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THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

BUDDY RICH

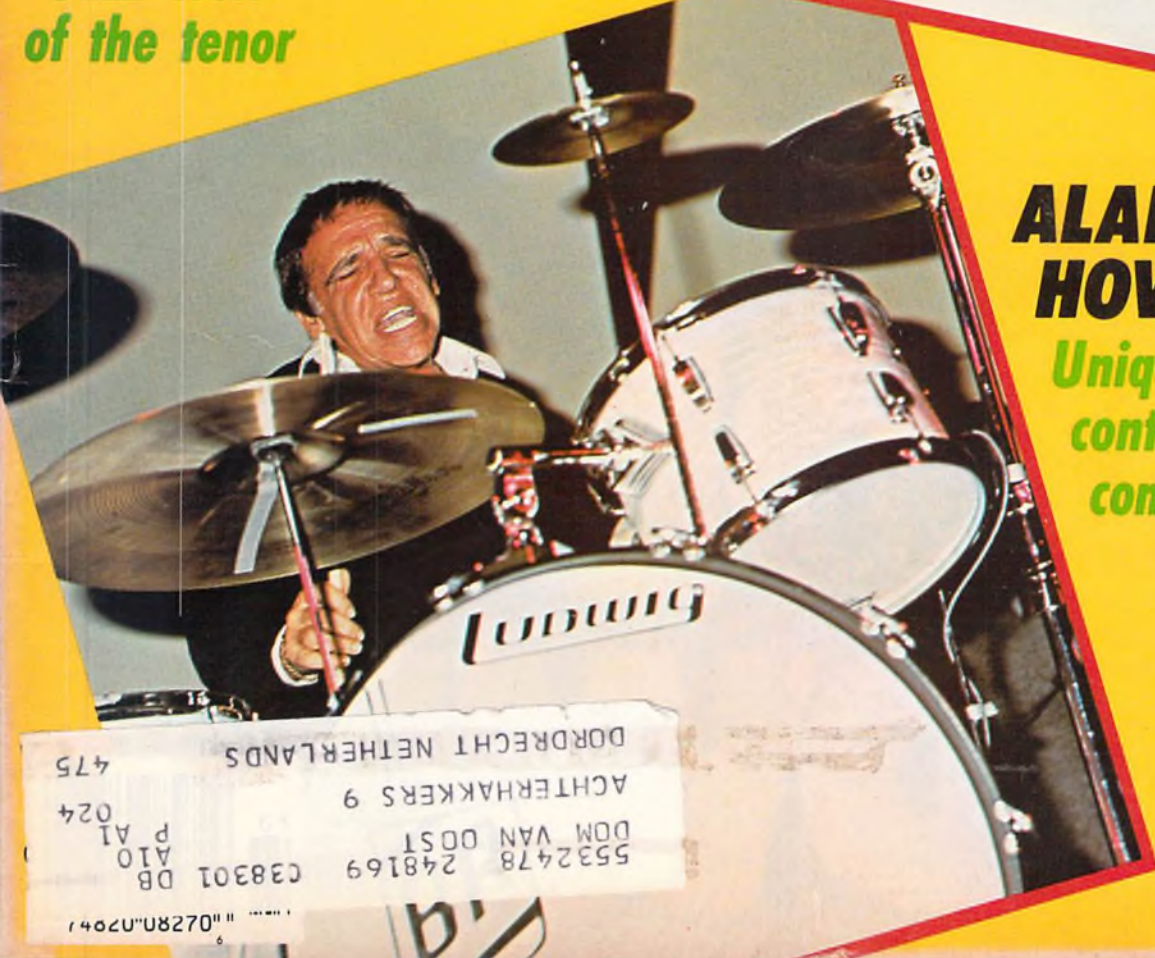
"Youth, that's our audience"

LEROY JENKINS

Violinist of new music

RICKY FORD

"Jazz Wolf" of the tenor



ALAN HOVHANESS

Unique among contemporary composers

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Ricky Ford

ANDY FREEBERG



Alan Hovhaness

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RICH RAPS

BY ELIOT TIEGEL

Youth is very important to Buddy Rich.

Not that he's trying to forget that he's 64 and has been in show business for 62 years. No, the slant on youth is reflected by the players who keep his band swinging nine months out of the year, the high school and college musicians who flock to his campus gigs, and the young faces which cram all the available space at places like Disneyland, where his 16-piece band plays for listening, not dancing.

Youth is also served by the number of young drummers who are slowly turning away from the theatrical approach to the instrument, as exemplified by rock & roll's complicated set-ups, to a simpler, back-to-the-basics kind of drumming found expressly in jazz.

"Youth, that's our audience," Buddy Rich exclaims one sunny afternoon as he and I sit down to chat outside his apartment in the Marina Del Rey section of Los Angeles. The band is starring at Disneyland and Buddy has several hours free this afternoon. "Youth, it's been that way for the past six years. My career today is involved with high school and college shows during the school year. The shows are packed with teenaged guys. The average age of a guy in my band is 23. Where are they coming from? They're the kids who heard us when they were 17." Buddy has been playing Disneyland 14 years straight. "We appeal to a very young audience there because we play very young, big band music. Disneyland represents young people. We're the only band that plays there without dancing. We're a concert band."

In his travels Buddy claims he finds more interest among the young in playing drums "than ever before." Frankly he doesn't know why this is the case, but playing the instrument "is a visual thing, one which gives you the satisfaction of knowing you're in charge of something; you are the main man up there." If there is any sign that jazz is building for the future, it can be found among his school kids, Buddy points out. "The kids in high school feel there is a future for them in jazz because they look at my guys and say, 'These guys aren't much older than I am, and they're already making a lot of money, and they're playing good music. I have to try that.' Now, I've heard some high school bands that would scare you to death, trumpet players especially."

Regarding neophyte drummers today, "If you look at most kids' set-ups today, you'll see it's changing. Five years ago they had two bass drums, 20 tom-toms, and 1,000 cymbals—and couldn't play half of it. Most kids today are back to one bass, a couple of tom-toms, and a bunch of cymbals. They're getting away from the visual thing and are concentrating on playing a bass drum, a snare drum, and some cymbals."

Despite rock's taking over and dominating the music business for 25 years, Buddy says when he left Harry James in 1966, people asked him, "Why a big band when rock's the



thing?" His answer: "I know what the need is, and it's for a form of music that has integrity, validity, and personality; it never sacrifices integrity for the sake of selling millions of records. There are people who say we have to have something new? Everytime a jazz musician plays, he plays something new."

Buddy's often disappointed when he sees a contemporary rock act in person; the band doesn't sound like anything he's heard on its records "because they don't have all of the gimmicks with them that they have in the recording studio. When a jazz band goes in to record, it may take three or four days. When a rock band goes in, it may take a year. What the hell can they do for a year when they're playing two chords? I take my band in and we have nine hours, but I can record in six."

Rich says he's "ashamed" of his last LP, *Buddy Rich Band*.



"It's the worst thing I've ever done," confesses the outspoken drummer, who has performed on hundreds of albums during his career. He claims the performances are sloppy and the sound terrible. As for other recordings, there are no immediate plans, though he has collaborated with Carmine Appice on an LP that will be released soon. Rich says he's also received three offers to videotape his band for videodisc presentation, but he's not sure he wants to venture into the home market. A disc of one of his performances may kill his audience, goes the reasoning: "They may not come out to see us if they have us on videodisc."

He says he hears very few new original drummers, singling out Steve Gadd, the New York free-lancer as "one of the best young drummers to come along in recent times, but there are 50 clones who play like him. Years ago you could tell every band by the different style of drummer. Sid Catlett, Max Roach, Jo Jones, Philly Joe, Gene Krupa, Dave Tough, they were all individual and had their own concept of playing. Today, because of the power that's in the recording studio, every drummer must sound exactly alike. You must play umph-chaka-boom-chaka, the triplets off the tom-tom, digadiga-doom, and there's no individual creativity because the engineer and the producer say, 'You got to do this in here because it fits.' Where is the guy saying, 'No I don't think I want to play that because everybody else is playing that. I want to play something that's different.'?"

Buddy appreciates Gadd's ability to play rock as well as jazz. "He's got ears big enough to listen to everything. But you take a 15-year-old who's only been listening to music for one or two years, and he can only play the simplest form of drums, which is hitting the cymbal and playing a heavy two and four and hoping the time stays right.

"What I consider to be great," he continues, lighting yet another cigarette, "is if a guy does not want to bang on his tomtoms and cymbals, he should have enough intelligence to be able to play on the snare drum for an hour-and-a-half without having to do anything else and still get all the tonal quality he wants out of that one drum by using dynamics and by attitudinal playing.

"I have the highest respect for people who can go out and play under certain conditions that would be impossible for a young kid, like playing when you're not feeling good, in pain, when you're in trouble. They don't jive an audience; they play an audience. When people come to spend \$6, \$8 to hear my band, I'm going to give them full value because without these people I have no band and no career. I have to be very honest

with them because they expect me and my band to be in top form, and if I don't do that, I'm not only f---ing with them, I'm also f---ing with me because then I'm letting them down and I'm letting me down, and that's something I won't do."

As for his own playing, he calls his style "simple" and advises young people to hear everything and then make their own decisions about their own style. "Don't worry about what your friends say about a style that's old or something that's 'not hip.' What's hip?" he asks. Furthermore, Rich, who never practices and has no drum equipment at his apartments in New York or Los Angeles, or at his home in Palm Springs, tells young people they have to be able to take a drum apart and put it together and then play it. "I don't mean one time. Forever. Everything is separate until you play it, and then it becomes one."

Buddy never prearranges his own solos. "I think of my soloing as a story with a beginning, middle, and a punch line. I construct a solo the same way a trumpeter or saxophonist or pianist does. It's a musical concept—not a percussive concept—when you bang on the drums for an hour-and-a-half. If I have 32 bars to play in a chart, then I'll make that chorus a musical chorus. If I have an extended solo, I'll play 10 choruses, but they'll be 32 bars and 32 bars, and you won't know they're 32 bars because maybe the 32nd bar may run into the 33rd or 34th bar. So you can't just say one and two and one and two. I'll divide the time, break up the time, divide the time again, and change the tempo. I'll go into three, go into five, but at the end of 32 bars you'll know that one starts the next 32 bars. I think of my instrument as a musical instrument—not as something to bang on.

"I may play the worst solo in the world because I've had a beef with my old lady [whom he's been married to for nearly 30 years], and I may not feel good. I don't play great every night. I don't play good every night, but my average is high. But if I played good every night, I'd be disappointed with myself because then it would be mechanical. I have to play exactly as I feel. I know when a guy feels good because I know what he's giving me. I react to that. I react to singers and players by the emotional impact they can thrust upon you. I know when a guy is cold. I walk out. But I know when a guy is saying something to me, whether it's on drums or a violin."

Is it difficult being a leader from where you sit with all the players in front of you? "No, I don't pay any attention to that. Just watch it sometime when the leader of a band is up-front, and see if anybody is paying attention to him. I've worked with leaders all my life where the guy is waving his arms. But



photos by STEVE KACAN

the guys are looking at their music, they're not looking at him. In my position I can yell at some guy if I think there's something wrong—"hey," and I got it.

"Sitting up where I sit I'm the coach, the quarterback, and I call the shot; if you miss that play, you got to see me later. Nobody wants to do that because I still have a temper, and I still want perfection from the people that work for me. That's why I hire them. They know if they blow it they'll hear from me right away." Even on-stage in front of an audience? "Absolutely! I'll call a guy a motherf---er while he's sitting on the bandstand, and not out of hate or anger, [but] out of disappointment because I know the potential of this guy is great and he's letting me down. But more important, he's letting himself down. He's letting his own talent down and that's why I get mad."

Isn't it embarrassing to curse out a player before an audience? "I don't think about the audience," Buddy replies. "I think about what I want to do for the audience. If it's an understanding audience, they know I'm yelling at the guy because I want it to be right for them. My yelling is not like it used to be. I've become a little more understanding. I don't know if I've mellowed a little bit, but I think I understand certain problems. I don't understand mistakes. I understand pain and tiredness because I'm tired too. But mistakes . . . there's no room for them."

As for the responsibility of a soloist in his band, Buddy says "It's to be the best he can be. I don't consider this a drummer's band. I play one solo a night, and that's usually at the end of the show. Basically my band is an ensemble band, and the soloists are the featured people. I have a trumpet soloist, three sax soloists, one trombone soloist, one pianist, and myself. That's a lot of soloists in one band. The other players aren't jealous because they're not soloists; they are the house for the soloists. The first trumpet is the melody man. Either the second or third trumpet will be the jazz player, and the other guys are not the jazz players. They fill out that section. You hire a specific person to be the jazz saxophone player or jazz trumpet

player, so there's no jealousy as far as the other guys are concerned."

Buddy says the toughest chairs to fill are lead trumpet, trombone, sax, bass, and piano. There is no guitar because Buddy cannot find a rhythm guitarist who plays as well or better than Freddie Green of the Count Basie band. "And since there's only one Freddie Green, I'll do without."

He also doesn't have a singer. "I don't like band singers" is his acerbic statement. "My band's a concert band and we don't want to get involved in playing background music for singers. I'm trying to establish an art form without all the gimmicks, without all the bullshit, without having broads come out and dance and jiggle. I'm selling music; I'm not selling bullshit. I don't talk between tunes. I don't introduce the tunes because it's boring to have a guy say, 'And now we're going to feature Charlie Brown from Pennsylvania or Freddie Bell from wherever.' No, at the end of the night I will come down and talk to the audience and introduce the guys and various soloists, and they get a genuine round of applause. But to go down at the end of each tune and say, 'Now we'd like to play an arrangement written by so and so, and it features this guy and that guy,' you've already wasted three or four minutes. So out of a 45-minute set, you may have only played 30 minutes and bullshitted the rest. We give 45 minutes of music, no talk, no jive. We play. And while I've received some heat about not introducing the tunes, I think if you enjoyed it, you don't have to know what it was."

Of the 500 tunes in the band's repertoire, 80 percent are original compositions. Buddy selects all the tunes for each set—he owns the band. It is his money which is the foundation of its survival, and by working nine months out of the year, he is able to meet his expensive payroll. There are 19 people on the traveling payroll. "It's different today than it was 10 years ago, but it's not a problem." He says he's not aware what the other bandleaders pay their sidemen. "I hire people and ask them what they're worth. I won't pay that

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BUDDY RICH'S EQUIPMENT

Buddy Rich uses Ludwig drums and A. Zildjian cymbals. His kit consists of single bass and snare drums, one small mounted tom-tom, and two 16 x 16 floor toms; his cymbals include 14-inch New Beat hi-hats, an 18-inch thin crash (on the left side), an 18-inch medium-thin crash (on the right), a 20-inch light ride, 20-inch pang, and an eight-inch splash.

BUDDY RICH SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

BUDDY RICH BAND—MCA 5186
TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME—Gryphon 784
TATUM, HAMPTON, AND RICH AGAIN—Pablo 2310775
SWINGING NEW BIG BAND—Project 3 LN100089
STICK IT—RCA AFL14802
SPEAK NO EVIL—RCA AFL11503
ROLLIN' WITH THE FLOW—Epic PE34891
RICH VERSUS ROACH—Mercury 60133
BUDDY RICH PLAYS AND PLAYS AND PLAYS—RCA CPL12273
BUDDY RICH IN LONDON—RCA AFL14666
ORIGINAL DRUM BATTLE—Verve 68484
DIFFERENT DRUMMER—RCA ANL11090
BIG SWING FACE—Project 3 LN100090

FOR THE RECORD
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BY BOBB LUMENTHAL

LERROY JENKINS

The new music violinist/composer has spent the better part of his 50 years exploring unique instrumental contexts—from solo improvisations to large ensemble interactions. Along the way he has formed strong opinions about the state of creative art in the current musical (and economic) world.

Leroy Jenkins is something of an ideal interviewee. To a certain extent, this is simply a product of where he has been and what he has achieved as the most prominent violinist of the new music, an early member of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, a pioneer disseminator of the AACM's message (first to Europe, then New York), a member of two important collective bands (the Creative Construction Company and the Revolutionary Ensemble), and more recently an important performer and leader under his own name. On top of all this, Jenkins is articulate, perceptive, and willing to speak for the record. "Leroy talks just like he plays," Anthony Braxton once told me, which accurately captures Jenkins the energetic, wide-ranging, and intense conversationalist. I might also add that Jenkins pursues ideas to comprehensive completion, to the point of arriving with prepared remarks—but that gets ahead of the story.

Jenkins and I met at the violinist's New York studio one weekend last fall to discuss his various activities since the Revolutionary Ensemble disbanded in 1977. "I've worked in a lot of different musical contexts," he notes, "solos, duos, trios, quintet; now I'm primarily concentrating on my mixed quintet. I



try to use different formats when I do a project, like the 'Duos, Trios, Quartet' concert I did at the Public Theatre. In Europe I've written for, conducted, and played with orchestras; I've rehearsed students for three days, then given a concert; I've written for the traditional big band, in that 'New Music Salutes Duke Ellington' concert. Usually, formats are directed by financial conditions. As a soloist or in duet, I can make the money come out without putting a strain on either the business end or my end, and as a result I've evolved a duet repertoire and a solo repertoire, which is something that I had never considered."

Yet it is the larger situations, with greater prospects for interaction, which clearly hold more appeal for Jenkins. One of his current projects is the formation of "a workshop for everybody that wants to learn to improvise in an ensemble setting, on whatever instrument. It will be about learning how to get along. Whatever 'free' is, you've got to get along.

"In a lot of cases, nobody tells a player what to play in this music. You have to know how to blend, in terms of the head and what it says to you, and with what's going on at any particular time, be it with the leader or anybody else. You must get in and accent, and learn how to

space your notes so that everybody else can get in. Sometimes you lay back a few seconds, in the process of your playing, to absorb what is going on. You have to talk and listen at the same time, so to speak. I use the expression, "Take the instrument out of your mouth." Take your hands off the piano; take the violin off your shoulder; make it stop! Because the music isn't dependent on changes, it's dependent on direction—where it came from and where it's going. Some people call that open-ended, but it's not open-ended at all. It's up to us to get from here to there. We all feel our way, and then ultimately the leader gives the signal for the next step. That's where the leader comes in."

Jenkins stresses the importance of compositions as guides ("We don't play aimless improvisations; we're going places, and the music I compose sets up where we're going each time.") but relishes the input of other players. "If a musician shows me a different way," he says, "I'll go with it. That's why I hire known improvisers, because they try things I haven't thought of. I want adventure; I want players who will try to impress me and other people. They're the ones who are going to bring the music out. What I write is just a figment of my imagination—when they play it, it's for real."

In pursuit of this adventure, Jenkins has organized some impressive bands in recent years. During 1978 and '79, he led a trio with Andrew Cyrille on drums and either Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Davis, or Amina Claudine Myers in the piano chair. In the past year his energies have focused on the "mixed quintet" format, and it is this group that will be touring the West and Southwest this spring. [At press time, the itinerary included the following dates: 4/25—El Granada, CA; 4/28—San Diego; 4/30—Scottsdale, AZ; 5/1—Albuquerque, NM; 5/2—Houston.]

"The Mixed Quintet has Byard Lancaster on flute; J. D. Parran, clarinet; Marty Ehrlich, bass clarinet; John Clark, french horn; and myself on violin and viola. I called it 'mixed' to distinguish it from the typical jazz quintet with a rhythm section and two front men. I got the idea from Leo Smith, who used this instrumentation back in Chicago when we were doing things with the AACM. Leo even played french horn, which is what made it so tantalizing. I've recorded it, but it's so esoteric nobody wants it.

"Which leads up to something I want to discuss," Jenkins said, and he reached for a notebook that had been sitting on a nearby table. "In interviews you always talk about what you're doing and how you do it musically, the same thing over and over again. I decided I'd prepare a little statement, like they do when they come before the press in

Washington." And with that, we jumped from the what and how to Jenkins' view of the current working situation for creative musicians.

"As for myself," he began, "I feel that the avant garde—which I call the *a-vant garde*—and the classical tags that people put on me are designed to mix the audience's thinking. There is a subtle conspiracy going on about the music in the industry. Influential critics write about the lack of their knowledge and musical growth, rather than what the music is saying in these times. The industry in general hasn't kept up with modern music at all; it has stagnated for years. The people out there with ears, who want to hear some stuff, have to go

**LEROY JENKINS'
EQUIPMENT**

Leroy Jenkins uses a Schweitzer violin, Hill bow, Polytone amplifier and Barcus-Berry pickup.

**LEROY JENKINS
SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY
as a leader**

SOLO CONCERT—India Navigation 1028
THE LEGEND OF AL GLATSON—Black Saint 0022
SPACE MINDS, NEW WORLDS, SURVIVAL OF AMERICA—Tomato 8001
DUO (W/ ABDUL WADUD)—Red 148
SWIFT ARE THE WINDS OF LIFE—Survival 112
FOR PLAYERS ONLY—JCOA 1010

with Revolutionary Ensemble

VIETNAM I & II—ESP 3007
MANHATTAN CYCLES—India Navigation 1023
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC—A&M Horizon SP 708
REVOLUTIONARY ENSEMBLE—Inner City 3016
THE PSYCHE—RE 3117

with Anthony Braxton

THREE COMPOSITIONS OF NEW JAZZ—Delmark 415
BX° N-O-I-47^A—BYG 529.315
THIS TIME—BYG 529.347
NEW YORK FALL 1974—Arista 4032

with Muhal Richard Abrams

LEVELS AND DEGREES OF LIGHT—Delmark 413
MAMA AND DADDY—Black Saint 0041
LIFELONG AMBITIONS—Black Saint 0033

with Creative Construction Company

CCC—Muse 5071
CCC VOL. 2—Muse 5079

with Anthony Davis

OF BLUES AND DREAMS—Sackville 3020

along with what they're given. Then the people who control the industry blame the music for being so way out that it doesn't sell. And the younger people in the industry don't take care of business; they haven't been trained to do anything, so they don't know what they're doing. They just want to be part of a scene, to be hip, get high, hang out. That just pollutes the musicians. So I would say the record industry is a mess when it's relating to contemporary music of any kind of quality.

"Musicians themselves are egotistical, and they don't know how to deal with each other or with business people. At this level, business and music go hand-in-hand, and the art of compromise is the name of the game. Musicians

aren't relating inter-musically—like bebop as opposed to avant garde—and musicians think they're worth more than they're worth, so they mix up financial details. They don't know anything about business.

"Yet the music itself—this music that I'm involved in—is in top form. In Italy, Black Saint is recording like mad. Sometimes, the way it looks in America, I think Giovanni Bonandrini's crazy, but he's not, he just knows what we know. There are concerts all over the world except America. I've worked America more than most people, because I have an agent that deals in America, but most of the top names are not working in America like they should. If it wasn't for Europe, they'd be out of it.

"At the same time, everyone is into their next project, and just happy as pie with their music. Muhal's last album, *Mama And Daddy* [Black Saint 0041], is a fine recording; Oliver Lake has put out some fine things lately; Roscoe Mitchell; Joseph [Jarman] and [Don] Moye; the World Saxophone Quartet, I could just keep going. What hurts is that not any of these people are getting credit for upholding a tradition. It's not that people don't know about it; that's why I say the conspiracy is kind of subtle. The music is just put out there, with no advertising, in order for it to fail. Companies say the music doesn't sell, but they aren't selling it."

Jenkins' statement raises a slew of questions, such as whether the music actually can be sold to more than a small, hardcore audience. The violinist is convinced that it can. "I've been all over, in places people have never heard of. Most people wouldn't expect that they'd like our music in Bellingham, Washington, for example, but a lot of people showed up, in the thousands. A lot of other places I could mention, like Albuquerque, where some hard-working promoters have been doing it for two or three years. And these audiences have imagination; they came to hear something they didn't know about, and everybody really liked it for what it was. I didn't prepare anything for Bellingham as such—in fact, I did more stuff in Bellingham than I would do in New York. People here are conservative and jaded, it's hard for them to concentrate on something creative. They're lazy."

To Jenkins' mind, the way in which the media approaches the music is crucial. "What's hip is what's popular, and Americans dig what they think is hip. Now if this music were presented like it was hip—if the people who put it out acted like they liked it—then people would pick up on it."

One way to improve the music's image, Jenkins thinks, would be to re-examine the terms used to describe it. "Anything new strikes critics as mun-



TOM COPI

dane, or they coin words, like 'ostinato.' What the f--- is that? I mean, I understand the definition, but it certainly doesn't apply to this music. I play the violin, and know how to make it sound like a violin should, so right away I'm labelled as 'classical.' Well, I've never been a classical violinist; all I did was what everybody does—I studied the instrument! That may be rare, but that doesn't make me classical. And what is 'avant garde' but some French phrase that makes the music into an arty kind of thing. Most of the masses aren't hip to art, so they react by saying, 'Oh, that's different, that's avant garde.' The term wouldn't be bad if it wasn't so arty, because the music is not that arty. We're all out here living very gutsy lifestyles."

How would Jenkins do it differently? "I would come to a company with a plan. I would get the best musicians available, plan a little five- or 10-concert tour, then light out from the tour right into the recording studio. The first tour would be built on my name, which I've done before without a record by the specific band. The company wouldn't have to pay the salaries, they'd just have to subsidize the advertising, the small things that make concerts successful. I wouldn't leave it to the companies, because they haven't done it in the past; I'd write an outside person into the budget. Then make the record, and the places we've already played are a natural market for the record. Then do a second tour, as a result of the album, with the company helping us do some concerts this time on the basis of their advertising the record. Now we've completed a cycle, and if the company is still interested in Leroy Jenkins but not the Mixed Quintet, then I've got other

ideas. Everybody knows that touring and recording go hand-in-hand, but it's not being done in this music, not even for Ornette [Coleman] and Cecil [Taylor]. And I'm only looking for a reasonable amount of support. The context of this music states that we will only attract a certain amount of people, but we can't even get to the people who would like it. None of us are out to get rich—just almost rich."

Regarding his thoughts on "the art of compromise," Jenkins underlines that he is not thinking of musical compromise. "I think I'm putting out valid music that, if given a chance, would probably catch on, and I want to continue to do this. So I've got to work out a way to make what I need and still continue. I can't ask a price based on what someone more famous than me gets. In order for the music to get a full hearing, with all the things against it, there's going to have to be some sort of financial compromise. I don't mean nickels and dimes, or working for the door, but a good fair price that both sides feel is realistic."

Some might question Jenkins' claim that the music is in top form. I cited the inability (and occasional unwillingness) to maintain permanent bands, plus the absence of a recognized, innovative leader, to test his claim. "We are all juggling," he noted, in explanation of the transitory nature of most groups, "that subtle conspiracy has divided to conquer. The only groups that lasted are the Modern Jazz Quartet and the Art Ensemble; Air might get there too. Now the Revolutionary Ensemble only lasted seven years, but being together seven years, or 25 years, doesn't guarantee a good performance every time. Econom-

ics breaks up bands.

"Musicians have also been coming to New York in the last five or six years with concepts of their own, of how their music should be presented. As soon as they get something of a name, they just jump out there on their own, a little too soon in some cases. Often they demand astronomical fees, because they don't know what they're doing. They base their price on who they worked with before instead of who they are, without making the adjustments necessary when going from sideman to leader. There are probably more composer/improvisers out here now than ever before, and new people are constantly coming in with these same concepts. So we constantly need more music. It's actually good for the composer—it's spawned a composership thing.

"Everybody's writing—they have to. They've started thinking more in terms of form, because many players entered this free thing with no prerequisites, and that gave the music a bad name. Just in terms of self-preservation, we had to go into some kind of form, as to how the music should be presented, so we could split the men from the boys."

On the subject of innovation, Jenkins says that "people create for ever and ever. For instance, we're still working from the innovation of Ornette Coleman. This thing that Ornette did has permeated the whole music; even in rock & roll, the new wave stuff is a result of the looseness he brought into music. Like always, some other music master nobody expects is going to come along with something that captures the imagination of the musicians."

In terms of his own contribution,
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RICKY FORD:



B Y L E E J E S K E

It has to be a tenor saxophonist's classic nightmare: being hired to play in a big band and, when arriving, finding that you are the third tenor player in the band; Illinois Jacquet is the first, and Arnett Cobb is the second.

Yet that is the situation Ricky Ford found himself in last summer when Lionel Hampton's ill health caused him to leave an important European tour with his own orchestra and those two Texas purveyors of hip-shaking, growling, honking, boot-in-your-ear tenor were signed on to take up some of the slack.

"That's the heart of competitiveness right there," says Ricky Ford of his two sectionmates. I really didn't want to create a generation gap; it's very easy to create one with musicians that are older than you. I played my parts and whenever I got a chance to play, I played. I try to be positive about doing everything professionally. Some days you don't get a chance to play and some days you do. It all comes out in the wash."

The point, of course, is not that Ricky Ford weathered the storm of sitting next to a pair of Texas longhorns, but that he

was with them every step of the way. When he did get a chance to grab a solo, it showed strength, taste, and wit—there was no diminishing of tonal power from that of Messrs. Jacquet and Cobb. Because, unlike many of his contemporaries, Ford has fashioned a tenor style from the hard-nosed, gruff, macho school founded by Coleman Hawkins. His solos do not give the feeling of coming from the brain, but have the soulful quality of having come from deep within the belly. When he plays, he arches his back, shakes his shoulders ever so slightly, and swings like the bells of St. Mary's, employing an ebony-hard, spiny tone augmented by the occasional jarring snarl.

It is a style that is very welcome, and Ricky Ford's is a wide-ranging musical talent that is very adaptable. And that is why, in a short span, Ford has worked with a surprisingly wide range of jazz talents—from Mercer Ellington to Sam Rivers, from Lionel Hampton to Charles Mingus, from Ran Blake to Sonny Stitt. And Ricky Ford is only 27 years old.

"My grandparents were musical," says Ford. "My grand-

mother played guitar with an all-female band in the '30s—sort of jazz and rhythm & blues. We're from Boston and they did a certain amount of gigs around the eastern seaboard, but after she had my mother and my aunt, she decided to put her guitar in the closet. We used to get together and have jam sessions—it was my first exposure to songs like *Body And Soul*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, and *Ain't She Sweet*. At that time I was supposed to play the drums."

Ricky wasn't a good drum student; he preferred being outside tossing a pigskin to being inside pounding a drum skin. Incredibly, he didn't receive his first tenor saxophone until he was 16, inspired by one of the best saxophonists of the time. "I met Raasaan Roland Kirk about six or seven months before I started playing, through a family friend. And that's when I really decided that I wanted to play music. I said, 'Wow, the guy is playing so much horn.' I was already getting set to have my own horn—we had put some money down on one around that same period.

"I had a friend who was working in a Hayes-Bickford [cafeteria] across the street from the New England Conservatory, and he had met Ran Blake. He said, 'Hey, Rick, there's a guy at the Conservatory that I'd like you to meet. I think he can help you out with your music.' So I met Ran and I started studying at Community Services, at the Elma Lewis School, in Boston. I met Gunther Schuller, Jaki Byard, George Russell, everybody who worked at the Conservatory. Then, after I found out that I could get out of high school a year early and get early admittance to the Conservatory, I really got serious about investigating music. So I started taking lessons with Bill Saxton, studying real basics."

By the time he was a sophomore at the N.E.C., Ricky Ford was earning a reputation as being one of the toughest reedmen to come out of Boston—a town used to tough reedmen (Harry Carney and Johnny Hodges to name but two)—in quite some time. He had also begun working weekends at Wally's Cafe, as part of an organ trio that included Bob Neloms on the Wurlitzer and Buddy Smith on drums. Although, with rare modesty, Ricky says he used to be kicked off the bandstand and told to go home and learn his changes, he began to garner favorable attention in the Boston press.

Ford spent his time at the Conservatory studying theory and technique with "guys who studied with key composers—I have a heavy lineage in the theoretical department" and his spare time "going through various stages where I'd investigate certain jazz styles exclusively. I might spend a month, or two or three months, just studying records by Dexter Gordon. Or Sonny Rollins—I went a little heavy on the Sonny."

He also began to sit in with everybody who rolled into town. Ricky's reputation, even amongst his fellow students, was firm, and visiting musicians would quickly hear about this young cat blowing heapfuls of tenor. Ricky would prepare himself—making sure to learn a couple of the tunes that the particular artist was playing at the time and would show up, at the Jazz Workshop or Paul's Mall, ready to blow. It takes a certain amount of chutzpah to knock on Sonny Rollins' door, tenor in hand, but a cocky confidence, bordering on arrogance, is one of Ricky's personal, and musical, stocks-in-trade. Everybody, he says, loved it: "That's how I got to meet everybody who lived in New York. I sat in with Mingus, and Sonny Rollins enjoyed me sitting in so much that he was contemplating having me in his band."

It was Mercer Ellington, having just taken over the Duke

Ellington Orchestra after his father's death, who would first give Ricky Ford the seat that would take him out of Boston. "Mercer was introduced to me by Elma Lewis who said, 'This is Ricky Ford, the most promising saxophonist in Boston.' And he said, 'Oh yeah, why don't you come on the bus at five o'clock tomorrow?'"

"So I got on the bus and went up to New Hampshire and he had me playing on almost every tune. I knew all the tunes because I was an avid fan of Duke Ellington. After that he said, 'Come on back tomorrow night, but you've got to pack a bag because we're going to New York.' So I said, 'Okay.' I packed a bag—I had to get a bow tie and a blue shirt—got on the bus, and we barnstormed to New York. Instant road."

It was the summer. In September Ricky returned to the Conservatory for his last semester, before being given a permanent seat with Mercer Ellington the following January. "I took a hiatus from school," he says, "which I am now recently finishing. I had an inkling that something was going to happen with my career around 1974; in '73 I took double courses so when I did leave school, I would have that much less to do to get my degree when I decided to."

In the first year that Ricky Ford played with the Ellington Orchestra, that aggregation was on the road for 48 weeks. Altogether he'd spend a year-and-a-half with the band, living out of a suitcase, when the band was in town, at New York's Edison Hotel.

"There was a concert that we did at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine," recalls Ford, "a big affair in honor of Duke. The band played, and Charles Mingus did a bass solo on *Sophisticated Lady*. Someone at the reception told me, 'Someone's going to steal you away from Mercer.' I didn't pay it any mind, but two or three days later I got into the hotel one evening, and there was a message to call Charles Mingus. I called him and spoke to his wife, Sue, who said that they had all this work—a world tour—and they needed a saxophonist. George Adams had just left to work with McCoy Tyner. I said yeah, gave Mercer my two weeks' notice, and had one day between gigs."

Mingus had sent Ricky a copy of his band book—which included such recent pieces as Sue's *Changes*—but there

is more to Mingus' music than is notated on staff paper. "I knew how to read," says Ricky, "but the difficult part was understanding the overall conception of his music. That took me about seven or eight months, but he stuck it out with me."

According to some reports, there was a personality clash at first between the brashly self-confident Ford and the volatily tempered, perfectionist Mingus. "There were musical problems, I guess," admits Ford, "problems about conception. And I have a tendency to play long, so sometimes I'd play too long on some tunes. I was more or less my own personality, too, and we had our personalities to grapple with."

Dannie Richmond, Mingus' longtime drummer and rhythmic blood-brother, remembers the bassist's frustration at the length of Ford's solos. "From my experience in going to jam sessions," says Richmond, "in many cases it takes somebody more than 64 bars, or even double that, to really put it into first gear and make the statement that they desire. In this case, however, Ricky went beyond that, and I was told later that it was the same kind of situation when he was sitting in with Roy Haynes—Roy told him to stop playing, and he continued to play. He told him to stop playing again, and he continued. Finally, Roy threw some sticks and pulled a cymbal down and threw it at him. He stopped playing then."

RICKY FORD'S EQUIPMENT

Ricky Ford has a Selmer SA 80 that he's been playing in concert, a 1960s Selmer Mark VI that he's been recording with, and an older Mark VI for good measure. He uses Rico #3 reeds.

RICKY FORD SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

LOXODONTA AFRICANA—New World Records NW 204

MANHATTAN PLAZA—Muse MR 5188

FLYING COLORS—Muse MR 5227

TENOR FOR THE TIMES—Muse MR 5250

with Mercer Ellington

CONTINUUM—Fantasy F-9481

with Charles Mingus

ME MYSELF AN EYE—Atlantic SD 8803

SOMETHING LIKE A BIRD—Atlantic SD 8805

THREE OR FOUR SHADES OF BLUES—Atlantic SD 1700

PASSIONS OF A MAN—Atlantic SD 3-600

with Dannie Richmond

THE DANNIE RICHMOND QUINTET—Catemouth 1004

THE LAST MINGUS BAND—Timeless SJP 148

with Ronnie Matthews

LEGACY—Bee Hive BH 7011

with Sonny Stitt

SONNY'S BACK—Muse MR 5204



"Mingus definitely had his eye on Rick. He used to ask me, 'What do you think of Ricky-Ticky?' Leave it to Charles to come up with names for people. But Mingus was drug, Ricky Ford was drug. And the fact that Mingus advocated for many, many years that musicians could not play a wrong note as far as his music was concerned, would mean that if Mingus said anything to Ricky, he would contradict what he said earlier. He didn't say anything and I knew that he was waiting for Rick to more or less get the music down and be able to close the book—because Rick has sort of a photographic memory where he can close the book and devote his time totally to the finer parts of the arrangement. He finally made a definite musical statement and had an impact on Charles. I remember that one day, Mingus told him that Charlie Parker played some of his best solos when he was only able to take two 12-bar choruses on a 78. I don't know if that turned the tide as far as Ricky looking in another direction, but I'm sure it had something to do with it."

"It was not always roses," says Ford. "There were even a couple of times when I was fired. But it was mostly a positive thing, working with Charles." The relationship between Mingus and Ford smoothed out, finally. Ricky would be the last saxophonist Charles would ever employ, for during his two-year tenure with the band, Mingus was slowly dying of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

"Right after I joined the band, Mingus started having mobility problems. I used to help him on the bandstand. We had this whole routine: 'Oh, Ricky, it's time to go to work.' I'd hold his hand and pull him up on the bandstand. And the guys would laugh at me. I was hoping he'd write some kind of ballet for us to get up on the stand to. It was sad, in a sense, but there was an element of humor to it. After a while our association really became productive, when he started writing a lot of music. He really became content with the progress

that the musicians had made in his band, after everybody had settled. It really became a productive unit."

Mingus' last concert was at the University of Arizona at Tucson, "the night Reggie Jackson hit three home runs in the World Series," as Ricky Ford recalls.

In the last year of Mingus' life, Ford and Jack Walrath, the trumpet player, would travel to the Mingus home in Woodstock to help him transcribe some of his music. It was also during that time the first thought of keeping the band together came up—Ricky had a gig at the Citicorp Building and hired the whole band, with Cameron Brown handling the bass parts. That band—Ford, Richmond, Walrath, pianist Bob Neloms, and Brown—still works together, usually under Dannie Richmond's banner.

During his stint with Mingus, the saxophonist had the chance to wax his first album as a leader, *Loxodonta Africana*. "It was part of New World Records' Anthology of American Music. Gunther Schuller asked me if I wanted to do it; I was very privileged to have a whole record. There were a lot of composers who only had four minutes. I was very fortunate."

After Mingus became inactive, Ford began taking various assignments, working with Walter Bishop Jr., Sam Rivers, Beaver Harris, and bassist Ronnie Boykins in their bands, and taking a few of his own gigs at spots like the Tin Palace. In the summer of '78 he made what was to be the first of (so far) three albums for Muse Records, *Manhattan Plaza*. He even acted—playing an alcoholic tenor saxophonist in the short-lived off-Broadway play, *They Were All Gardenias*, based on the life of Billie Holiday.

Oddly, Ford has never played with the Mingus Dynasty. There are conflicting reports as to why Ricky has been passed up in favor of such tenor players as Bill Saxton and Joe Farrell, whose connections with Mingus are, at best, rather tenuous.

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ALAN HOVHANESS

angelic ● cycles



BY PETER WESTBROOK

As he showed me into his modest home in a quiet Seattle suburb, Alan Hovhaness felt the need to apologize for two things; first the cluttered state of the house and secondly the noise of saws and hammers overhead. The reason for both these inconveniences quickly became evident. Scores. Piles of them. Overflowing from every room and stacked in corners and passageways.

The results of over six decades of creative outpouring virtually unparalleled in the realm of contemporary music. Hence the workmen on the roof—they were in the process of building an extension onto the Hovhaness home just to accommodate the collected works of this remarkable man, whose creative fire shows no sign of diminishing, even as he enters his 71st year.

Alan Hovhaness enjoys unique sta-

tus among contemporary composers. Part of this is due to his enormous output, which, not including over a thousand early works which he destroyed, runs to 49 symphonies with number 50—a symphony for Mount St. Helens—on the way, as well as more operas, ballets, and other works than even he can keep track of. But more important, perhaps, is that he has created a style which is utterly original, unconcerned with fads, fashions, or schools, and which somehow finds a common ground between Eastern and Western—as well as the most ancient and the most modern—forms. The end result is a music which transcends technique in striving for, and almost invariably achieving, a profound and simple beauty which has captivated audiences all over the world. As Hovhaness himself writes: "The greater the emotional intensity, the greater the simplicity. This is not 'intellectual' music, but music of pure feeling."

Born in 1911 to an American father and a Scottish mother, Hovhaness was actively making music from his earliest years, improvising at the piano before taking any lessons, and writing pieces as soon as he had learned notation—by about the age of seven. By the age of 13, he had written two operas as well as many smaller works. Formal training followed, first at the New England Conservatory and later at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, MA. Yet, in these early years, it was his own intuition, rather than any formal influences, which guided the direction of his musical thought.

By 1945, New York performances of his works had brought him considerable recognition, and from this followed Guggenheim and Fullbright fellowships which enabled him to travel and study the music cultures of India, Korea, and Japan. These influences, along with that of the Armenian music he was exposed to in his youth, gave his style its characteristic Eastern dimension, which is counterbalanced by a profound admiration of, and involvement with, Western contrapuntal techniques. He has now achieved such mastery of these that he is able to write intricate contrapuntal forms based on a wide variety of Eastern and ancient modes.

Unlike many attempts at synthesis, however, Hovhaness' integration of such diverse resources seems to have arrived at the best of all worlds, to judge by the range of critical and popular appeal he has achieved in many parts of the world. He has received just about all the plaudits which can come to a composer in his lifetime. He has been commissioned by almost every major orchestra in the U.S., yet is equally welcomed in Japan or the U.S.S.R. He has received commissions from the gov-

ernments of Japan, Korea, and India. He has written ballets for such choreographers as Martha Graham, produced scores for Broadway shows, and in recent months he has seen his music gaining even wider audiences, as a result of performances of Lousadzak by Keith Jarrett and the American Composers Orchestra, and the use of parts of his 19th Symphony by Carl Sagan in the PBS Cosmos series. The result of these successes is that Hovhaness has been one of the few composers to be able to make a comfortable living exclusively, and without any kind of compromise, from his composing.

As we settled into our conversation, I asked him about the apparent effortlessness of his creative work. Had it always been easy for him?

A.H.: Yes, much of my music writes itself up to a certain point, though I am always practicing and studying how to improve things. I always work on contrapuntal problems and things like that. Not to make them intellectual but to make them beautiful. Difficult and complicated music doesn't interest me if I can't make it beautiful. It's very easy to write complicated music.

P.W.: Often people with special gifts are surprised when they realize others don't have them. Did you find that?

A.H.: That was my first realization, because when I was very young I was always hearing melodies in my head and I thought that, of course, everyone else does and I didn't think anything about it. Then one day in school they had music appreciation, and they played a song and said this was written by Schubert and I thought, "Well, I guess I should write these things down because apparently everyone doesn't have this. . . ."

P.W.: So then you had some formal training to help you write these things down?

A.H.: Well, I never had any difficulty in writing things down because in school we sang simple things and read notation, and I always felt that if you can read you can write. It never struck me as a problem. I don't understand when people tell me they can't write down their music. Anyone can write music, it's much easier than many languages. Chinese notation is used in Gagaku [a predecessor to a similar type of Japanese music], and I don't know Chinese but I learned those notations right away.

P.W.: At the same time you have chosen to expose yourself to a number of experiences which have greatly enriched your music—traveling, for example.

A.H.: Actually, I had no intention of traveling, but the man I call my teacher—a Greek painter named Hermon DiGiovanno whom I knew in Bos-

ton—told me I should do research work, investigate ancient music—whatever survives—and so on. And I think this was suggested to me even before I met him. I happened to hear a concert by the dancer Uday Shankar, the brother of Ravi Shankar, with Vishnu Shirali—this was in Boston in 1936—and this had a tremendous influence on me. And there was another composer, Roy Stoughton, who loved Oriental music, mainly from the Near East. We were very interested in this sort of thing. The Oriental influence was always there. Even in some of my earliest childhood works it was there. People used to think they were very queer because they were "gloomy" and Oriental. I didn't think they were gloomy at all! Afterwards I got away from it for a while, and suddenly I came back to it. But I never really tried to write anything Oriental. My way of thinking and ideas just are that way.

P.W.: You have said that one of your goals has been the development of melody. That would tend to pull you toward Eastern music.

A.H.: Well yes, I thought that Armenian music—ancient Armenian music, which is very rich in modes and melodies—and Indian music seem to have melody which could stand by itself, it didn't need harmony. In fact it's better as a single line with perhaps a drone to give it foundation. And many pieces—some of my symphonies, like the *Eighth Symphony (Arjuna)*—have no harmony from beginning to end. It's just one giant melody as [composer] Lou Harrison would say.

Anyway, I did eventually go to study in Japan and Korea, and before that in India. I went to South India because I very much wanted to study the Carnatic music system. Then on my way back I went through Japan. Of course I had been very interested in Japanese music for many years, and so, when I went there, they performed for me—my *Third Symphony* and other works were performed. I did some conducting, but also I listened to [Japanese] Gagaku music, Kabuki, and Bunraku music, and I was dying to go back and study that music, and so I did. I got a grant a few years later to go back. And so I think from 1959 my traveling began and I was able to hear these musics first hand. I can remember hearing Korean music many years before and thinking "This is so beautiful, it's like another planet." And then finally I found myself in Korea studying that music, and studying those instruments, and finally I was commissioned to write a symphony for two orchestras—an ancient orchestra of Ahak, as they call it, instruments, and a full symphony orchestra on the same stage. So that's the *35th Symphony*—for

two orchestras.

P.W.: Do you write many things for non-Western instruments?

A.H.: I like to from time to time. My *16th Symphony*, which I wrote while I was in Korea, uses Korean instruments. There are pieces for Japanese instruments, a sonata for ryuteki [a cross-blown bamboo flute] and shō [a bamboo, pipe-like mouth organ], and one for hichiriki [an oboe-like double-reed instrument] and shō. There is a piece for oud [a Middle Eastern lute] and strings, quartet, or orchestra. And when I was in India, I wrote a piece for South Indian orchestra, with vinas, Indian harps, tamboura, and so forth. I called that *Nagoora* after a 19th-century saint from Madras. Later I transcribed it for cello and percussion. Also, I have used Oriental forms, such as Gagaku orchestral techniques, in writing for Western orchestra.

P.W.: You must also have been influenced by the rhythms in Oriental music. I notice many devices like South Indian rhythm cycles cropping up in your work.

A.H.: Yes, of course. Indian concepts, but also Armenian dance rhythms and other things. These have been important to me and I have studied them, but I don't use them directly. I have always made my own systems.

P.W.: Can you recall any specific examples?

A.H.: Well, it's pretty well diffused throughout my writing. I like to use cycles of 13 or 10 or 7 beats or whatever, often for percussion. I think the *St. Vartan Symphony* is a good example there. Or sometimes, like in the *Eighth Symphony (Arjuna)*, I juxtapose complex rhythm cycles in the percussion against simpler rhythms in the rest of the orchestra. But it's always my own system.

P.W.: Your music has definitely gone in a very different direction from that of many of your contemporaries. Was that intentional?

A.H.: Well I think it came out when I was really very young, about 19 or so. I had a scholarship to the New England Conservatory to study with Frederick Converse. He was a very nice man and he asked me if I would like to get a scholarship to go to Paris and study with Nadia Boulanger. And I said no. I felt I didn't want to be a part of contemporary music. I didn't want to be a part of this very intellectual approach. A very cold approach I felt.

P.W.: Boulanger represented that approach to you?

A.H.: To me she did. But somehow I didn't want to be subjected to other people's influence. I felt I wanted to write music which was more universal

and melodic, so I went my own way. But I felt that the real need for writing melodic music was that you had to know melodic music. To know it from all over the world. I don't use melodies from India or other places, but I have to know them.

P.W.: What about atonality? Do you feel that it is in some way unnatural?

A.H.: To me it's unnatural because it lacks a center. The best atonal composers usually try to give a feeling of pedal or center, and that's what you need. I was looking at a string quartet by Schönberg, and I noticed that he really harped on one note for a long time before he quit it. Any mode has certain central notes. Everything in the universe has a center. We are on a planet which has a center. The sun is the center of our solar system. Every solar system is the same way. Galaxies have cores which they rotate around. I don't want to have music always out in limbo somewhere. I think there should be a center. There can be moments of it, but to have a whole system of music . . .

P.W.: You have incorporated moments of serial technique in some of your pieces though, haven't you?

A.H.: Yes, sometimes to get unrelated sounds like distant stars, I may use something like that, because some sounds are related and some sounds are very distant sounds from a center. But there usually is a center. Or there may be a moment of cloud or some kind of thing, like the beautiful melodic passage that Beethoven marks "oppressed"—it's in one of his late string quartets; it represents a feeling of despair for a moment, but he comes out of it.

P.W.: But even if not atonal, some of your pieces are very complex and dissonant aren't they?

A.H.: Well, there was a period when I was writing some very coloristic, experimental things. *Floating World* was one, and *Mountains And Rivers Without End*. That was in the '60s, around 1963. But recently my work has been much more classical, I think. I'm trying to simplify everything to get to the essence.

P.W.: These titles are very evocative. Is there a strong programmatic content to these pieces? Or to your music generally? Do you try to imitate nature when you write?

A.H.: No, I don't think about a program when I write. In fact, most of these titles come up after the piece is written. Or perhaps while I am working on it. *Mountains And Rivers Without End* was named after a famous Chinese scroll painting. It seems to evoke the same mood.

P.W.: But there are pieces where there

is some programmatic content determined beforehand. I'm thinking of *And God Created Great Whales*.

A.H.: Well, that was a commission from the New York Philharmonic. They wanted a piece based on some tapes of whale songs. The man who made them, his name was Dr. Payne, felt that my music would be the most suitable. What he had heard of mine was purely abstract, but he just felt it would fit. So it may be that my music evokes things in nature, but if it does it's not because I try to make it that way.

P.W.: You don't consciously attempt to portray certain things. It's something subtler than that.

A.H.: Yes. It's more on the level of feeling.

P.W.: Tell me some more about your educational experiences. Did you ever

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MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS WITHOUT END—Poseidon 1004
AND GOD CREATED GREAT WHALES—Columbia M-34537

go through a complete program at a conservatory or university?

A.H.: No, I never did. I took what I wanted. I came back to Converse later because I wanted to have somebody look at my music and to hear some things which I had written for orchestra. And later I felt I wanted to study counterpoint with him. He said, "You're crazy, you know it." But I said, "No, I'm very good at faking things but I don't really know it. I'd like to start at the beginning and work it out as a kind of mathematics." And so I did. I went very deeply into it. Very deeply. I gave myself the most terrible problems. Finally he gave me an examination—a theme to write a fugue on, and I wrote a whole book of fugues, canons, and finally a quadruple fugue bringing his theme in at the very end with all the other subjects the way Bach intended with his *Art Of Fugue*. Later I wrote a piece with a similar form, only using my own themes. That was the *Prelude And Quadruple Fugue*.

P.W.: So you get the best of both worlds—melody from Eastern music, counterpoint from the West.

A.H.: Yes, I felt that counterpoint was the very pinnacle of Western achievement. Very much so. I remember when I was very young, Roger Sessions, who had seen some of my little pieces through my piano teacher, told me to study the classics. Not just because they are classical but because they are the only music we have which is good enough. And my feeling is to study the best music from all around the world. Whatever I feel is really the best example of music, that I study very deeply. For melody, I think that the highest development is in India.

P.W.: Is there any other influence which has been important to you?

A.H.: Armenian music has been important to me. Not so much the folk music, as that has been weakened by so many other influences, but the church music and the work of Komitas Vartabet. He was the Armenian Bartok. He was a great musician and he created the Armenian style really, out of the actual materials. He created something very beautiful. His choral music is magnificent. I conducted some of his choral music for his centennial celebration in 1969—he was born in 1869. I was also the first to play his piano pieces in this country.

P.W.: Have you heard much popular music?

A.H.: I never can listen to music except at certain times, because I always want to work. I love to work. So mostly I don't listen any more. I read scores sometimes. I go back to the scores I love. But there's so much violence in popular music now, with electronic devices, that my ears just can't stand it. I don't hear too well anyway, but it's worse when it's loud. Beethoven said, "Don't shout because I'm not deaf." Well fortunately I'm not deaf, but I sometimes think that I almost wish I was, because I can hear music so well without my ears.

P.W.: I get the feeling that your inspiration is a very personal thing.

A.H.: Yes. There is a lot of music which has been important to me, particularly Handel, and Oriental music. But I have almost been more influenced by someone who was not so much a musician as a great mystic—Francis Bacon. He was a very great man, and all his philosophical works are dedicated to what he calls the Angelic Intelligences. I like that idea very much. I believe that this is the kind of music which I would like to produce if I could. I try to do that. I fail every time, but I try. There may not be much chance for much of it, but I'd like to have a little of that kind of music on Earth.

db

RECORD REVIEWS

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

THE POLICE

GHOST IN THE MACHINE—A & M

SP-3730: *SPIRITS IN THE MATERIAL WORLD*; *EVERY LITTLE THING SHE DOES IS MAGIC*; *INVISIBLE SUN*; *HUNGRY FOR YOU* (*J'AURAIS TOUJOURS FAIM DE TOI*); *DEMOLITION MAN*; *TOO MUCH INFORMATION*; *REHUMANIZE YOURSELF*; *ONE WORLD (NOT THREE)*; *OMEGAMAN*; *SECRET JOURNEY*; *DARKNESS*.

Personnel: Sting, vocals, electric bass, saxophones; Andy Summers, guitars, synthesizer; Stewart Copeland, drums, keyboards; Jean Roussel, keyboards (cut 2).

★★★★★

The Police is a group, like Steely Dan, whose music makes you change speeds when one of their songs comes on your car radio. Clean, direct choruses that keep your ears blinking to attention, emotional hooks every 30 seconds, and lushly produced melodies make both groups irresistible. With the release of *Ghost In The Machine*, their fourth album, the Police prove they're able to merge diverse pop idioms into complex music that will carry a mass audience where the group wants to take them. Too often at this point of commercial acceptance, the tendency to keep spinning out material the customers have bought before and are likely to buy again kills a group's creativity.

No longer dependent on the reggae/rock amalgam that first caught the public's fancy, however, the Police harken back to myriad influences—the acid rock power trios of Jimi Hendrix and the Cream, the early jazz-rock of Soft Machine and King Crimson, and the harmonic pop of the Hollies—while avoiding being locked into past forms like so many of today's "new wave" bands. Sting, Summers, and Copeland use any means at their disposal to create vital contemporary music. *Spirits In The Material World*, for example, adapts the mechanical possibilities of synthesizer-generated chords to invent a repetitive overlay for the Gatling-gun drums to lead the way out of, as the message of spirit over matter emerges. *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic* is a genuine Top 40 hit that doesn't wear out even on the 40th listening. Here, the ethereal chant "eeyoeoh" floats through the story of joyous, if unrequited, love—"It's a big enough umbrella/But it's always me that ends up getting wet"—bubbling on.

Invisible Sun is an oppressive dirge with a Philip Glass-like opening count-off leading to a moaning vocal. The insistent bass drum hits slow and heavy like Chinese water torture to set the scene of social inequities opposed by the prayer for an invisible sun which "gives its heat to everyone." *Hungry For You* is a less-satisfying disco-jam with French subtitles, while *Secret Journey* offers maudlin Yes-like sentiment and harmonies. Far more effective are songs like *Too Much*



GILL SMITHERMAN

Information, with its blaring clang and sing-song swirl of the omnipresent media blitz, or *Omegaman*, with its fantastically busy, beehive assault seemingly played at 78, driving straightahead.

Rehumanize Yourself throws everything in—sirens, synthesizer tremolos, racing guitars—to advise wayward youths and the authorities alike: "Policeman put on his uniform/He'd like to have a gun just to keep him warm/Cause violence here is a social norm/You got to humanize yourself." With songs like this and the mystic cymbal/tape magic reggae-like *One World*, the Police add an evangelical fervor to their exploitation of electronics, hoping to wrench the ghost out of the machine.

—richard friedman

AIR

AIR MAIL—Black Saint BSR 0049: B.K.; R.B.; C.T./J.L.

Personnel: Fred Hopkins, bass; Steve McCall, drums, bells; Henry Threadgill, tenor, alto saxophone, flute, bass flute, hub-kaphone.

★★★★★

With the exception of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Air is the first group to come to mind when talking about long-standing improvisational units. It's not that people aren't collectively improvising anymore, they're just maintaining a looser field of alliances. This results in a greater diversity of personnel in various groups, but also a certain predictability that harkens back to the Blue Note days of early '60s blowing sessions—great

playing, but they all blend together from a distance. Air members also partake of this free exchange, but they return to the intimacy of their trio with its unified vision forged around the concept of collective improvisation. It takes this ensemble intimacy and familiarity to elevate a session from mere excellence to real excitement and exploration.

This new Air recording indicates some of the influences that the individual members bring to the group. The opening track, *B.K.*, could be lifted from a recording by Arthur Blythe, in whose *In The Tradition* band McCall and Hopkins play. A racing ostinato bass line is thrown against a perky rhythm with sudden shifts into a staccato chorus. Threadgill plays a simple, bouncing melody that forms the launching pad for a trio improvisation pivoting on McCall's melodic drumming.

C.T./J.L. takes its initials from Cecil Taylor and Jimmy Lyons. While it doesn't partake of the hurricane intensity which these musicians are capable of, it employs the lessons of the two pioneers and practitioners of sensitive collective improvisation. Threadgill's alto makes probing stabs to open the piece in a questing, exploratory manner, and is tentatively answered by McCall and Hopkins. There's a dialog, consent of action, and then a headlong foray of twisting lines and cross-cut patterns screaming down the alleyway. Gears shift and there's more probing, but it's less hesitant, more demanding. There's a nervous energy as Threadgill riffs against McCall's landscaped minefield. Threadgill's playing is devoid of clichés, and

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influences have been submerged to the point of implication.

The final dedication and influence is heard on R.B., dedicated to the late bassist Ronnie Boykins. Air creates a solemn dirge with Hopkins' arco bass droning across misty malleted rolls from McCall and the lonely tones of Threadgill's hubkaphone. Hopkins introduces a gospel melody that Threadgill picks up on tenor and transmutes into controlled anguish. His arcing swirls break against McCall's stormy drumming and the crying of Hopkins' bass.

Air is not breaking new ground with this record, and I'm not sure that innovation is what it's all about, anyway. They are making a personal exploration of their heritage and redefining it in their own terms in a spontaneous and involving fashion.

—john diliberto

VARIOUS ARTISTS

GIANTS OF JAZZ: THE GUITARISTS—

Time Life TL-12: RAINBOW; CHURCH STREET SOBBIN' BLUES; IT'S RIGHT HERE FOR YOU; BEALE STREET BLUES; AFTER YOU'VE GONE; PICKIN' MY WAY; DJANGOLOGY; CHINA BOY; MINOR SWING; MONTMARTRE; FINESSE; NUAGES; JEEPERS CREEPERS; ROSE ROOM; SEVEN COME ELEVEN; PROFOUNDLY BLUE; SOLO FLIGHT; WAITIN' FOR BENNY; CHARLIE'S CHOICE; 6/8 GLIDE; HOTTER THAN THAT; THE MOOCHE; PADUCAH; BULL FROG MOAN; TOLEDO SHUFFLE; ALABAMA HOME; HAUNTED NIGHTS; I GOT RHYTHM; IF YOU SEE ME COMIN'; SWEET LORRAINE; CHASIN' A BUCK; GOOD MORNING BLUES; COUNTLESS BLUES; SWINGING ON THAT FAMOUS DOOR; SQUEEZE ME; 'S WONDERFUL; PEG LEG SHUFFLE; SOMEBODY LOVES ME; LATCH ON; BUCK JUMPIN'.

Personnel: Eddie Lang (cuts 1-6, 24), Django Reinhardt (7-12), Charlie Christian (14-19), Lonnie Johnson (20-24), Oscar Aleman (13), Bernard Addison (26), Teddy Bunn (27-29), Dick McDonough (30, 31), Eddie Durham (32, 33), Carmen Mastren (34, 35), Carl Kress (36, 37), George Van Eps (38), Al Casey (39, 40), guitar; various assisting personnel including Benny Goodman, Johnny Dodds, Ed Hall, clarinet; Buck Clayton, Louis Armstrong, Cootie Williams, trumpet; Jack Teagarden, trombone; Sidney Bechet, soprano saxophone; Lester Young, tenor saxophone; Stephane Grappelli, violin; Lionel Hampton, vibes; Fats Waller, piano.

★ ★ ★ ½

THE UNHEARD BENNY GOODMAN,
VOLUME 3, FEATURING CHARLIE
CHRISTIAN—Blu-Disc T-1006: STILL
WAITIN' FOR BENNY; STEALIN' APPLES; I'VE
BEEN THERE BEFORE; BREAKFAST FEUD;
JENNY; RAMONA (2 takes); BEFORE.

see below

In Volume 12 of *Giants Of Jazz*, Time-Life makes the instrument, not the instrumentalist, the star. In this three LP collection of pre-bop jazz guitar, the first three sides concentrate on portraits of Eddie Lang, Django Reinhardt, and Charlie Christian. The album

should have stopped there, since there were no other certifiable "giants" on the pre-war guitar scene. Indeed, if one's stature as a giant in jazz is supposed to be measured by the length of playing time given over in this series, than the decision not to do a full album on Christian puts Time-Life embarrassingly at odds with overwhelming historical consensus, critical judgement, and obvious impact on subsequent musicians.

But even for those who hold no special brief for Christian, the album is still something of a disappointment. Basically, it can't seem to decide exactly what it wants to be. If it is to be a collection of guitar giants, then too much time is spent on marginal non-giants; Bernard Addison, Oscar Aleman, Teddy Bunn, Dick McDonough, et al.—all excellent players, but hardly seminal movers. If it is to be a documentary history, on the other hand (such as Columbia's *50 Years Of Jazz Guitar* CG 33566), the accompanying booklet should have treated the guitar as the star. But in the rather free-standing biographies that accompany the records, we don't get a clear sense of the instrument's growth and development in jazz. Are we to accept each of these players as a giant? Eddie Durham, we are told, was probably the first electric guitarist to record. What we aren't told is that he really wasn't all that great. Time-Life, it seems, is confusing pioneers with giants. They aren't the same. I can't imagine anyone seriously arguing that Durham's rather stiff negotiation of *Countless Blues* represents an epitome of jazz guitar.

There were several very accomplished guitarists on the scene during the '30s, and they are represented. Carl Kress, George Van Eps, Carmen Mastren, and Dick McDonough were all virtuosos of a chordal style of acoustic guitar, and more or less descended from Eddie Lang. They were superb musicians, but rather one-dimensional jazzmen. Only the fact that they are surrounded by players like Benny Goodman, Bud Freeman, Joe Venuti, Sidney Bechet, Jack Teagarden, Roy Eldridge—all unquestioned giants of jazz—keeps the proceedings lively. The Bechet/Muggsy Spanier *Squeeze Me* (featuring Mastren) is one of the great jazz records. Charlie Teagarden and Frankie Trumbauer play a tightly knit dialog on 'S Wonderful. And Eldridge is in excellent early form on *Swingin' On That Famous Door*. But solo guitar numbers like *Peg Leg Shuffle* (Kress) and *Chasing A Buck* (McDonough) have very little jazz interest. The music notes claim Buck as a first issue, although it appeared on a 1977 Jazz Archives collection of Kress/McDonough work for which Time-Life annotator Marty Grosz did the liner notes. Only the Eddie Lang/Lonnie Johnson duet on *Bull Frog Moan* has some of the spontaneity and looseness of a real jazz performance.

Perhaps the one real find in the collection is a superb and virtually forgotten *Alabama Home* by the Gotham Stompers, a mostly Ellington small group of 1937 without Ellington. Bernard Addison's guitar is heard, but it's Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and a fragile ensemble sound full of emotional resonances from Caravan that makes this so special.

As for the real real giants of the collection—Lang, Reinhardt, and Christian—we get a varied, if too brief, sampling of each in different contexts. Curiously, none of the Blue Four sides, upon which much of Lang's reputation rests, are included. But there are Venuti/Lang band sides with Goodman and Teagarden as well as a sparkling duet with Kress. The differences between the American guitar mainstream and Reinhardt are instantly apparent in Django's throbbing, Edith Piaf-vibrato. But he swung with an intensity perhaps no American player could match at the time. Of course, Christian out-swung them all, and his work here with the Goodman Sextet (*Rose Room*, *Seven Come Eleven*) is among the most timeless in jazz. Although nothing is included that has not been available before (with the exception of some significant new information in the companion biography), it's a satisfactory sampling, especially the famous *Waitin' For Benny* jam session that happened to get recorded by Columbia engineers. It flares up and then hesitates. It probes, retreats, then strikes out again. It has the ebb and flow of a real jam session. And Dave Tough's drumming is marvelous.

"The engineer abruptly cut off the proceedings," the notes tell us, and this was assumed to have been the case until very recently when an extraordinary new Christian find surfaced on Blu-Disc, a label of the Merit Record Society (Box 156, Hicksville, NY 11802). On this fascinating document we hear the

complete session made that day in the studio, and learn in the process that the music was not cut off. At the point where *Waitin' For Benny* stops, the group proceeds into *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me* and beyond that *Rose Room* and then *Blues In B*, which was originally issued with *Waitin' For Benny*. Through it all ideas are thrown out, played with, abandoned, and occasionally returned to. Other melodies are tossed in at random. The same gravitational pull of *After You've Gone* is particularly strong on *I Can't Believe*. Overall, the music lacks direction, but this is a rehearsal, not a finished performance. That's its attraction, an authentic behind-the-scenes glimpse of ideas in development. It runs around 23 minutes, and hardly a minute passes without some casual "let's-see-if-this-works" concept tossed in. This is Charlie Christian as you've never heard him before. The other side contains several alternates and amusing breakdowns of the Goodman Band, 1939-41. It would be unfair to offer a rating to such rehearsals, but on a scale of pure fascination, they rate five stars.

—john mcdonough

BUD POWELL

IN PARIS—Discovery 830: *HOW HIGH THE MOON*; *DEAR OLD STOCKHOLM*; *BODY AND SOUL*; *JOH-DU*; *REETS AND I*; *SATIN DOLL*; *PARISIAN THOROUGHFARE*; *I CAN'T GET STARTED*; *LITTLE BENNY*.

Personnel: Powell, piano; Gilbert Rovere, bass; Kansas Fields, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

The conventional view of Bud Powell, like that of Lester Young, holds that the final third of his career produced little of lasting value, at least when contrasted with the major achievements of his early years. This album, recorded in the French capital early in 1963, some three years before his death, puts the lie to that assertion, for Powell is heard not only performing with unimpaired creative vigor but with a palpable exuberance and joyousness that make for a greatly enjoyable program. The set, incidentally, had been released by Reprise Records shortly after it was recorded, and its reappearance now restores to print one of the pianist's more accessible and delightful recitals, comprising as it does a number of cherished standards—*How High The Moon*, *Body And Soul*, and *I Can't Get Started*; familiar modern jazz staples—*Joh-Du*, *Satin Doll*; his own works—*Parisian Thoroughfare* and *Dear Old Stockholm* (*Varmeland*); and a pair of less well-known but worthy originals by the legendary Little Benny Harris—*Reets And I* and *Little Benny*.

Powell's playing throughout is crisp and muscular, crackling with imagination and wit, a great deal of harmonic savvy, and idiosyncratic rhythmic variety. Despite the familiarity of the program, the pianist has no trouble in finding stimulating new thoughts

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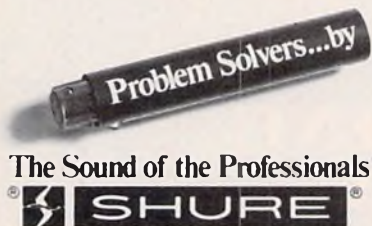
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as he ranges through it. And the emotional brightness of his approach to the material, his enthusiastic delight in it, is a decided plus too, countering the far more usual mordancy of his general approach to music. His recasting of *I Can't Get Started* is particularly outstanding, a lovely and affecting rumination on the ballad that constantly delights the ear with its unfolding tapestry of sinuous melodic variations and fresh voicings; from its opening notes it seems newly minted. The same holds, though to lesser extent, of *Body And Soul*, which also has a decided Monkish cast to its voicings and rhythmic deliberation. Other pieces employ standard "set" arrangements, but once past the theme statements it's pure Powell all the way, which is to say, totally, absorbingly engaged by the creative act. And he gives the Harris selections loving, inventive attention.

While these are not among the touchstone recordings of his career, neither are they among the more unfortunate productions of his later years—far from it, in fact. If they do not strike the astonishing levels of his finest, most gripping work, they offer in compensation immensely satisfying levels of creative expression, a pleasing consistency and, not least, an overall geniality of mood that make the set a worthwhile addition to any jazz listener's library. They more than hint at the man's greatness. They confirm it. Honor Bud Powell.

—pete welding

ARTHUR BLYTHE

BLYTHE SPIRIT—Columbia FC 37427:

CONTEMPLATION; FACELESS WOMAN; REVERANCE; STRIKE UP THE BAND; MISTY; SPIRITS IN THE FIELD; JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE.

Personnel: Blythe, alto saxophone; Abdul Wadud, cello (cuts 1-4, 6); Kelvyn Bell, electric guitar (1-4); Bob Stewart, tuba (1-4, 6, 7); Bobby Battle, drums (1-4); John Hicks, piano (5); Fred Hopkins, bass (5); Steve McCall, drums (5); Amina Claudine Myers, organ (7).

★ ★ ★ ★

PAQUITO D'RIVERA

BLOWIN'—Columbia FC 37374: *WALTZ*

FOR MOE; BASSTRONAUT; MONGA; CHUCHO; ON GREEN DOLPHIN STREET; SONG TO MY SON; AL FIN AMOR; EL DIA QUE ME QUIERAS.

Personnel: D'Rivera, soprano, alto saxophone, flugelhorn, flute, percussion; Jorge Dalto (1, 3, 6, 7), Hilton Ruiz (2, 4, 5, 7) acoustic electric piano; Russell Blake, electric bass (2-5, 7); Eddie Gomez, bass (1, 2, 6); Ignacio Berroa, drums; Daniel Ponce (1-5), Jerry Gonzalez (3, 4), percussion; Mario Rivera, flute (3).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

It is conceivable that, in less than a century of life, jazz has seen the last of its tidal waves of transition. More than 20 years ago, Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor broke the last rules by abandoning the chordal approach and

ending formal interrelation between musicians; the resulting reliance on percussion, cacophony, and collective improvisation, in fact, brought jazz full circle to its New Orleans origins. What, then, constitutes innovation in jazz? Change now is measured less in musicological revolutions than in personally stamped recombinations of existing knowledge. Such a framework houses the work of Arthur Blythe, one of the leading synthesists to emerge in the 1970s, and Paquito D'Rivera, who promises to become prominent in the '80s.

Blythe's latest disc, *Blythe Spirit*, furthers his impressive and individual body of work. The album is marked again by Blythe's two trademarks: a vision broad enough to embrace both tradition and modernism, and a totally unique ensemble sound, defined by his own sonorities, Abdul Wadud's cross-cutting cello, and the mournful pumping of Bob Stewart on tuba. Their fundamentally sad texture suits the resolute, even grim, substance of *Blythe Spirit*, one foretold in the opening selection's title, *Contemplation*. Throughout side one, and on side two's *Spirits In The Field*, Stewart bleats the regular beat of a slow funk, while the overlaid saxophone and cello depart that carnal music for lamentations more akin to a dirge. Blythe and Wadud seem to solo as one mind, their twin voices trilling upward. Blythe alone blows with raw power and evasion; his voice remains compelling as much for mystery as clarity.

Tellingly, Blythe employs different ensembles for the album's two moments of emotional relief, *Strike Up The Band* and *Misty*. The former is rollicking "free-bop" fun, while the Erroll Garner chestnut—with the under-rated John Hicks on piano plus Air's rhythm section of Fred Hopkins and Steve McCall—simply seduces and caresses. But both selections would slide off the thematic edge of *Blythe Spirit* were they not followed by *Just A Closer Walk With Thee*, which both closes and unifies the album. After the dark ruminations of Blythe's own spirituals, organist Amina Claudine Myers' reading of the traditional hymn concludes the album on a note of redemption. One assumes Blythe needs little more reason than that to carry on.

An utterly unhealed brand of redemption informs Paquito D'Rivera's *Blowin'*. If D'Rivera lashes and roars like a man set free, it should come as no surprise, for this is his first solo album since defecting from Cuba, where he was comrade saxophonist in Irakere. Joy and passion drench *Blowin'*, and the sorrow for family and friends left behind tinge and leaven the work. Who knows if D'Rivera ever can repeat such a captivating, enervating album any more than Stevie Wonder could sing *Isn't She Lovely* for his second daughter—the emotional conditions never will come again. But just one *Blowin'* justifies a career; many names have been made on less.

The album conveniently arrives as "salsa meets jazz" has become the New York City jazz vogue; D'Rivera provides a benchmark for a natural mating of the forms. As a Cuban, he comes by his latin sound honestly, raising it above the overdubbed sweetener to which much jazz, particularly fusion, relegates its



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hemispheric relative. The arrangements, compositions, and phrasings all employ latin influence so naturally, so unselfconsciously, that D'Rivera can range across song genres without pricking the aura. His blistering break on *Waltz For Moe* is a case of modal-meets-salsa, with the altoist spearing the rhythm with his own percussive attack. *Monga* exemplifies the other extreme, balladry; the flutes of D'Rivera and Mario Rivera form a cross-breeze lush and more sensuous than anything a synthesizer ever spit out. As if to remind skeptics of his mainstream chops, on *Green Dolphin Street* his alto dodges and feints from the melody, touches its rim with clusters of notes, and openly states the theme only on the final chorus; it is the sort of treatment Archie Shepp often gives the compositions of Duke Ellington.

A stable of sidemen thrive under D'Rivera's direction. It is a pleasure to hear Jorge Dalto at length, on acoustic piano, and uncluttered by overwrought arrangements. Drummer Ignacio Berroa, another Cuban expatriate, makes a similarly powerful American debut. He is busy, but never distracting, and enough of a battler to stand up to D'Rivera, who, like John Coltrane or Sonny Rollins, needs a powerful foil on percussion.

But no one should doubt that D'Rivera could excite his musicians as much as his listeners. For at least one magic period, in the afterglow of escape, he possesses the kinesic not only of artistry but of humanity.

—sam freedman

DON FRIEDMAN

HOT KNEPPER AND PEPPER—

Progressive 7036: *AUDOBON; I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU; HELLURE; GROOVIN' HIGH; MEDLEY: ALFIE, LAURA, PRELUDE TO A KISS, I GOT IT BAD; BEAUTIFUL LOVE.*

Personnel: Friedman, piano; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Pepper Adams, baritone saxophone; George Mraz, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

After a hiatus of about 10 years from the jazz scene, Don Friedman has apparently decided to return to the fold for another taste. Younger listeners may not recall, but from the early '60s on Friedman increasingly attracted critical attention. Classically trained but an early convert to the creative climate that marked the jazz world at that time, the pianist continued to develop his versatility and other professional skills by working with such stylistically disparate figures as Dexter Gordon, Buddy DeFranco, Harry Edison, Chet Baker, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Mann, Jimmy Giuffre, and Clark Terry. But the exigencies of life's demands forced the budding stylist to temporarily retreat from purely artistic endeavors. Teaching and the commercial route became the way to survive.

Now presumably on his economic feet again, Friedman finds himself once more able to pursue the jazz life, and no better way to start can be imagined than by surrounding oneself with such present day

giants as Adams, Knepper, Mraz, and Hart. Actually, though, this is not a piano-plus-accompanying-band date, but rather an all-out exercise in bebop democracy, for if Friedman's name were not in titular position it would be easy to believe this a cooperative enterprise.

Opening the album is the 19-year-old Sonny Rollins' Birdlike theme (*Audobon—get it?*) on *Honeysuckle Rose* changes, and from the outset we know that everyone means business. Pepper is as brusquely fluent as ever, and Knepper as warmly noble, while Friedman, perhaps not yet as comfortable as he will be in the future, opts for a slightly cooler approach. *Sentimental* is played at an encouragingly medium tempo and offers excellent work by both hornmen. Pepper contributed his own 12-bar blues, *Hellure*, to the date, and it is notable not only for its inspired front line choruses, but also for the eight-bar trades between Friedman and Hart. The ever-popular *Groovin' High* features fantastic Pepper, but it is ironically the sterling quality of this track that tends to diminish the effect of the obligatory medley that follows: Friedman plays *Alfie* in a flowery, rhapsodic style, but is soon redeemed by Knepper's thoughtful reading of *Laura*; a horn-like Mraz essays his *Prelude* very well indeed, but even he is soon overwhelmed by Adams' double-timed machine-gun delivery on his idol's (Harry Carney) showpiece, *I Got It Bad*.

A more cohesive note, that found on Victor Young's minor ballad, *Beautiful Love*, closes the album, but, despite the sentimental expression initially intended by the composer, this selection seems to draw forth even more double-timing from the tireless baritonist. The others are as before. —jack sohmer

STAN GETZ

IN STOCKHOLM—Verve UMV 2614:

INDIANA; WITHOUT A SONG; I DON'T STAND A GHOST OF A CHANCE WITH YOU; I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; OVER THE RAINBOW; GET HAPPY; JEEPERS CREEPERS.

Personnel: Getz, tenor saxophone; Bengt Hallberg, piano; Gunnar Johnson, bass; Anders Burman, drums.

★ ★ ★

THE DOLPHIN—Concord Jazz CJ-158: *THE DOLPHIN; A TIME FOR LOVE; JOY SPRING; MY OLD FLAME; THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES; CLOSE ENOUGH FOR LOVE.*

Personnel: Getz, tenor saxophone; Lou Levy, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

These two albums present Stan Getz in a situation most to his liking, apparently free of pressures from record producers to create something commercially viable. In an age where we are so acclimated to electronics and the over-aggressive input of rhythm section players, performances like these require us to adjust our bearings a bit.

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Getz has never been known as an innovator; his light airy sound—almost altoish in character—and his rhythmic approach resulted mainly from the influence of Lester Young. From his earliest days, however, Getz has been able to forge one of the most unique and identifiable sounds in jazz. Stan Getz *In Stockholm* was recorded in 1955. At 29 he was already an accepted member of the jazz coterie, famous for a rendition of *Early Autumn* with the Woody Herman band. By the mid-'50s his graceful lyricism had been molded with a more driving approach which is not noticeable on the *Stockholm* album. Because of illness he hadn't played during the previous four months, and he may have been taking things a bit easy here as a result.

Each tune has a similarity of style, due in part to the limitations of the pickup Swedish rhythm section. They make little attempt to interact creatively with Getz, but at least offer unobtrusive if not boring support. Pianist Hallberg plays a good solo on *Get Happy*. Getz, meanwhile, displays a consistent "velvet fog" timbre throughout all registers, unlike his newest release in which his sound has a certain harshness and edge, particularly in the upper range. He solos well on the hard-boppish *Indiana* and especially on the ballad *Everything Happens To Me*. He has a lot to say (two full choruses) and it's all well worth hearing. He opens *Get Happy* with an exciting bluesy cadenza. This is the only tune, unfortunately, on which the rhythm section comes alive.

Getz' newest recording, *The Dolphin* (recorded live at San Francisco's Keystone Korner), is his first on Concord. One problem here is that, for the most part, everything stays at the same controlled and reserved emotional level. There are few if any dramatic surprises. The lack of bravura within the rhythm section—even though this is perhaps what Getz prefers—detracts from the total effect. High points, however, occur during, and especially at the end of, Monty Budwig's fine bass solo on *Joy Spring*—the bridge seguing into Getz' entrance is quite exciting. Victor Lewis' drumming, depending on your point of view, is either delicate or lackluster. *Thousand Eyes* is the album's most energized tune. Getz plays an outstanding solo with originality and some good bop licks, and Levy's piano solo is his best on the album. Getz' most exhilarating solo occurs on *Joy Spring* and includes many engaging double-time figures. Although he is generally considered not to have been influenced by Charlie Parker, his choice of notes on this tune is at times reminiscent of Bird. The *Dolphin* is a fast bossa—calling to mind Getz' '60s collaborations with Astrud Gilberto—and is a likable tune but fails to sustain interest over its unvaried, overextended length.

—danny l. read

RALPH SHAPEY

**FROMM VARIATIONS: 31 VARIATIONS
FOR PIANO**—CRI SD 428.

Personnel: Robert Black, piano.

★ ★ ★

In terms of its connotations, this piece stands squarely in an American tradition that goes

back to Charles Ives' piano music and the 1930 *Piano Variations* of Aaron Copland. Within its painful silences, its fitful starts and stops, it encompasses a world of questions asked but never answered, of uncompromising loneliness, of menacing images etched against a starkly barren landscape.

Yet, despite the vividness of certain passages, these quasi-tonal variations, written in 1973, fail to create a strong impact overall. One reason is that they're so short; with each averaging only a minute or two in length, there isn't much room to develop a particular idea. Also, the variations are not only totally separate, but are each ended by a fragment of the original theme. Thus, rather than leading to something new, the variations are like a series of photographs of the same object, taken from different angles.

This is not an unimaginative concept: in literature, for example, such disparate authors as William Faulkner and Alain Robbe-Grillet have made good use of it, and the montage technique is a familiar one in movies. But in a set of abstract variations lasting 45 minutes, one longs for development toward an emotional goal; all one finds here is a stuttering reiteration of a single idea, relieved by occasional flashes of brilliance. Shapey displays a marked rhythmic facility in several variations; if only he had allowed this tendency to unfold, he might have been able to infuse his piece with the kind of dynamism that sparkles in Frederic Rzewski's epic set of variations. *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*

The most interesting thing in these variations is Shapey's harmonic vocabulary, which it shares with his 1971 work, *Praise*, an oratorio for bass-baritone, chorus, and orchestra. I call it "quasi-tonal" because, having no real tonal center, it is a good deal more than dissonant; but there are recurrent melodic phrases which are clearly derived from tonal composition, and many of the chord roots imply conventional harmonic progressions. While none of this is new, Shapey has used it to develop a very personal, intimate language. —joel rothstein

ANDREW CYRILLE

SPECIAL PEOPLE—Soul Note SN 1012: *A GIRL NAMED RAINBOW; HIGH PRIEST; FORTIFIED NUCLEOLUS; BABY MAN; SPECIAL PEOPLE.*

Personnel: Cyrille, drums, percussion; David S. Ware, tenor saxophone; Ted Daniels, trumpet, flugelhorn; Nick deGeronimo, bass.

★ ★ ★

Special People was recorded in 1980 for Black Saints' alter-ego label, Soul Note. Leading his own band, Maono, Cyrille chose the five tunes presented here with obvious care and rehearsal—the breaks are neat, the themes crisp.

The first song is a lovely Ornette Coleman composition, *A Girl Named Rainbow*—a majestic theme structured around two notes in a repeated motif. Unfortunately the song is given such a reverential treatment that this interpretation sounds like a recital band. *High Priest* and *Nucleolus* are hard-boppy

pieces that harken back to the archetypal Prestige and Blue Note sessions of the '60s, with Cyrille's ride cymbals sizzling in 4/4. Stylistically he is a clean, concise drummer who brings to each song a calculated understanding of metric propulsion.

My qualms aren't with the leader but the rest of the band, especially tenorist Ware and trumpeter Daniels; their playing is a paradox of how an individualistic style is or isn't developed. Ware, on one hand, is still assimilating the history of the jazz saxophone and its creators. His phrases and nuances earnestly suggest a musician still seeking himself. Daniels is even tougher. He has stripped his expressivity away to the point of becoming generic. He is neither spare nor emotive to any remarkable degree, and floats over a characterless netherworld except on the last cut, *Special People*, where he loosens up with a series of guttural bubbles almost lost in the ensemble free-for-all. The pairing of these two on the front line of the quartet has a deleterious effect that cancels out one solo after another.

Hence the reservations I have about this album, wherein three of the four musicians haven't developed keen enough musical personae to be regarded as having individual styles. Everyone in the arts has influences, but it is up to artists to dive deeper into themselves until influence is merely a footnote, a lesson learned, even forgotten. Creative artists are at the mercy of themselves, not

their public or their critics, to take the next step in forging truly new music—which in order to flourish, must become again misunderstood and momentarily incomprehensible.

—jim brinsfield

**ABBEY LINCOLN
(AMINATA MOSEKA)**

GOLDEN LADY—Inner City IC 1117:
*SOPHISTICATED LADY; GOLDEN LADY;
PAINTED LADY; THROW IT AWAY; WHAT
ARE YOU DOING THE REST OF YOUR LIFE;
CAGED BIRD.*

Personnel: Lincoln, vocals; Archie Shepp, tenor saxophone; Roy Burroughs, trumpet; Hilton Ruiz, piano; Jack Gregg, bass; Freddie Waits, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Combining the forces of Abbey Lincoln and Archie Shepp seems so natural, since as artists they have so many similarities. They are poets with common themes, both speaking eloquently of spiritual freedom, evoking love and anger in simultaneous moments in their music, both have a theater background that has affected their music, and both won't hesitate to cry, and to cry out, in their song.

Golden Lady may not be as consistently powerful as Lincoln's 1978 Inner City release, *People In Me*, the Riverside releases of 20-some years ago, or the stunning collaboration

with Max Roach, *Freedom Now Suite*, but it has the most magical moments of interplay between Lincoln and an instrumentalist since she recorded with Kenny Dorham for Riverside.

Anyone who has heard Stevie Wonder's *Golden Lady* will be stunned by a careful listening to the graceful, careful version here. Wonder sang joyously about the marvel of a young romance; Lincoln sings with maturity and reflection about the depths of love. Shepp treats the song much as he approached the spirituals recorded not long ago with Horace Parlan, with gently tearing, restrained passion and reverence. Shepp and Lincoln have made the song their own, bending and stretching the melody so it forces a completely new look at the lyrics.

One might expect the same from *Sophisticated Lady*, but the classic Ellington sob story is disappointing. Shepp's fills seem disturbingly disjointed, not in sync with Lincoln, and she bends the melody in ways that rob it of its wonderfully flowing pathos. Shepp's solos, thankfully, show a subtle empathy for the lady; he has always been one of the best hands at interpreting Ellington.

Since she moved from night club singer to jazz singer, Abbey Lincoln has increasingly taken chances with melody, more than most vocalists around today. Yet on her own material in this album, she seems to revert to her earlier, more direct approach of putting the message above the medium. The melodies on



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RECORD REVIEWS

her three originals are generally light and appealing, but the content is often intensely personal—from squawking, literally, a song of freedom, to lamenting that people view the singer on-stage as a “spectacle.”

The supporting cast here is fine, but this album is dominated by Lincoln and Shepp. She has recorded before with masterful musicians—Sonny Rollins, Eric Dolphy, Coleman Hawkins, Wynton Kelly—but few, if any, have reached the same level of empathy as Shepp has. Abbey and Archie should be paired again, soon.

—r. bruce dold

WOODY HERMAN

A CONCORD JAM—Concord Jazz CJ-142: *WOODCHOPPER'S BALL*; *ROSE ROOM*; *JUST FRIENDS*; *NANCY (WITH THE LAUGHING FACE)*; *BODY AND SOUL*; *SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE SORRY*; *MY MELANCHOLY BABY*; *APPLE HONEY*.

Personnel: Herman, Eiji Kitamura, clarinet; Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Dick Johnson, flute, alto saxophone; Warren Vache, cornet; Cal Tjader, vibes; Dave McKenna, piano; Cal Collins, guitar; Bob Maize, bass; Jake Hanna, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

THE THIRD HERD, VOL. 1—Discovery DS-815: *STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY*; *BLUES IN ADVANCE*; *TERRISSITTA*; *MOTEN SWING*; *NO TRUE LOVE*; *GO DOWN THE WISHIN' ROAD*; *BLUE LOU* (2 takes); *I LOVE PARIS*; *THE MOON IS BLUE*.

Personnel: Herman, clarinet, alto saxophone, vocals; (cuts 1-4)—Don Fagerquist, John Howell, Roy Caton, Jack Scarba, trumpet; Carl Fontana, Urbie Green, Jack Green, trombone; Arno Marsh, Dick Hafer, Bill Perkins, tenor saxophone; Sam Staff, baritone saxophone, flute; Nat Pierce, piano; Chubby Jackson, bass; Sonny Igoe, drums. (5-8)—Caton, Stu Williamson, Tommy DeCarlo, Phil Cook, Dick Sherman, trumpet; Fontana, Will Bradley, Jack Green, trombone; Marsh, Hafer, Perkins, tenor saxophone; Staff, baritone saxophone, flute; Pierce, piano, celeste; Jackson, bass; Art Mardigan, drums; Candido Camero, Jose Manguel, percussion. (9-10)—Williamson, Ernie Royal, Bernie Glow, Harold Wegbreit, Bobby Styles, trumpet; Green, Frank Rehak, Vernon Friley, Kai Winding, trombone; Jerry Coker, Hafer, Bill Trujillo, tenor saxophone; Staff, baritone saxophone, flute; Pierce, piano; Red Kelly, bass; Mardigan, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Nearly three decades separate these albums, and although the Concord recording lacks the exciting arrangements and big band sound of the Third Herd, it does represent Herman's return to the clarinet. In this August 1980 concert recording, he plays with great tonal variety, fiery excitement, and flowing ideas. There's nothing more than head arrangements here, but variety is interjected by changing the soloists on each cut. Only on the opening *Woodchopper's Ball* and the closing *Apple Honey* do all the horns solo.

Rose Room is a vehicle for Woody, who constructs an intense solo without ever un-

dercutting the piece's light, gentle swing. *Someday* features the bright mellow cornet of Vache, whose uncharacteristic missed high notes destroy the mood at the end. But throughout the album Vache's warm brass playing helps vary the ensemble sound, as does Tjader's bright vibes work. *Body And Soul* introduces Kitamura, who has a gorgeous mellow clarinet tone but an absence of ideas when he tries to improvise. Hamilton's breathy tenor playing, interrupted by McKenna (who creates his own flowing melodic line) is the main feature of *Nancy*, and he lingers over and caresses the tune with that lush style of mentors Hawkins and Webster. But McKenna steals the show with his solo vehicle, *Melancholy Baby*, which opens with a gentle lyricism and then starts to swing with a rolling bass which builds as the pianist piles on rhythmic lines while his left hand sails along, including a sudden burst of stride prior to the return to the opening mood. It's certainly not to be confused with the *Melancholy Baby* of dingy piano bars and is worth the price of the album.

Woody's Third Herd, the last to be numbered, isn't as well known as the second—the Four Brothers band—but as this reissue shows it was an exciting, driving band, with fine soloists—especially Marsh, Fontana, Fagerquist, Williamson, and Pierce—propelling fine charts, most of them by Pierce and Ralph Burns. (The notes don't identify the arrangers, except for one tune; don't identify many of the soloists; misidentify at least one soloist who is named; and misspell at least two names.)

Woody first issued these and other numbers on his own Mars label which he started after Columbia rejected the tapes as dull, and the sides have been reissued at least twice by Norman Granz. *I Love Paris* (with a delicately dancing bridge) and *Moon Is Blue* are given lightly swinging treatments. Muted trumpets playing against the trombones add warm colors to both ballads. Woody's vocals dominate three tracks. Except for a latinish sax section intro, *Wishin' Road*, one of those novelty numbers popular with big bands at the time, is best forgotten. But his lazy, bluesy style is well suited to *No True Love* (with softly wailing saxes in the background) and *Blues In Advance* which is kicked along by driving Marsh and Fontana solos and intertwined trumpet, trombone, and sax lines. It's the swingers on which this band, and its arrangers, especially shine. Burns' *Terrissitta* is a beautiful latin piece that builds and subsides via sectional interplay. Pierce's delightful arrangement of *Blue Lou* mixes gentleness and drive (with Pierce playing piano rather than celeste on a version issued here for the first time). The trombone and trumpet sections shout on hard swinging versions of *Motén Swing* (arranged partly by Pierce and Urbie Green) and *Stompin' At The Savoy* (in a Burns arrangement).

With little freshness to be found in big bands today, it's good to have these recordings available again, even if they aren't all among the best Mars sides, the recording information incomplete and not error free, and the playing time a skimpy 29 minutes. Let's have volume two, but produced with more care.

—jerry de muth

MEREDITH MONK

DOLMEN MUSIC—ECM-1-1197: *GOTHAM LULLABY; TRAVELLING; THE TALE; BIOGRAPHY; DOLMEN MUSIC (OVERTURE AND MEN'S CONCLAVE, WA-OHS, PINE TREE LULLABY, CALLS, CONCLUSION).*
Personnel: Monk, voice, piano (cuts 1, 2, 4); Steve Lockwood, piano (3); Collin Walcott, percussion (2), violin (3); Andrea Goodman, Monica Solem, Paul Langland, voice (5); Robert Een, voice, cello (5); Julius Eastman, voice, percussion (5).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JAY CLAYTON

ALL-OUT—Anima 1J35: *BADADADAT; RANDOM MONDAYS; LONELY WOMAN; 2-5-1; 7/8 THING; FRAGMENTS; ALL-OUT.*
Personnel: Clayton, voice; Jane Ira Bloom, soprano, alto saxophone; Larry Karush, piano; Harvie Swartz, bass; Frank Clayton, drums, water drums; Bill Buchen, kalimba (5); Shelley Hirsch, Becca Armstrong, Sally Swisher, voice (5).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PAUL McCANDLESS

NAVIGATOR—Landslide LD-1005: *JULIAN; NOW AND THEN; HELIX; NON-NAVIGATOR; THE GREAT LAWN; WILLOW; CIRCLE WALTZ; SYNAPSE—THE WELL; DOWNSTREAM.*
Personnel: McCandless, soprano saxophone, oboe, english horn, bass clarinet; Ross Traut, electric guitar, sitar; David Samuels, vibes, marimba, percussion, voice; Steve Rodby, bass; Jay Clayton, voice (1, 4, 6, 9); Linda Namias, handclaps (5).

★ ★ ★

Meredith Monk came to music from dance, determined to find a vocal body language to express the vague yet powerful emotions for which we haven't yet found words. Drawing on the entire range of the human voice to convey the entire range of human emotions, Monk has invented a private but readily accessible vocabulary of shrieks, sobs, and moans, of nonsense syllables and sounds without literal meaning which all taken together seem to make literal and often frightening sense. She has staked claim as a singer to land which instrumentalists alone have always held title to—the idea of music as a universal language.

Monk's early work has been documented on independent labels and imports. It is fortuitous that her unveiling on a major label should coincide with her most ambitious, most mature statement to date. The 23-minute, five-movement title piece represents Monk's successful attempt to extend her domain, to choreograph her method and her madness for a mixed choir of six voices. The male voice is a new element in Monk's world, and she exploits its unique characteristics to establish natural opposition to the female vocal traits that run through and define all her work. There's a dark religious aura, a sense of majesty and ritual to this performance—the priestly basso-profundo mum-

bling on *Conclave* and the congregational layering and swelling of voices all throughout suggesting a rite of exorcism or burial. But there's humor here too, in the spiraling jawharp-like "wa-ohs" and in the resounding paganistic "ha!" which concludes the work, and it is precisely this tension of extremes which makes hearing Dolmen Music such a moving experience.

The four pieces for one voice on side one form a song cycle depicting a woman's life from the womb to the grave. What is most startling about these songs is their forced marriage of the soothingly familiar and the menacingly alien. In musical terms this is no more than the meeting of East and West, heard as rudimentary Major piano chords clashing with untempered and frequently microtonal vocal glossolalia. On a deeper level though, it's the unconscious rising to the surface, the murmur of half-comprehended conversations intruding on a child's peaceful slumber in *Lullaby*, or the nagging sounds of a little girl's inhibitions checking the lusty yells of a woman's sexual awakening on *Travelling*. *Tale* is the only piece with lyrics (non sequiturs delivered in a senile cackle), although the words "what I see, what I see" and "dying, dying" are ominously audible in the death rattle of *Biography*. It would be difficult to overestimate the daring, the originality, and the profound importance of what Monk has accomplished on this remarkable record.

Jay Clayton is a gifted young singer who holds dual citizenship in the realms of new music and jazz. She has performed with artists as different as saxophonist Bob Mover and composer Steve Reich, and her wordless vocal style shows familiarity with the principles of both lyrics and scat. But her first record as a leader is all too obviously a jazz record. The compositions (by Clayton, pianist Karush, saxophonist Bloom, and producer Heiner Stadler) are all either pointillistic frameworks for group improvisation or modal blowing vehicles, and Clayton, for the most part, lines up as another horn (especially on the hypnotic but too-long 7/8, where three other female voices set her off).

Having relinquished the singer's traditional storytelling privilege (except on a haunting reading of someone named Guryan's lyrics to Ornette Coleman's *Lonely Woman*, which is by far the best track here), she is often literally left with nothing to say. Her taste in syllabification, her purity of timbre, her unerring intonation, her warmth, and her playful grasp of time all make her singing ample reward in itself, but her free-reigning virtuosity makes a greater impact when harnessed to a composer's clear, sovereign vision, as it was on Muhal Richard Abrams' *Black Saint LP*, *Spihumonesty*. Still, Clayton's record is worth owning; the musicianship is impeccable (especially Swartz' lean bass lines), the soloists are personable and individualistic (especially the lyrical, enigmatic Bloom), and Clayton is an important singer—one who proposes dramatic changes in vocal styles and roles. Her best work is still in the future, but you can hear her moving steadily closer to that future here.

Clayton "solos" on two tracks of the Paul McCandless LP *Navigator*, and she is used as

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a primary color on two others. With Clayton or without her, the music here is as gently probing, as pantheistic in spirit, and ultimately as pleasantly inconsequential as you'd expect from a member of Oregon. The placid surface of this music can't quite conceal its stylistic conflicts. The improvising draws on the traditions of world musics and jazz, and the textures and rhythmic cycles evidence an understanding of new music (especially Reich). But the chords resolve into melodies so predictable and so unreasonably cheery that they might as well have been penned by Marvin Hamlisch or Neil Sedaka. This is warm, graceful music, though, the kind which provides a meditative backdrop for any number of solitary activities, and some of it (I admit) is pretty catchy—with some editing, Traut's *The Great Lawn* might become a left field hit on the order of Weather Report's *Birdland* (and at least these guys are human like you and I).

—francis davis

JOHN DENTZ

THE REUNION BAND—Realtime Records: *SWING, DENTZ, SWING!*; *MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE*; *ISOTOPE*; *BOOP BAP*; *MIYAKI*; *NIGHT AND DAY*; *SHALL WE DENTZ?*; *INVITATION*; *BLUES FOR JOHN C.*; *TWO FOR TWO*; *BUD POWELL*; *SIFU*; *ANDY MEETS CHICK*; *OLEO*.

Personnel: Dentz, drums; Ernie Watts, reeds; Chick Corea, piano; Andy Simpkins, bass.

★ ★

The first observation many listeners to *The John Dentz Reunion Band* will probably make is that the album sounds more like a Chick Corea date than one led by the drummer. This would be a natural reaction considering Corea's formidable recording career as a

leader, plus the pianist's dominant personality. In addition, eight of the 14 compositions in this double-set are by either Corea alone or in collaboration with one or more of the other participants. The most attractive is Sifu, a pretty ballad which showcases Corea's romantic side to perfection. The most adventurous is the Dentz/Corea tune *Shall We Dentz?*, in which the leader's drums and the tenor sax of Ernie Watts are prominent.

Generally speaking, however, these LPs are a disappointment. Although everyone involved is a first-rate musician and plays impeccably, nothing ever really gets off the ground. It's interesting to note, too, that this digital recording—the producers of which went to great lengths to detail the recording process on the inside of the cover—nevertheless gives short shrift to Andy Simpkins: the bass was either under-recorded or not properly mixed.

Now and again, to be sure, there are moments of high creativity—note especially in the opening *Swing*, *Dentz*, *Swing!*, how reminiscent Chick is of his Circle days, in the execution of some of his characteristically tricky, angular runs. And at times the pianist gets into a quasi-Tyner bag, with an intensity and density of sound not often associated with Corea. Unfortunately, these moments of inspiration are few and far between.

Incidentally, the concept of the album, as told in the brief liner note by producer Ralph Jungheim, was a celebration of Dentz' return to health and business after undergoing surgery to restore his hearing. Jungheim points out that these four men are "playing for their own pleasure . . . everybody had fun." This may be true, but what emerges for the listener is simply a pleasant collection of tunes that seem to be almost haphazardly thrown together for the occasion.

Several of the tracks are distinctly bebop flavored (*Boop Bap* and the *Sonny Rollins*

classic *Oleo*), but there isn't enough energy to really hold it together. Once again, it must be stressed that the performances by these four seasoned jazzmen are of the highest standard. Maybe what's lacking is an intense involvement with the material. Only flashes of that occur—and in a two-record set, the attention too easily wanders.

—frankie nemko

TEDDY EDWARDS

TEDDY'S READY!—Contemporary S 7583: *BLUES IN G*; *SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE*; *WHAT'S NEW?*; *YOU NAME IT*; *TAKE THE A TRAIN*; *THE SERMON*; *HIGGINS' HIDEAWAY*. **Personnel:** Edwards, tenor saxophone; Joe Castro, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★ ★ ★

OUT OF THIS WORLD—SteepleChase SCS 1147: *NO NAME NO. 1*; *APRIL LOVE*; *OUT OF THIS WORLD*; *SUMMERTIME*; *THAT'S ALL*; *CHEEK TO CHEEK*. **Personnel:** Edwards, tenor saxophone; Kenny Drew, piano; Jesper Lundgard, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

EDDIE HARRIS

STEPS UP—SteepleChase SCS 1151: *STEPS UP*; *SCANDIA SKIES*; *MISTY THURSDAY*; *FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE*; *ENCIRCLEMENT*; *IF I DID—WOULD YOU?*; *BLUES AT STEEPLECHASE*.

Personnel: Harris, tenor saxophone, Eddie Harris Attachment, reed trumpet; Tete Montoliu, piano; Bo Stief, bass; Norman Fearington, drums.

★ ★ ★

The tenor saxophone's unique storytelling capacity is in evidence on the respective SteepleChase debuts of Teddy Edwards and Eddie Harris, which, in Edwards' case, is foreshadowed by the Contemporary reissue. With declarative styles rooted in bop and blues, Edwards and Harris tap the horn's full emotional range, delivering everything from raucous romps to lovely ballads with an ear for detail and well-timed punch lines. Additionally, the sensitive and assertive accompaniments, and the spirited, after-hours ambience are valuable assets with which the Central Avenue veteran and the "electrifying" Chicagoan purvey their personable brands of straight funk.

When *Teddy's Ready!* was recorded in 1960, the foundations of Edwards' mature voice were already in place, though he relied more on youthful power than on worldly nuance. One measure of Edwards' budding majority on this album is the fluidity of his choruses despite their complexity of phrasing, particularly on his rollicking *Higgins' Hideaway*. Still, it is Edwards' energy that carries the session, which is perhaps a held-over trait from the burlesque and rock & roll gigs he took during his recuperation from gall bladder and dental problems, and it has survived the decades with distinction.

Edwards' solos on the recent *Out Of This World* are steeped in a rich stylistic melting

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RECORD REVIEWS

pot. Like his former L.A. chase-mates Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, Edwards imbues the tenor with a good-humored drive that alternately lopes through choruses and gnaws at a phrase. Particularly during cadenzas and turnarounds, Edwards leans towards the incantatory contours Coltrane inherited from Gordon, while his choruses occasionally shout and growl with authority. His fervent and witty solos are animated, in large part, by his superb reed control, whether he dramatically underscores Summertime with wide vibrato or teasingly squeezes out the bridge of *Cheek 'n' Cheek*.

While the many aspects of Edwards' voice remain cogently unified after two decades, *Steps Up* finds Eddie Harris employing several distinct approaches. The common thread in Harris' work is a jocularity that gives even his most outside tangents an earthy directness. *Blues At SteepleChase* finds Harris blowing intensely in a mid-period Coltrane vein, yet the accessibility of the blues never leaves the forefront. Though Harris' edge on Kenny Dorham's sprinting *Scandia Skies* is softer than expected, his solo gains mass through facile phrasing. The use of electronics and reed trumpet is somewhat a moot issue, as the overall effect of the album is not altered by their presence.

Both SteepleChase albums forward a casual atmosphere without lapsing into flaccid grooves. Keyboarders Kenny Drew and Tete Montoliu contribute much in this regard, as they expertly ground the expositions of the saxophonists to the forthright pulse of their section partners. While Montoliu, Bo Stief, and Norman Fearington deliver thoughtful, energetic performances behind Harris, it is Drew, Jesper Lundgard, and a sterling Billy Hart who pull out that last, semi-tangible stop in their work with Edwards.

—bill shoemaker

EUGENE CHADBOURNE

THERE'LL BE NO TEARS TONIGHT—

Parachute P-013: *HONEY DON'T; DANG ME; THE LAST WORD IN LONESOME IS ME; I'M THE ONLY HELL MY MAMA EVER RAISED; TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT; MOTEL TIME AGAIN; GEORGIA IN A JUG; WINDOW SHOPPING; MY HEART WOULD KNOW; MR. RECORD MAN; JEALOUS LOVING HEART; SWINGIN' DOORS; THERE'LL BE NO TEARS TONIGHT.*

Personnel: Chadbourne, acoustic, electric guitars, electric dobro, vocals; John Zorn, alto, soprano, baritone saxophone, clarinet, bird calls (cuts 1-3,12); Tom Corra, cello (1,3,12); David Licht, percussion, drums (1,3,8-12); Dennis Licht, percussion, (8,10,11); Scott Manring, lap steel guitar, lap dobro (8-11); Robbie Link, acoustic bass (8-11).

★ ★ ★ ½

Chadbourne has been known as an avant gardist in the eclectic "space guitar" tradition that extends from early Les Paul through Jimi Hendrix and Sonny Sharrock to such contemporary abstractionists as Fred Frith and James Ulmer. He has performed solo and with jazz and classically based

improvisers, experimenting with novel timbres and percussive effects on fretted instruments, both acoustic and electric. Recently he has joined the parade of "outside" musicians into New York's punk rock cabarets, with an eccentric but accessible new approach he calls "free improvised country & western bebop."

There'll Be No Tears Tonight comprises 13 classic c&w tunes rendered in an anything-but-classic manner. As a vocalist, Chadbourne is just plain awful, by conventional standards at any rate. For purposes of parody, however, his shower stall warblings are right on the mark, capturing the mawkish sentimentality and drunken machismo of country music with abiding affection and devastating wit.

The musical accompaniment is no less risible, as Chadbourne and company punctuate the corny lyrics with assorted squeals, squawks, and buzz-saw grindings. Sometimes the loony sound effects suit their context, as on the line, "She told me not to smoke it, but I did and it took me far away," from Johnny Paycheck's *I'm The Only Hell My Mama Ever Raised*. More often the juxtaposition is simply absurd, although the strictly instrumental "out-to-lunch" interludes with saxophonist John Zorn and percussionist David Licht are funny enough in themselves.

Chadbourne is hilarious on his self-accompanied Paycheck medley and on the band tracks with Zorn, his partner from last year's forbiddingly arid *School* double-album. On the separately recorded selections backed with steel guitar, his half-hearted attempts at authenticity fall flat, and only his eerie solos on electric dobro distinguish these from amateur coffeehouse performances.

The songs of Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Ernest Tubb, et al. prove sufficiently well-crafted to shine through the grossest manglings, but one wonders why a smirky ditty like Roger Miller's *Dang Me* needs further exaggeration. If Chadbourne has not quite succeeded in reconciling his folk roots with his free-form predilections, he has at least created an amusing novelty that may draw new audiences to an awareness of his more serious work. —larry birnbaum

ANDRÉ JAUME/ JOE MCPHEE

TALES AND PROPHECIES—hat Hut

Twelve (2R12): *DRUMDANCER; CORSICAN NIGHTFLOWER; TALES AND PROPHECIES/SONG FOR THE GYPSY.*

Personnel: Jaume, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, clarinet, flute; McPhee, valve trombone, soprano saxophone, harmonica, double ocarina, trombone, bamboo flute, piano, bells, percussion; Raymond Boni, acoustic, electric guitar (cut 3).

★ ★ ★ ★

André Jaume, Joe McPhee, and Raymond Boni are members of a new crop of intellectual jazz musicians who are influenced by various ethnic hues of world music. They play double ocarina and bamboo flute as well

as traditional jazz instruments here, but even the standard instruments sound unusual; they're blown and articulated in ways that stretch sonic possibilities.

All these tunes are originals. Jaume and McPhee duet on the same compositional wavelength on *Drumdancer* and *Corsican Nightflower*, the first a more abstract composition, the second overtly lyrical. *Drumdancer* takes up all of the first side and part of the second. Dryly textured reed clackings and chirpings at the beginning of the piece are followed by shrill whooshes of breathy bamboo flute. When Jaume enters on tenor saxophone, he incorporates similar timbral effects into a highly developed, absorbing solo. His is a fluent, compelling style marked by a strong sense of time—not just of rhythmic patterns, but of the ways rhythm affects the contour of a composition. When McPhee joins Jaume, the kinship between them is immediately apparent. They reach an emotional high point trading gospel and folk-influenced lines, communicating spirituality in a restrained, yet powerful manner.

Corsican Nightflower opens in an exotic vein with a double ocarina solo by McPhee. Extended solos on flute and then piano build tension that is released in a climactic tenor solo. The form is deceptively simple; McPhee and Jaume solo effortlessly with little or no accompaniment. Transitions between solos, usually made by beginning another solo before the last finishes, are also simple, but because they are expertly handled, link the various sections into a cohesive whole.

Adding Raymond Boni on the second record, the group continues to offer sparse yet sophisticated interplay. Boni's guitar playing is a solid accompaniment to Jaume and McPhee's free style. He stays in the background, coming forward occasionally with short bursts of strumming that adds another layer to the manic improvisation. Whether textures are sparse or dense, individual lines of all three musicians have a sinewy expressiveness.

—elaine guregian

PHIL WOODS/ LEW TABACKIN

PHIL WOODS/LEW TABACKIN—

OmniSound N-1033: *LIMEHOUSE BLUES*; *SWEET AND LOVELY*; *LEW BLEW*; *PETITE CHANSON*; *THEME OF NO REPEAT*; *SITTIN' HERE*.

Personnel: Woods, alto saxophone, clarinet (cut 4); Tabackin, tenor saxophone, flute (4); Jimmy Rowles, piano; Michael Moore, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

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Personnel: Davis, Griffin, tenor saxophone; Junior Mance, piano; Larry Gales, bass; Ben Riley, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

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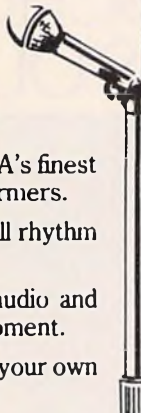
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saxophones. When they play, backs are slapped. Suspenders are snapped. Chests are thumped. Jokes are on the house. The nice thing about this display of unbridled masculinity is that no amount of feministic caterwauling can change it. This is pure saxist music.

Into this private men's club step the saxophonists of *Live At Minton's* (tenormen Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin) and *Phil Woods/Lew Tabackin*. These players are atypical members. Their output never disintegrates into cliché. No one is a hog. There is no blowing for one's own amazement. Riffs aren't swapped; instead ideas are exchanged. Solos are not based on bluster and bull; they show thought and substance.

Nearly 20 years separate these albums. *Live At Minton's*, a double-record reissue, comes from a 1961 performance at the famed New York club. Evidently, it was a very productive engagement, this being just one of five other LPs this booking spawned. *Phil Woods/Lew Tabackin*, on the other hand, is a 1980 studio date. Yet despite their age difference, the albums are compatible. Both are as much an outcome of their times as they are a reaction to them.

On paper, *Live At Minton's* sounds quite staid. Most of the album's 10 selections share the same arrangement: both tenors state the melody, one tenor solos, pianist Junior Mance solos, the other tenor solos, the tenors briefly trade four-bar jests (optional), they restate the melody, the song ends. Ho-hum. Except in these performances, there are no yawners. Griffin and Davis present their improvisations in a point/counterpoint setting. Each saxman states his case thoroughly, succinctly, and separately. Griffin, the soft-spoken one, makes his points with an assortment of accents. As illustrated on *In Walked Bud*, the same note could have four different meanings just with the slightest adjustment in articulation. Davis, the larger of the two, lets his size be his guide. His tone is bigger, his attacks louder, his lines longer. Assisting Davis and Griffin are the aforementioned Mance; Ben Riley, a commanding drummer whose strength and sense of anticipation are uncanny; and Larry Gales, whose bass is largely unheard thanks to the technical limitations of recording live in 1961.

By their choice of instruments—alto vs. tenor—Woods and Tabackin take a different approach to the classic saxophone confrontation. Wood knows his horn cannot match the tenor's robust virility. The alto is a European-cut Bill Blass shirt with epaulets. The tenor is a wool lumberjack number by Pendleton. Mindful of this difference, Woods adopts a highly aggressive stance in the duets. In so doing, he charges everyone's performance, including the stellar rhythm section of bassist Michael Moore (whose articulate lines were for the most part recorded far downstream from the nearest mike), pianist Jimmy Rowles, and drummer Bill Goodwin. This contagious aggressiveness gives the recording a vibrancy rarely heard in this blase decade.

The first notes from Woods and Tabackin proclaim their readiness for adventure. *Limehouse Blues* opens the LP with an im-

provised double-saxophone introduction whose a cappella contrapuntal melodies march smartly from the narrow streets of the French Quarter. By the time the a cappella returns for a reprise, this chestnut has gone from classic jazz to bop to out and back. Every cut on the album takes a similar trans-genre flight. None, however, packs as many surprises as Woods' *Petite Chanson*. Here the duel rages between the rainwater-clear tones of Tabackin's flute and Woods' seldom-recorded clarinet. The result is a work of sprightly sonority and grand thematic integration. —cliff radel

THE KINGBEES

THE BIG ROCK—RSO RS-1-3097: *THE BIG ROCK; SHE AIN'T MY BABY; SHE CAN'T MAKE-UP HER MIND; HOW CAN I LOVE YOU; LET MYSELF GO; STICK IT OUT!; RIGHT BEHIND YOU BABY; WISHING; BOPPIN' THE BLUES; BURNIN' THE TOWN TONITE; THE UGLY TRUTH; ROCKIN' MY LIFE AWAY.*

Personnel: Jamie James, vocals, guitar; Michael Rummans, bass guitar, vocals; Rex Roberts, drums; vocals.

★ ★ ★

THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS

BUTT ROCKIN'—Chrysalis CHR 1319: *I BELIEVE I'M IN LOVE; ONE'S TOO MANY; GIVE ME ALL YOUR LOVIN'; ROLL, ROLL, ROLL; CHERRY PINK AND APPLE BLOSSOM WHITE; I HEAR YOU KNOCKIN'; TIP ON IN; I'M SORRY; MATHILDA; TELL ME WHY; IN ORBIT.*

Personnel: Kiwi Wilson, vocals, harmonica; Jimmie Vaughan, Arson Funderburgh (cut 7), guitar; Keith Ferguson, bass; Fran Christina, drums; Al Copley, piano; Doug James, baritone saxophone; Greg Piccolo, tenor saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★

ROOMFUL OF BLUES

HOT LITTLE MAMA—Blue Flame Records BLUF 1001: *HOT LITTLE MAMA; THE BIG QUESTION; NEW ORLEANS SHUFFLE; SUFFERIN' MIND; CARAVAN; LOAN A HELPING HAND; LONG DISTANCE OPERATOR; SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY; TWO BONES AND A PICK; LITTLE FINE HEALTHY THING; SUGAR COATED LOVE; JEEP'S BLUES.*

Personnel: Greg Piccolo, tenor saxophone, vocals; Rich Lataille, alto, tenor saxophone; Doug "Mr. Low" James, baritone saxophone; Porky Cohen, trombone; Danny Motta, trumpet; Ronnie Earl Horvath, guitar; Jimmy Wimpfheimer, acoustic, electric bass; Almon LeGrande Copley, piano; John Rossi, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

This is the rock & roll primeval, born of some marriage (the other side of the tracks) between city and country music, black and white music, r&b beats, and hillbilly licks.

Rockabilly they call it sometimes. Whatever it is, it certainly cuts through the Aerosmith/Journey/Styx haze that purports to be today's rock.

Although rockabilly has survived the '60s and '70s in small alcoves both in the U.S. and abroad, we may have to thank the new wave for occasionally turning the spotlight to groups like the Kingbees. The minimal rock attitudes that cleared the decks for '80s mods helped create a larger audience for the similarly inclined rockabilly bands. The Kingbees, out of L.A., cater to a young, hip audience and tour new wave clubs.

Their latest LP, *The Big Rock*, continues to establish them as a tight unit capable of appealing on more than just a novelty level. Jamie James' originals have little to do with the age of milkshake dates, but nevertheless contain a classic rock & roll kinesthesia. *Stick It Out!* and *The Big Rock* are prime examples; though when the band slips into an oft-traveled mode, as on *How Can I Love You*, the impact is lessened. Side two is more entertaining as the band gets into some genuine golden good ones. *Right Behind You Baby* (Charlie Rich) hops relentlessly, and *Boppin' The Blues* (Carl Perkins) makes for finger poppin' time as well. The Kingbees also cover Buddy Holly's *Wishing* religiously. Next to such redone rock pinnacles, James' tunes like *Burnin' The Town Tonight* and *The Ugly Truth* seem slightly second generation, though potently performed.

The Fabulous Thunderbirds wear pointed shoes and slightly greasy hair, but don't try comparing them to Sha-Na-Na because there's no hype here. They've got a sense of humor alright, but the Fab T-Birds are the real thing. Like the Kingbees, they mix originals with early rock classics, but they're an older band—with more affinity for the blues side of ancient rock & roll—and their experience shows.

Much of the credit has to go to singer Kim Wilson, who writes gems in the rough like *I Believe I'm In Love*, the New Orleansque *Give Me All Your Lovin'*, and (with Nick Lowe) *One's Too Many*. Wilson has a marvelous feel for Slim Harpo on *Tip On In*, and he's believably natural in the constant changing of vaunted rock styles that the group handles so well. The band itself is seasoned in time-honored rock basics, yet never stale. Their grit and cohesiveness hints of long hours playing seedy Texas bars, and they exude that kind of hard-to-find authenticity. Today's rock fans are beginning to appreciate this band's brand of T-Bone Walker-inspired chops. Unfortunately, the Fab T-Birds missed out on a golden opportunity to reach the masses when their U.S. tour with Eric Clapton was canceled because of the latter's illness.

There are other participants in this non-glitter rock revival that you may find to your liking: Rockpile, Ray Campi, Colin Winski, Rockats, Matchbox, Joe Ely, Billy Burnette, and others. One we can't go away without mentioning is Roomful Of Blues, a nine-piece crew that gets totally loose on their latest LP, *Hot Little Mama*. They connect up with that historically elusive moment when blues met rock, and work that rowdy vein for all it's worth. Roomful Of Blues means party time, and some of this wild-eyed soloing even obscures the possibly moot point that nothing overwhelmingly original is happening here.

—bob henschen

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**STEVE LACY/
BRION GYSIN**

SONGS—hat Art 1985/86: *GAY PAREE BOP*; *NOWHERE STREET*; *SOMEBODY SPECIAL*; *LUVZYA*; *KEEP THE CHANGE*; *PERMUTATIONS (JUNK IS NO GOOD BABY, KICK THAT HABIT MAN, I DON'T WORK YOU DIG)*; *BLUE BABOON*.
Personnel: Lacy, soprano saxophone, voice (cut 7); Gysin, voice (4, 6); Steve Potts, alto, soprano saxophone; Bobby Few, piano; Irene Aebi, voice, violin; Jean-Jaques Avenel, bass; Oliver Johnson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

AMIRI BARAKA

NEW MUSIC-NEW POETRY—India Navigation IN-1048: *THE LAST REVOLUTIONARY (FOR ABBIE HOFFMAN)*; *AGAINST BOURGEOIS ART*; *STRUNZA MED*; *I LOVE MUSIC*; *DOPE*; *CLASS STRUGGLE IN MUSIC I*; *CLASS STRUGGLE IN MUSIC II*; *IN THE TRADITION (FOR BLACK ARTHUR BLYTHE)*.
Personnel: Baraka, voice; David Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Steve McCall, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Jazz and poetry—when the art forms mingle the listener might expect scenes from '50s films: bongos, finger-snapping, gone hipster's patter keeping a noodling horn company. Never mind this stereotype; provocative unions between poetry and contemporary music do occur: Jeanne Lee, Joseph Jarman, Captain Beefheart, and Steve Swallow's settings of Robert Creeley poems, to name only a few. Jazz and poetry have been sporadic partners since 1939 at least, when Billie Holiday immortalized *Strange Fruit*, later borrowed by Langston Hughes for his own poem. The inter-arts flirtation is bound to last through formats novel and tried.

Contrasting approaches toward the problem of coupling one expressive medium with another are presented in new releases from Steve Lacy/Brion Gysin and Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones). Gysin and Baraka share the idiom of colloquial American speech and "hip," often reconstructed, black dialect (in Gysin's case, beatnik language par excellence). But Lacy opts for song form to frame Gysin's lyrics of sex, ennui, dope, and isolation. After the heads are played and the words sung, sextet members blow generous solo choruses minus any relationship to the poetry. Sprightly solos from Bobby Few's rhapsodic piano, Steve Potts' wry alto, and the leader's soprano (*Blue Baboon* and *Gay Paree Bop* rekindle memories of *Straight Horn* days circa 1960) are major highlights of *Songs* nevertheless. In Baraka's live performance, however, the precise senses and meanings of words spoken, sung, or screamed (with a knack for dynamics) receive constant reinforcement from improvising reeds and traps. Solos here are not easily plotted: the

"voices" of Steve McCall, David Murray, and Baraka chase/embrace in gumptious loving *menage a trois*.

Lacy's compositions (all but *Luvzya* are credited to him) relay Gysin's flighty lines with wit and style. *Gay Paree Bop* has an obvious hook, with nervous boppish fills sideswiping the theme like *Keystone Kops*. A melodramatic Oriental scale allusive of carnival sideshows opens the love (yourself) song *Somebody Special*, and functions as a bridge between verses. Such music is uniquely identifiable as Lacy's; his long, circular, sing-songy melodies complement the Gysin technique of wall-to-wall (internal and end-) rhyme. For its part, Gysin's free-associated dadaist street doggerel usually spits and crackles in the spirit of *Luvzya's* Beefheartesque associations: loves you like "a butternut setup/with slim hips/hot tits/thick lips/n' paperclips." *Luvzya* and *Permutations* remain curios for sheer energy and gross-out value, but these two Gysin recitations actually sound stiff when compared to songs performed by the full group.

Without being musical, Irene Aebi's vocals possess undeniable character. Her performances invest the lyrics with a Marlene Dietrich cabaret-like dimension which is two-sided. Aebi's wavering pitch, oddly enough, fits the landscape described in *Nowhere Street* ("no spot to eat/no church to pray"); a *Heartbreak Hotel* with jazz vacancies! But her most affecting contribution is saved for last. On the modified blues *Blue Baboon* ("I'm the chic-est baboon of them all"), Lacy joins Aebi for a duet whose tone is funny, charming, and poignant all at once. Aebi's manner is relaxed, unforced, almost conversational, unlike her renditions elsewhere on *Songs*.

Though not near the top of Lacy's discography, the Gysin collaboration is one of a kind. Even if *Songs'* music sometimes serves notice of being more notable than Gysin's word games, the many engaging surprises make this project worthwhile, and hat Art's stylish packaging is a treat not to miss.

Amiri Baraka's notes to *New Music-New Poetry* propose that poetry's affinity to jazz be put to work. "Poetry, first of all," he writes, "was and still must be a musical form. It is speech musicked." The eight recitations are intensified by Murray's tenor saxophone (or bass clarinet) and McCall's drums playing around ad hoc musical structures. Spanning from insouciant waltz time (*Against Bourgeois Art*) and spirituals (*Dope*), to backbeat (*Class Struggle in Music I*) and Trane-chasin' harmonics (*I Love Music*), the musical references always build on and complete Baraka's poetry. Muscular, dramatic, self-assured, and highly convincing, *In The Tradition* exemplifies this approach, presenting a panoramic mini-history of black music beginning with a call-and-response work song, seamlessly evolving into ragtime, *One O'Clock Jump*, *Now's The Time*, latin beat, and contemporary sounds. Along the way the poem recognizes past heroes: "countless funky blind folks/& one leg country beboppers/bottleneck in the guitarneck dudes/whispering thrashing cakewalking raging/ladies/& gents/getdown folks, elegant as/sky-

writing." Present-day enemies are also evoked; Tradition shouts "Death to the Klan!" in parting.

Baraka's commitment is trenchant and his message undeniably Marxist, while in comparison, Gysin's Songs qualify as "bourgeois art," or poetry-for-the-hell-of-it lacking ideological purpose. Still, the shared heat and passion of *New Music-New Poetry* should communicate to most everyone.

—peter kostakis

**OLD
wine
NEW
bottles**

A fresh, fortuitous wind has blown over the jazz reissue world the last few months, with a number of record companies fanning the breeze. **Charles Mingus** is the greatest recipient, with five separate companies returning some of the late bassist's most valuable music to circulation. Atlantic's reissue of the 1956 *Pithecanthropus Erectus* date (Atlantic Jazzlore SD 8809) is the oldest, chronologically, but remains a vital experience over a quarter-century after its birth. Three of the four compositions (one, a Mingus rearrangement—complete with sound effects—of Gershwin's *A Foggy Day*) are classic samples of jazz "program music" after Ellingtonian examples. In addition, the title piece served as a springboard for "outside" saxophone playing prior to Ornette Coleman's 1959 NYC debut; Jackie McLean's harsh, wailing cries are especially evocative, and the ensemble is held together by the granite-like strength of Mingus' bass and Mal Waldron's piano. Mention should be made, too, of the welcome appearance of the severely under-recorded tenorist J. R. Monterose, and the inclusion of Mingus' excellent, heartfelt, original liner notes. Atlantic missed out on a chance to make this reissue doubly valuable, however, by not packaging it in a two-fer along with another long out-of-print session, *The Clown*.

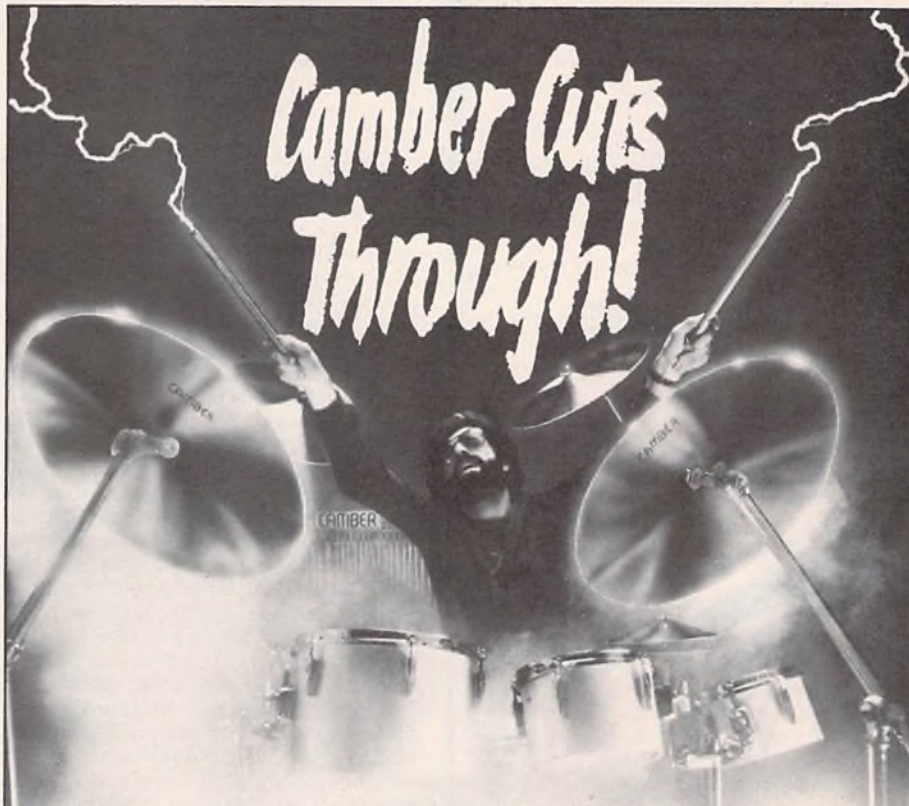
A new label, Jazz Man, has appeared with 16 albums reissued from various sources; among them is a 1960 lesser-known companion to the classic *Mingus Presents Mingus Candid* disc. Both LPs were available for a time as a two-fer, but that apparently has disappeared, so it's good to have this back again. The highlight of *Mingus* (JAZ-5002) is a 13-minute *Stormy Weather* by the Jazz Workshop quartet of Mingus, Ted Curson, Eric Dolphy, and Dannie Richmond, featuring a lengthy "dialog" between the instrumental voices of Ming and Eric. The remaining three cuts find the bassist fronting larger

ensembles: *Lock 'Em Up* is for an octet, while *MDM* (which weaves Monk's *Straight, No Chaser*, Duke's *Main Stem*, and Mingus' *52nd St. Blues*, albeit briefly, as the music is mainly a string of solos) and *Vassar Lean*, a tenet.

More formalized samples of Mingus' arranging skills are to be heard on the other reissues. PolyGram has come out with *Pre-Bird* (EXPR-1015), the big band date originally recorded for *Limelight* also in '60. Three tracks have an Ellingtonian flavor to them—an *A Train* contrapuntally contrasted with its chordal source, *Exactly Like You*; a similarly constructed *Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me*; *Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*; and the Mingus original *Bemoanable Lady*. Also noteworthy are *Mingus Fingus*

No. 2—Chazz' first big band arrangement (originally scored for Lionel Hampton in '47), two moody expressionist pieces using vocals by Lorraine Cousins (*Eclipse* and *Weird Nightmare*), and the classically derived *Half-Mast Inhibition* which, though strikingly successful on its own terms, seems a shortened precursor of *Meditations On Integration*, the epic composition performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival five years later. At any rate, the usual Mingus sidemen of the time—Curson, Dolphy, Jimmy Knepper, Yusef Lateef, and the great Booker Ervin—are heard to good advantage.

The roaring, soaring, boiling, "organized chaos" of *Meditations On Integration* has been reissued on *Mingus At Monterey* (Pres-



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RECORD REVIEWS

tige/Fantasy JWS 001/2), and the ad hoc assembly of 13 instrumentalists copes with the difficult writing admirably, cemented by the composer's arco bass interludes and especially by the riveting piano of Jaki Byard, who does yeoman duty throughout. Also included in the package are small group performances (w/ Charles McPherson, John Handy, Lonnie Hillyer, and Byard standouts) of a loquacious Ellington medley and an extended version of *Orange Was The Color Of Her Dress*. One negative aspect of the reissue, though, is that it keeps the same god-awful side breaks as the original release—with all three pieces interrupted in literal mid-note. Surely a new layout could have been devised to avoid this. Also, due to the live recording, some problems of balance occur—at one point, the flopping of Mingus' sandal is more audible than his bass—nevertheless, all of the music's remarkable color, energy, and commitment is in evidence, and that's what counts.

The final Mingus album helps inaugurate MCA's program of reissues from the Impulse catalog. Unlike the other sets in this series, which are anthologies taken from various albums, *Great Moments With Charles Mingus* (MCA 2-4128) offers two complete sessions with excerpts from a third as a bonus. Here are the classic *Black Saint & The Sinner Lady* and *Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus* dates from '63. *Black Saint*, like *Meditations*, is one of Mingus' masterworks of construction; displaying the work's dance roots, the 11-piece ensemble twists and pirouettes through the music's turmoil and tenderness, including episodes of the "Spanish tinge" that was first heard on *Tiajuana Moods*. The second session captures some of Mingus' best and most neglected pieces in similarly oversized but exquisitely proportioned arrangements. Note that *II BS* is better-known as *Haitian Fight Song*, *Theme For Lester Young* is *Goodbye Pork-pie Hat*, and that *IX Love* was recorded elsewhere as *Nouroog*. Also note that there have been no better showcases for Charlie Mariano's Hodges-slurred, honey-dripping alto on disc than *IX Love* and *Celia* here. The four solo piano cuts from *Mingus Plays Piano* are pleasant afterthoughts.

MCA and Prestige have also loosened their vault-strings to offer a pair of **Sonny Rollins** two-fers. *Vintage Sessions* (Prestige P-24096) is the accumulation of the first five sessions recorded under the soon-heroic tenor's imprint, dating from '51-'54. Assisted variously by Art Taylor, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, and Roy Haynes on drums, bassists Percy Heath and Tommy Potter, and Thelonious Monk, John Lewis, Elmo Hope, Kenny Drew (and on one cut Miles Davis sketching out chords) on piano, we hear the young tenor-giant-to-be mature while in the throes of forging his own distinct personality on the horn. Strength and confidence were there from the very beginning, as was warmth on such ballads as *Time On My Hands* and *Duke's In A Sentimental Mood* (updated as a duet with McCoy Tyner, remember, some 25 years later), and there's even a precursor to *St. Thomas* in *Sonny's Mambo Bounce*. Ira Gitler's informative and personal liner notes are no small

bonus to this attractive package.

Great Moments With Sonny Rollins (MCA 2-4127), as opposed to the completeness of the Prestige set, brings a wider range of material from different dates. *Hold 'Em Joe* (another calypso) and the ballad *Everything Happens To Me* are highlights of the '65 quartet session aided by Ray Bryant's piano. Two of Rollins' compositions (arranged and conducted by Oliver Nelson) exemplify Newk's work on the *Alfie* soundtrack project. The sidelong *East Broadway Run Down* finds Rollins' tentative excursion into a bluesy avant garde backed by Freddie Hubbard, along with John Coltrane's rhythmic base, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones. By the time of these performances ('65-'66), Rollins had begun another period of soul-searching, and was to soon disappear from the scene for a lengthy hiatus.

Always welcome are added samples of the unique artistry of soprano saxophone master **Sidney Bechet**, and three such servings have recently come our way. Though released under trumpeter Jonah Jones' leadership, one-half of *Inner City 7021* consists of a Sep. 22, '54 Paris session featuring Sidney's soprano on six titles and two alternate takes of *When You Were A Tulip* and *Chinatown My Chinatown*. Both Americans far outshine the unsubtle, rather limited French rhythm section; Jones is brassy and extroverted (as opposed to his "muted" reputation of later years), and Bechet is characteristically energetic and impassioned. Together they combine for a tasty contrapuntal workout on *Chinatown*, while Fats Waller's *Squeeze Me* echoes Bechet's great version with Muggsy Spanier. The album's second side finds trumpeter Jones with the Alix Combelle Orchestra, displaying a more swing-era bent, buffeted by Combelle's booting Al Sears-ish tenor.

Two debuts are heard on CBS/Commodore XFL 15774—Bechet's for Commodore (waxed 1950) and Bob Wilber's first anywhere ('47). Bechet's New Orleans Footwarmers is something of a misnomer, as none of the other participants (Wilbur DeParis, Wild Bill Davison, Ralph Sutton, Jack Lesberg, and George Wettling) were from New Orleans. By the time of this recording, the clarinet was by far Bechet's lesser-heard horn, though it sings sweetly on *Jelly Roll Morton's Jelly Roll Blues* and the curious but winging *National Emblem March*—the latter recalling dixieland's parade link to Louisiana bands. Also on tap is a sinuous soprano-sparkled *Hindustan*; this is Bechet at the top of his game. Wilber's *Wildcats*, on the other hand—a second generation, Westchester version of Chicago's Austin High Gang—reveal their fledgling status. Wilber, limiting himself to clarinet here in deference to his position as a Bechet disciple, though not as fluid as he would later be after developing his current virtuosity, rips off a number of spirited solos, as does an equally youthful Dick Wellstood.

Jazz Archives JA-48, meanwhile, devotes an entire album to the documentation of Bechet, Bunk, and Boston 1945. Despite the largely chestnut-stuffed program (*High Society*, *Royal Garden Blues*, *Sister Kate*, *Darktown Strutters Ball*, as partial examples),

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there is musical and historical value in this mix of radio airchecks and Savoy Club rehearsal numbers. New Orleans trumpeter Bunk Johnson, for all his (deserved or not) legendary reputation, remains neglected on vinyl (though a recent Contemporary/Good Time Jazz [M12048] reissue of his 1942 rediscovery recordings eases the neglect slightly). Despite three years of new dentures and reactivity, Johnson's chops are only so-so here; though shaky on *High Society*, his lead work on *I Found A New Baby* is strong and dramatic, if uninventive—he doesn't venture far from the melody at any time, though in actuality this serves to heighten the contrast to Bechet's snake-charming obligatos. Pianist Ray Palmer adds some nice fills to the proceedings, but make no mistake about it, Bechet's the main man here—hear his spitfire salutation to Ellington via the latter's *Never No Lament* (later to be rechristened *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*)—and any opportunity to hear the music of Sidney Bechet is occasion for a party. —art lange

★ NEW ★ RELEASES

(Record Companies: For listing in the monthly New Releases column send two copies of each new release to Art Lange, db, 222 W. Adams, Chicago, IL 60606.)

POLYGRAM

(Verve/Emarcy/Limelight)

Eric Dolphy, reissue of the late reed wizard's Hilversum, Holland quartet session from '64, *LAST DATE*. **Zoot Sims/Al Cohn**, double-barreled tenor team from '60, w/ Mose Allison's piano, *YOU 'N ME*. **Cannonball Adderley**, vibrant altoist leads Miles' '59 quintet without Miles, but with Trane, in *CHICAGO*. **Maynard Ferguson**, high-flying trumpeter leads '54 West Coast septet in two long jams, *HOLLYWOOD PARTY*. **Dinah Washington**, vocalist backed by, among others, Clifford Brown, Maynard Ferguson, and Clark Terry from '54, *DINAH JAMS*. **Buddy Rich/Max Roach**, drum battle between two stalwarts, *RICH VS. ROACH*.

Clifford Brown, '55 session of nonpareil trumpeter with strings. **Clifford Brown**, co-leads classic quintet w/ Max Roach, from '54, *STUDY IN BROWN*. **Clifford Brown**, as part of all-star nonet inc. Ferguson and Terry, also '54 vintage, *JAM SESSION*. **Clifford Brown**, '54 West Coast'ers jam on *Caravan* and *Autumn In New York*, *ALL-STARS*. **Clifford Brown**, again w/ his'n' Max's quintet, from '54, *BROWN AND ROACH INCORPORATED*.

Charles Mingus, '60 session of big band arrangements, inc. the neo-classical *Half-Mast Inhibition*, *PRE-BIRD*. **Les McCann**, swinging pianist caught in '65 *LIVE AT SHELLY'S MANNE-HOLE*. **Sarah Vaughan**, sassy vocals from '54 backed by Brownie, Paul Quinichette, *SARAH VAUGHAN*. **Herb Geller**, '55 date for West Coast altoist and his sextette. **Helen Merrill**, a dozen standards sung in '57, w/ Bill Evans' piano on

half the tracks, *THE NEARNESS OF YOU*. **Art Farmer/Benny Golson**, '59 version of the six-man Jazzlet, *ANOTHER GIT TOGETHER*. **Gerry Mulligan**, '54 pianoless sextet, inc. Zoot, Bob Brookmeyer, and Jon Eardley, *PRESENTING*.

CRUSADERS

L. Subramaniam, digital waxing of violinist w/ Hancock, Coryell, Cables, Handy, *BLOSSOM*. **Joe Sample**, seven originals done digital by the Crusaders' keyboarder, *CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA*. Crusaders, pop-jazz band caught digitally live in Tokyo, *ONGAKU KAI*. **Joe Sample/David T. Walker**, pianist teams up w/ guitarist for a '78 digital date, *SWING STREET CAFE*.

ROUNDER

Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, blues guitarist/singer/violinist brings his roadhouse show to vinyl, *ALRIGHT AGAIN!* **Van Manakas**, guitarist leads quartet in seven original instrumental *LOVESONGS*. **James Booker**, strider from Zurich in '77, *NEW ORLEANS PIANO WIZARD: LIVE!* **Legendary Blues Band**, Little Walter and Muddy Waters alumni inc. Pinetop Perkins' piano, *LIFE OF EASE*. **Tony Rice**, acoustic newgrass/bluegrass/spacegrass, *STILL INSIDE*.

DISCOVERY

Bob Florence, California big band blows in from *WESTLAKE*. **Barbara Carroll**, longtime lounge-jazz artist from NY's Hotel Carlyle finds herself *AT THE PIANO*.

OMNISOUND

John Coates, re-release of the Water Gap pianist's first trio LP, *TRIO*. **Bill Dobbins**, seven originals and one Ellington ballad via solo piano, *DEDICATIONS*. **Dave Frishberg**, pianist/singer in a program of "hip" originals, *SONGBOOK*.

CONTEMPORARY

Helen Humes, the late songstress with 11 '59 chestnuts arranged by Benny Carter, *'TAINT NOBODY'S BUSINESS IF I DO*. **Howard McGhee**, bop trumpeter in '61 session w/ Phineas Newborn's piano, *MAGGIE'S BACK IN TOWN*. **Howard Rumsey**, bassist and his sextet of Lighthouse All-Stars from '56, *MUSIC FOR LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING*. **Curtis Counce**, bassist leads Jack Sheldon, Harold Land, Carl Perkins, and Frank Butler in a '57 *CANCELATION*.

GALAXY

Art Pepper, altoist in an '80 date w/ Stanley Cowell on piano, *ONE SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON*. **Dewey Redman**, Old And New Dream'er from '78 session inc. cohort Charlie Haden, *SOUNDSIGNS*.

ELEKTRA

Grover Washington Jr., mellow moods from the reedman plus Grady Tate's vocals, *COME MORNING*. **John Klemmer**, a second volume of overdubbed saxes et al., *SOLO SAXOPHONE II-LIFE*.

PROGRESSIVE

Harold Ashby, expressive ex-Ellington tenorman in a '78 quartet date, *PRESENTING*. **Dorothy Donegan**, hot-blooded piano program, *THE EXPLOSIVE*.

continued on page 52

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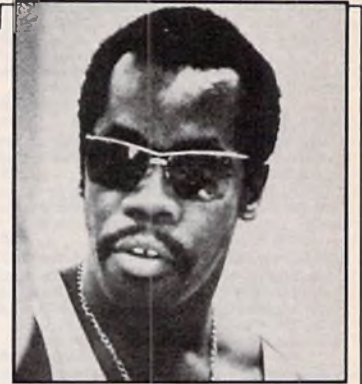
ANDREW CYRILLE, A Brooklyn native, is best known for his more than 10-year association with pianist Cecil Taylor. However, before joining the Taylor Unit in 1966, Cyrille had put in time with Freddie Hubbard, Coleman Hawkins, Illinois Jacquet, Junior Mance, and various other

diverse leaders.

After leaving the Unit in 1975, Cyrille brought his expansive percussion talents to various other situations—including solo work (documented on BYG and Ictus Records) and duets with another inventive drummer, Milford Graves (live and on an Institute of Percussion Studies LP).

Most notably, Cyrille has led his own band, Maono

(pronounced Mā-oh-no, Swahili for "feelings"), consisting of trumpeter Ted Daniel, bassist Nick DiGeronimo, and saxophonist David Ware. They've recorded three albums, the most recent of which, *Special People*, has been released by Soul Note Records (SN 1012). This is Cyrille's first Blindfold Test, and he was given no information about the records played.



1. ART MATTHEWS. I'LL REMEMBER APRIL (from *It's EASY TO REMEMBER*, Matra). *Matthews, piano; Archie Shepp, tenor saxophone; Charles Fambrough, bass; Alan Dawson, drums.*

That's a beautiful treatment of *I'll Remember April*. It could have been somebody like George Adams, and the bass player—it's strange—was sort of like Sirone. The drummer was one of two people . . . I may be off on this. It could be Dannie Richmond or it could be Freddie Waits.

I thought the drumming was, technically, superior. I also felt the drummer had a great deal of control and sensitivity as far as interpreting the music. You know, it almost felt that it could have become rhythmically free to some degree, but the drummer kind of held it together in the 4/4 meter, which is a credit to him.

It was imaginative and they did a classic piece and it just wasn't run of the mill; they worked at it and thought about it. I'd say four or four-and-a-half stars.

2. MUSIC REVELATION ENSEMBLE. BABY TALK (from *NO WAVE*, Moers Music). *Ronald Shannon Jackson, drums; James "Blood" Ulmer, guitar, composer.*

That sounds like something Ronald Shannon Jackson might put together. The music sounds as though it comes out of the text of what Ornette's been doing over recent years. I thought at first of "Blood" Ulmer, but I can't be sure. The guitar playing is fine. I think it may be a tune written by the drummer—it's a simple line, almost nursery rhyme-like. It has a good feeling, all the elements of free playing, and I thought everybody was listening to each other. But maybe it could have been more interesting had they stayed in the same tempo and had the horns play much faster, like doubling the time in regard to the rhythm section.

I'd give that about four stars.

3. M'BOOM. CARAVANSERAI (from *M'BOOM*, Columbia). *Max Roach, drums, leader; Joe Chambers, marimba, composer.*

That sounds like Max Roach and M'Boom.

The drummer on the set sounded like Max, and the reason I say that is because I could hear the sound of the cymbals, the way he uses hi-hat, and I know that particular rhythm that Max likes to play. And, of course, the way Max tunes his drums, and the kind of register that he plays the sound of the snare drum in, is typical. As is the way he punctuates and syncopates and how he uses space and the aggression as far as how he plays his rhythms. Even though he doesn't rush it, he's still really on top of it—kind of upfront and wanting to pull things to himself, so to speak. I like that.

I liked the balance of the instruments and thought the cohesiveness was beautiful. It sounded like a takeoff from *Caravan*. I'd give that four-and-a-half stars.

4. LIONEL HAMPTON. HAVEN'T NAMED IT YET (from *THE COMPLETE LIONEL HAMPTON 1937-1941*, RCA Bluebird). *Hampton, vibes; Sid Catlett, drums.*

That was really cute, it really swung in the classic sense. I would hazard a guess and say it could have been Jo Jones. Or, maybe, Cozy Cole or J. C. Heard. I don't think it was Sid Catlett.

To me, the way that sock cymbal was being played—the dotted eighths and 16ths—sounds the way Jo Jones plays. That kind of inflection, that kind of drive, that kind of aggressiveness. He's really on top of it. That could have been somebody like Red Norvo on vibes, I don't think it was Lionel Hampton.

Because I've heard greater invention on other albums, I'd rate that about three-and-a-half stars.

5. BRÖTZMANN/MILLER/MOHOLO. SCHNELL IM BISS (from *THE NEARER THE BONE, THE SWEETER THE MEAT*, FMP). *Peter Brötzmann, reeds; Harry Miller, bass; Louis Moholo, drums.*

That's an interesting format. I liked the effort, I thought the cats were playing well. The drums sounded a little distant, but I liked the way the drummer was playing in relationship to the bass and saxophone. They were really listening hard and they were playing hard. I liked that improvisation

a lot. I'd lean toward giving that five stars.

6. DANNIE RICHMOND. DRUM SOME, SOME DRUM (from *ODE TO MINGUS*, Soul Note). *Richmond, drums, composer.*

That could have been John Betsch. I know John and have listened to him on occasion, and it sounds as though it's the kind of thematic material he'd play. It's kind of reminiscent of what Max (Roach) would do. Also, some of the textures and parts of the instrument that he used kind of reminded me of some of the things I would do also. I thought he was sensitive and he worked around the theme well. The thing that throws me is that I had never heard John work on RotoToms, but people are always adding new things. And the other reason I would think it could be John is because the tune sounds African-ish, which may be something written by Dollar Brand.

It didn't take me to the summit. I thought it was fair. This one had a good feeling, it was alright, but the sound of the cymbals didn't appeal to me. I'd give it about three stars.

7. THE EASTERN REBELLION. BITTERSWEET (from *EASTERN REBELLION*, Timeless). *Cedar Walton, piano; Sam Jones, bass, composer; Billy Higgins, drums.*

That's my man, Billy Higgins. That's one cat that I really love to listen to. You know, he has such a blend between his left and right hand, and the sound that he gets out of the snare drums, and the sound that he gets from the cymbal—it's almost like it's ensonced in velvet. He really hears the timbre of the instruments that he's playing with, and he seems to complement them almost as well as anybody that I know. It also seems as though he can play with so much feeling and a minimum of equipment. And I thought his accompaniment was premier. Those cats really listened very well to each other.

I think the composition was from the fertile, neo-bop mind of Cedar Walton, and I think the bass player was one of two cats, Wilbur Little or Sam Jones. But Billy is just magnificent, because he dots all the I's and he plays the melodic line, rhythmically, almost perfectly. I'll give that five stars. ♣

Profile:

John Blake

BY RUSSELL WOESSNER

"Music is becoming more unified to me. I don't see the divisions as much. I see more similarities than anything else. I've studied Indian music, I came up on blues, gospel, rock & roll, and listening to Trane and all that stuff. There are so many things in Indian music that I can relate to my own culture, to classical music, and to jazz. So much is the same. It's just people."

John Blake is the musical proof of the axiom that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Most people may recognize him as the violinist in pianist McCoy Tyner's group, but John is not entirely comfortable with the limitations that are implied by that identification. "Sometimes labels can really hang people up," the 34-year-old resident of the Germantown section of Philadelphia says. "I don't mind being called a 'jazz' violinist. But I also like to show people that I'm capable of more, that I have a lot of other experiences behind me. I like being able to communicate with people, that's important to me as an artist."

Blake's musical growth began with formal lessons on the piano in the third grade. Inspired by a violin performance which he saw on television, he switched to violin and over the next few years played at "teas" in his neighbors' houses and at services in church. Soon he started taking private lessons and studying at the Settlement Music School. John performed with the All-Philadelphia Junior High Orchestra, the All-Philadelphia Senior High Orchestra, and the Settlement Music School String Ensemble. This led to a scholarship to West Virginia University where, he admits, "I lost interest in the violin. I really wasted a lot of time as far as the instrument is concerned because I had gotten wrapped up into my growing as a person. I was in school during the '60s, so I had gotten involved politically. I was asking myself all kinds of questions about who I am, what I want to do with my life. Everything was serious. So music took a backseat to things for awhile, but that situation also inspired me to get into myself more and figure out what I wanted to do. And that motivated me to do what I'm doing now, which is to improvise. Because prior to that time I don't think that I had really



realized that there was a place for the violin in jazz. Then I think I heard Michael White play a piece with John Handy called *Spanish Lady*. I said, 'Wow, this is incredible!'"

Returning to Philadelphia after college, Blake sought out other musicians with whom to share his new interest. One of the first he found was a neighbor, vibraphonist/composer Bill Lewis (see Profile, db, July '81). John remembers, "Bill Lewis was a strong influence on me when I got out of school because he lived near me. I used to go to his house and talk a lot. We played together for a short while, but, as a person, he was a good friend. He gave me a lot of encouragement. It was the same way with a lot of musicians in this town whom I've been really close to. I played in the New Liberation Unit, which was made up of Kenny Kelleem, Emmanuel Thompson, and George Taylor who was the leader of the group. Emmanuel used to tell me, 'Just play, man, just play.' And eventually that's what happened. One day I found myself doing stuff, just doing stuff, which was great."

"Also during that time, I was studying Indian music with a fellow named Adrian L'Armand. Learning Indian mu-

sic was a totally different head trip. I had never heard the violin in that idiom, although I was familiar with Indian music because I used to listen to a lot of different stuff when I was a kid, but I never imagined it was as big a story as it was. I used to come out of Adrian's basement, and I didn't know where I was because it was so foreign. It was so different for me technically. There's nothing that I know of in classical music that compares to that type of technique." This aspect of Blake's training is most evident on tapes of live performances with Lotus, a group established by tabla and electronics artist Lenny Seidman that includes John's younger brother Elliot, who plays sitar, recorder, autoharp, and zither.

An opportunity to write arrangements for a concert by Grover Washington Jr. resulted in the saxophonist adding the violinist to his group. As Blake recalls, "At that time, it was Sid Simons on piano, 'Doctor' Leonard Gibbs on percussion, Pete Vinson on drums, Richard Steacker on guitar, and Tyrone Brown on bass. That band was a very exciting band. There was just a unique chemistry of people working together. I enjoyed that music very much, and it had a great influence on me as a writer and a player. I had not really written anything in that idiom, and it was a challenge for me to try to write that way and feel that music. As far as my violin playing, I really grew a lot on my instrument because the commercial idiom calls for more blues, more simple things, and it kind of brings you home in a sense. You're dealing with real basic stuff. Grover had a way of being able to use the basic and put the intricate on top of it and still make it simple—and yet it wasn't simple—and a lot of that started to rub off on me. When we played, I felt he really knew me well, especially when we were doing a duet or something that had a harmony part. We would bend notes together. Or if I did something fast on the bow, he would do the same thing on his reed. It was a back-and-forth type of conversation. If I had to describe Grover, I would say he's a quiet person. But, man, when he picks up his horn, he's got a lot to tell you." Blake is featured on Washington's albums *Paradise* (Elektra 182), *Reed Seed* (Motown 7-910), and *Live At The Bijou* (Kudu 3637).

Although John no longer plays with Grover, he has maintained a working relationship with most of the other members of that band in a new group called Locksmith, with the substitution of Gerald Veasley for Tyrone Brown. Their first album, *Unlock The Funk* (Arista 4274), was released last year, and a second record is scheduled to be out soon. John acknowledges that the band's style "has changed somewhat

since Grover. We utilize what's happening commercially, like vocals and all that. But we've known each other a long time and we've worked together so long that we can't help but to play a certain way together no matter what we add. That same kind of feeling that we used to get is still intact."

Three years ago Blake became a regular member of McCoy Tyner's group. John calls the pianist "a giant . . . an institution. His style has already had a great impact while he's still living. There's only one real McCoy, but you can hear his influence on other people. Even Chick Corea, Herbie [Hancock], those guys have been influenced greatly by McCoy. So that's been good because I'm getting roots in his medium of music. It's rubbing off. He influenced my writing earlier, but it's even more now, because I get a chance to play with him, talk with him, be on the road with him. McCoy has been really helpful in just sharing a lot of information, not so much about music as about life and how he views himself as an artist and how he tries to carry himself. He knows that eventually I want to do something on my own, and he encourages me to reach for that. He never tells me what I should do, but he gives me his opinion. Regardless of what happens in the future, he's someone I'd love to continue to be able to work with and play with, do concerts with. Because it's such a good feeling." McCoy Tyner has recorded two compositions by Blake, *Motherland* and *Woman Of Tomorrow*, both on the album *Horizon* (Milestone 9094).

"All these experiences have brought me to a point now where I feel closer to being a leader. I'm trying to be involved with as many different creative things as possible. I enjoy playing in clubs and concert halls, but I also want to travel around to colleges, to reach people that way too, because it gives people other alternatives in their mind to see the instrument being used in another way. When I think of the artists that appeal to me, like Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong, I like those men because of the way they communicated to people. Louis Armstrong was loved all over the world, not just because he played the trumpet, but because of the kind of individual that he was. It came out in his music and it came out when he just spoke to people on a one-to-one basis. I really like to strive for that kind of thing in my own life because I feel that it's important to give people something and to be sincere about what I'm doing."

In 1980 the *db* Critics Poll named John Blake the talent deserving wider recognition on valent. About that honor and about his plans in general, John concludes, "I feel great about a lot of things that are happening, and I feel good about the future. I really feel positive." **db**

Jemeel Moondoc

BY LEE JESKE

Some children recoil at their parents' musical taste. A lot of that backlash, of course, leads to new directions in music—witness rock & roll, for example. However, sometimes it has the opposite effect. Talking about the music that he heard at home in Chicago, where he was born in 1951, Jemeel Moondoc says, "My mother and father were great, super jazz fans. I was listening to Charlie Parker at a very early age. That tune, *Little Willie Leaps*—I must have heard about 6,000 times.

"My father used to talk about Charlie Parker coming to Chicago and the time when all of a sudden Bird just started playing by himself for, like, a half-hour. So when I saw a clarinet in a pawn shop and I asked my father to buy it for me, he did. And I just started playing it. I never had formal clarinet lessons. I didn't have formal lessons till I started playing the flute in high school."

Jemeel's musical education actually started with his grandmother, "the kind of person that would go to church seven days a week." She had her grandson singing in the choir and noodling on the piano from the time he could first sing and noodle. His first experience with the world of ensembles was with a high school group that used to imitate Booker T. and the MG's—playing instrumental r&b hits. He started fooling around with various reeds, playing blues and various other forms of music. He was, he says, not listening to jazz at all and is not, he emphatically states, a product of the AACM.

Moondoc's parents, despite their jazz leanings, wanted their son to pursue architecture—he had even won a scholarship to the Illinois Institute of Technology. He wanted to play music. The ensuing rift led to his leaving Chicago and landing in Boston. After rattling around in a blues band playing the college circuit, Jemeel ended up at the New England Conservatory of Music. "I never really had any theory and stuff like that," he says. "At that point my jazz listening started to develop—I started collecting records. People like John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and Sonny Stitt I had heard a little bit in Chicago, before I started playing jazz. But in Boston, when I heard my first Cecil Taylor record, it blew my mind. I knew that there was something there that I really wanted and he had it. I knew that I had to go play with him, to go study with him. So when I heard that he was going to be at the University of Wisconsin, I went from Boston to Wisconsin."

Cecil was teaching at the University and Jemeel "just introduced myself and



COLLIS DAVIS/HANDA

told him that I enjoyed his music and I wanted to play with him. I only played a little while, because I wasn't a student and it was hard to survive. Then when I heard he was going to be at Antioch in the fall I said, 'Look, I'm going to go back to Boston and get some money together and I'll see you at Antioch.' He said, 'Yeah, cool.' So that's what I did. I was actually down there two days before he got there. He was very surprised to see me."

Cecil Taylor spent two years as artist-in-residence at Antioch College, Ohio. Jemeel was there the full time, though not as a student. He was living in a cold-water studio and cooking hamburgers in the Antioch cafeteria to survive, but nobody minded his sitting in on Taylor's classes and rehearsal big band. By this time he was concentrating on the alto, which was to quickly become his main horn.

"It was great. The band had between 24 and 32 people. We would start at eight o'clock every night and play until two, three, or four in the morning. Then we'd go and jam till the sun came up. It was like, for two years, I was playing 30 hours a day. That's where my whole thing now, what I'm doing now, started. Me and Cecil were pretty tight at one point, and I learned a lot from him just by listening to him: about principles, theory, the whole thing about commercial music vs. true black art music, and making sacrifices. It was there that a group of us got together and formed the original Muntu (rhymes with 'one-two') ensemble." (The name derives from an African word meaning, according to Moondoc, "a new and continuing culture building off the old.")

At the end of Taylor's two-year stint, Jemeel traveled to New York City with

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Write:

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trumpeter Arthur Williams and pianist Mark Hennen—the basis of the new, pared-down Ensemble Muntu. Sam Rivers quickly employed the group at his Studio Rivbea—opposite himself.

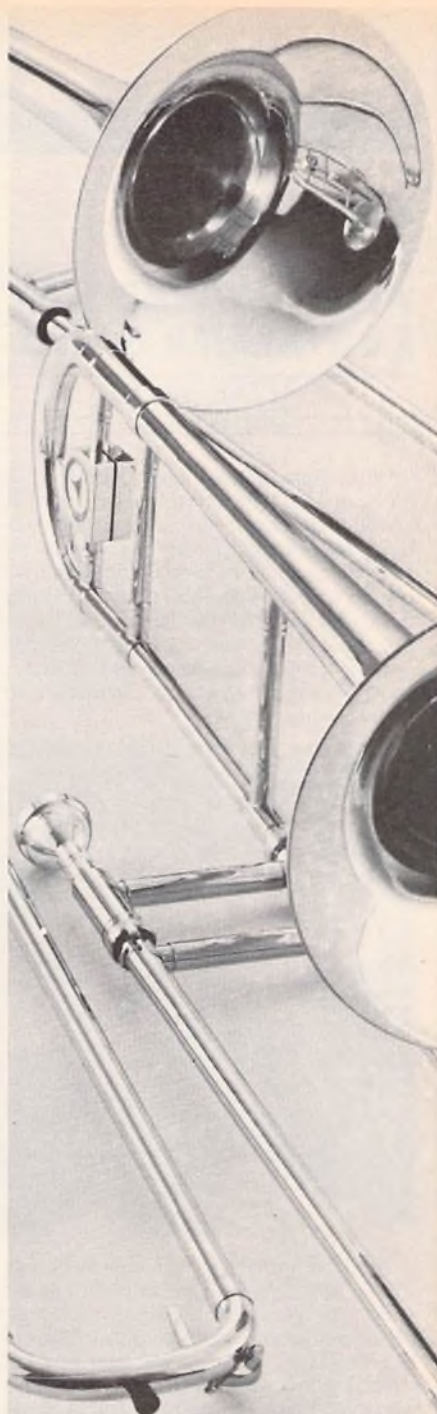
"The reaction at Rivbea was pretty good," remembers Jemeel. "We played down there a lot. Arthur Williams left to go with Cecil, and I took over the band—I had always done all the business anyway." Roy Campbell replaced Williams on trumpet, bassist William Parker and drummer Rashid Bakr rounded out the Ensemble. Pianist Hennen soon left and the kernel of the band was set for the next eight or nine years.

With the piano, the sound of the Ensemble began drifting away from a Taylor vein and more toward the sound of the classic Ornette Coleman quartet. Moondoc's sound is dry and voice-like, and his composing is thoughtful and spatial. The unit "just worked and worked and worked, all over New York," says Jemeel. "We never got any critical acclaim until I self-produced our first record. That record got me a tour of Europe—a great tour. I was playing all the time and I really got a lot of stuff together, conceptually. When we got back—this was in '78—we worked the Public Theatre and the Tin Palace, and people started noticing us. We had a week at Ali's Alley, and Robert Palmer came down and wrote a nice article for the *Times*. That was the first break."

Since that time, Moondoc has doggedly kept his Ensemble Muntu together—producing his own records, touring Europe on a yearly basis, incorporating a non-profit organization for summer music workshops on the lower East Side of Manhattan. "Really," he says, "I consider myself a composer. We had a workshop that involved the playing of my compositions by anyone who wanted to come and play. We had about 15 pieces and it was great. That's the kind of stuff I want to do. And we were teaching a children's workshop, too, and a basic theory workshop.

"I realize that there's not much money to be made here, so I'm setting up my European network. I've lost my rhythm section to Cecil, so I've been trying different things with different people, like Khan Jamal on vibes, and drummers like Dennis Charles and Ed Blackwell."

Jemeel Moondoc's insistence on doing things his way has kept him rolling along for close to 10 years. If nobody'll produce his albums, he'll do it himself; if he can't find work in the States, he'll pack Muntu off to Europe. I sense that he'll continue to get things done. And, although he may not be an architect, if his parents sought out New York Live (Cadence Jazz 1006) they wouldn't find *Little Willie Leaps*, but they would find a fresh, rarefied version of *Salt Peanuts*. db



"I wanted something that sounds musical and plays both very loud and very soft. There just was no horn that could do that before. So I decided to design one to my specifications."

Jay Friedman

Jay Friedman
Principal Trombonist
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

HOLTON

price until I hear them for a week or two, and then if they're worth it, they'll get it and more." Actually the band recently was structured on one basic salary rate for each of the players with a few exceptions—like Steve Marcus, the featured saxophonist who has been with the band seven years.

He hires sidemen on recommendations from other people, including members who are leaving or have been fired—and that happens enough times so it's a known fact within the industry that Buddy is not the easiest person to work for. "My band is totally non-political. I don't have cliques in my band—guys asking 'How much are you making?' I won't have one guy talking about another guy in my band. We have to be a unit. We travel together constantly. If we can't get along, we can't play together. I run my band on the most simple kind of understanding between the players and the leader: get up there and play your ass off for me, and we'll get along fine; dog it and you're in a lot of trouble with me. That's how I run it. Everybody knows where I stand."

This summer Buddy was traveling quite a lot on the band bus rather than driving in his own car. There was one grueling bus trip during the waning days of summer in which the band covered 2,000 miles in 29 hours. Buddy picks up the story: "We finished a job in Indianapolis, got on the bus, and drove that night and the next day, and arrived in Las Vegas around six in the morning. We checked in, got a couple hours sleep, and did a concert at five in the afternoon. Then we cut across the street to the Sahara Hotel and did the Jerry Lewis telethon and then went to Los Angeles to get ready for our opening at Disneyland the next night. The reason I sat on the bus was not to show the guys it's not that tough a trip, but to show them I understand the toughness of the trip. While it would be simple for me to get on a jet and do it in three hours, I may have a very unhappy band when they arrive thinking, 'Oh sure, he's there and he's sleeping.' So I said, 'Okay, I'm going to be with you so you can't be any more tired than me.' And it works."

"I understand guys being tired after that because I'm tired after that kind of trip. But on the job you can't be tired because the people that come in don't want to know your problem. I think people go out to get away from their problems. Well then I don't want to be the kind of guy that's gonna add more problems on their brain."

Although he annually hits the other continents, Buddy claims he's not heard any new rhythms and tempos. "Wherever you go you hear the American influence, so there's nothing new out there." And he says he likes playing all tempos. "If we play a fast tune and it gets faster, I get bugged. If

we play a slow tune and it slows down, I get bugged. A tempo is a tempo. If I kick off something meticulously fast, it's because that's what I feel like playing. I can't ever say that tonight will be like last night. My moods change, the audience changes. I have to judge an audience within the first 10 seconds I walk on-stage. I do it by looking at them. There's an anxiety, an anticipation, an involvement. You can tell by the response you get when you walk on the bandstand. If it's a lackadaisical [clap-clap-clap, he slowly smacks his hands together to demonstrate the point] then you know tonight we've got to work hard. If there's a great amount of cheering and love being shown, you know exactly what to do to please all these people. You can't take the time to walk out and think 'I'll try this and if it doesn't work, I'll try this.' You have to know what will please them. That's the secret. Know your audience."

Of the new groups he's heard, he likes Weather Report and Tower of Power. He liked Bill Watrous' original big band which has since folded. He also likes Mel Lewis' band and has high praise for Woody Herman's current Herd. "I like the Brecker Brothers, but I can't say I like all the music I hear. Most of it sucks. But there are some musicians who have high standards, like the Breckers and Quincy Jones, who is a genius; I play his *Smackwater Jack* album constantly."

He says he doesn't listen to his own records and that he's recorded "more than I should have." Doesn't he like to hear his performances? "I don't like to hear myself or my band on record. It's a boring feeling because I know my band is better in person than it is on record, so I don't want to have to listen to something that is inferior. I'm playing every night so I don't have to listen to it on record. I'm not so involved with myself that I have to go back and listen to what I've done."

Buddy emphasizes that he works on a spontaneous basis. "How I feel is how I play," he repeats. Well, if he's feeling lousy, will his playing reflect that, or will he have to force himself to get over this mood? "I never force myself. I may play some difficult tunes but I won't force myself to play them. I may play a chart tonight that won't sound nearly as good as it sounded last night if I'm in a difficult mood, but it'll be the same tune. I don't think I've ever played lousy. I may not play as good as I want to, but it's never lousy. If I thought I played lousy, I'd quit."

Goals for the future? "I haven't achieved what I want to do, which is play better, and I'm very sincere about that. I think that once you think you've played as good as you're ever going to play, you're cheating yourself and everybody else. And I have never decided I played so good that I don't have to worry about it any longer. I concern myself with it every time I sit down behind the drums. I have never attained the kind of expertise that I want."

CHORDS *continued from page 10*

KKGO, KJAZ, WBGO, WGBH, and WBUR say that they use the book, and they have interviewed me about the research. (Names were supplied the Editor for verification.) But Axelrod says it's not for *db* readers! Why? What explains this whopping paradox?

Axelrod gives us the answer: he says he's been listening to jazz seriously "for something more than two years." In short, novice Axelrod decided to go out and practice surgery without bothering to finish med school, and the result was just butchery. I am outraged to see years of work victimized by such quackery. Even worse, Axelrod has misled *db* readers. Through ignorance, he has turned them away from a book intended

just for them.
Len Lyons

Berkeley, CA

Alan Axelrod replies: I fail to understand Mr. Lyons' claim that my review is "misleading." The blurb on the back of his book calls the work "a listeners' guide to building a jazz record collection." We are also told here that Mr. Lyons provides a "general introduction to jazz." His preface announces: "This is the book I wish had been around when I began collecting jazz albums." What all of this tells me, tells the editors of *down beat* (who solicited the review from me), and tells anyone who pulls the book down from a sales rack, is that Mr. Lyons is writing for a lay audience—indeed and explicitly, a "novice" audience—rather than a professional audience. And this is pre-

cisely why I—yes, very much a jazz amateur—was asked to review it.

Who is misleading whom? If Mr. Lyons had intended his book for an advanced professional audience, he should have announced and marketed it accordingly. (Of course, he should also have written it accordingly.) Might I advise Mr. Lyons that successful professional writers in any field learn to define and then to address the audience to whom they intend to appeal. Having done this, they then learn not to claim an audience other than the one they have, after all, chosen. To adopt Mr. Lyons' own pointless and petulant metaphor, a medical doctor would not write *General Introduction To Anatomy: A Guide To The Chief Organs* expecting it to be read and reviewed as an advanced treatise for veteran surgeons.

BANDS cont. from page 13

amusement parks, in addition to his usual concert circuit. Buddy Rich is the one exception to the 'hit record' theory. There is no big number Buddy has to play, yet he remains one of the great star bandleaders. But he's got two things going for him in addition to an immense talent: he's on the *Tonight Show* regularly, and he's a survivor of the big band heyday when he first became a star."

Willard Alexander himself is keenly aware of the role of records, and last year he blasted the record industry in *Billboard* magazine. "There is not the slightest doubt that there is a demand [for big bands]," he wrote, "and that this demand could be enhanced . . . if we were lucky enough to get the support of the record companies. . . . [But they] are ignoring a public demand. . . . It is the first time in the history of the entertainment business that I know of, that major record companies are united in opposing the recording of big bands."

If bands cannot get exposure through records, then where can they be heard? One answer may be radio. There

are upwards of 130 stations around the country doing a *Music Of Your Life* format, which is basically big band music. Yet there are several reasons to be cautious about viewing such programs as a cultural trend of the future.



Glenn Miller circa '38

One, advertisers support such formats for the 35-to-50 demographics they offer. Such an age group may have money to spend, but it has a relatively small impact on popular culture. Two, because of the limited contemporary big band output on records, such formats necessarily rest on records 25 to 45 years old.

This brings us to the nub of

big band revival and why it's never really happened. Most people continue to define the big band sound in terms of what it was, in terms of reissue LPs, and in terms of Miller, Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw. Those who have talked about the bands "coming back" have been looking towards the future in a rear view mirror. With no one around in the '50s, '60s, and '70s to do what Goodman did in the '30s, the big band lobby has been strongly restorationist in its stance—so have many of the bands it's supported, with notable exceptions. The result has been the perpetuation of, by and large, the finest popular music ever created in America to an audience whose new members have kept only slightly ahead of the attrition of the Swing Generation.

But Schunk suggests a possible future scenario. "By exposing new audiences to the traditional big band sounds," he says, "we may be laying the groundwork for an acceptance of new bands on the scene. Granted, it creates a problem for the new artist—namely how do the living compete with the dead? But the torch can be passed. Look at Stan Kenton. In the '60s he went into

the high school market and developed an enduring interest in bands among kids, literally from nothing. In making the music meaningful to them, he kept it alive and growing.

"And now we see traditional social events like proms coming back in high schools and colleges. The kids who get off playing Don Ellis and Kenton charts are finding that playing Miller and Dorsey type things can not only be hip and fun, but lucrative too—they can get local gigs."

So one thing leads to another, but where it will lead is hardly clear. Not until a big band messiah—a latter-day Goodman—comes on the scene with an original and charismatic idea around which all these incipient trends can rally and break the record company barrier Alexander cited will the bands come back.

"Meanwhile," says Schunk, "the big band business is not a museum business. It's not surviving because of nostalgia, but because it's good music and people want to hear it. We may not have the swing era again, perhaps, but our ledgers wouldn't be full if bands weren't entertaining people." —john mcdonough □

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Reportedly, Susan Mingus, who is in charge of the Dynasty, has never been fond of Ford. Ricky doesn't think this is the case. He says that when the Dynasty was formed, he was busy at work in Gardenias, but that doesn't explain why he hasn't been asked to join the band since then. Whatever the reason, in thinking it over, Ford expresses an admiration for the concept, but feels that he "exhausted that avenue—Mingus' music—and I don't really want to become too associated with playing it after his death. See, with Mercer's band, I had already been confronted with reproduction of music after the composer's death. And I don't want to do it again—it would really undercut a lot of things that I'm aspiring to do."

Ricky Ford, during the past couple of years, has become one of the most in-demand tenor players around. He credits Jaki Byard with influencing him to become "a total musician," and nothing fazes him. He has turned up in bands led by Ronnie Matthews, Frank Foster, and Nat Adderley, to name but a few, on recordings with Red Rodney, Richie Cole, and Sonny Stitt ("The producers wanted to ruffle Sonny's feathers a little bit," says Ricky), and in a CBS Cable TV special with Betty Carter (a highlight of which is their duet on *Just Friends*). He still works with Dannie Richmond and has become more active with his own quartet (Walter Booker on bass, Jimmy Cobb on drums and, usually, either Larry Willis or Albert Dailey on piano). Yet, when Lionel Hampton called him to join his band, Ricky, with customary nonchalance, signed on.

"I put myself in Hamp's place. I said, 'Let's see, if the Lord lets me live that long and pursue my career and I get to be one of the leading musicians around, I'd like to have some of the leading players to work with me.' So I said, 'It'll be nice to work with Hamp.'

"I can write some music for him to play, and just to have that experience again of working in a big band—which is my first love—I felt that I should participate in his experience. He's got a lot of energy and he's very positive. If you say, 'Hamp, how about if we do this.' He says, 'Yeah, let's go and try it.' So I'm getting a chance to write for him; he likes some of my music." Which is exactly how Ricky Ford found himself in the same saxophone section as Jacquet and Cobb in the summer of 1981.

Of course, if Ricky had his druthers he'd be working with his own band exclusively. But he realizes that's not realistic at the moment. He would also like to have the Ricky Ford Big Band one day as well, something that is even further removed. In the meantime, the offers keep on coming. Ricky has recently become a father for the second time, three-week-old Adrienne joining two-year-old Jordan in the Ford household. He turned down a European tour with Elvin Jones to be with his wife Betsy at the time of the birth.

Ricky Ford was the recipient of the 1981 **down beat** Critics Poll award for talent deserving wider recognition, but, it seems to me, he is receiving extremely wide, and well-deserved, recognition. There is no reason not to believe that Ford is on the threshold of a brilliant career on the most beloved of all jazz instruments, the tenor saxophone. His reputation, even at such an early age, is quite solid and extends, not surprisingly, to Europe and Japan.

"I heard I'm getting a big following in Japan," he says with a grin. "I'm called 'Jazz Wolf' over there. Wolf is a world-champion small sumo wrestler. He's 25 years old, a very attractive-looking guy, and he's big amongst the ladies in Japan. He's like Muhammad Ali. I'm called 'Jazz Wolf' of the tenor. Sort of like the big man on the tenor saxophone there. It's interesting. Everybody knows who Wolf is."

In a couple of years, they might be referring to the guy as the "Sumo Ricky Ford."

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JENKINS continued from page 22

Jenkins notes that "Around the country and all over the world, I see more violinists coming up. I'm seeing what I didn't want to happen—other people being compared to me. I like to think that I had some influence in bringing out the violin in a more modern fashion, based on a more refined technique. Some of my predecessors didn't really have the opportunity to learn the violin like I did. I think that has partly clouded the issue, the fact that I know the violin, so people want to make me classical."

Yet Jenkins can claim at least one experience reserved for only the finest classical violinists. "The Cremona festival in Italy has been a classical festival for years, but they've always had a little jazz entity. I was the jazz representative in 1979, and the young guys in charge decided that this Stradivarius they have in a museum should be played by someone on a contemporary basis. This instrument is worth \$200,000, and is only played by famous violinists and the guy who takes care of it. They came to pick me up in a police car, plus an escort, and we went to the museum. The violin is kept in a plexiglass box in this 16th century room with beautiful antiques; it is 300 years old, but the violin looked brand new! The keeper gave me a Hill bow, like mine only better, and I started to play. I grabbed some of the flashier stuff from my repertoire, and man, the instrument was responding. Before I knew it I was smokin', giving a concert right there for three people.

"When I got through the keeper said 'Okay,' like I had passed an audition, 'okay, let's go to the concert.' I was just dressed casually for rehearsing, but back into the police car we went, with another police car following us. The concert was in a beautiful outdoor palazzo. A lot of my repertoire has scratching in it and other effects I want to get out. Playing that instrument, I was getting all of them, everything I thought I should get but don't get on my violin. So I just went into more esoteric stuff. I played for a half-hour, and was ready to keep going, but I saw the keeper over in the corner looking very nervous. I went back to see him and he said, 'I think that's enough.' The audience wanted me to come back, but I gave it up.

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