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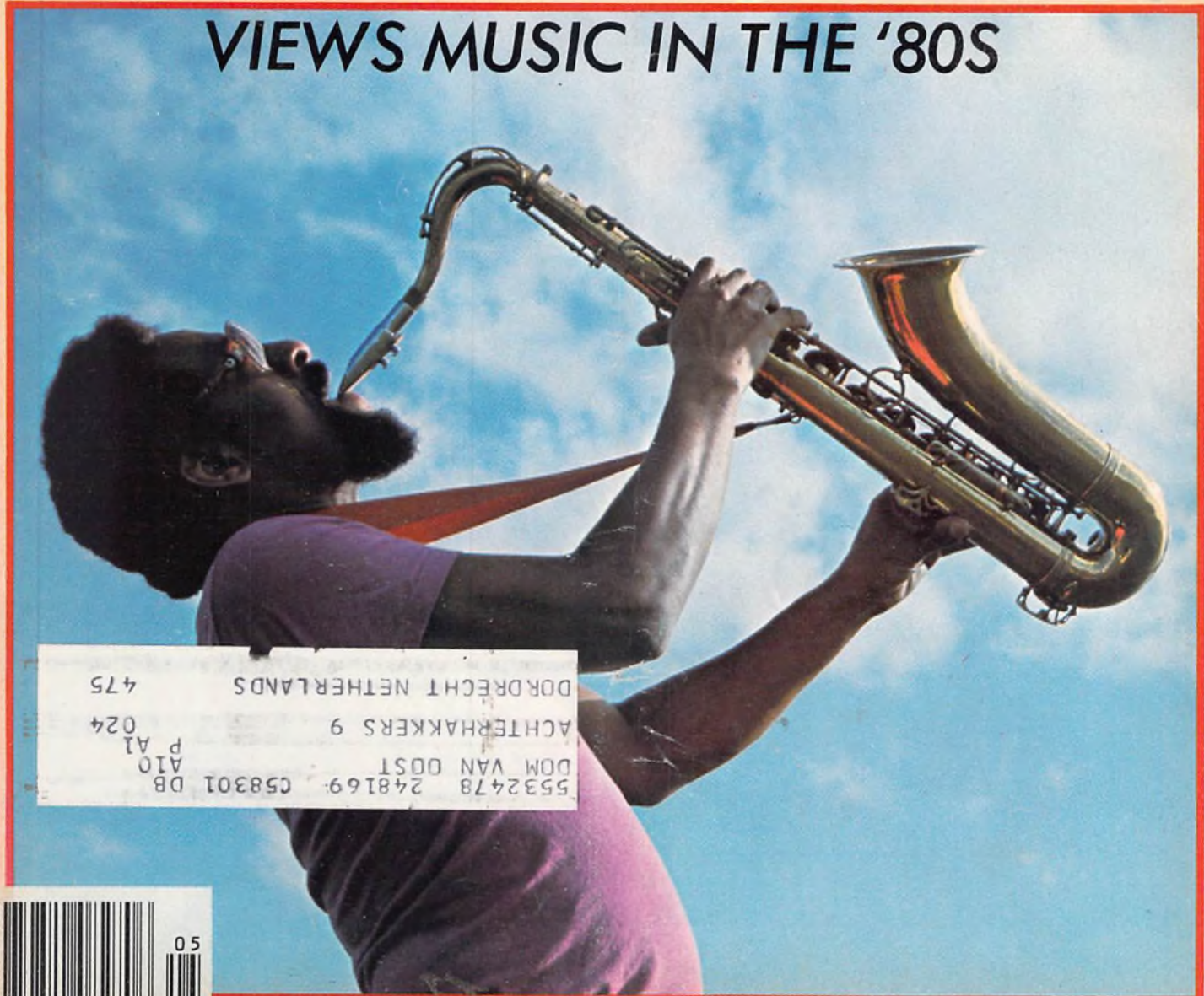
**MICHAL URBANIAK**  
A SECOND CHANCE

**WILLIAM RUSSO**  
SUCCESS OF A MAVERICK

**SARAH VAUGHAN**  
VOCALIST OF THE CENTURY?

# SONNY ROLLINS

VIEWS MUSIC IN THE '80S



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- 15 SONNY ROLLINS INTERVIEW**  
These days Newk has the reins of his career firmly in hand—from self-producing his own albums to playing showcase engagements rather than week-long gigs—since, as he tells Bob Blumenthal, "I don't have to go up on the bridge [anymore]."
- 19 "I'M NOT A JAZZ SINGER"**  
Or so says Sarah Vaughan. The No. 1 distaff vocalist with **dbers** reveals to A. James Liska that she still gets butterflies before a performance, and "I'm a singer." Period.
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Electrifying Polish violinist Michal Urbaniak found his first Stateside, State Department-sponsored visit a lark; when he subsequently emigrated with singer/spouse Urszula Dudziak, they received a typically hostile Big Apple reception. It's all behind him, as Lee Jeske discovers.
- 26 WILLIAM RUSSO**  
Though perhaps still best known for his work with Stan Kenton in the early '50s, composer/arranger/author/educator/erstwhile-trombonist William Russo has seemingly done it all—jazz, rock, blues, symphonies, operas, ballets, soundtracks, plays, books. Not so, he tells Jon Balleras, there's more on the horizon.



Sarah Vaughan



Michal Urbaniak

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# SONNY ROLLINS

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL

*Visits to Boston by Sonny Rollins are always events, but the tenor saxophonist's November 1981 stop held two special points of interest. The Rollins quartet that maintained constant personnel for three years had broken up and been replaced by a new band, and this was Rollins' first local appearance in a showcase club that generally books rock (the Paradise), after years in jazz clubs (primarily the now-defunct Jazz Workshop) and concert halls (primarily the Berklee Performance Center).*

*With these things in mind, and not wanting to take another stroll over both sides of the bridge (for all his shyness, Rollins has been a frequent and cooperative interview subject), I decided to focus the interview on how life and music are for Sonny Rollins in the '80s. What follows is an edited conversation that took place in Rollins' Airport Hilton suite the night before he played the Paradise. The new album Rollins mentions, recorded the following month, features Bobby Hutcherson and guitarist Bobby Broom in addition to Bob Cranshaw and Tony Williams, and has been released as No Problem (Milestone M-9104).*

**BOB BLUMENTHAL:** You just finished touring Europe, which must be an increasingly important segment of your—and other musicians'—audience.

**SONNY ROLLINS:** I started going to Europe in the late '50s, but there is more happening there now, in more places. All the cities want to have a jazz festival—these are winter festivals, not the summer ones which were already big business with tourists. We did the Rome Jazz Festival, and for the first time they did a thing at the Opera House for jazz.



Cork, Ireland, this was their fourth annual jazz festival. Paris. South America seems to be a very good market, except that people have had money troubles down there. You have to be very careful; you don't want to find yourself in a foreign country where nobody knows you, with no money.

We've been talking about going to Russia, but a lot has to be worked out. Money up-front is not what it would be in another place, but you are able to carry a tape and film of the performance out of the country. In other words, if I wanted to make a record, *Sonny Rollins In Russia* or something like that, I could do it. I'm not sure, we may hit 'em next year. It takes a year to set these things up.

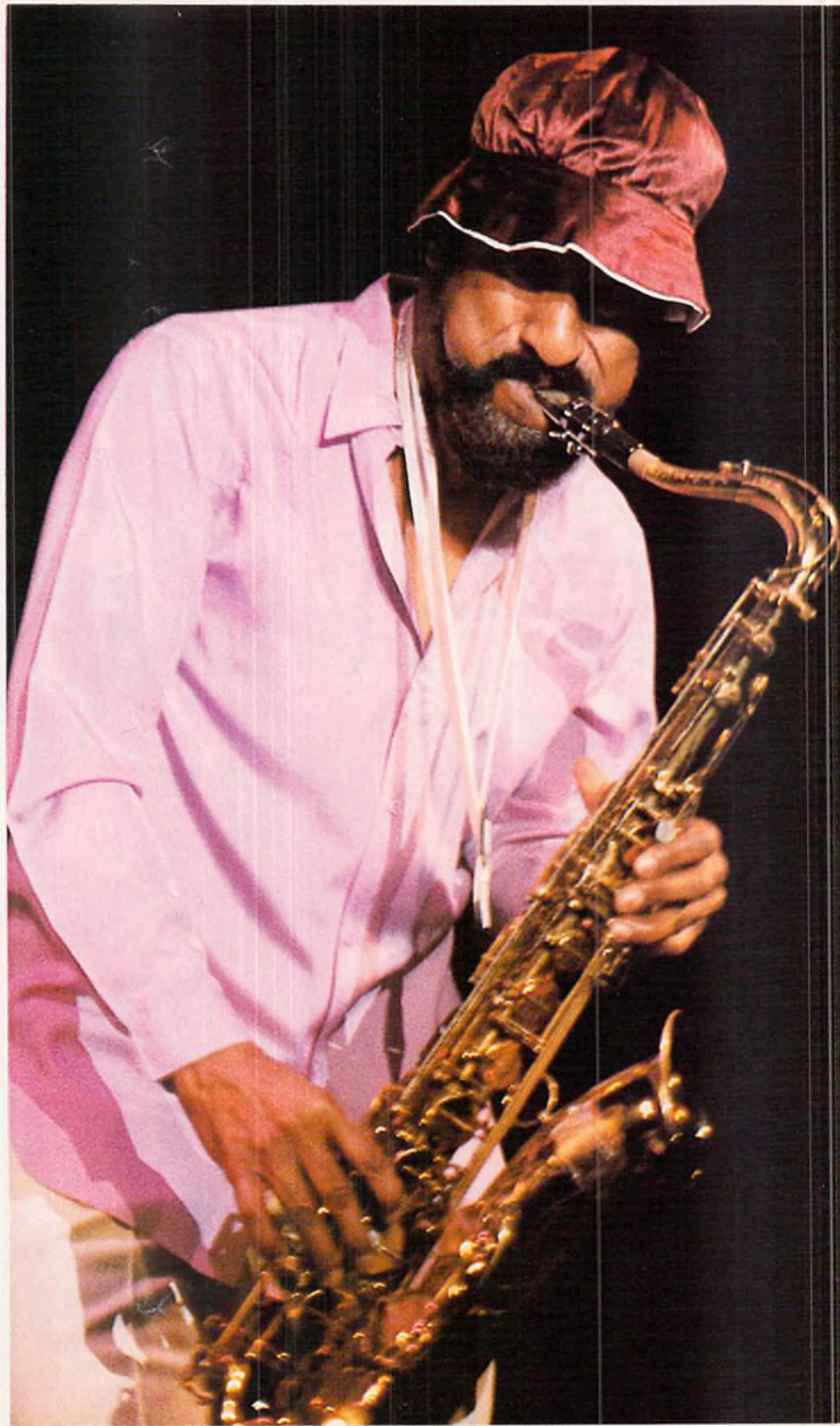
**BB:** In this country the places where you perform have changed. You play at the Bottom Line in New York instead of the Vanguard; you're playing the Paradise here. How do the showcase one-nighters compare to the days when you worked one club for a week?

**SR:** I work very hard whatever I'm doing. Say I'm playing two nights at the Bottom Line; for me that's very hard, even though it's only four shows instead of a whole week. The people are more intense, each show is like a concert in a way, so it's harder. In Boston I have one night to come across. With a week, if tonight is not so good, then tomorrow, or another night. On the other hand, it's easier on me than doing one club every night.

I've been around the circuit several times. Staying in a Hilton hotel is not what I look forward to, but it's part of the job. Sometimes you get a nice hotel, sometimes you get a greasy one. I'm not the kind of guy who likes to stay out on the road a lot. Not like Dizzy, to go from one extreme to the other, who is always working. I don't like that life much. So the fact that clubs are one- or two-night jobs now helps me play a lot better.

**BB:** Is anything lost with the demise of the week-long booking?

**SR:** It could be. In New York particularly, the last set wouldn't be over until four in the morning. I remember it used to seem, not like the best, but like something special would happen on the last set, more relaxed or whatever, so that different things happened musically. So maybe you do lose something. I just remember times I would feel like playing more after it was over. Of course we had played three or four sets already, but that last set, after three a.m. to four or beyond. . . . In general, though, I don't think you really play more playing four sets a night; it's not guaranteed that the music is going to be better. I don't think less time to get across is necessarily a bad thing.



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

**BB:** What about the demands to play certain material, like *Don't Stop The Carnival*, every set?

**SR:** We play a 90-minute show. In my case there are songs like *Don't Stop The Carnival* that I feel constrained to play, really, but the length of the songs vary,

and I play other things that give certain satisfaction to other people. Where the spontaneity remains is in the length—if it's going good, I might play it for a long time. This gets to be a problem, even if I had a repertoire of five songs. On a given night I might play four of them for 90

minutes, and it would be enough; another night I might go through those five tunes like that, and they just wouldn't be working. That kind of leverage keeps the spontaneous thing alive. But I don't blame the more limited repertoire on time restrictions; it has to do with what I'm trying to do.

**BB:** Can you still include unexpected material, which is something you were known for at one point?

**SR:** I am playing one piece that is very unusual, for me and guys who are playing jazz. I'm still trying to compose, and give a varied performance of my own compositions. I realize that variety is where my real presentation is at. I try to get in all of the different elements. This song we're doing is a Dolly Parton song, *Here You Come Again*. So I'm still trying to cover other spectrums.

**BB:** What led to the change in your band?

**SR:** I have a reputation—these things seem to catch up to me from a long time ago—for not keeping groups, which is not necessarily true. The guys that I had—Al Foster, Mark Soskin, and Jerome [Harris]—had been together for three years, which is a long time these days, especially when the group hadn't organized when everyone was in school. It wasn't like that—I had brought disparate elements together. It wasn't that everybody was keen to be together; they were together because they were in my group. Marriages of that sort are only bound to last so long, especially today when guys want to express themselves in their own fashion and make names for themselves. It's always been that way, but with the speed-up of the media in the past two decades, it's more so. People have their own ambitions.

The group that I have now has Tommy Campbell, who used to be with Dizzy and is from Boston, on drums. I have Bob Cranshaw on bass, who was with me a long time ago, and Masuo on guitar, who used to be with me in the '70s. Bill O'Connell on piano is from New York, and he has been with me since April. Today the emphasis seems to be away from groups, partly because guys want to do their own thing, and partly because of the economics of the business. People want to see so-called "stars" together more, so mergers between musicians who had their own bands a few years ago are happening more. Having a group to accompany a person like me, a "bandleader," is now out. People are more interested in seeing VSOP, or the Milestone Jazzstars. I'm accepting this now, that I will work with a pool of people I need for specific occasions.

I don't really want to do all-star jobs anyway. There are times when you have to, and it's okay for a while. I enjoyed that tour with the Milestone Jazzstars. I would still like to have my own group, as much as possible, but I can see this other thing coming. In fact, I went to Japan in August with George Duke, Stanley Clarke, and Al Foster. It's not ideal, but people like to see people like this together, so you have to go along with it. . . . You very often feel unfulfilled. Of course you could feel unfulfilled anyway. There's no guarantee just because I have my own band, but at least there's more chance, and I have more control over the repertoire.

**BB:** Would you work with acoustic bass again?

**SR:** Yeah, but it's much easier for us to carry an electric around. It's mainly the player, not the instrument. I know there are differences between the electric and the upright, but it's very much a matter of the individual. Bob Cranshaw is playing Fender bass, but he has an upright conception. If someone is grounded in playing upright bass and plays Fender, and can find a middle ground between the two, this is optimal for me. Stanley Clarke played upright bass on that Japanese tour.

**BB:** I hear you're producing your next album.

**SR:** I have been thinking about producing for a long time. I was listening to Roberta Flack talking one night, and what she described was similar to me. She was actually producing her own albums anyway; she was selecting the material, picking the people. What I haven't been doing is talking to people on the date about money and various arrangements. The rest is something I think I should be doing—it just means more control over what you do. It's a logical conclusion to end up producing your own things. It's more responsibility that I should be handling myself.

**BB:** It has become a cliché that Rollins albums don't capture the spark of Rollins in live performance. Does this mean anything to you as a player/producer?

**SR:** I've accepted the fact that I've got to concentrate more on making a studio date have a certain pizzazz, a zing to it that performances would have by virtue of the people and I interacting. That's something I'll deal with this time. It's also a psychological thing on my part, about going into a studio and playing as much like I usually play as possible. I feel I can deal with it a little better, now that I've been thinking about it for a while.

I can say that Tony Williams will be on the new album, and Bob Cranshaw. It

will basically be a small band date, with something overdubbed if necessary.

**BB:** Recording your parts for the Rolling Stones must have been quite different.

**SR:** Mick Jagger was there, and he was singing over the tracks, recording his part with me at the same time. It wasn't as if I was just in there listening to stuff over earphones. He had sent me the material. When he first contacted me, I asked him what he had in mind. I mean, the Stones are alright, but I'm not familiar with a lot of their material. So I asked him to send me some ideas of what he'd like to do, and if I could relate to it, I'd do it. He sent me some tracks he wanted me to play on—it wasn't a record yet, just some tracks. I listened to them, we talked several times, and finally got together. I heard later that the Stones are big jazz fans.

The recording project didn't seem that different to me, because I wasn't with it from beginning to end. I realized that the record was a long time being made; in fact, Mick Jagger must have called me two years ago after he heard me at the Bottom Line.

**BB:** What do you think of the end result?

**SR:** I don't know if I should say this or not, but people know how I am. I'm not too keen on listening to my own work. I haven't really heard the record, except when I was someplace where I couldn't avoid it. This would be my general rule with most of my stuff; I listen to it while I'm doing it, making different takes, but I don't really hear it later.

**BB:** What about the fact that you don't get a credit on the LP [*Tatto You*]?

**SR:** It doesn't bother me. In fact, since I was worried about how I sounded, I'm glad I didn't get a credit. They do that—I think they haven't put any names on their last few albums.

**BB:** Lots of Stones fans will never realize they heard Sonny Rollins.

**SR:** Yeah, but I don't know how many Rolling Stones fans are going to like me anyway. I don't think I'm going to win a lot of Rolling Stones fans. I doubt it.

Actually, they wanted me to do concerts. They called me up when they were rehearsing for the tour and asked me to do some dates. All of them or some of them, which was very nice. I probably could have made more money being part of that rock scene, and more rock fans would have seen me, but I'm not the Rolling Stones. I have my own thing, and I have my own things to do. I couldn't rearrange commitments, I had this European tour set up for over a year . . . I mean I could have, but I wouldn't do it.

**BB:** You haven't been in the habit of doing guest appearances. And I remember seeing Betty Carter in a club one



# SARAH VAUGHAN

## *"I'm Not A Jazz Singer"*

BY A. JAMES LISKA



In late 1980 during the first of four Frank Nelson Doubleday lectures at the Smithsonian Institution, the subject of singing was approached via this question: "Who is the greatest vocal artist of the century?"

On hand to answer the question and supply the evidence was Gunther Schuller, a man whose mark has been made on American music through his efforts as a composer, conductor, and scholar. Schuller noted that "it's one thing to have a beautiful voice. It is another to be a great musician. It is still another to be a great musician with a beautiful voice who can also compose." He then proceeded to list several opera singers (Lauritz Melchior, Cesare Siepi, Kirsten Flagstad, and

Maria Callas) in tandem with several jazz musicians (Louis Armstrong, Joe Williams, and Charlie Parker).

The comparative evidence supplied, his biases exposed, Schuller announced Sarah Vaughan as the answer to the difficult question. "Hers is a perfect instrument, attached to a musician of superb instincts, capable of expressing profound human experience, with a wholly original voice."

"Leontyne Price," Vaughan offers quickly as her own answer to the same question, adding that when she hears a commentary like Schuller's she first blushes. "Then it gets embarrassing," she says, laughing that little girl laugh which so regularly punctuates her speech. "They say it and go on and

on and on. I'm just so happy that everybody enjoys what I do."

It is a few days before Vaughan's all-Gershwin concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which Michael Tilson Thomas will conduct. Vaughan is relaxing in the tastefully appointed bedroom of her suburban Los Angeles home, a great sprawling house high atop a hill in a carefully guarded, exclusive community in the San Fernando Valley. Her preparation for the concert, a program performed frequently in the past, includes home rehearsals with Tilson Thomas, whose arrival is expected momentarily.

"I'm a one-room person," Vaughan says, looking around the room which serves as both sleeping and working quarters. The room, which opens out onto the swimming pool, is large by any standard and has all of the usual bedroom furnishings. Black and white photographs of a variety of jazz figures, in simple black frames, adorn the wall over the bed's headboard. Against another wall there is an upright piano equipped with a Pianocorder—an electric piano and a portable electronic keyboard which she takes on her frequent tours. A television set is situated to facilitate her watching from bed, and atop it is the familiar golden figure of an Emmy award.

"I won that for a TV show I did, but nobody ever knew about it. People are always surprised I won that," she laughs. She gets up and walks past the Emmy, toward a window overlooking the Valley, and gazes into the fog-bound evening. If people don't remember the Emmy, they do remember and like her singing. Her thoughts have left the subject of the Emmy and return to her popularity and hard-earned fame. "It's unbelievable, that's what that is, that everybody likes me as well as they do. I still can't believe it."

Sarah Vaughan's being where she is was not so much a matter of planning, nor the result of years of rigorous training, as it was just being in the right place at the right time—initially, at least. "I was going to be a hairdresser before I got into show business. I always wanted to be in show business, and when I got in, I didn't try. I just went to the amateur hour, and in two weeks I was in show business. It shocked me to death and it took me a long time to get over that."

That "amateur hour" was a contest at New York's Apollo Theatre. She won the competition and was recommended by singer Billy Eckstine to his boss, bandleader Earl Hines. Vaughan made her debut as a pianist and singer with Hines' band in April of 1943, leaving the next year to join Eckstine's own band. She stayed with him until 1945.

Since that time and with few exceptions—not counting innumerable guest appearances with various bands—she has worked as a solo throughout her illustrious career. Usually she relies on her own small groups—like her current one of pianist George Gaffney, bassist Andy Simpkins, and drummer Harold Jones—to provide accompaniment.

Preparation for such a career was minimal at best. As a child in Newark, New Jersey, Vaughan sang at the Mount Zion Baptist Church and studied piano. But she never had any formal voice training or music education by today's standards.

Her training came more in the way of exposure to and working with some of jazz music's greats, from the swing and bebop eras to contemporary time. Strongly associated with Parker and Gillespie, her unique vocal qualities have enabled her to gain acceptance in both the jazz and pop worlds, with abilities equal to many an opera singer. Those vocal abilities have attracted such fellow musicians as Michael Tilson Thomas, who has just arrived at her home to rehearse for the upcoming concert appearance with the L.A. Philharmonic.

**"D**o it Chopin-style," exhorts Tilson Thomas from the keyboard of the acoustic piano. "Take the time at the bottom, then get it back." He turns to Vaughan, who is now sitting on the edge of her bed studying the page of music he has written to introduce *The Man I Love* and petting one of her three dogs which make frequent runs through her bedroom. "You know all about that stuff."

"I'll be glad when people find out that I do not know everything," she replies firmly.

"You know everything there is to know," he says, his voice gently offering reassurance.

She interrupts him with "I know everything I know." She pauses and laughs. "That's a good line."

Though Vaughan and Tilson Thomas have performed all-Gershwin programs before, new material is constantly being added, and this is no exception. "These new tunes have me a nervous wreck," Vaughan admits. "I like new tunes. But they make me nervous. I can't help it." Her voice changes to a raspy whisper, drawing attention to and perfectly befitting the story which is to follow. "I got ossified, you know. One night I got drunk just thinking about it. In my own house. I just went into the living room and drank me some cognac. Went to take a sip. Took sips." She laughs.

"Before Sarah goes on, she's real nervous," Tilson Thomas explains. "But the minute she's on. . . ." The words of confidence have little effect on Vaughan, who interrupts with a reminder about her nervousness: "I'm so nervous right now and I'm always nervous before a show. Barbara McNair made a statement in *Jet* magazine that people who were nervous before they went on must be insecure. I don't know why she said that. Carmen [McRae] says the same thing. Before I go on, I'm real nervous, and it lasts until I get the reaction from the audience."



### SARAH VAUGHAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SEND IN THE CLOWNS—Pablo 2312-130

HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN

GOING ON—Pablo 2310-821

I LOVE BRAZIL!—Pablo 2312-101

COPACABANA—Pablo 2312-125

DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

ONE—Pablo 2312-111

DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

TWO—Pablo 2312-116

THE DIVINE SARAH—Musicraft

504

LIVE—Mercury 2-412

SARAH VAUGHAN—Emarcy/

Polygram EXPR-1009

ECHOES OF AN ERA—Roulette

103

FEELIN' GOOD—Mainstream 379

LIVE IN JAPAN—Mainstream 401

SEND IN THE CLOWNS—Main-

stream 412

TIME IN MY LIFE—Mainstream

340

GOLDEN HITS—Mercury 60645

AFTER HOURS—Columbia Spe-

cial Products JCL-660

IN HI-FI—Columbia Special Prod-

ucts P-13084

VOLUME ONE—Archive of Folk

Music 250E

VOLUME TWO—Archive of Folk

Music 271E

VOLUME THREE—Archive of Folk

Music 325



"Of course, sometimes it gets worse. People sit out there and stare at you and don't applaud. Then I start shortening up my show because I think they don't enjoy what I'm doing and I want to get the hell off of there. And then when I come back and sign autographs, they say 'I've never heard you better.' Then I'm saying 'Why do you do that to me, you all? I thought you hated me out there.'"

Her nervousness is again soothed by Tilson Thomas. "Oh come on now," he says of the new piece they're rehearsing, "just 16 lousy bars."

"That could be 16 messed-up bars," she warns. "I'm gonna have all this music on stage with me, you know."

"Anything you'd like on stage is fine," he says, finally reassuring her with a promise to follow her lead. "You see? No sacrifice is too great for my art."

Such accommodations have not always been at Vaughan's disposal, though she has fought vigorously to maintain control of her artistic life. While her success has been great, affording her a lifestyle of considerable comfort and establishing her as one of popular music's most important singers, she has not attained the superstar status of her more pop-oriented counterparts.

Schuller suggested that her art is too subtle for her "to make it big, really big, like some half-mediocre, punk rock star." Record companies have wished she had less subtlety and greater sales. "That's why I quit recording for five years," Vaughan asserts. "The record companies always wanted me to



do something that I didn't want to do. 'Sarah, you don't sell many records' they'd say, and so *Broken Hearted Melody* came up. God, I hated it. I did that in the '50s and everybody loves that tune. It's the corniest thing I ever did.

"The 78s I didn't mind too much," she continues, recalling her earliest days of recording. "One side was commercial and you put yours on the other side. Usually the side I picked was the one that sold the record, though." Her telling smile indicates a self-assuredness both of her own artistic abilities and the integrity an audience is sure to detect.

**B**y now, though, Vaughan's recorded efforts have escaped the commercial connotations afforded much of her work in the '50s and '60s. During that time she took critical lumps from the press, which insisted on labeling her a jazz singer. "I'm not a jazz singer," she quickly protests. "I'm a singer. There's a lot of titles of music. There's punk rock, soul-punk rock, rock-jazz, jazz that rocks, jazz that doesn't rock, jazz jazz, jazz minus punk. . . . I don't know why people call me a jazz singer, though I guess people associate me with jazz because I was raised in it, from way back. I'm not putting jazz down, but I'm not a jazz singer. Betty Bebob [Carter] is a jazz singer because that's all she does. I've even been called a blues singer. I've recorded all kinds of music, but [to them] I'm either a jazz singer or a blues singer.

"I can't sing a blues—just a right-out blues—but I can put the blues in whatever I sing. I might sing *Send In The Clowns*, and I might stick a little bluesy part in it, or any song. What I want to do, music-wise, is all kinds of music that I like, and I like all kinds of music. I want to do a country & western record, but I want to do it with my kind of background. I hate country & western the way it's done; it all sounds the same to me, so I want to do my version."



TOM COPI

That attitude pervades much of Vaughan's thinking and certainly accounts for her doing programs such as the all-Gershwin show with symphony orchestras. Her other shows these days include a great amount of material from the pop and jazz bags. Future album projects, which she now controls to a great extent, include a desire to do some experimenting, going back to her church roots and maybe even doing a spiritual or two. "My next album for Pablo is going to be called *Crazy And Mixed Up*," she says, laughing at the proposed title and suggesting that her continued efforts are to more solidly establish her as a singer, not just a jazz singer.

Is it a move to a new commercialism? A return to the commercial success she enjoyed during the '50s and '60s? After all, many singers with half of Vaughan's talent enjoy twice as much success. She scoffs at the idea and doesn't concede to any jealousy or resentment of others' success. "There's no resentment because they have to sing those kind of songs. I don't have to sing those kind of songs," she says, indicating that whatever material to which she would lend her talent now would emerge with the inimitable Sarah Vaughan stamp clearly on it—a stamp which seems to just happen according to the modest singer.

"I never think about singing, I just go out and sing. I never think about the how or the why of it. It's just according to how I feel and it's never the same." A sudden laugh proceeds her telling of what she does think about when she is singing. "You know," she cautions, "sometimes I'm wondering if they fixed the fence, or I wonder if my dog got well. That's why I forget lyrics sometimes."

But she does think about future projects—recording and live—and the idea of working again with some old jazz buddies is always present. "I'd like to do a tour with Basie; that's the only way I'd do a tour for, like, 20 days or something. We did a tour one time," she laughs. "It was for 71 days and we had one day off in Detroit. That one day came at the end of the tour, and I'm telling you, the next day they were looking for us. There were some drunks. They even found some of them in the curb. We must have drank up all of the whiskey in Detroit. I was just one of the boys in the band," she says fondly.

Her recollection of the Detroit experience reminds her of her own usually hectic schedule. "I haven't been doing much of anything lately. I've been resting and I'm not used to that. Maybe that's why I'm so tired. But starting tomorrow . . . lets' see . . . oh, yeah, I've got a rehearsal in the morning, then I fly to Delaware," she says, suddenly getting up to retrieve a manilla envelope with the words *Take to Delaware and New York City!* scrawled on the front. "See? 'Take to Delaware and New York City!' Then I'm going to New York and then to New Jersey. Sunday I come back here and go do the Count Basie thing at that library. Then we rehearse Sunday night and Monday. Monday night and Tuesday night is the Gershwin thing." She sighs. "After that, I forget."

She suddenly recalls another Basie story: "I remember one time we were on the bus with Basie's band, and Billy Eckstine and the guy who worked for him were always playing jokes, pranks. Basie had been out that night and when he got on the bus, he went to sleep. Well, the guys—they had planned this—tied Basie up with these big link chains. They had chains going all around his feet and his neck. They just left him, and he slept all night like that. When he woke up and saw what had happened, he said 'Damn.' Boy, what fun we had on that bus!"

Sarah Vaughan gets up from the bed and wanders over to the window. The fog obscuring the Valley has lifted, and she points out the lights of a nearby community. She thinks out loud about her career—a career she had always wanted, but hadn't really planned.

"I've been singing all my life and I've never really thought about anything else since that amateur hour. But I'm the same way now that I was when I was 18. I don't go for that star stuff." From her window vantage point, Sarah points out and up. "All the stars are in heaven."

db

# M I C H A L

## *stranger in a*

*Electric violinist Michal Urbaniak polished his chops all over Europe before arriving Stateside with his wife, vocalist Urszula Dudziak. They narrowly avoided entrapment in their native Poland recently, and have put their inhospitable Big Apple welcome of '74 behind them, as Urbaniak continues in his quest for the freedom to do everything.*

by Lee Jeske

**"S**HE WAS READY TO LEAVE ME—TO GO HOME, NOT TO Warsaw, but to the little town where her parents live. She said, 'Take me to my parents.'

"I was shaking her. I was physically shaking her, saying, 'Don't do it to me.' Shaking her. We had problems. She stood on the street and said, 'You are crazy. Nothing is happening, nothing will happen. You are stupid. You are a dreamer.'"

Michal Urbaniak sits on the floor of his cluttered New York City apartment, shoulder-length hair dripping from a recent shower, remembering his first few weeks as a Polish immigrant in this country. His wife, vocalist Urszula Dudziak, is slicing tomatoes and laughing about her reaction to New York in 1974.

"We were living in a hotel on 31st Street and 5th Avenue," recalls Urbaniak. "In the first few weeks we had seen so many bad things—I had never seen anything like this in my life and haven't seen anything like it since. One morning, at the place where I'd go to buy the newspaper, somebody got shot. Our car was stolen. Then somebody went to our hotel and stole about two pounds worth of gold—10 years worth of savings. And another day, after about two months here, somebody came to our room and left only my violin. They took all our clothes, tapes, everything. So we cried. And that was our welcome to the U.S."

Urszula Dudziak thought her husband was mad. He had told her about the United States; after all, he had been here in 1962. He told her about the limousines he rode in, about the tuxedos he wore, about the red carpets he trod. He told her about being on a receiving line at the White House, meeting Secretary of State Dean Rusk, shaking his hand and forgetting his phonetically learned remarks. He reverted to a song title he knew and greeted Mr. Rusk by saying, "Hi-Fly." After all, it sounded similar and his only English consisted of song titles and "Please, one frankfurter." Everybody laughed.

Michal told his wife about listening to Miles Davis at the Blackhawk in San Francisco, about listening to John Coltrane and Dinah Washington at Birdland, about hearing Sonny Rollins in Chicago, and about performing at the Newport Jazz Festival on the same bill as Duke Ellington, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Thelonious Monk. He told her about the record stores brimming with jazz albums and about not having to pay for any of them.

In short, he told her about the America he had seen in 1962, when, as a 19-year-old tenor saxophonist, he was part of a

hard-bop band called the Wreckers, which was invited by the U.S. State Department to make a summer tour. Everything, even the LPs, were paid for by the U.S. Government. And none of it surprised the 19-year-old. "It just confirmed my feeling of America," says Urbaniak.

Michal Urbaniak was born in Warsaw on January 22, 1943. At the age of six, he says, he was hooked on music. "Nobody could take me away from the radio to play with other children. My favorite music was accordion music—I would turn on our old radio at 12 o'clock for *Accordion Hour*. A friend of my mother, who happened to be a music teacher, said, 'You should give him some music lessons.'"

A musical education is taken quite seriously in Europe, particularly in the Slavic countries. Michal was enrolled in a school that gave him equal doses of general and musical education, in preparation for the Warsaw Conservatory. "I was really treating the violin seriously. As a 14-year-old kid, I was playing with a symphony orchestra as a soloist. I had a scholarship to go to Moscow and so on and so on."

What came in the way of Michal Urbaniak's pursuit of a career as a classical violinist was the Voice of America—specifically, Willis Conover's nightly broadcast of an hour of jazz. "When I first heard it, as a teenager," remembers Urbaniak, "it turned my life around. It shocked me. I was actually crying after I heard Louis Armstrong."

"I wanted to play, but I wanted to keep my classical music intact and didn't want to touch the violin for jazz. So I bought a guitar, but that wasn't fast enough. A friend of mine told me about a student club that had a band and instruments and, if you joined, they lent you an instrument. So I got a soprano and six weeks later I was playing in a dixieland band called Tiger Rag. It was the most popular jazz band in Lodz."

"I was playing soprano, not clarinet; I was the fourth person in the horn section. I was, harmonically, very developed and I started to play 'wrong notes'—dissonant notes. I started to expand the harmonies and, quickly, the club where I belonged moved me up from their dixieland group to their swing group. My mother even bought me a tenor. One day, when we were rehearsing for a festival, somebody came to me and said, 'Look, it doesn't sound right. The tenor player with the modern combo is much more of a swing player and you're a much more modern player, so I'd rather you'd switch places.' In a half-a-year, I was playing bebop in the modern combo. I was going through the whole evolution of jazz, while still studying classical violin. I went step-by-step through a whole jazz education, but what made it and stamped it was Horace Silver. And I think he is my biggest influence until today."

"I was playing tenor saxophone and everybody was raving—it was such a success—and I spent a lot of time with it. I fell in love; it's like love, you know. Then Zbigniew Namyslowski came to town, who was my idol. At that time he played alto, trumpet, and trombone. He was the hard-bop player in Poland. I was about 17 and I jammed with Namyslowski and he said, 'You sound good. If you come to Warsaw you can play with my band. I'm just starting a band called the Jazz Rockers.' That was the first funk band in Europe."

"I went to Warsaw and a few weeks later another Polish

# URBANIAK

*strange land*



ANDY FREEBERG

musician, who was in a band called the Wreckers, came to listen to us and said, 'Man, my trumpet player and tenor player are leaving. I need a lead section. Are you guys interested?' The Wreckers were the top group in Poland. Namyslowski and I both said yes and, after only a few weeks back in Warsaw, I was with the top group and going on a two-month tour of the States. Because of my music and certain things in my personality, I felt in a way like 'An American in Poland.' It was a dream come true."

After their summer tour of the States, the Wreckers returned intact, despite a scholarship offer from the Berklee School of Music. Michal wanted to take it and stay, but he didn't want to do it alone, and the rest of the band was anxious to return. But, he says, that was the start of his "American dream."

Urbaniak was voted the best young jazz musician in Poland and, for the next few years, would continue to be a hard-bopping tenor saxophonist by night and a classical violin student by day. "I didn't play one slur or slide on the violin; violin was purely for classical activities. My dream was to do

a concert playing violin with a string quartet in the first half and tenor with a jazz quartet in the second part. I hated all the jazz violin I heard—with all my heart. To me at that time, jazz started from Horace Silver. Swing was too corny. When I heard Stephane Grappelli I was laughing—too sweet."

After awhile, the Wreckers broke up and Urbaniak gave up his violin studies. He says he was working so much as a reed player that he didn't have time for a string instrument. In 1964 he toured Scandinavia in a band that featured a Billie Holiday-influenced vocalist, Urszula Dudziak. "She was singing my favorite Dinah Washington things, and I was backing her up, sounding like Ben Webster. We met and fell in love, as simple as it is."

The two worked for a time with Krzysztof Komeda, touring Europe. Michal was also doing his share of film scoring and arranging and "making a very good living." In 1965 he started his first band, which would feature a set of hard-bop, influenced by John Coltrane, and a set of such standards as Goody-Goody sung by Urszula.

**T**HINGS SOUND AWFULLY ROSY UP TO THIS POINT, BUT THERE were to be several events that would change the course of Urbaniak's career and life. During a trip to Switzerland, things fell apart. "We didn't have any more gigs," he says, "and we had a robbery—they stole our car and everything. We had to stay in Switzerland and we had to support ourselves. I went to a few restaurants to get something going, to get some money. I found a German trio that was looking for a violin player to play some gypsy music. I took it. And then I realized that by not playing violin I was hurting myself, because I'd studied it for 14 years.

"Around that time, also, I heard Stuff Smith in Copenhagen. That was the turning point, because I found out that a violin can have guts, be not too sweet and still be expressive. That was the feel I wanted for jazz. I had never heard Stuff Smith before I saw him, and I flipped. He's responsible for me playing jazz on the violin.

"I was still mainly playing jazz on the saxophone, but I started coloring my sets with some violin. And then I started opening up to Polish folk music, free jazz, classical music, everything. That's when the fusion idea started. My American dream was still very much in the center of my mind. I only wanted to prove myself in the States."

The other important element in his life in the mid-to-late '60s was the fact that Michal Urbaniak became a drunk, something he decides to talk about only after a quick con-

#### MICHAL URBANIAK'S EQUIPMENT

Michal Urbaniak plays an electric five-string violin, custom-built to his own specifications: "My violin is basically a viola the size of a violin, with a violin top string. The fifth string gives me the opportunity of going low, and I love the low register."

sultation with Urszula in Polish. "I was playing more and more violin because I couldn't blow my saxophone," he says. "I couldn't cope with life. All my friends were drunks too, but they were strong drunks—they could drink and play and do something. I couldn't. Everybody said, 'He's finished.'"

"I had to make a life decision—either/or. I was living in Scandinavia and I decided to go back to Poland. I was sick for nine months—taking tranquilizers and going for tests. I had heart problems, liver problems. Urszula and I had got married in 1967, and I don't even remember the marriage, that's how bad I was. The problem was so bad that the last three hangovers I had, I spent in the hospital. When I got back to Poland I said, 'No more drinking.'"

#### **I**N 1969 MICHAL URBANIAK TOOK HIS CAREER FIRMLY IN HAND.

Completely dried out, he formed a quartet, made a deal with a club, and set out to make his "American dream" a reality. "Every day we rehearsed and every night we played. We played for six nights a week for nine months. Adam



ANDY FREIBERG

Makowicz was the pianist and Urszula sang. Sometimes we had 20 people, sometimes we had 50. And what with radio, recordings and everything, we could support ourselves. After a few months we started sounding so good. We played some free jazz, we played some latin stuff where Urszula would scat—that's where her experiments started—we did rock-oriented rhythms, everything. Our group was called Constellation and we had a rule in the band—we'd never set up what we would play. We could start with *Mack The Knife* and if somebody felt, "To hell with this, let's break it," he'd stop and do something else, but from then on he was responsible for the next part of the music. He's the leader and we're following. Then Adam would start playing Tatum and we'd all jump to the ceiling. It was one of the most interesting groups you could have."

Constellation represented Poland in a 1971 competition at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where Urbaniak won the Grand Prix as best soloist. The prize? A scholarship to Berklee with expenses paid. "Once again in my life, I had a scholarship to Berklee," says Urbaniak. "But in order to reward the band, which had been working so long with me, I said, 'Wait a minute. I can't go and leave you guys like this. Let's take advantage of this and work in Europe for a few years and try to fulfill everybody's career.'"

The group based itself in West Germany and quickly became one of the most in-demand units in Europe. Finally, in 1974 Urbaniak, against the advice of his friends and manager, against the wishes of his wife, against all odds, emigrated to the United States with a European reputation behind him and an album on German CBS under his arm, in pursuit, like so many millions before him, of an "American dream."

"We had the scholarship to Berklee and the free airfare," says Urbaniak, "so we got student visas. Basically I had all the enthusiasm in the world and all the optimism. The biggest problem was what to do with Berklee, because of our student visas. I didn't want to go to school. I didn't even want to go to Boston. I called Berklee and I said, 'I'm sorry, I've got the flu.' In the meantime, I was talking to Columbia about our career here."

There were no tuxedos, no limousines, no red carpets—and there was nobody at Columbia ready to make quick promises. "At one stage the only money we had was reimbursement from small claims court for a leather jacket of mine that was destroyed—\$400. But the next day John Hammond called and said he's buying *Newborn Light* and that Columbia decided to go ahead with fusion."

CBS is not a bad outfit to have on your side—they brought over the entire Polish band to tour the States and hired lawyers to take care of the immigration problems. "It was like a dream. It was like a dream come true 100 percent. I was telling Urszula, 'You see, you see.'"

American audiences took to the Polish firebrand. Urbaniak's violin playing is sizzling and impassioned. He has a forward, forceful attack forged in a romantic, classical fire. Though playing electronic music, Urbaniak's band was always a notch above the standard. And when he had a chance to prove himself at a Newport/New York jam session that included Charles Mingus, Charlie Byrd, Joe Farrell, and Howard McGhee, the newcomer from Poland displayed a lusty exuberance and impressive sense of swing.

After three albums for Columbia and after building a sizable audience, Urbaniak "messed up. The dreamer took over. I never really realized the reality of

what was happening in my career—the cold facts and figures. I thought that all companies were going to be as good as Columbia. I said, 'If I'm so successful with Columbia, I will be more successful someplace else, because Columbia has too many artists.' I got a promise from a president at another company and I thought it would be the same. It wasn't. I left Columbia, and started to accommodate record companies. I said, 'Well, we'll do more commercial music.' I alienated most of the critics and some of my fans. I didn't go anywhere, but all the time I was working on my music and violin playing, staying alive, above water, by doing this and trying that. Urszula got a contract and we had a hit with her, but then we had our first child and that took up a lot of time."

Michal Urbaniak and Urszula Dudziak have become journeymen—recording for a variety of labels, among them Motown, Arista, Inner City, and MPS. It has also given Urbaniak a chance to reinvestigate his roots—he's recorded two albums of standards for JAM Records, has appeared with an ensemble called the New York Four—Buster Williams, Kenny Barron, and Roy Haynes—and, most recently, formed a duo with guitarist Larry Coryell. They both still, however, are very much involved with fusion, a musical form that Urbaniak feels has been cheapened by amateurish imitations by inexperienced players.

"Now," says Urbaniak, "I'm in the best situation in the world. I'm free to do everything. A record deal ties up your life. A record takes a half-year to negotiate, a half-year to record, and a half-year to see how the record does. And you've lost one-and-a-half years of your life doing nothing. And if you don't have a hit, you haven't accomplished anything."

"Now, I'll record the album myself and then try to sell it to a record company. Lately I've been spending so much time on my violin—practicing my attack, the shape of the note. I want to have all my saxophone experience transferred to the violin. Once I have it 100 percent, I'll know that I've got what I want. And I'm very close to it. I can be very expressive on violin. I want to make the violin sing like Ben Webster. That's my goal."

**A**T THE TIME WE SPEAK, MICHAL AND URSZULA ARE PLANNING to leave for a two-month tour of Western Europe, culminating with a number of duet concerts in Paris with Larry Coryell. It's nine years since either of them have been back to Poland; although they both still hold Polish passports, neither of them is in a rush to return. They are afraid that something could happen to the new-found freedom in their homeland. Naturally, this is several weeks before the im-

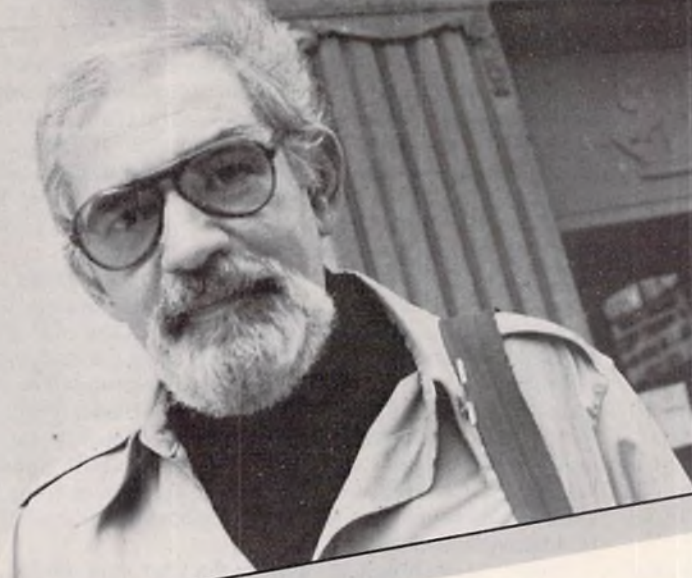
position of martial law. After he returns from Europe, Michal tells me that he considered making a trip back to Poland during a break in their tour—he decided against it—and three days later martial law was imposed. "If I went there," he says sadly, "I'd still be there. Now you know why I didn't even go back for my mother's funeral. I'd like to do some kind of tribute, but I don't know what."

"My life's goal," he says proudly, "was to get to America and to play in the Village Vanguard. I went beyond this—I played the Village Vanguard, I had a deal with Columbia, I did it all. And I lost myself, I didn't know what I wanted, really. Now I know what I want. I want to play my music, have and raise the kids, and play only what I feel, not what I have to, should do, or could do."

"You remember that interview last year in *down beat* [Dec. '81] with Jaco Pastorius when he said, 'The sound is in my hands.'? Well with me, it's all in my head and all in my heart." **db**

#### MICHAL URBANIAK SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

JAM AT SANDY'S—JAM 500Y  
MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND JAZZ QUARTET—JAM 001  
DAYBREAK—Pausa 7114  
SERENADE IN THE CITY—Motown M7 944R1  
ECSTASY—Marlin TK 2221  
FUTURE TALK (w/ Urszula Dudziak)—Inner City 1066  
MIDNIGHT RAIN—Arista 4132  
TRIBUTE TO KOMEDA—MPS 0698  
HERITAGE—MPS 68-182  
SMILES AHEAD—MPS 68165  
URBANIAK—Inner City 1036  
BODY ENGLISH—Arista AL 4086  
URSZULA (w/ Urszula Dudziak)—Arista 4065  
FUNK FACTORY—Atco SD 36116  
FUSION III—Columbia PC 33542  
ATMA—Columbia KC 33184  
FUSION—Columbia KC 32852  
NEWBORN LIGHT (w/ Urszula Dudziak)—Columbia KC 32902  
INACTIN—Intercourt 28784-7U  
NEW VIOLIN SUMMIT (w/ Jean-Luc Ponty, Sugar-cane Harris)—MPS 33 21285-8  
PARATYPHUS B—Intercourt 28771-4U  
CONSTELLATION IN CONCERT—Muza SXL 1010  
URBANIAK'S ORCHESTRA—Atlas ARLP 101



# WILLIAM RUSSO

BY JON BALLERAS

**I**t might seem that composer William Russo has done just about all worth doing. His credits include two symphonies, six operas, four cantatas, three concertos, four ballets, several film scores and plays, plus an impressive collection of recordings which run the gamut from big band jazz to Third Stream pieces to best selling "populist" compositions fusing blues band and orchestra, and two books on jazz composition and orchestration. First coming to notice as a composer/arranger and sometimes trombonist with Stan Kenton's orchestra in the early '50s, Russo's crossed over more genres than several musicians might in their collective lifetimes. One might think that he could easily rest on his past achievements.

Hardly. In a 1965 db interview conducted while Russo was recording with the London Jazz Orchestra, he said directly that his purpose in life was "to write some music that has value, and to teach." In talking with Russo recently, it's evident that his past and present musical activities reflect his continued fidelity to these goals.

Sitting in a living room which is

crammed, not unpredictably, with books and scores and dominated by a grand piano, Russo reflects on his variegated musical experience, recalling his early studies with Lennie Tristano. "Tristano was a great teacher," says Russo, "because of his emphasis on ear, feeling, and knowledge—all together. He really wanted you to hear. He got you to understand Lester Young by having you sing along with his solos. He taught you to construct your own solos by writing them out. You had to write a solo that was a part of you; yet you had to shape it and change it. Tristano was the first jazz teacher in the real sense, the first person to organize the harmonic vocabulary of jazz. He made us pay attention to Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, Louis Armstrong, and Charlie Christian—also to Bird and Dizzy. The other part of Tristano's greatness was his scope. He once said that you would play better after you had read *War And Peace*. He encouraged us to read, to learn about the world, to enlarge ourselves."

It's impossible to understand Russo's thought and feeling about music without appreciating the importance which he places upon the activity of musical composition. "Arranging never interested me that much," Russo explains, "because I didn't like being limited to using other people's materials. I was drawn toward melody, even though people think of me as brilliant in my sounds and stuff. But that part doesn't interest me—it never has, actually. I'm

not even interested in chords at this point. And I know I was drawn magnetically toward composing. Perhaps it had something to do with Woody Herman's band, that wonderful band Ralph Burns wrote for in the '40s. I heard those pieces and thought 'God, if I could only do something like that!' and I was able to do it. When I was 16 or 17, I wrote two pieces for Lionel Hampton's band. There I was going to the Pershing Ballroom in Chicago, hearing Hampton's knockout big band playing my pieces. That was it. I was hypnotized. When a young composer actually hears his piece played, and played well, it's compelling. So I suppose I became a composer because I heard my music played very early in my life. I couldn't stop doing it."

During his 21st year Russo joined Stan Kenton's orchestra. He stayed with the aggregation for five years and now is quick to observe that the lessons he learned during that time were not exclusively musical. "Most of all," Russo stresses, "I learned noblesse oblige, that is, the responsibility of a leader to his group, to the audience, and to the music. Stan Kenton was a brave, courageous man. He wasn't self-indulgent. He'd be the first person to give up his reservations or his ticket to someone else. He cared for the men in his orchestra, helped them solve their problems, advised them, lent them money and didn't ask for it back. He helped them build reputations and careers. He was open and generous with his time, and he was large-minded. He didn't carry grudges. There was nothing small about him. He was an admirable person.

"As a composer working with him, it was good to have so many deadlines, to have to write on demand. Kenton might ask, say, for a piece for Buddy Childers by next Tuesday. It was also good to write for musicians who had such considerable talents and, on occasion, such virtuosity. It was also an incredible gift to have so many of my pieces recorded so early in my career. The down side of that was that a lot of people still know me primarily from the writing I did during that time—and there have been considerable changes in my outlook since then. It's partly because Stan kept those pieces in recorded circulation, and parts and scores were available to groups around the world."

After leaving the Kenton band, Russo devoted his efforts to composing in a wide variety of genres for diverse media. His *Symphony No. 2* was conducted by Leonard Bernstein and performed by the New York Philharmonic with Maynard Ferguson as featured trumpet soloist. Yehudi Menuhin commissioned and performed Russo's *The English Concerto* for violin and jazz orchestra. During this period Russo also wrote two urbane, humanistic texts on composition (*The Jazz Composer* and the encyclopedic *Jazz Composition And Orchestration*, both published by the University of Chicago Press).

Perhaps it was the sense of noblesse oblige that he absorbed from Stan Kenton that drew Russo into teaching at Chicago's Columbia College. Perhaps no band, orchestra, or theater company could be catholic enough to satisfy this composer's eclectic, evolving tastes. Or perhaps, as Russo himself explains, "If you've been given a lot and you have the ability to communicate some of it, you owe it to the people who taught you and the people who want to learn."

Russo's work at Columbia further broadened his diversity of musical activities. He recalls, "I got interested in vocal music and formed a vocal company. Then the Chicago Jazz Ensemble

and the vocal company started performing together. I wrote a rock cantata called *The Civil War* about the war between the states and Martin Luther King and John and Robert Kennedy. The whole thing grew enormously."

During this time Russo also wrote the immensely popular *Three Pieces For Blues Band And Orchestra*. Conducted by Seiji Ozawa and featuring the Siegel-Schwall Band, the work was premiered by the Chicago Symphony, then played by the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and the San Francisco Symphony. Still viable, the piece drew record crowds when performed in

### WILLIAM RUSSO SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*THE WORLD OF ALCINA*—Atlantic 1241  
*AN IMAGE*—Verve MG V-8286  
*SCHOOL OF REBELLION*—Roulette SR 52045  
*SEVEN DEADLY SINS*—Roulette Birdland R 52063  
*RUSSO IN LONDON*—E.M.I. SCX 3478  
*STONEHENGE*—E.M.I. 33SX 1758  
*THREE PIECES FOR BLUES BAND AND ORCHESTRA*—Deutsche Grammophon 2530 309  
*STREET MUSIC*—Deutsche Grammophon 2530 788

Chicago's Grant Park last summer. Operas, rock and otherwise, followed, including *Aesop's Fables*, *Isabella's Fortune*, *Pedrolino's Revenge*, *The Island*, and *A General Opera*.

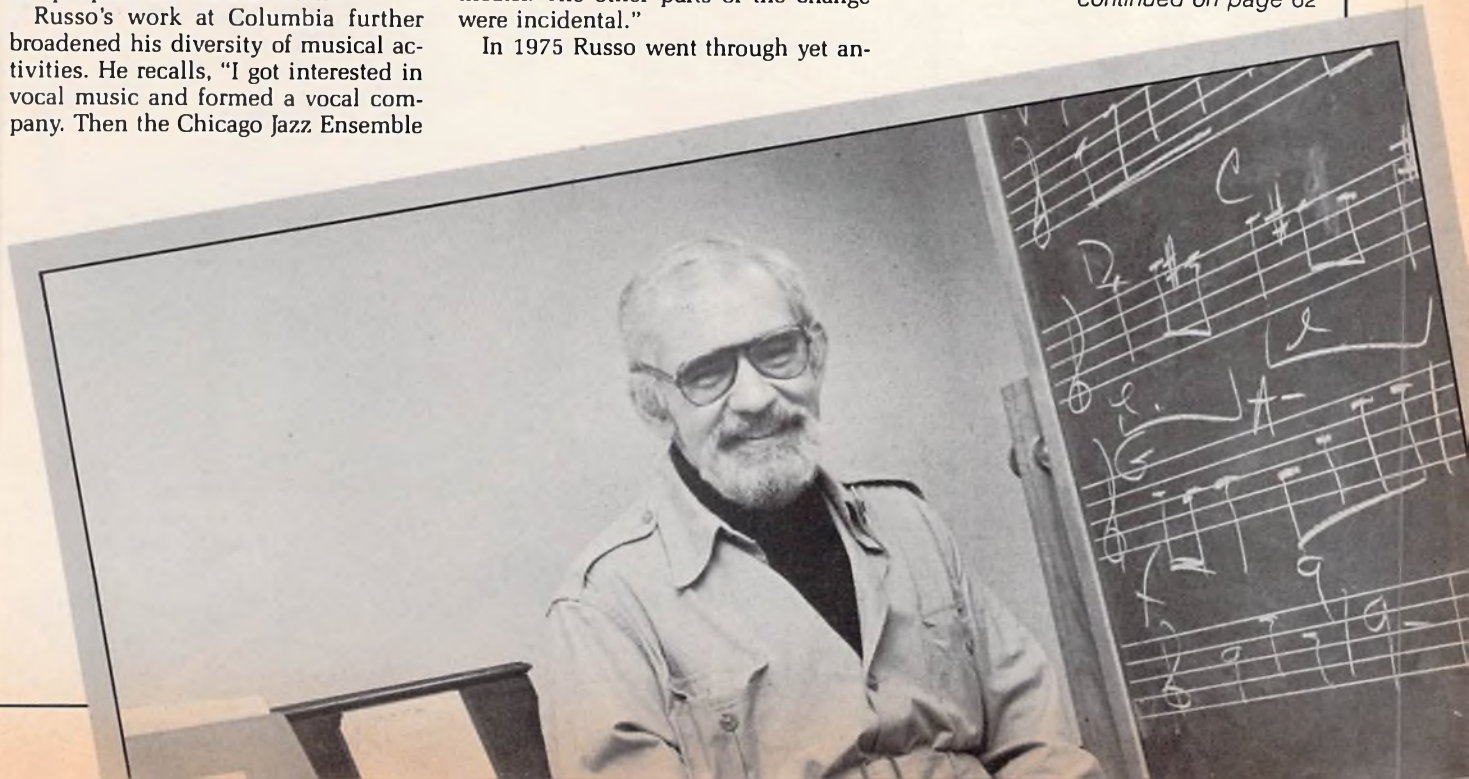
What common denominator shapes Russo's diverse musical activities? Russo traces the threads of his development quite simply: "I came to realize the beauty of the human voice," he says, "then I came to realize the beauty of theater and the ability of both to humanize music, to direct it outward, to make it available. I went from instrumental music into singing, to singing in the theater. The other parts of the change were incidental."

In 1975 Russo went through yet an-

other series of congruent musical changes. Temporarily stepping down from Columbia's music program, he became composer-in-residence for the City and County of San Francisco. During the next several years he worked on film assignments in London, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and formed an opera company in New York. Meanwhile, he worked with Corky Siegel on a companion composition to *Three Pieces For Blues Band*. Titled *Street Music, A Blues Concerto*, the work received the coveted French Grand Prix du Disque. Russo later wrote for Jack Elliot's 85-piece New American Orchestra on the West Coast. He comments, "It was dreamlike to be asked to write for all those studio players, all wonderful musicians who give up their time to rehearse with this orchestra for peanuts. All those incredibly well-trained musicians who brought themselves into a symphony orchestra dedicated to Third Stream works, works like I write."

What then, after seeming perfection? Bearing in mind Russo's dual purposes of composing and teaching, his 1979 return to Columbia to serve as director of the music program seems a natural outgrowth of his priorities and values. His goals for the music program seem in line with the pragmatic demands students are making on education. Russo observes that "music education today has to address itself to the problem of forming a musician who knows all idioms. It's no longer possible to play jazz or classical music only. Classical musicians find themselves doing recording dates where they're expected to play in the spirit of an Ellington sax section. That's the first thing, to develop in the composer or performer a notion

*continued on page 62*



# RECORD REVIEWS

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

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

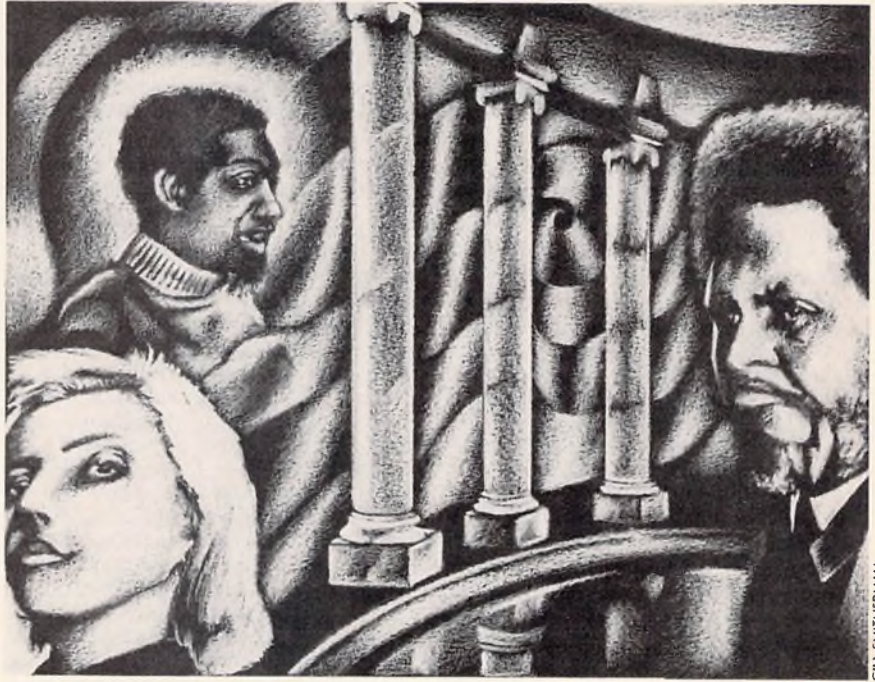
**AMARCORD NINO ROTA**—Hannibal HNBL 9301: *AMARCORD*; *INTERLUDE FROM JULIET OF THE SPIRITS*; 8½; *THEMES FROM LA DOLCE VITA AND JULIET OF THE SPIRITS*; *JULIET OF THE SPIRITS*; *LA DOLCE VITA SUITE*; *SATYRICON*; *ROMA*; *MEDLEY (THE WHITE SHEIK, I VITELLONI, IL BIDONE, THE NIGHTS OF CABIRIA)*; *LA STRADA*.

**Personnel:** Jaki Byard, piano (cuts 1, 10); Dave Samuels, vibes (2, 4); Bill Frisell, guitars (5); Steve Lacy, soprano sax, gong (8); Carla Bley, organ, glockenspiel (3); Michael Mantler, trumpet (3); Gary Valente, trombone (3); Earl McIntyre, tuba (3); Gary Windo, tenor saxophone (3); Courtenay Winter, woodwinds (3); Joe Daley, euphonium (3); Arturo O'Farrill, piano (3); Steve Swallow, bass (3); D. Sharpe, drums (3); Sharon Freeman, french horns, piano (6a, b, c, 7); Francis Haynes, steel drums (6a, c); Muhal Richard Abrams, arranger, conductor (6b); Claudio Roditi, trumpet (6b); Emmet McDonald, trombone (6b); Henry Threadgill, flute (6b); Bobby Eldridge, baritone saxophone, clarinet (6b); Jay Hoggard, vibes (6b); Amina Claudine Myers, piano (6b); Fred Hopkins, bass (6b); Warren Smith, drums (6b); Michael Sahl, keyboards (6d); Chris Stein, guitar (6d); Deborah Harry, vocal (6d); Charles Rocket, accordion, bell (6d); Lenny Ferrari, drums (6d); David Amram, Jerry Dodgion, flute (7); Victor Venegas, bass (7); Steve Berrios, Ray Mantilla, percussion (7); William Fischer, arranger, conductor (9); Wynton Marsalis, trumpet (9); George Adams, tenor saxophone (9); Branford Marsalis, woodwinds (9); Kenny Barron, piano (9); Ron Carter, bass (9); Wilbert Fletcher, drums (9).

★★★★★

A gay and carefree parade of images, tunes, and unforgettable stills, with a motley cast of two score and more, *Amarcord* Nino Rota unfolds with much the same moody enthusiasm and kaleidoscopic imagination as the Fellini films whose composer it honors. Nino Rota, whose fine Italian hand deftly brushed and lit each of Federico Fellini's chiaroscuro films over 29 years (he died while scoring *City Of Women* in 1979) with gossamer melodies and a pastel Mediterranean levity, receives due praise here from a wide array of modern American jazzfolk who felt a kinship with his blithe spirit and exacting art. From the succulent, summery shot of Sandra Milo that lights the cover, through the thoroughgoing notes, the airy but precise production, the handpicked artists, and ordered sequence of tunes, Hal Willner has produced a worthy labor of love.

Framing the album are two jaunty yet misty piano solos by the ineffable Jaki Byard,



GILL SMITHERMAN

and the keynote is an 11-minute suite from 8½ by Carla Bley's irrepressible tetet, with appearances from Mike Mantler, Gary Windo, Joe Daley, and Gary Valente as vivid as Fellini's unforgettable walk-ons, including a madly swirling, final cosmic parade.

There are also two short but tenderly evocative vibes solos from *Juliet Of The Spirits* by Dave Samuels, and a multi-guitar collage from the same film in Bill Frisell's solo, which communicate the film's heroine Giulietta Masina's self-doubt and courage.

Side two opens with a *Dolce Vita Suite* that features the french horn of Sharon Freeman, Muhal Richard Abrams' tetet, and the album's only vocal—a wordless paean to a carousel by Rota-addict Deborah Harry of Blondie, in a steamy setting with accordion and hi-hat that conjures up *Trastevere trattorias* (sidewalk restaurants in a funky section of Rome) after midnight. Exotic reeds and percussion spice Amram's *Satyricon*—sandblasted, primitive, and rough-cut as that unusual Fellini flick. Horn rips herald soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy's *Roma*, less evocative of the documentary than exploratory of the saxophonist's own filtered experiences in *The Eternal City*. A segue to lean bop sextet leans into William Fischer's exquisitely underwritten variants of four black-and-white film classics (1952-57), appropriately warm-blooded and straightahead. *Cabiria's* Roman honky-tonk makes it to Chicago.

Fade to Jaki Byard, tender and crestfallen yet noble and tough, kicking up the sand as he saunters down the lonely beach with Giulietta Masina in *La Strada*. Full circle, full set, great tribute. —fred bouchard

## WYNTON MARSALIS

**WYNTON MARSALIS**—Columbia FC 37574: *FATHER TIME; I'LL BE THERE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT; RJ; HESITATION; SISTER CHERYL; WHO CAN I TURN TO (WHEN NOBODY NEEDS ME); TWILIGHT*.

**Personnel:** Marsalis, trumpet; Branford Marsalis, tenor, soprano saxophone; Charles Fambrough (cut 7), Clarence Seay (1, 2), Ron Carter (3-6), bass; Kenny Kirkland (1, 2, 7), Herbie Hancock (3, 5, 6), piano; Jeff Watts (1, 2, 7), Tony Williams (3-6), drums.

★★★★★

Wynton Marsalis is the 20-year-old trumpeter from New Orleans. Although a classical music prodigy who has studied at Juilliard and performed with the New Orleans Philharmonic, Wynton is first and foremost an admirer of jazz; the horn of Clifford Brown speaks to him in ways Bach concertos do not. His formal studies in abeyance, he joined Art Blakey's traveling Jazz Messengers school, learning firsthand about the music's special fire and drive, its history, and its spiritual link to his Afro-American heritage. Wynton's playing, his articulation of a growing understanding of jazz, has been turning heads for about two years now.

Marsalis' eagerly awaited debut recording finds him in fine form and in fine company. He digs in on *Father Time*; his sure-toned trumpet comments with authority while following the tune's metrical shifts. Wynton's cannily shaped phrases (reference point: Miles Davis) are buoyed by 21-year-



old brother Branford's saxophone—when the older Marsalis blows we hear the influence of Wayne Shorter. Wynton produces a dark mood on *Twilight*, his mix of long tones and spurts of notes proceeding on top of ominous repeating bass and restless cymbals. Agitated solos by Branford and pianist Kenny Kirkland add to the piece's somber mystery. Herbie Hancock's ballad *I'll Be There* is less gripping; the trumpet seems irresolute and only the wafting soprano begins to explain its title. On these tracks pianist Kirkland, drummer Jeff Watts, and alternately Charles Fambrough or Clarence Seay on bass—all impressive young players—aid and abet the brothers with active concern.

Venerable Miles alumni Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams (with whom Wynton toured last year) are on hand for several numbers. Branford and Wynton aren't the least bit intimidated, playing with the same poise they display with the other musicians. Williams' *Sister Cheryl* is seven minutes of bittersweet rapture—its highlight an elating Hancock spot. The Crescent City pair exchange exciting choruses on *Hesitation* as Carter and Williams maintain a strong but secondary presence. The tender *Who Can I Turn To* belongs to the trumpeter; his playing has warmth and dignity, with lyricism reminiscent of Fats Navarro and Brownie. Carter's *RJ*, a scalar twister, has the brothers giving stellar approximations of Davis and Shorter, but the original (found on Davis' *ESP*, with Ron, et al.) still shines brighter. Stronger personal voices will come. All told, Wynton Marsalis is a fine record.

—frank-john hadley

## OLD AND NEW DREAMS

**PLAYING**—ECM-1-1205: *HAPPY HOUSE*; *MOPPI*; *NEW DREAM*; *RUSHOUR*; *BROKEN SHADOWS*; *PLAYING*.

**Personnel:** Don Cherry, trumpet, piano; Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone, musette; Charlie Haden, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## DEWEY REDMAN

**SOUNDSIGNS**—Galaxy 5130: *PIECE FOR TENOR AND TWO BASSES*; *HALF NELSON*; *ADESSO LO SAI*; *COME EARTH*.

**Personnel:** Redman, tenor saxophone, harp (cut 4); Charlie Haden (1, 4), Mark Helias, bass; Fred Simmons, piano (2, 3); Eddie Moore, drums (2, 3), saw, cymbals (4).

★ ★ ★ ½

Old And New Dreams' latest album presents the unit laying down yeasty, unadulterated jazz which packs more oomph than previous studio dates (one each for Black Saint and ECM). Recorded live in Austria during June 1980, *Playing's* 55 minutes capture the band in creative ferment. Ornette Coleman casts the expected shadow (half the compositions are his, and Redman's *Rushour* bears strong resemblance), but there is not a hint of Music Minus One. Old And New Dreams have more than enough ideas, humor, and swing to go

around, as former accompanists Cherry, Redman, Haden, and Blackwell embody and extend the pre-electric musical concepts of the master through an alluring program of songs and improvisations closely connected to ensemble interaction.

To hear this music almost guarantees tapping the feet, tickling the brain, and vice versa. Each performance—*Broken Shadows'* dirge-inspired fantasies excepted—irresistibly cooks. Mopiti recalls African "high life" and Cherry's fascination with ethnic sounds. Introduced by the composer's chanting and piano, the exuberant selection contains a brief canon, colorful solos from the front line, and adept call-and-response cowbell during Blackwell's spot. *Broken Shadows*, a piece premiered on Coleman's *Crisis* LP (Impulse 9187), furthers the ethnic reference by featuring Redman's melismatic musette.

The trumpet tradition is puckishly and gloriously reassembled in Cherry's loose, lovely, airily spaced lines. His solo on *Happy House*, Coleman's gamboling stop-start "fugue," links a nursery rhyme paraphrase of the theme, bluesy cries, and bunches of notes twining in long lines. His ear for dynamics and unexpected contrasts shows best on *Broken Shadows*, where blasting fanfares and "naive" broken phrasing play hide and seek with the tune's mid-section parade rhythm. Dewey Redman's tenor saxophone suggests a sense of familiarity as much as displacement, while Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell, the archetypal rhythm section, bring to mind the soft clocks in Salvador Dali paintings—pliant, shapely, yet recognizable at an instant's ticking. To match the piece's changing moods, Haden's bass ranges from chiaroscuro bowing to delicate pizzicato with the drummer's responsive mallets in tow. Blackwell's tom-toms bounce like African tap dancing, keeping everyone's energy level up throughout the set.

Besides membership in Old And New Dreams, Dewey Redman has free-lanced on Jazz Composers Orchestra projects, played with Keith Jarrett's American quartet, and led record dates for BYG, Impulse, and Galaxy. *Soundsigns*, a larger survey of Redman the stylist, elaborates his preference for panoramic compositional and improvisational approaches while adding to the body of substantial music under his own name.

His recording career reveals the tenor saxophonist to be "a Redman for all seasons." His Old And New Dreams' tenor favors limber rhythmic gamesmanship of the Ornette order, with the inbuilt swagger of Texas blues—a strategy that suits the group's book well. But here the confident and symmetrical dry-toned blowing on *Half Nelson* flips hair-pin turns around the changes like an updated Don Byas, even at times gliding a seductive touch behind the beat. Whatever its context, however, Redman's playing usually offers a welcome alternative to the bell-bent roar of contemporary saxophonists who equate intensity with artistry.

*Piece For Tenor And Two Bases* illustrates Redman's interest in unusual coloristic and textural options. The track opens with tandem groaning of two arco basses (Charlie Haden and Mark Helias) which becomes interspersed with harmonic details and

gnarled double-stops passed from one string player to the other. The ruminating, somewhat mournful, Alabama-like theme that Redman intones seems calculated as incidental to the expressive basses. The non-egotistical Redman forsakes saxophone completely on the impressionistic *Come Earth*, a sound-oriented study of skidding overtones in which plucked notes (basses and harp) contrast with electronic-sounding bowed tones (basses, saw, and cymbal). Careening from folk to free with Traneish horn passages, *Adesso Lo Sai* reaffirms the leader's Jarrett affiliation: Eddie Moore's drums pertly power the ensemble ebb and flow.

Although *Come Earth* and *Adesso* last too long, *Soundsigns* stands as an invigorating example of Dewey Redman's consistent risk-taking and spirit of adventure.

—peter kostakis

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**SWING**—Planet Records P-24: *BIG BUCKS*; *RIGHT IDEA*; *SERENADE IN BLUE*; *TWEEDLEE DEE*; *CARAVAN/MIRAGE*; *LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL*; *DANCING IN THE DARK/CLOSER I GET TO YOU*; *TROCADERO BALLROOM*; *CRAZY HE CALLS ME*; *MAKE LOVE TO ME BABY*.

**Personnel:** Chuck Findley, Steve Madaio, Jerry Hey, Gary Crant, Conte Candoli, Bobby Shew, Bob Findley, Gene Goe, trumpet; Charles Loper, Lew McCreary, Dick Hyde, William Reichenbach, Ernie Carlson, trombone; Tom Scott, David Boruff, Tom Saviano, Joel Peskin, Gary Herbig, John Kelson, reeds; Dick Tee, David Benoit, Randy Waldman, piano; Neil Stubenhaus, Bob Glaub, bass; Ira Newborn, Paul Jackson, George Doering, Tim May, guitars; Danny Farangher, organ; Vic Feldman, vibes; Paulinho DeCosta, percussion; Ed Walsh, synthesizer; Charlotte Crossley, Lorraine Feather, Steve March, vocals.

★ ★ ½

**ECHOES OF AN ERA**—Elektra EL-60061: *THEM THERE EYES*; *ALL OF ME*; *I MEAN YOU*; *I LOVES YOU PORGY*; *TAKE THE A TRAIN*; *I HEAR MUSIC*; *HIGH WIRE*—*THE AERIALIST*; *ALL OF ME*; *SPRING CAN REALLY HANG YOU UP THE MOST*.

**Personnel:** Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone; Chick Corea, piano; Stanley Clarke, bass; Lenny White, drums; Chaka Khan, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

Two different albums with a single theme—contemporary performers taking on material of older periods. *Swing* is a frankly commercial venture, with plenty of zip but ultimately unconvincing. *Echoes Of An Era* is a pretty good musicians' session in which neither the material nor the artists seem at all compromised by each other.

*Swing* has about as much to do with the music of the '30s as Roy Rogers has to do with the cowboys of the Old West. It's a fake. But, of course, such a comparison is not only unfair, it's beside the point. Roy Rogers was never intended to be a real cowboy. He was a

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## RECORD REVIEWS

fantasy, and so is *Swing*. It's a gentle caricature of yesterday fashioned by performers of the '70s and '80s for their own time. Listeners who prefer the old records will have little use for this. *Swing* seeks a share of the Manhattan Transfer audience, and it seems well positioned to get it. The formula is solid. There is first a batch of new material done in a style vaguely suggestive of art deco ballrooms and air-brushed moonlight. Then a couple of romantic standards of the period, with Steve March doing Ray Eberle more or less straight in *Serenade In Blue*. Next, a pair of swing era instrumentals (Charlie Barnet's *Right Idea* and Fletcher Henderson's *Big John Special*, which is recast as *Big Bucks*) to which Lorraine Feather has put some snappy lyrics that show a flair for clever internal rhymes. And finally, for the sake of versatility, we get a couple of '50s rock & roll items that are really out of place.

Through it all there is impressive vocal musicianship, backed a band of top studio musicians including Tom Scott, who seems able to change his colors at will. There is also a slightly campy attitude running throughout that often comes when performers take on a style outside their own experience. However it may fascinate them, they rarely seem to believe in it. The music becomes more of a technical exercise than an emotional commitment. So it is with *Swing*. In the final analysis, it's a rhinestone cowboy, all polish and polyester.

In *Echoes Of An Era*, however, a few survivors of the fusion movement of the '70s get together on some older tunes in a way that seems a good deal more successful. *Them There Eyes*, *All Of Me*, and a few others are taken on their own terms. The material is only the scaffolding; the architecture is their own. It's nice to hear Freddie Hubbard playing good changes once again; he sounds superlative throughout, his best work since *Super Blue* or the North Sea concert on Pablo. Judging from Lenny White, who served as producer and wrote a brief liner note, this was a labor of love. After a decade-and-a-half of producing nothing but "perfect" performances through the mirrors of electronic fabrication, the idea of recording everything in one take is a happy novelty. Everyone, therefore, seems particularly proud of their "mistakes."

Although this is something of a triumph for the musicians involved, it is hardly exceptional to anyone familiar with even a fraction of the countless Blue Note and Prestige blowing sessions of the '50s. These were the albums on which this date was modeled, more or less, and the music on which these players cut their teeth. It's well honored.

But the album really belongs to Chaka Khan. Paying homage to no one in particular, and singing songs nearly everyone has done, she chews up the carpet in broad, soul-drenched strokes that pull out the stops. Moreover, she seems to love every minute of it. *I Mean You*, from a 1946 Coleman Hawkins date with Fats Navarro, gives her some fine vocal blends with tenor Joe Henderson. And she scats her way through *A Train* in the best Betty Roche tradition. For Chaka Khan, a fine album. For everyone, in fact.

—john mcdonough

## KENNY DREW

**FOR SURE!**—Xanadu 167: *FOR SURE!*; *MARIETTE*; *ARRIVAL*; *BLUES WAIL*; *DARK BEAUTY*; *CONTEXT*.

**Personnel:** Drew, piano; Charles McPherson, alto saxophone; Sam Noto, trumpet; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Frank Butler, drums.

★ ★ ½

## CEDAR WALTON

**EASTERN REBELLION 3**—Timeless

SJP143: *3RD STREET BLUES*; *NEVER NEVER LAND*; *INCOGNITO*; *SEVEN MINDS*; *CLOCKWISE*; *FIRM ROOTS*.

**Personnel:** Walton, piano; Curtis Fuller, trombone; Bob Berg, tenor saxophone; Sam Jones, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★ ★ ★

**THE MAESTRO**—Muse MR5244: *THE*

*MAESTRO*; *RHYTHM-A-NING*; *NOT IN LOVE*; *SABIA*; *IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD*; *BLUE MONK*; *CASTLES*; *ON THE TRAIL*.

**Personnel:** Walton, piano; Abbey Lincoln, vocals (cuts 1, 3, 5, 7); Bob Berg, tenor saxophone; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★ ★ ★

The bebop quintet deserves special commendation. For nearly 40 years it has served above and beyond the call of duty. It has never gone out of style. And its standard configuration—piano, bass, drums, and two horns—remains the preferred instrumentation in jazz. Three recent releases present variations on this classic lineup circa 1978 (*For Sure!*), 1979 (*Eastern Rebellion 3*), and 1980 (*The Maestro*).

*For Sure!* stars the expatriate pianist Kenny Drew. Before he quit America for Europe, Drew worked in the house bands of Blue Note and Riverside Records. These groups were virtual bebop factories, specializing in one-size-fits-all accompaniments. In some cases, this method was a success; in others, it resulted in assembly-line jazz. That failing mars *For Sure!* Three of Drew's sidemen—Charles McPherson, Sam Noto, and Frank Butler—reside in Xanadu's talent stable. If the reader senses Drew is working with an in-house, pick-up group, he's right. Sadly, the record sounds that way, too. All six cuts come off homogenized; nothing is terrible, but nothing is extraordinary either.

Even under these circumstances this outcome was not inevitable. Drew has plenty of tonal variety at his disposal. His playing is interesting, even though it's a bit light in the left hand. Noto's fat and forceful notes, a la Clifford Brown, come close to sounding inspired during his ad-lib on the album's title cut. As for the other players, inspiration took a hike. Butler and Leroy Vinnegar are steady and unspectacular. McPherson plays alto saxophone and catch-up throughout the album. On the passages he shares with Noto, he's constantly behind the trumpeter, giving the recording a distinctly unrehearsed flavor.

*Eastern Rebellion 3* reunites Cedar Walton with a former sidekick in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, trombonist Curtis Fuller. Their performances, Walton's compositions, and

the playing of Bob Berg, Sam Jones, and Billy Higgins make this a very pleasing effort. As Prestige's house pianist in the '60s, Walton was Drew's counterpart. Yet, this late '70s album has none of the matter-of-factness present in *For Sure!*

Part of this can be explained by Walton's playing and writing. He goes beyond bebop's traditional single-note lines and engages his left hand in all sorts of chordal maneuvers. The arrangements and compositions, four of the latter belonging to the pianist, use the band for something more than stating the melody, passing around the ad-lib hat, and then giving the theme a final once-over. For instance, Fuller and Berg trade melodic phrases on *3rd Street Blues*. Their precision and ease of execution indicate this wasn't their first encounter with the song. This familiarity extends to Jones and Higgins. Like Berg, they were members of Walton's 1979 quartet, and like Berg, they play with imagination. Higgins uses his snare drum as a solo instrument to accentuate the others' statements. Jones' tonal changes give his *Seven Minds* a rainbow of aural colors.

The jaunty sounds of Fuller's trombone also enhance the album. Fuller does not have a sad note in his horn. Whether playing the ballad *Never Never Land* or Walton's programmatic bebop paean, *Firm Roots*, the songs smile.

Another Walton quintet and reunion highlight *The Maestro*. Here, the pianist uses his 1980 quartet: Berg, Higgins, and bassist David Williams. The other instrumentalist is vocalist Abbey Lincoln, Walton's boss in the '60s.

Little can be said for this reunion. As a singer, Lincoln makes a better actress. Her pitch is indiscreet. Her readings of the lyrics are uneven. In *A Sentimental Mood* is fine, and Lincoln becomes part of the group, blending her voice with Berg's saxophone. *The Maestro*, Walton's hymn to Duke Ellington, is not so fine, as Lincoln trudges over the lyrics. In all fairness to the vocalist, Walton's words are practically unsingable. Their rhyme scheme and meter are horrendously awkward.

*The Maestro* would have been better off as a quartet album. On the Lincoln-less tracks, the four musicians give telling renditions of two Thelonious Monk numbers, *Rhythm-a-ning* and *Blue Monk*, Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Sabia*, and Ferde Grofe's *On The Trail*. But a quartet album would have been cheating. Everybody knows bebop goes better with five. —cliff radel

## AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS

**SALUTES BESSIE SMITH**—Leo Records LR 103: *WASTED LIFE BLUES; DIRTY NO-GOODER'S BLUES; JAILHOUSE BLUES; IT MAKES MY LOVE COME DOWN; THE BLUES (STRAIGHT TO YOU); AFRICAN BLUES.*  
**Personnel:** Myers, vocals, piano, organ; Cecil McBee, bass; Jimmy Lovelace, drums, bells.

★ ★ ★ ½

It is ironic that the kind of majestic emotional power that would befit a tribute to blues

singer Bessie Smith is achieved by Amina Claudine Myers not in her renditions of blues originated by Smith, but on *African Blues*, the 15-minute cry which finishes the album. Before *African Blues*, however, Myers interprets some well-known Bessie Smith material and her own traditional composition *The Blues (Straight To You)*. While no one will doubt her sincerity, Myers' tribute seems based on a general love and admiration for Smith rather than a shared background or inspiration. Myers' voice itself comes across as the wrong instrument, lacking the force or sheer guts with which Smith carved out her powerful lyrics and stately tunes, and one's impression is more of a clash of artistic personalities than a relevant updated interpretation of timeless blues.

Instrumentally, though, the salute succeeds. Myers' spirited gospel and blues-based piano, McBee's graceful bass, and Lovelace's discrete drumming provide the four Smith blues with an elastic sound, sophisticated yet respectful. It is hard to understand why Myers chose to include *The Blues (Straight to You)*, which, consisting of trite r&b lyrics cast in a traditional blues format, again only manages to remind the listener of Myers' shortcomings as a traditional blues artist, and of the towering strength of Bessie Smith's work.

But *African Blues* soon makes one forgive and forget; improvising over her own gospel roots, and with a touch of Dollar Brand's piano, Myers lets her voice meander, lift, and intensify to a flowing, almost rollicking wordless expression of pain and joy. Here Myers' voice suddenly becomes wonderfully and deeply human—a female mezzosoprano, if you will—with a cry of eternity. Bessie Smith would have understood and been moved by Myers' performance here. —Iars Gabel

## ART BLAKEY

**LIVE AT MONTREUX AND NORTHSEA**—Timeless SJP 150: *MINOR THESIS; A WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL; BIT A BITTADOSE; STAIRWAY TO THE STARS; LINWOOD.*

**Personnel:** Blakey, drums; Valerie Ponomarev, Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Bobby Watson, alto saxophone; Bill Pierce, tenor saxophone; Branford Marsalis, baritone, alto saxophone; Robin Eubanks, trombone; James Williams, piano; Kevin Eubanks, guitar; Charles Fambrough, bass; John Ramsey, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**STRAIGHT AHEAD**—Concord Jazz CJ-168: *FALLING IN LOVE WITH LOVE; MY ROMANCE; WEBB CITY; HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN; E.T.A.; THE THEME.*

**Personnel:** Blakey, drums; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Bobby Watson, alto saxophone; Bill Pierce, tenor saxophone; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

When played creatively, bebop is without doubt the most intellectually challenging and technically demanding of all forms of jazz, both past and present. But it also has its share of inherent traps, seductive lures that

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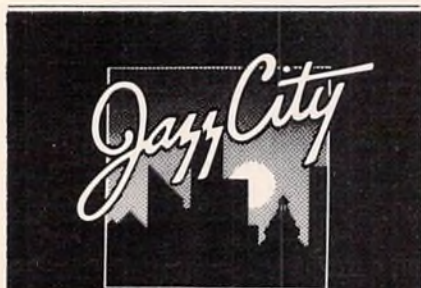
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encourage fluency at the expense of reflection, gloss at the cost of substance. Earlier stylistic approaches, while still valuing the twin luxuries of instrumental proficiency and harmonic flexibility, rarely placed as much emphasis on speed or complexity of line as did bop. And for that reason, many a possible convert to the newer medium (Ben Webster, for example) found its rigors unnecessarily excessive. Nevertheless, history has shown that for every qualified older jazzman to have successfully embraced its Circean charms, bebop has also ensnared and crippled countless younger ones of lesser ability.

But these, tellingly, have never found a comfortable berth in any of Art Blakey's many bands. An ongoing force in bebop since its earliest times, Blakey has probably done more than any other single figure in jazz to recognize, encourage, and ultimately bring to public acceptance the brightest and most formidable young improvising talents on the scene. And, of course, he is still very much in the business of doing just that. His current band is one of the best he has ever had. It is unquestionably a paragon of disciplined abandon; in both their ensemble and solo statements, each member rings not only clean and true, but impassioned and heated as well. It, like many of its predecessors, is an inspired band, one that succeeds in uniting the strong emotional forces of early jazz with the ever-tightening demands of contemporary musicianship.

A prime exemplar of this happy union is trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. He is young and creatively unbridled, but he also evinces a masterful control of his instrument and a thoroughly classic respect for structure and form. His sound—full, rich, and perfectly intoned in all registers—suggests the Fats Navarro/Clifford Brown line of development, but his harmonic and rhythmic responsiveness is unmistakably rooted in the present. Featured to excellent advantage on both albums, Marsalis promises more for the future of pure bop than any other trumpet player to have emerged within recent years. But the other Blakey bandsmen are equally deserving of praise. Though only a tad more familiar than Marsalis, each has grown remarkably since first hearing. Altoist Watson, while still retaining his admirable fire, has in the interim cultivated greater control of both his enthusiasm and his axe; tenorman Pierce seems to have come from another direction, for now he has added heat to an already precise technique; pianist Williams, never lacking in any category, is just that much more incisive; and bassist Fambrough continues to be a consistently booting force throughout.

The Jazz Messengers Big Band album on Timeless was culled from tapes recorded in July, 1980 at the Montreux and NorthSea jazz festivals, and boasts the additional virtue of more similarly striking soloists. In actuality, the Big Band is more of an extended sextet than it is an orchestra, for the charts (three originals by Watson, one by Williams, and one standard) serve almost exclusively as stepping stones for the many featured soloists. All are in top notch shape, with trumpeter Ponomarev and trombonist Eubanks be-

ing the most exceptional of those not already mentioned. The aptly titled Concord set was recorded live at San Francisco's Keystone Korner in June, 1981 and is easily on a par with the earlier, possibly more heady experience. —jack sohmer

## THE CRUSADERS

STANDING TALL—MCA 5254: *STANDING TALL; I'M SO GLAD I'M STANDING HERE TODAY; SUNSHINE IN YOUR EYES; THIS OLD WORLD'S TOO FUNKY FOR ME; LUCKENBACH, TEXAS (BACK TO THE BASICS OF LOVE); THE LONGEST NIGHT; REPULSE (I'M SO GLAD I'M STANDING HERE TODAY).*

**Personnel:** Wilton Felder, reeds, electric bass; Stix Hooper, drums, percussion; Joe Sample, acoustic, electric keyboards, synthesizer; Barry Finnerty, Larry Carlton, guitar; Marcus Miller, electric bass; Joe Cocker, vocals (cuts 2, 4).

★ ★ ½

## SPYRO GYRA

FREETIME—MCA 5238: *FREETIME; TELLURIDE; SUMMER STRUT; ELEGY FOR TRANE; PACIFIC SUNRISE; AMBER DREAM; STRING SOUP.*

**Personnel:** Jay Beckenstein, reeds; Tom Schuman, Jeremy Wall, keyboards; John Tropea, Chet Catallo, guitar; Will Lee, electric bass; Eli Konikoff, drums; Geraldo Velez, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Sample, Felder, and Hooper, over their many years together, have developed an easily recognizable sound which has remained attractive; however, the Crusaders' albums have slipped into a production rut and become all too predictable. The recipe for *Standing Tall* is spiced up somewhat with two soulful vocals by another very recognizable stylist, Joe Cocker, whose last commercial success was *You Are So Beautiful*, circa 1974, after a number of hits in the late '60s. Past performances by Randy Crawford (*Streetlife*), Bill Withers (*Soul Shadows*), and the Crusaders themselves (*Keep That Same Old Feeling*) have proven that vocals take Crusaders albums out of the jazz racks and into the pop racks—which isn't to say that popularity makes something bad. However, this push for hit records seems to have distracted the instrumental creativity of Sample and Felder, and makes one wonder whether or not these undeniable talents have simply decided to cash in after years of paying dues.

The two vocals here admittedly allow the Crusaders to temporarily sidestep their rut and expand *Standing Tall*'s musical scope, as Cocker's rasping, heartfelt rhythm & blues vocal on *This Old World's Too Funky For Me* is the most memorable cut on the album. In fact, the most outstanding performance on this record is Cocker's, as the various instrumental solos tend to be short and at times uninspired. Felder's soprano work on *Luckenbach, Texas* and the subtle Texas feel of the tune are refreshing and worth a listen, but full arrangements and "big-time" production tend to distract from other improvisational

efforts by Sample and Felder, as well as by guest guitarists (among whom is Crusader alumnus Larry Carlton). Whatever happened to the lively, energetic solos of the *Scratch* and *Free As The Wind* albums?

Spyro Gyra's *Freetime*, on the other hand, is an album of constantly changing moods and textures. Though the group creates almost as many styles as there are cuts—ranging from funk to reggae to classical to r&b—like the Crusaders the sound is definitely their own. The variation and experimentation on *Freetime* reveal the young group's potential for growth (and hopefully longevity). This is probably their best album to date.

Keyboarder Tom Schuman's composition *Pacific Sunrise* is an exemplary example of the group's variegated creativity. The longest cut on the album, it begins with airy surf-like synthesizer effects out of which grows a light and swinging 3/4 soprano melody. An abrupt transition switches the music to a funky 7/4 solo section led by Tropea's guitar and followed by Beckenstein's tenor. Then very subtly they shift into overdrive for fast 4/4 piano and synthesizer solos. The energy of the solos fades away as the listener finds himself once again enjoying the surf and quietly swinging to the 3/4 soprano head.

*Elegy For Trane*, written by co-producer Jeremy Wall, is jazz-classical (if there is such a term) simply utilizing soprano sax, acoustic piano, cello, and cymbal. Beckenstein's fine technical and tonal control, and the intense emotion expressed during this performance, exhibit him as one of the best saxophonists recording today. He proves himself on this beautiful cut, as well the entire album, to be much more than just a funk player.

*Standing Tall* is where pop-jazz has been, and hopefully the Crusaders won't be content to stay there. *Freetime* is an example of where pop-jazz is going, and of the quality it can achieve. —albert de genova

**ART PEPPER**

**ONE SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON—**

Galaxy GXY 5141: *MR. BIG FALLS HIS J.G. HAND; CLOSE TO YOU ALONE; THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU; MELOLEV; GOODBYE, AGAIN!; BRAZIL.*

**Personnel:** Pepper, alto saxophone; Stanley Cowell, piano; Howard Roberts, guitar; Cecil McBee, bass; Carl Burnett, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

**SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE VILLAGE**

**VANGUARD**—Contemporary 7644: *YOU GO TO MY HEAD; THE TRIP; CHEROKEE.*

**Personnel:** Pepper, alto saxophone; George Cables, piano; George Mraz, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In his essay for the Blue Note reissue *Early Art*, Coleman Andrews quotes Pepper: "Once you stop searching, your playing stops. You've always got to have a challenge, something that you have to stretch out to reach." Anyone who knows the course of Art Pepper's career can testify to the courage of this philosophy. For by the middle of the '50s, Pepper had developed not only a unique alto

sound, but a classic one. Well-nigh classical: he had taken the pure, vibratoless tenor tone of Lester Young and, applying it to the alto, rarified that sound into something Bach could have used. Indeed, the West Coast Pepper of the 1950s bopped through glorious arrangements of soaring homophony with breakneck bursts of tortuous counterpoint, perfecting a hard gem-like technical precision and mastering an individual language of great eloquence. What takes courage is departing from—or, rather, growing from—such perfection.

He doesn't always find it. Not that *One September Afternoon* is a failed effort. Far from it; this is excellent but simply not exceptional Art Pepper. Technically, the work throughout is impeccable. All of the music is at least pleasant, and the compositions by Pepper himself—*Mr. Big Falls His J.G. Hand* and *Melolev*—are graceful, urbane, and thoroughly interesting. Particularly effective is the subtle tension between the "old" Pepper, with clean, coruscating bop lines, and the "new," who insinuates bent notes and bunched modal riffs. *Melolev*, redolent of a

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laid-back Thelonious Monk, develops such tensions yet more subtly and exhibits the most inventive improvising on the album.

There Will Never Be Another You demonstrates Pepper's growth in that his alto no longer sounds a contrapuntal line, but a looser, throatier, rather more breathy and freer post-bop wail. The only complaint I have here is that the piano of Stanley Cowell, diamond brilliant and steely hard, too aggressively underscores these very qualities in Pepper's own playing. A similar problem threatens Brazil, in which Howard Roberts' electric guitar makes for a brilliance utterly unyielding. Pepper's characteristically bright, bright horn demands a mellow, lyrical foil. This cut typifies all that is right and wrong with One September Afternoon. Breezy, sinuous, fun, this cut, despite the compatibility problem, is technically flawless but emotionally uncommitted. It, like the rest of the album, is fine journeyman work, disappointing only because it comes from a master.

But it is the master who prevails in Saturday Night At The Village Vanguard, the last and most exciting of a trilogy recorded in performance at the venerable New York jazz club. Listen to the two ballads—Close To You Alone and Goodbye, Again!—on One September Afternoon. What you hear is remarkably pretty, especially Pepper's chaste, almost feminine treatment of Close. But how much more rewarding and revealing is the ballad that opens the Vanguard album! You Go To My Head begins straightforwardly enough—sort of. Actually, Pepper is hinting at new and invitingly risky directions from the very start. He's playing just a bit too fast for a sentimental ballad. His tone is unrelentingly bright here, sounding at times more like a soprano than an alto; its bite, its edge working against the easy, melancholy backing of drummer Elvin Jones and bassist George Mraz. They're playing a ballad; Pepper's doing something else. In fact, he's soon straying out of key and improvising in modes, bending notes in the manner of Coltrane here and there, overblow-

ing sometimes and, in spots, breathing just a little bit like Ben Webster (an intimation only, but one you would never hear in Art of the '50s). George Mraz' intelligent and almost seraphically lyrical bass provides a sweet foil to the rippling acid of Pepper's horn. Pepper's acid turns to balm in The Trip, which sets uncharacteristically mellow alto against the brittle, acerbic piano of George Cables.

A 16-minute blow through Cherokee crowns the live trilogy. It is supercharged, nearly supersonic, with Elvin Jones' percussion not so much kicking Art along as Pepper riding over him. Pepper has synthesized the best of his past mastery here with that restless stretching for something new. He freely trades between precise, light bop phrases drawn from his earlier periods and free, hard, growling, squealing riffs worthy of Pharoah Sanders. And all of this evolves—explodes, rather—against the contrasting elegance of George Cables' piano. It is true that this side is held together by the marvelously contrasting invention of the ensemble, but for his part in these 16 minutes alone, Pepper's claim to the mantle of Charlie Parker is justified. This is a major performance. —alan axelrod

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**MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS**

**MAMA AND DADDY**—Black Saint BSR 0041: FAFCA; BALU; MALIC; MAMA AND DADDY.

**Personnel:** Abrams, piano, synthesizer; Baikida Carroll, trumpet, flugelhorn; George Lewis, trombone; Wallace McMillan, alto, tenor saxophone, flute, conga drum; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Bob Stewart, tuba; Leroy Jenkins, violin; Brian Smith, bass; Andrew Cyrille, percussion; Thurman Barker, drums, marimba, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

**LEROY JENKINS**

**LIFELONG AMBITIONS**—Black Saint BSR 0033: GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS; MEDITATION; HAPPINESS; THE BLUES; THE WEIRD WORLD; THE FATHER, THE SON, THE HOLY GHOST.

**Personnel:** Jenkins, violin; Muhal Richard Abrams, piano.

★ ★

Perhaps it's unfair to rate these albums in such close juxtaposition. Muhal Richard Abrams' tentet intentions are miles distant from Leroy Jenkins' duet ambitions. Yet here are two influential members of the AACM's first wave: Abrams, co-founder, theorist, and leader for many years of an experimental big band; and Jenkins, iconoclastic stylist, pragmatist and gadfly, one of three who were the Revolutionary Ensemble. Both are improvisers, composers, and orchestrators, experienced in solo work and with various sized groups.

Abrams' album is rich in ideas, some of which emerge from striking thematic material, and some from the interplay of tones and techniques provided by his finely attuned



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instrumentalists. The diverse colors (I assume, both improvised and annotated) are never applied so densely as to obscure each other, though trombone may growl while marimba beats and french horn sings clearly, in refined if not closely related counterpoint. His assemblage is frequently deployed in small chamber groupings, which either bracket or lead to ensemble settings. There's some Ellingtonian wisdom in this; Muhal knows, for example, how Jenkins' violin can bridge the jumpy energy of Wallace McMillan's sax and the more rooted blasts of Baikida Carroll's brass. And so, even in their driest, most arhythmic passages, Abrams' compositions are so multidimensional that the listener can assess them from every angle, and does not tire of the necessary re-examinations.

But the real standout here is the title track. *Mama And Daddy* is a warm, bright portrait of an apparently stimulating and loving couple. The previous forays are all atmospheric and non-referential; *Mama And Daddy* is refreshingly concrete, and still free of artificial inhibitions. The piece pulses in two contrasting tempos, with meaningful, dramatic solos and marvelously voiced group lines and guideposts. Muhal's own solo evokes youthful escape and mature filial sentiment. Start listening to side two, track two, and return to *Mama And Daddy* again after hearing *Fafca*, *Balu*, and *Malic*. That's better.

I like Leroy Jenkins' *For Players Only* (which he created and conducted for an 18-piece Jazz Composer's Orchestra) and the ensemble interaction of his *Space Minds*, *New Worlds*, *Skies Of America*. I've admired Jenkins' contributions to Anthony Braxton's early records, his intensity with the Revolutionary Ensemble, and his triumphant forbearance at the nearly drowned out Chicago Jazz Festival of '81 when in duo with drummer Jerome Cooper. But during the violinist's more than 30 minutes with pianist Abrams, recorded in performance at Washington Square Church in 1977, nothing much happens.

Their collaboration on the one hand seems facile; the six compositions Jenkins proposes are little more than outlines, and clearly he communicates well-enough with Muhal to sustain parallel activity for this duration. But as Jenkins saws away, with his inimitable touch—grainy, insistent, and unleavened by melodic or harmonic diversity—and Muhal responds with clusters, fragments, and detached runs, there is no forward motion. Perhaps Jenkins' greatest strength has been as catalyst among groups of musicians; his violin is overexposed and without an engaging context here.

*Happiness* involves inner piano box pluckings, choked string picking, and raspy scratching; a watch ticks off the seconds—yes, it's well recorded, but *Happiness?* *The Blues* is a Jack Benny riff extended by some classical figures and bluesy modulations, mostly at Muhal's insistence; Leroy works up some momentum, but is listening only to himself. Also, there's an annoying hum. Frenzied bowing describes *The Weird World*, and lengthier lines of the same frenzy characterize *The Father*, *The Son*, *The Holy Ghost*. Is their matching energy Jenkins and Abrams' statement? Their *Lifelong Ambitions*? Well, they've done it now. On to something else.

—howard mandel



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## RECORD REVIEWS

### MARK MURPHY

**BOP FOR KEROUAC**—Muse MR 5253:

BE-BOP LIVES (BOPLICITY); GOODBYE PORKPIE HAT; PARKER'S MOOD; YOU BETTER GO NOW; YOU'VE PROVEN YOUR POINT (BONGO BEEP); THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL; DOWN ST. THOMAS WAY; BALLAD OF THE SAD YOUNG MEN.

**Personnel:** Murphy, vocals; Richie Cole, alto, tenor saxophone; Bruce Forman, guitar; Bill Mays, keyboards; Bob Magnusson, Luther Hughes (cuts 3, 4, 8), bass; Roy McCurdy, Jeff Hamilton (2-4, 8), drums; Michael Spiro, congas, timbales.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### LUBA RAASHIEK

**CHIJAZZ**—Erect EJLP 702: LOVE MAKES

THE WORLD GO ROUND; LOVER MAN; BIRDLAND REVISITED; WELL, YOU NEEDN'T; ENTERPRISE; IMPRESSIONS; OH, WHAT A WORLD.

**Personnel:** Raashiek, vocals; Grady Johnson, alto saxophone, flute; Ari Brown, soprano, tenor saxophone; Tommy Jones, Von Freeman, tenor saxophone; John Young, piano; Milton Suggs, bass; Robert Shy, drums.

★ ★ ½

On *Bop For Kerouac*, altoist Richie Cole plays Bird to vocalist Mark Murphy's Miles. You get the vividly hot and detached cool intensity of the music. Kerouac captured the feeling in his writing, and it is charted lovingly here in keyboarder Bill Mays' nostalgic yet exultantly contemporary settings.

Boplicity slips in like the birth of the cool, deliberately laidback, smoldering underneath. (Murphy scats syllabically in a Betty Carter bag.) Cole's alto, glissing out of the shadows, commiserates with Murphy's midnight, dead-end tale on *Porkpie Hat*. The blues Parker's Mood has King Pleasure's lyrics and an excerpt from Kerouac's *The Subterraneans*, including a piercing reference to Bird's eyes. Murphy's long notes and smoky delivery make *You Better Go Now* linger. *The Bad And The Beautiful* and *Ballad Of The Sad Young Men* (with an intro from *On The Road*) become a cathartic ache in the heart as Murphy stretches his phrases nearly to the tensile limit of emotion, most like early Miles. A latin wave carries *Bongo Bep* and *St. Thomas*.

Mays' arrangements feature saxophone/guitar/(mostly) electric piano unisons (a spiritual bow to George Shearing?) and relaxed but kicking bass and drums. The makeup inspires solos that are on-target and dancing. The singer's thoroughly masculine timbre coarsens or cracks for dramatic emphasis. His vibrato swaggers or glides. No rhythmic flab anywhere. *Bop For Kerouac* is a great album for romance.

Raashiek's *Chijazz* is basically a jam and has an unfocused quality. The singer digs Eddie Jefferson (*Birdland*; *Well, You Needn't*; *Enterprise*; *Impressions*), with shades of Lou Rawls (*Love Makes*) and a melismatic gospel baritone (*Oh, What A World*). One second he tiptoes, the next he treads heavily; *Lover Man*

is particularly indicative. But he projects the kind of charismatic enthusiasm that would probably really grab you in a live set.

The saxophonists are wasted as an ensemble, although their solos are agreeable. Freeman gargles a typically cryptic blues statement on *Enterprise*, Raashiek's tribute to the tenor giant's frequent hometown habitat. Johnson's alto is boppish and well-oiled throughout. Pianist Young swirls through a flurry of Tatum arabesques and heavy block chords. He is generally excellent in combination with Suggs' Mingus-driving bass and Shy's solid, unshy beat. They are the soul of Chicago time.

With more carefully plotted production values, this could have been a better album. All the ingredients are present, but they remain somehow dispersed. But watch out for Raashiek. He has the potential.

—owen cordle

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*DUKE ELLINGTON: THE FABULOUS FORTIES, VOL. 1* (*Rarities 56*) ★ ★ ★

*DUKE ELLINGTON: THE FABULOUS FORTIES, VOLS. 2, 3* (*Rarities 59, 70*) ★ ★

*AN EVENING WITH DUKE ELLINGTON: PHILHARMONIC AUDITORIUM* (*Giants of Jazz GOJ LP 1003*) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

*DUKE ELLINGTON: HOLLYWOOD BOWL CONCERT, VOLS. 1, 2* (*Unique Jazz 001, 003*) ★ ★ ★ ★

*SUITE THURSDAY/CONTROVERSIAL SUITE/HARLEM SUITE* (*Columbia/Encore P 14359*) ★ ★ ★ ★

*UP TO DATE ELLINGTON, VOL. 4: THE EXTENDED WORKS* (*Meritt Record Society UTD 2005*) ★ ★ ★ ½

*FESTIVAL SESSION* (*Columbia PC 36979*) ★ ★ ★ ½

*SYMPHONY IN BLACK AND OTHER WORKS* (*The Smithsonian Collection N 024*) ★ ★ ★

Ellington is everywhere. It is eight years to the month from his death, and yet in 1982 Ellington is as popular as ever. To begin with, he's on Broadway, an ambition he never



realized in life. There were attempts at musical shows and revues, but nothing like the epic tour de force, *Sophisticated Ladies*, that materialized in 1981 and has kept Broadway jumping for joy ever since. It's a howling good show—no story, all music—and must be considered the centerpiece of the Ellington renaissance (not that Ellington ever went away, of course) of the '80s. Through it, the man's music will be finding new audiences for the rest of the decade. The public loves it, and one can assume Duke would have, showman that he was. There's even something in it for the serious Ellington buff: a Playbill full of factual errors which one can delight in pointing out to less-knowledgeable companions.

All this activity has generated more Ellington records than at any time since the mid-'70s. There is first the obligatory Original Cast album from RCA (CBL2-4053), a big, fat two-LP souvenir that recalls the spectacle of musical theater, but does not conjure the actual show for those who have yet to take it in. Having released the cast LP, what a pity RCA did not take the opportunity to assemble a really first class package of original counterparts to the show numbers. What they have done is stuff two LPs into a single dust jacket without a word of annotation and call it *Sophisticated Ellington* (RCA CLP2-4098). Chintzy packaging aside, however, the buyer expecting the real originals will be partly disappointed in hearing a number of Ellington-recreates-Ellington performances from 1945 (*I Let A Song, Caravan*) and 1966 (half of side one) that don't shed light on the era and spirit that inspired the show. Three numbers are included that were not heard in the show (*Pretty Woman, Beale Street, Hayfoot*), and at least two are excluded (*Old Man Blues, KoKo*) that were. For the casual listener, it's a satisfactory collection, but little more.

Ellington began the 1940s on an auspicious note, by switching record companies. The reasons were interesting. Brunswick, his label through most of the '30s, was bought by CBS late in 1938. Within six months he was on CBS' new Columbia label. Then enter Count Basie, who came over from Decca. At first CBS released Basie on the budget Vocalion label, but the inevitable happened—no sooner did the first Basies appear on Columbia, than Duke appeared at the offices of RCA Victor. Determined to be the black band on any label he recorded for, he abandoned Columbia and addressed himself to a monumental period of creativity that is echoed handsomely on the Smithsonian Collection's *Duke Ellington 1941* (DPM2-0492). This is not a "best of" collection, but rather the fourth installment in the Smithsonian's one-year-at-a-time survey of Ellingtonia beginning in 1938. The band made 22 titles in 1941, not enough to fill these two LPs. Moreover, the music from *Jump For Joy* was withheld for a future album in the series, leaving 15 Victor-made sides (plus one piano solo on *Solitude*), supplemented by 14 non-commercial transcription numbers and two interesting but unenlightening movie soundtrack items. Six titles are heard in both Victor and transcription versions offering differences in detail but not attitude or basic concept. We generally think of the 1940-42 period as a whole, but in fact 1941 produced relatively few works of lasting significance. *Blue Serge* and *Chelsea Bridge* are the high points of the period, and even they are remembered more for the solo work of Ben Webster than their

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orchestral ingenuity. But there was a broad second tier of near-great records that still bring glory to the period. There is *A Train* (the transcription take is thin and ill-at-ease), *West Indian Stomp*, *John Hardy*, *Jumpin' Pumpkins*, *Bakiff*, *Raincheck* (with Webster again the star), and *I Don't Know What Kind Of Blues I Got*. The debut version of *Perdido* is somewhat bland; like other arrangements done first as transcriptions, the definitive performance came later on the commercial record (in 1942). The balance of the collection is marginal, although *Moon Over Cuba*, which most writers tend to snub with a sneer, has an alluring melodic charm I've long found delightful—a sort of Caribbean bolero. Gary Giddins' annotations are extremely detailed, and all the more authoritative because they never try to hype the weaker performances into something they aren't simply because they're on the record. He pronounces *Have You Changed*, for example, an "unmemorable . . . gumdrop."

The next batch of important Ellingtonia jumps ahead five years and covers the immediate postwar years from the end of the Victor association (1946) through the Musicraft period and into the Columbia years (1947). It was a period when Ellington's image of himself was changing. He was doing a number of concerts now, and he wanted to put his name to concert-type compositions as never before. That meant his most serious creative energies went to the longer extended works, at the expense of the shorter pieces that are the backbone of any band's book. The postwar years saw fewer and less impressive short works, and that trend is thoroughly reflected in the five *Hindsight* volumes (*The Uncollected Duke Ellington*) which gather most of the tunes done for Capitol Transcriptions.

Ellington developed two strategies to freshen his repertoire—both calculated, one presumes, to take up as little of his time as possible. First, he recruited the work of other composers. Second, he reworked his earlier favorites. Of the 63 titles on these five volumes, for example, 30 are of non-Ellington origin—three W. C. Handy blues, originals from other bands (*Blue Lou*, *One O'clock Jump*), some popular standards, and a number of pieces from Duke's own court composers such as Strayhorn and various sidemen. Several other pieces had been recorded by Ellington before the war. Among these 30-odd titles, some are some classic beauties: the first recording of *Flower Is A Lovesome Thing* (Vol. 3), *Swamp Fire* (Vol. 5), and a straight-up swinging *One O'clock Jump* (Vol. 2). But no new light is shed on *Moon Mist* (Vol. 3) by having Ray Nance play violin in place of trumpet. *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me* (Vol. 3) loses the poignancy of the earlier small band version. And *Jumpin' Pumpkins* remains as charming as it is unaltered from 1941. By and large Ellington seemed more preoccupied with reflecting trends than projecting them at this time. It's to his credit that he did it with a minimum of pandering and compromise. If charts like *Just You/Just Me*, *Indiana*, and 9:20 *Special* are unexceptional, the band still managed to stamp them with the Ellington sound at its fattest.

The 28 Ellington titles contemporary with the period are typically the work of a journeyman swing arranger. Few, however, rank with the best of the prewar compositions. Suddenly *It Jumped* (Vol. 2), *Unbooted Character* (Vol. 3), and *Frisky* (Vol. 5) are typical. They project instant appeal with simple, swinging riffs, but they lack the surprising forms Ellington created in charts such as *KoKo*. Soloist and orchestra rarely achieve the interlocking dependency that made *Concerto For Cootie* a masterpiece. Ellington preferred to save such experimentation for the concert works. More casual audiences demanded simple, danceable music, and Ellington provided it with elegance and style. Many of the transcription versions of this collection were repeated in commercial recordings for Victor and Columbia. Volume 4 is particularly valuable, providing uniformly superior recordings of the important titles Ellington made for Musicraft, including *Deep South Suite*. There are also several one-of-a-kind extras scattered about. *Far Away Blues* (not the Bessie Smith song) on Volume 5 recalls the Hodges small band sound of the late '30s. And Strayhorn's *Double Ruff* (Volume 3) looks the other way, foreshadowing Hodges' Verve sessions of the '50s. Harry Carney is radiant in an otherwise throwaway called *Sono* (Vol. 1). All and all this is good, but not definitive mid-'40s Duke, and no substitute for the Prestige Carnegie Hall series.

For the Ellington collector interested in depth, there's been no shortage of new issues, mostly material taken from radio broadcasts presumably now in the public domain. But for all his prolific output, Ellington was not superhuman. The band's active repertoire in any given year contained a number of charts played routinely every night. Invariably, they would turn up on every fifth or sixth broadcast as well, and that means a lot of title repetition among the many Ellington LPs issued today, especially since the focus on the mid-'40s seems to be so intense.

*Duke Ellington: The Fabulous Forties* (Rarities 56, 59, and 70) is a three-volume series of air checks covering 1940-47, and programmed, one suspects, according to what happened to be available (*Two Johnny Come Lately's* on Volume 1?). Ten years ago this might have been received as a real treasure. But the competition among such collectors' albums has increased, the track is faster today, and we no longer have to settle for the muddy recording quality and incomplete performances we get too often here. Yet no volume is without some isolated freshness or perfection to make the real Ellington lover consider overlooking the repetitious and routine. *Bojangles* and *Mainstem* (*Altitude*) on Volume 1 are buoyant variations of the originals, with Ben Webster stretching out for a stentorian 32 bars on the former. He only took 16 on the original record, and make no mistake, players schooled in the terse disciplines of the 78-rpm era could speak sonatas in what are by today's standards such cramped musical quarters. Webster scores again in a partial take of *Tonight I Shall Sleep*, and Johnny Hodges fashions a very pretty *It's Been So Long*. Volume 2 is less impressive, made up largely of Ellington popular standards. Hodges stands out on his

regular feature over years. *Sunny Side Of The Street*. *C Jam Blues* is a lively string of solos from the postwar sidemen. Most of side two is from the December 1944 Carnegie Hall concert, but nothing duplicates the Prestige issue of the concert; these are Prestige outtakes, and include Duke's medley of hits that was the bane of his concert programs to many of his more devoted fans through the years. Volume 3 is little more than a patchwork of arbitrarily selected numbers from 1940-44, some of which have been kicking around for years. The identical cuts from 1940 (*Mellotone*, *Stomp*, *Wham*) are available in much better fidelity on Jazz Guild 1006, *Fargo Encores*. On the other hand, Rex Stewart takes off nicely on a pop tune called *Amour*, and Duke's own *Three Cent Stomp* remains a delight. For those who wish to go off the beaten path, each of these LPs offers a number of forgotten items the band played briefly and then dropped. Don't expect to learn anything of importance from them, however, except that any band that plays nearly every night for 50 years runs on more perspiration than inspiration.

In contrast to Duke's dance broadcasts were his concert appearances. Two excellent examples are *An Evening With The Duke: Philharmonic Auditorium, January 17, 1945* (Giants of Jazz GOJ 1003) and *Duke Ellington: The Hollywood Bowl Concert, Vols. 1 & 2* (Unique Jazz 001 and 003). Both offer the cream of his current crop and are well-recorded. The Philharmonic performance was part of the Esquire awards concert, but nothing is duplicated from the main segment of the evening issued on Sunbeam SB-219. The program is wonderful, from the opening bombast of *Bluetopia*, which quickly swings into a gospel mode followed by urbane sophistication, through an extended *Frankie And Johnny* opened up to include Nance, Duke, and some of the grittiest Joe Nanton anywhere. Al Sears plays *Don't Mean A Thing a la Illinois Jacquet's Flying Home*, and the crowd loves it. Anita O'Day drops in for a fine *I Can't Believe*. This is one to pick up.

The *Hollywood Bowl Concert* from August 1947 is made up of several of the numbers Duke had made for Capitol Transcriptions, thus more duplication of the *Hindsight* series. But the overall program is above average, unencumbered as it is by pop tunes and dance arrangements. Hodges comes flying out of the dark corners of *The Mooche* like an eagle; Hamilton is a bit suave for *Blue Street Blues*, but Greer's spicy drumming keeps *Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue* moving mightily along. What ingenuity Duke could bring to the 12-bar blues! Half of Volume 2 is *Black, Brown And Beige*, which had undoubtedly become second nature to the band by now. Another *Frankie And Johnny* is totally different from the Philharmonic version of 1945, and worth hearing for Duke and Oscar Pettiford. Happily, we get very little overlapping with the 1947 Carnegie concert on Prestige.

Several of Ellington's longer works from the '50s have been restored on Columbia's *Encore* series album, *Duke Ellington: Suite Thursday/Controversial Suite/Harlem Suite* (Columbia/Encore P 14359). There is hardly an unscintillating bar of music anywhere in *Suite Thursday*, from the smooth sax ensembles of the first part to the rocking violin of Ray Nance in the fourth part. Superb Ellington. *Controversial Suite* is half-satire,

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half-program piece describing the postwar controversy in the jazz world between modern progressives and fundamentalist traditionalists—all in good fun, however. *Harlem Suite (A Tone Parallel to Harlem)* is certainly Ellington's finest continuous long work—a concerto for orchestra almost totally without major solo features, as opposed to a collection of miniatures standing apart from one another.

Jerry Valburn's Meritt Record Society has issued a considerable quantity of Ellington material—too considerable to be dealt with all here. Among five *Up To Date Ellington*

volumes of unissued postwar Columbia material, however, there is *The Extended Works* (Meritt UTD 2005), which makes available rare alternate versions of *Controversial Suite* and *Harlem* made at the same sessions as the issued takes. Because such long works are inclined to have generally set sequences, the differences tend to cluster around varying degrees of ensemble perfection. In the second section of *Harlem* where the tempo picks up, for instance, the muted brass sections fumble one of the repeated riffs. Such needles in the haystack are for Ellington scholars to search out, however. The third extended alternate is

*Liberian Suite*, a remarkably meaty string of six short, often muscular "dances," with Nance and Carney handling the melodramatic beauty of dance number three in one breakdown and one complete take. Since the issued version of *Liberian Suite* is currently out of issue, it's nice to have this treat for both collector and non-collector.

Another welcome Columbia reissue restores *Festival Session* (PC 36979), a fine sampling of Ellington in the late '50s when he was riding high both commercially and artistically. As usual with many of Duke's more casual albums, this is a mixture of old and new. There is *Perdido*, for example, with threads of continuity winding back to 1941, but indisputably contemporary in 1959 nevertheless. The two multi-part numbers (*Dual Fuel* and *Idiom '59*) are relaxed pot-pourris without any special programmatic intentions. *Fuel* is mainly a drum showcase, and thus made better viewing than listening. But *Idiom* is a bright piece of orchestration from start to finish, with Jimmy Hamilton sounding especially hot in part two. And note the marvelous blend of the reed section, which remained together without a personnel change for nearly 12 years.

Finally, there is a valiant effort at reconstruction from the Division of Performing Arts of the Smithsonian (N 024). In 1935 Ellington made a film short called *Symphony In Black*. The music was a cut-and-paste affair combining some previously recorded orchestrations with a modest amount of new music, but it was hardly a symphony. There was no thematic center of gravity, and to even call it a suite seems pretentious. Nevertheless, in a very primitive and elementary way, it embodies much of the same feeling that Ellington put into *Black, Brown And Beige* eight years later. *The Laborers* has its counterpart in *Work Song*, and *Hymn Of Sorrow* is an emotional miniature of *Blues* and *Come Sunday*. Gunther Schuller conducts with careful attention to detail and nuance. One may question the value of such performances on record, since the original recordings will forever be definitive. (The original soundtrack of *Symphony In Black* is on Biograph BLP-M2.) But the chance to hear such music performed live by players who care about it is indeed an opportunity to be savoured. In addition to *Symphony*, six other titles are heard. The ensemble rips into *Old Man Blues* with volcanic power, and Mike Abene's piano on *The Clothed Woman* is appropriately wry. Only time will determine whether any substantial body of Ellington's work as a composer can exist outside the world of the Ellington orchestra. *Symphony In Black* is hardly the ideal piece to test such a proposition. But Ellington remains the greatest composer yet to spring from the jazz world. If any composer's work can survive in repertory, I suspect it is his.

Note: some albums considered here may not be readily available in stores in some areas. For a list of mail-order sources, please write John McDonough, c/o down beat. Smithsonian albums may be obtained by writing: Smithsonian Performing Arts, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, D.C. 20560.

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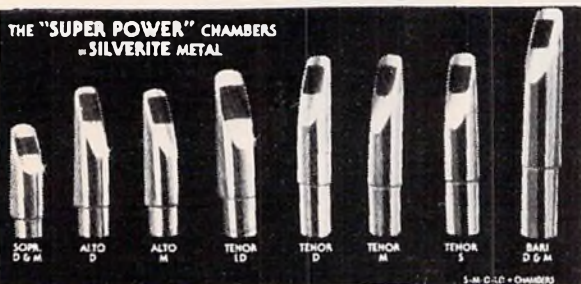
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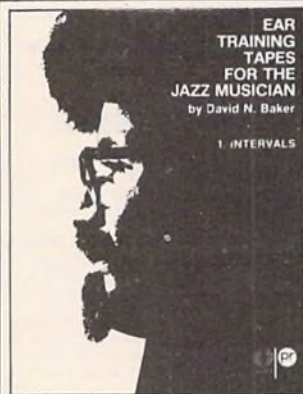
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# Blindfold Test: CHICO FREEMAN

**BY LEONARD FEATHER**

EARL (CHICO) FREEMAN belongs to the second generation of the many profoundly influential artists who sprang from Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Chico also is a second generation musician: his father is Von Freeman, the tenor saxophonist, with whom Chico

undertook two European tours in '79 and '80.

Born in Chicago in 1949, the multi-reedman worked in Chicago with Junior Wells, Memphis Slim, and his own band, Thunderfunk Symphony, before moving to New York in 1976.

The past six years have been most significant: he toured with Elvin Jones, made his first LP as a leader in 1977, formed his own

combo, and played many local clubs and lofts. Recently he has been juggling several careers simultaneously, leading his own group, working with Jack DeJohnette, and teaming up with his father. There are now eight LPs available under his own name.

This was Freeman's first Blindfold Test; he was given no information about the records played.



**1. JOE FARRELL. LET'S GO DANCING** (from *FARRELL'S INFERNO, Jazz a la Carte*). Farrell, flute; Victor Feldman, composer, piano; John Guerin, drums; Bob Magnusson, bass.

I don't recognize any of the players there. It's difficult to recognize the pianist because of the electric piano; to me, there's only a few electric piano players I can tell who it is—like Herbie, because he was one of the first. The band sounds tight, together, sounds like they knew the music. I didn't get a feeling of anything new; it sounded like a very good arrangement and good playing of whoever's composition it is. The flute player played well, good intonation and nice tone.

The theme had a Brazilian influence; the drums played a basic samba rhythm. When I was in Brazil and heard musicians play samba, it was a lot more intricate. This felt like a fusion of certain different kinds of music. It was easy listening, the kind of music to sit back and relax. It didn't really tax my ears or my mind. I'd rate that, on the basis of the musicianship, between two and three stars.

**2. MCCOY TYNER. IT'S YOU OR NO-ONE** (from *4x4, Milestone*). Tyner, piano; Arthur Blythe, alto saxophone; Cecil McBee, bass; Al Foster, drums.

The alto reminded me a little bit of Jackie McLean. I don't know the name of the tune, but I recognize the melody. I'm trying to make an educated guess at the rhythm section. The piano player reminded me sometimes of John Hicks. Is that Cecil on bass? It could have been, but sometimes it sounded like Buster Williams.

I enjoyed the record a lot. The rhythm section was very together, it was a high quality rhythm section. That drummer . . . could you play the record again?

(Later) The alto player . . . I have to change my guess. I've played a lot with Arthur Blythe, and there's a sound that reminds me . . . between Arthur and Eric Dolphy. So it could be Eric, but at times it reminded me of Arthur. But my guess is that it's Eric, from the nature of the rhythm section. I was going to say that the piano player reminded me of McCoy, but I didn't, because I don't remember hearing McCoy playing as sparse as this. Therefore, it sounded more like someone

who was influenced by McCoy. I'd rate that five stars.

**3. ANTHONY DAVIS/JAMES NEWTON. FOREVER CHARLES** (from *HIDDEN VOICES, India Navigation*). Davis, piano; Newton, composer, flute; Rick Rozie, bass; George Lewis, trombone; Pheeroan ak Laff, drums.

I'd give that five right away; I think it's excellent. It sounds like James Newton on flute, and Cecil McBee—if that is Cecil, in comparison to the other recording. I can tell the things I was speaking of that I didn't hear before, seem to be more present there. The trombone player sounds like George Lewis. The piano player sounds like someone who has listened to Muhal Richard Abrams, so I might think Anthony Davis. The drummer I'm really not sure of.

I do know, though, that that's James Newton; I can tell by his tone, and the composition sounded like something that James might write. I liked the concept of the composition; it covers a lot of ground in terms of rhythmic movements from more contrapuntal, open kinds of playing into a swing feeling. And I know that James is very respectful of people like Charles Mingus, so I think this might be something he wrote, dedicated to Charles.

I really like the sound of the flute and trombone; it's a very interesting sound. This is, to me, a very interesting piece of music because it takes a lot of chances. It tries to do some things and I think everything works. And the quality of the players is extremely high. I think George Lewis is probably the premier trombone player today.

**4. PHAROAH SANDERS. CENTRAL PARK WEST** (from *REJOICE, Theresa*). John Coltrane, composer; Sanders, tenor saxophone; John Hicks, piano; William S. Fischer, vocal arrangement.

I recognize the composition, that's Coltrane's Central Park West. I thought it was very beautifully done. The only person I know who's done things with a choir lately is Barry Harris—although that didn't sound like Barry to me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. The saxophone player I thought was very nice, but I don't recognize who it was. He had a little bit of a quality that is reminiscent of

Coltrane. He had good tone, good intonation, soft. I liked the piano, too.

I think the piece itself is a statement, not so much of an improvisational thing. It seems, too, that the arranger was using the vocal group basically for color; they were just singing the changes. The rhythmic motifs that were used were pretty simple. But that freed the piano player up in a different kind of way to do other things. It was very interesting; relaxing and pretty. I'd give it four stars.

**5. ERIC DOLPHY. GOD BLESS THE CHILD** (from *STOCKHOLM SESSIONS, Inner City*). Dolphy, bass clarinet.

Five stars—Eric Dolphy.

LF: What did you like about it?

CF: Everything! I play bass clarinet myself, and of course I've listened to Eric Dolphy over and over again. I regard him very highly, he's one of my influences. I've even written a composition dedicated to him. I like just about everything he's ever done. I loved him with the Charles Mingus groups, and I loved him with Trane, and with all the Five Spot things he did with Booker Little and Mal Waldron and Ed Blackwell. I just thought he was an incredible musician. He was a highly creative individual; I think he was an innovator.

**6. JOHN CARTER. JUBA STOMP** (from *NIGHT FIRE, Black Saint*). Carter, clarinet, composer; James Newton, flute; Roberto Miranda, bass; Bobby Bradford, trumpet; William Jeffrey, percussion.

Great; I like that too. The clarinet player sounds like John Carter. I haven't ever played with him, but I've heard him a lot. He worked with my uncle Bruz; in the '60s they had a group together—John Carter, Bobby Bradford, my uncle on drums, and a bass player. I think John Carter is an excellent clarinetist. I like his compositions as well.

That was James Newton on flute, again. That bass player sounded again like Cecil McBee. I couldn't really tell about the trumpet player; the playing was mostly done on flute and then the clarinet solos. I could just maybe guess Bobby Bradford. If the bass player wasn't Cecil, it sounded like someone who had listened a lot to him. I'd give that five stars. db

# Profile:

## Emily Remler

BY A. JAMES LISKA

**N**owhere in the story of guitarist Emily Remler's early years is there much evidence of either a natural inclination or dedication to jazz. Yet at age 24, as the pieces of her career fall neatly into place, she is fast becoming something of a jazz phenomenon, attracting the attention of musicians and fans in a variety of musical settings.

A little more than a year ago her name meant little outside of New Orleans, the town to which she had emigrated following a rather undistinguished career at Boston's Berklee School of Music. The Crescent City proved to be a good training ground for Remler; it was there that she finally settled into a musical life, honing her guitar craft as she variously worked a hotel band, stage shows, late-night jazz dates, and a rhythm & blues band. But her status as a big fish in a small pond was reversed by a move to New York City, where she began the struggle for survival as a jobbing guitarist.

The struggle wasn't unbearable though, and her talent, which had already impressed the folks at the Concord Jazz label, took her to Concord for a solo record date, *Firefly*, to Berlin for a jazz festival, to Hawaii for a jazz cruise, to several places with singer Astrud Gilberto, and back to New York for gigs with her own trio (bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Bobby Moses), plus a full schedule of teaching. Most recently she moved to Los Angeles to assume the guitar chair in the pit band of *Sophisticated Ladies*.

"Hey," she says in a matter-of-fact voice whose accent and nasal quality are telling of her New Jersey upbringing, "I'm a mere child. And I haven't settled into my own style, though people say they know me when they hear me." While her talent is undeniable, the matters of age and sex are at least partially responsible for her receiving so much attention as of late.

"My career is moving very quickly, and that whole woman thing has put me out-front and helped me get noticed. But when I'm playing, I forget if I'm a girl or a boy or a cat. It's when I leave the stage that I remember," she says. "It's funny, though, being a woman has worked both for and against me. Some



people like me because of the mere fact that I play. Those are the ones that judge too softly. Then there are those—I've had this happen—who come in and sit right in front of me, cross their arms, and say 'This, I've got to see.' Then there are the people who are prejudiced, and they just sit there and wait for the mistakes. It works to your advantage if you're pretty good, but if you're not good, it works to your disadvantage."

Obviously, things have been working well for Remler, though her being a good player, to hear her tell it, has not always been the case. "When I first went to Berklee in Boston, I was awful. I was so terrible I didn't play in front of my teacher for six months. It wasn't until I moved to New Orleans that I started getting good."

Up to that point, music remained nothing more than a hobby. She had begun playing folk guitar as a nine-year-old, and rock soon became the focus of her musical interests. The Beatles held her attention for a while before she became interested in the Rolling Stones and Johnny Winter. She began copying Winter's blues guitar licks, then those of Jimi Hendrix and, in keeping with her Eastern interests, developed an interest in Indian music, eventually memorizing Ravi Shankar's sitar records.

"I could sing all of the rock parts, and I could sing and clap all those weird Indian rhythms. Well, when I got to Berklee and first heard bebop and swing, it didn't make any sense to me. I got interested in jazz at Berklee, but didn't really do much with the guitar. I learned a lot about harmony, chords, and arranging, though."

At 18 Remler left Berklee and moved to New Orleans with her then-boyfriend, another Berklee graduate and guitarist. "I had really just screwed around at Berklee, but when I got to New Orleans I was forced to get better and better. I played all these show gigs and jazz gigs, and I had 25 students. I was forced to come up to a certain level of playing."

Remler's time in New Orleans was divided between playing shows and looking for other musical outlets, namely jazz. "It was great. There's a modern jazz thing happening down there. It's much hipper than New York because the people want to be a part of it. In New York, it's very serious. In New Orleans everybody jumps up and down. There's an r&b kind of feeling. I sort of stole that rich culture and applied it to my own music. If I had stayed in Boston, I'd be playing *Giant Steps* like a madman—like everybody else."

While in New Orleans, Remler met Herb Ellis, the guitarist responsible for introducing her to the Concord Jazz family. "I had a Herb Ellis model guitar and he was in town. I called him and asked him to fix it. I'm very gutsy. Anyway, he said to come on up and I did and we played all afternoon. Three weeks later I got a ticket to come out to the Concord [California] Festival. And there I was on a 'Great Guitar' bill with Herb, Cal Collins, Barney Kessel, and Tal Farlow—my heroes."

Though a recording contract was not offered right away, her appearance at the festival helped establish her in the mind of Concord Jazz' president Carl Jefferson. Not too long after, and after an appearance on the Clayton Brothers album, Jefferson signed her to a four-record deal. Her first album, *Firefly*, Remler describes as being "pretty straightforward." She is looking forward to her next which will expand her musical goals, including her composing.

Remler now calls New York her home. ("My boyfriend in New Orleans isn't anymore; now I've got a boyfriend in New York.") Besides her *Sophisticated Ladies* gig in Los Angeles, Remler is soaking up as much of the music of John Coltrane and McCoy Tyner as possible. "They're my heroes now, and I'm trying to copy as much of their music as I can. I started out copying Wes Montgomery and Pat Martino, and now I'm into Coltrane and Tyner. But I'm certainly not settled into my own style, yet. At 24, how could I be?" db

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## RUSSO *continued from page 27*

of the complete musical universe.

"The second thing is to equip students with as much largeness of purpose and facility and technique and wearwithall so in the competitive situation that musicians find themselves today, they'll have a chance. It's tough out there. You have to have a real sense of self and purpose. I mean, you want to be able to support yourself, but—I pray to God—that you don't only want to support yourself, that you want some justification for your life that goes beyond that. You need a sound artistic background, and you have to know lots of procedures, techniques, ways of making do. It's no longer enough to be kind of talented—you can't coast along in any field. You can't even sell out as easily as you could in the past."

In addition to administering the music program at Columbia, Russo teaches several courses, most notably a course in jazz composition and arranging. Russo's teaching methods are characteristically well formulated. "First," he explains, "you can teach the procedures, the general rules of thumb. For example, the alto is not as good in its low register as the baritone sax. This is easy to teach. You can also have students reduce scores. You can take a page out of a score and reduce it to two staves. And you can take the same passage and expand it, that is, write it for orchestra, and compare it to the reduction that you or someone else made." (For exercises like these, Russo uses unpublished Ellington scores, a gift from the bandleader himself.) "As far as the compositional processes are concerned," Russo continues, "I don't know how I'm able to do it, but I've had a lot of compositional students over the years, some of them remarkably successful. I must have stumbled onto something. Part of it is establishing the perimeters and the parameters of the work. For example, asking the student to write an eight-bar phrase for soprano saxophone over a given chord structure while using a given rhythm and isolating the choice of tones. Or giving students a row, say, of four notes and requiring them to use only those four notes, in one certain order, but in any way they want. Part of it is an isolating process, a limiting of resources."

Does teaching limit Russo's own resources? A composer with his gifts and experience would be better off financially and aesthetically working full-time with the pros in the studio, or in theater, film, or the concert hall. But Russo disagrees, pointing out that a play of his (originally titled *Paris Lights: The All-Star Literary Genius Expatriate Revue*) is planned to open soon in London,

that the New American Orchestra is at his disposal, and that he's just completed his third book on composition. Russo has indeed mastered the art of moving easily in harness. And, he adds, "I love teaching. I feel a tremendous pleasure from organizing a program like this one. I think we're at a critical time when everything's starting to change and it's the right time to be doing what I'm doing. It's really an interesting time. The dissimilarity between classical music and jazz is breaking down, and it's possible to have a varied background and not get in trouble for it. Twenty years ago, God, if you wrote for a violin and you were a jazzman, you were considered a maverick. There's a real opening going on today."

Perhaps Bill Russo, a maverick in his own special, several ways, has indeed created for himself the best of all possible musical worlds. db

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