieces in a more traditional, linear fashion that progress from point A to point B."

Although LaBarbara lived in New York for 11 years, she currently maintains residences in New York City and Valencia, California since her marriage three years ago to Morton Subotnick, also a new music composer and a teacher at the California Institute of the Arts. But as the manager of her own career, LaBarbara arranges to spend much of her time performing in the U.S. and Europe. In 1978-79 she produced a monthly new music radio program called *Other Voices, Other Sounds*, for the Pacifica station KPFK-FM in Los Angeles, and she has recorded commissioned pieces for European radio stations. LaBarbara also has taken numerous residencies at music schools and universities both here and abroad.

"I think of my life as an experiment," she said. "My music is intended to leave listeners with a similar experience. I hope they will be moved by my work from its musical qualities and from hearing things they've never heard before. But I also hope they'll be intrigued that the voice is capable of so much—more than most people imagine." 

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also his gig with the trio (which happened to include pianist George Duke) and hooked up with an unknown guitar player named Julio Martinez. "Just me and a guitar player," he thinks back, "no drums, no bass, more space for me to fill. And suddenly all of this stuff that was simmering underneath for so long just came roaring up—all this vocal stuff.

"We went into a little club that seated maybe 100 people and started getting about 180 people, six nights a week. We spent the next year in this place [Gatsby's in Sausalito]. That was the real blossoming of the stuff you hear me doing right now." For much of the next seven years, he continues, "I worked, scraped, and looked for a record deal." No one was buying.

Says Jarreau, "Just at the time I was striking out to find my pot of gold, they weren't interested at all in my music or anything closely resembling it. The world was fascinated by the whole rock/drug culture and so was the world of music. Everyone was dying except guys like Frank Sinatra. Nobody could find a recording deal doing anything remotely close to that stand-up kind of crooner-singer. Johnny Mathis just about disappeared entirely and is only just recovering. It was a real famine for any young artist of that sort; only the old masters were being accepted, and they all went out and hid in Vegas. And they're still hiding in Vegas.

"I knocked on all the companies' doors—several times—including Warners. It wasn't until 1975 that Mo Austin [Warner Bros. president] said, 'Hey, let's have a look.'"

Jarreau opened for Les McCann at the Troubadour in Hollywood one night early that year, and Austin liked what he saw (and heard). The following day they shook hands on a deal. By August the singer's debut album—*We Got By*, a tender portrait of good times and bad—was released. Jarreau had finally found his pot of gold.

Six years, five albums, and a wallful of awards later (including every *db* Readers Poll since '77), Jarreau is calling down to room service again, this time requesting a single glass of ice water. Times do indeed change. "At the time when I started recording," he reflects, "I was probably much closer to that hard-core jazzier kind of guy. I'm loosening up now. I don't have any axes to grind anymore. The jazz character is always going to be in my music, but I'm kind of curious about how things are going and how my music is developing. It's definitely going in different ways than it was going then."

He's not the only one who's curious. One critic wrote about Jarreau's fifth album, *This Time*: "Al Jarreau . . . is an exceptional vocal artist whose mind seems to be turning to cotton candy." The suggestion is that his lyrics are increasingly lacking depth. It could also be submitted that his songs carry less emotional punch than before and that they sound more and more like stylishly imitable pop-funk. Finally, it seems that his usually unusual vocal fun & games are somehow getting lost in the shuffle.

"I think those are all valid comments," Jarreau rather calmly responds. "At times I feel I want to be a little lighter than, say, being heartrending. I also honestly think I can reach more people that way. But, then again, I like to do a lot of music, so I don't intend to be confined by my critics or anybody else. I might want to do some punk rock & roll someday. And I like to sing rhythm & blues, too. I may funk for an album and then do some jazz. Or my next thing might be inspired by some classical piece of music 'cause that's in me too. But you can be sure of one thing—whatever it is I do, it'll always be fine music."

Jarreau leans back on the couch and piddles with his empty ice-water glass. "And there's one thing more that you can be sure of," he cautions, "in the concert situation you'll always get every bit of Al Jarreau you've ever wanted. It's always in that situation; it's saturated with all the inventiveness and all the tripping the light fantastic."

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admits, he wouldn't have taken the job 10 years ago, because "I was too involved in my own learning process of a certain conception that I wanted to do, and I really didn't want to take my energies away from that. Now, it has to do a lot with my own confidence. In what I consider to be the jazz tradition, to quote Beaver Harris, 'from ragtime to no time,' I feel I can play all those kinds of music."

Yet, despite Barry Altschul's abilities and despite the general praise garnered at all times for his drumming and his trio, Barry suffers from the bane of most jazz musicians with his stick-to-itiveness—a definite paucity of work. His trio still works more in Europe than in the States, and his three albums since the two all-star dates for Muse have been released on small labels in, respectively, Germany, Italy, and Canada.

"I'm ready to record again," he says. "There are musicians out there who are using the jazz tradition along with what they learned during the avant garde period who would do for the music what bebop did—advance it. But the power structure—the people who control the business end of the music—isn't allowing that to happen. There is some wonderful music out there being made by some wonderful musicians. The whole industry is looking for someone to record something new, something different. It's out there. It's not only overflowing in New York, but it's all over the world.

"Listen, record companies can write off more money than they give to a jazz artist to record. I mean, I know some very big impresarios who are in the rock business, and they can make a not-so-talented person who has some charisma into a star by the machines that the structure has. They don't do any of that for jazz—they don't advertise, they don't play it on the radio, they don't do anything. You have to get a special station to get grants and ask public support and all that, just to get this music played on the radio. In Japan and in Europe, for instance—the two biggest jazz markets in the world—you can't hear a full jazz show, unless it's specially scheduled. But you can't hear a full rock show or a full classical music show either. They'll play one tune rock, one tune jazz, one tune classical, on all their radio stations. What it does to the people listening to that music is it makes it part of their lives, from the time they're children. They know about all this music. So the same people who go and see a rock concert will go and see a jazz concert—because they know about it—and, here, they don't do it at all. Absolutely nothing."

The Barry Altschul Trio continues undaunted. They have a new name, **Brahma** (not as mystical as it sounds—it's an anagram of their three sets of initials) and a definite commitment to each other. Ray Anderson and Mark Helias are also co-leaders of a free-funk outfit called **Slicaphonics**, but it doesn't affect the music or production of the Trio. Altschul has no interest in the current funk movement, claiming that he's a lousy funk drummer and, after all, from a different generation.

Currently, Barry is considering adding a baritone saxophonist to his group, but is afraid that it won't work economically, and that he won't be able to find a saxophonist with the same level of commitment to the group that Ray and Mark have. He is also willing and anxious to take work as a sideman again. He claims that since he's been a bandleader the calls for work with others have stopped—perhaps they think they can't afford him, or perhaps they feel a bandleader's ego is too large for the role of accompanist. "I would love to get more calls—print that," he says, tongue not quite in cheek.

On the latest Barry Altschul release (**For Stu**) he has a solo drum piece called **Drum Role**. When asked to define the role of the drum, Barry thinks for a second and leans forward. "The drums are a musical instrument, as valid as any other instrument. As a matter of fact, I feel that without the specific drummer that certain people had to play with, the innovation of the music would not have happened. Without Elvin, Trane couldn't really manifest the concept. Without Max, Bird couldn't manifest that concept. It's the same with Miles and Philly Joe. Many people take the drums for granted, or feel that the people who play them are lesser musicians. I really can't abide that.

"It's a necessary given to the music; without it, the music wouldn't have manifested itself. Because without the drums—yes, you can solidify the concept—I don't think it could really propel itself or regenerate itself. I think that next to the main innovator of the time, whether that person is recognized or not, the second most important person to that innovator was the drummer. It's the drummer who has to figure out how to play the rhythm and give the feeling to the concept that this person has given that's new and different. Bird and Jo Jones could have played together, but the music wouldn't have manifested itself the same way as it did when Bird and Max Roach played together."

It is definitely a point to consider. It also makes one wish that certain innovators who, in recent years, have saddled themselves with clunky, insensitive drummers would turn to the talents of Barry Altschul.