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THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

**HERBIE
HANCOCK**
Funk At Full Current

**JOHN
SCOFIELD**
Guitar Connoisseur

**BENNY
GOODMAN**
*Swinger Influences
the Classics*

DR. JOHN
New Orleans Boogie

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SEPTEMBER

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THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

1982
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Dr. John

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BY JON BALLERAS

Herbie Hancock's Current Choice

To jazz or not to jazz? Consider Herbie Hancock, an innovative, complex keyboardist and composer who played on some 15 albums with the seminal Miles Davis quintet of the mid-'60s, and simultaneously released a striking series of impressionistic voyages under his own name. In light of Hancock's increasingly frequent crossovers into electro-funk and r&b idioms, addressing the question of his fidelity to the jazz tradition becomes, for some at least, particularly vexing. And Hancock's straightahead playing with the V.S.O.P. band, with Chick Corea and, most recently, with the prodigious trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has again raised the bothersome question of his commitment to *any* idiom, be it r&b, funk, disco/pop, or undiluted jazz. To jazz or not to jazz? If not, why not?

To gain some insight into these questions, I caught up with Hancock as he passed through Chicago, his native town. In his hotel room, on a dresser to one side of his chair, rested a hand-held computer, and on the other side, on a chest, were prayer beads, candles, a fruit bowl, and a small bell, objects used in the ritual of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, a religion to which Hancock converted nine years ago. Flanked by these symbols of technology and of the spirit, this many-faceted man and musician began a

careful explanation and defense of his current musical activities.

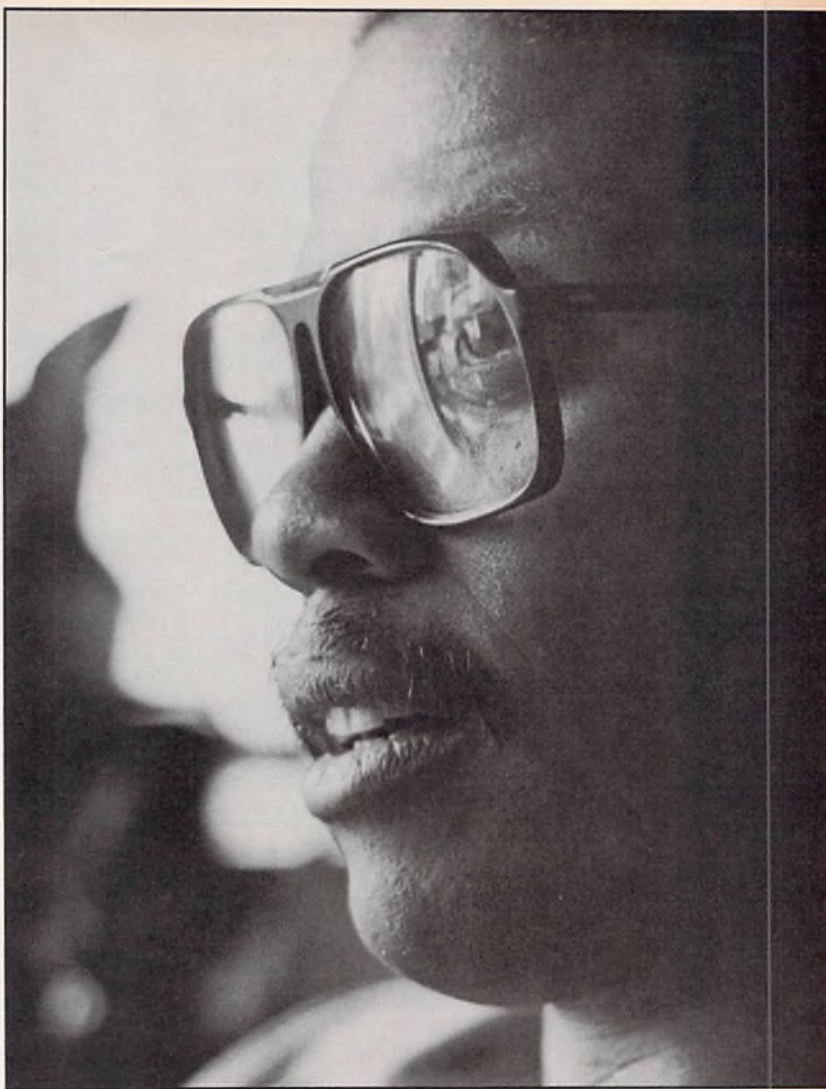
"I have a stigma against me," he complained. "The very fact that I come from the jazz tradition means that there are certain expectations built into anyone who knows my history. So when I do the more commercial side of me, they use those expectations, which don't apply, and I wind up getting treated unfairly. Whereas, if my records went to the right person for review, I could get a fairer treatment. It's funny, though. I can play *Lite Me Up* [his current disco-funk release] to anybody who's into what that record's about, and almost everybody flips over the record. Now, that tells me something about critics. They can't believe that you can learn from anything besides jazz and classical music."

But Hancock's "more commercial side" has met with less than positive acclaim from the severest of his critics, musicians themselves. One extreme, pointed attack was voiced several years ago by Lester Bowie in a *db* Blindfold Test [see next page]. Hancock had never read Bowie's critique of *You Bet Your Love*, a track from *Feets Don't Fail Me Now*, Hancock's first "non-jazz" record, and he was visibly disturbed when I showed Bowie's remarks to him.

"From what Lester says," he began, "he's

had a lot of experience playing on the road in funk bands, which I haven't. He's absolutely right about that. He mentions here about my getting snatched off the stage because my music isn't funky enough. Well, that's fine with me. I'd be prepared for that if people didn't like the music. Why sure, then they should yank me off the stage. At the same time, that doesn't mean you're supposed to give up and think you could never play the music. And there isn't just one kind of funk, either. In my estimation, there are different levels or degrees of it. It's not something that's limited to one small, specific area.

"What I mean . . . take James Brown. James Brown is funky as a dog. He was the first person who really turned me on to funk. Sly Stone's another one who's funky and turned me on to it. But there's other music I like, you know. Music that's funky in other degrees. For example, a group like Earth, Wind & Fire—it's not James Brown, but I like what they do. Stevie Wonder's music is funky, but it's not always heavy funk. Lester doesn't have to like this record, but I wasn't bullshitting when I made it. He *doesn't* say that I'm not a talented musician. If I'm understanding him correctly, he thinks I'm making a big mistake in playing this kind of music and that it's gonna do harm and not any good, either



STEVE KAGAN

Lester Bowie Blindfold Test, db, 5/17/79

4. HERBIE HANCOCK. *You Bet Your Love* (from *Feets Don't Fail Me Now*, Columbia). Hancock, vocals, keyboards; James Gadson, drums; Bill Summers, percussion; Roy Obiedo, guitar; Eddie Watkins, bass.

That would be the first failure of the evening. It must have been Herbie, or some bullshit like that; probably Herbie. Whoever it was, they're full of shit. What they've done is taken the lower levels of the music and turned the whole scene upside down. This is what's happening now. They'll tell you that these cats can play. We've been sitting up here doing this test and we've heard quality music from quality musicians. That's not it! It's just not happening.

These cats don't know if they're going to be jazz or fusion or funk or disco. They're just tryin' to make some money, you can hear that. The reason I don't dig this is because I played this music seriously, for a living, up and down the highways for years, so I don't need to hear any more of that bullshit music. I won't participate in that again, lower myself and say, 'Well, I'm doing this to communicate with the people.' The people he's communicating with I don't even want to deal with.

I don't even think this is well done funk. These cats like Freddie and Herbie, I'm not trying to put them down but they were jazz cats, young cats who were talented musicians, they came up and by the time they were in their teens they were playing with some of the top jazz performers in the world. They were basically jazz cats—they

don't know nothing about funk, that's why they sound so funny. They ain't been on the road up and down doing that stuff. Of course they played a few gigs where they had to do a shuffle, but they never been on the highway. Do 30 or 40 of them one nighters with Albert King, then you'll learn how that shit goes. Play one song for two hours, vamping that mother 'til you learn how to make that form feel. These cats ain't got no funk at all. I could dig this if it was funky, I dig James Brown. I don't know what these cats are doing. Gettin' paid, that's all.

What I have against this music is it deadens the minds of our youth. It's beat-your-head-into-the-concrete type music. It's music that deadens a person's intellect. They say this music is happenin'—that's why people are so starved for music now. People really can't believe there's nothing else available; I can see it in people's faces when they hear something new. The other night at the Gate, the people weren't even familiar with our type thing; they didn't understand it, but you could feel them open up.

I feel sorry for Herbie if he thinks people are that dumb, 'cause you just can't keep taking advantage of people like that. Those cats should do something else. He's going to get hurt out there tellin' some people that—I know some places where they would snatch his ass off that bandstand. I used to work them joints with dirt floors. I seen people screwing, I seen people get killed right on top of the bandstand. And they would be snatchin' Herbie right off the stand. I'm telling you!



STEVE KAGAN



STEVE KAGAN

for myself or for the people who might listen to it. He's saying that I'm basically a jazz guy and that's where my talent lies, and I'm wasting my time doing other stuff. His viewpoint is a valid one, but it's not the only one. However, when he says that 'They're just tryin' to make some money, you can hear that.'—I'm sorry to say that his ears must be deceiving him. Because I'm not *just* trying to make money. But I think that was an emotional statement. I'm making money from the recordings and losing money from the tours. I make more money on acoustic tours, but less money on acoustic recordings. I'm doing this kind of music because I like it. It's part of my musical development. And in order for me to be really honest with myself, I don't want to ignore these urges. Because if I didn't do it, then it would be really bullshit.

"What I'm doing right now is covering most of the musical bases I'm really into. *Feets Don't Fail Me* was a difficult record for me to make. Using the Vocoder that way was a big challenge. The other challenge was that was the first record I'd made that was not a jazz record. Every other record of mine could be put in the area of jazz or as being some offshoot of jazz. That was a major success for me, because I'd been trying to make a record that wasn't jazz. Even doing the instrumental music I was trying to make some of those records not to be jazz. I was trying to make them be funk, but I hadn't quite learned about it. So, Lester may not like the area of music I was dealing with, with *You Bet Your Love*, but I think he's taking a lot for granted about his being able to judge music when he assumes that if it ain't as funky as James Brown, then it's bullshit. I think my tastes in

this area, anyway, are more broadminded than his, and he just doesn't like my tastes.

"But I don't just make records. Music is a practice the way medicine is a practice. You're always trying to better yourself. And if you don't go out and try different things that you feel are valid goals, you're not really going to explore all you can really be. Very often we explore a certain direction and find that it's not really for us. But if we never venture that far we'd never see that. Sometimes we find that in extending ourselves in a different direction there's something there for us. Maybe not a great deal, but at least we can find more about ourselves by at least making an attempt to follow an impulse. That's all that I try to do."

The polemics of jazz vs. funk will undoubtedly continue as long as these musics continue to evolve. But those who accuse Hancock of trailing after the James Brown/Sly Stone funkwagon should remember that Hancock's interest in r&b-based music predates his interest in jazz and, in fact, has run parallel to his work as a jazz player. *Watermelon Man* was no accident.

Hancock explains: "I started listening to r&b before jazz. When I was in grammar school I started off listening to classical music and r&b. Around the time I was 14 I started listening to jazz. I was overtaken by it. I didn't become interested in r&b again until I heard James Brown's *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag*. And, still, I didn't get involved in it. But I did have some interest in it, and I liked anything close to that song. Then I heard Sly Stone's *Thank You For Letting Me Be Myself Again* and I realized that James Brown was not the only kind of r&b I liked. And I thought

I'd better check it out, 'cause there was a whole lot going on out there. Then there was Stevie Wonder—*Talking Book*—and he wasn't doing those little kiddie things anymore, and Marvin Gaye's *What's Goin' On*, and Earth, Wind & Fire came out, and in later years Quincy Jones' productions of Michael Jackson's stuff, and George Benson, and Al Jarreau. To me, this is certainly the quality area of pop music. It's the kind I like most.

"And I think *Lite Me Up* is in the same ballpark. As far as its being original, one thing I learned was that even though some basic rules may be the same from idiom to idiom, some things change. With pop music, the idea of being original takes on a different definition, I think. The way of the groove becomes important. Not that it has to be as funky as Lester Bowie says to have value. Whatever you're dealing with, whatever degree of funk, it should really be true to that. I don't feel embarrassed about it. Certainly on this record the groove seems to be there, at least as far as my ears are concerned."

Yet another strain in Hancock's musical development is his use of electronic musical instruments. His original major at Grinnell College was engineering, and he remains fascinated by electronic systems. After trading tech talk about strategies in programming the Apple II computer, Hancock revealed his plan for using a custom digital switcher which, when interfaced with the Apple II, will control a battery of melodic and percussive synthesizers. He enthusiastically explains: "If you have the Prophet keyboard, why can't the Prophet play the Minimoog? One problem with playing synthesizers is that every manufacturer makes his instru-

ment to be the definitive instrument. And we only have two hands. So we can play at the most only two keyboards. Synthesizers are different, as far as their sound and as far as what they're able to do. But you don't need the black and white keys on every one. I want to use two stationary keyboards and a portable one. I'm getting a Clavitrone—a portable keyboard with as many voices as the synthesizer which it will control—and by using the switcher I can sequence the switching of the electronics from the various synthesizers into these three basic keyboards that I'm using. That switching will be done through software in the Apple. Consequently I can actually program the switching sequence of a song. It would be like me jumping around from keyboard to keyboard, except I won't have to move. I'll let the computer do the job." (Echoes of the futuristic album jacket cover of *Thrust* upon which Hancock was depicted as piloting a space ship having a conclave synthesizer keyboard as its control panel?)

Technology aside, the original question remains: To jazz or not to jazz? Happily, Hancock's vacillation is far less soul-wrenching than Hamlet's. Most significantly, he recently championed, toured with, and recorded with a quartet featuring the youngest trumpet virtuoso to appear on the scene in many years, Wynton Marsalis.

Hancock admits that he was at first somewhat reluctant to work with a player so young. "George Butler, head of a&r at Columbia, called me," Hancock explains. "He said, 'I heard a young trumpet player who is a phenomenon. You gotta hear him. You'll love him. And we want to sign him, and he'd love for you to produce his first album.' I said, 'How old is this guy?' George said, 'Nineteen.' So I'm thinkin', 'He'll play good for 19.' Little did I know.

"On the tape George sent was a double trumpet concerto by Vivaldi, with Wynton and his former teacher and the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra. On the other side was Wynton and his father, Ellis Marsalis—just trumpet and piano. Both sides of the tape killed me—Wynton's tone, his time, his ideas blew me completely away. At the same time, I'd been wanting to do this tour with the V.S.O.P. band, but I wasn't sure whether Wayne [Shorter] and Freddie [Hubbard] were going to be able to make it. So me and my manager, David Rubinson, started thinking about taking Wynton on the tour. I'd never heard him play live, but just before we went into rehearsal I heard him with Art Blakey's group, and he killed me. His stage presence and personality were surprisingly mature for someone that young. So the next thing was convincing Ron and Tony that it would be cool. And I started thinking that we could do this as a V.S.O.P. thing, periodically. As long as we didn't do it too often and it could still draw people, it would be special. I realized that we learned some stuff with that band that you don't hear very much anymore. It didn't get translated. It's like we didn't let anybody in on the secret. That combination makes me play in a certain way that's really special. And we're getting old. It's our responsibility that's

HERBIE HANCOCK SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

LITE ME UP—Columbia FC-37928
MAGIC WINDOWS—Columbia EC-37387
MR. HANDS—Columbia JC-36574
FEETS DON'T FAIL ME NOW—Columbia JC-35764
V.S.O.P.—Columbia PG-34688
DEATH WISH—Columbia PC-36825
MAN-CHILD—Columbia PC-33812
THRUST—Columbia PC-32965
HEAD HUNTERS—Columbia KC-32731
CROSSINGS—Warner Brothers BS-2617
MWANDISHI—Warner Brothers BS-1898
SPEAK LIKE A CHILD—Blue Note 84279
MAIDEN VOYAGE—Blue Note 84195
EMPYREAN ISLES—Blue Note 84175
TAKIN' OFF—Blue Note 84109

with Miles Davis

WATER BABIES—Columbia PC-34396
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LIVE-EVIL—Columbia CG-30954
IN A SILENT WAY—Columbia PC-9875
FILLES DE KILIMANJARO—Columbia PC-9750
NEFERTITI—Columbia KCS-9594
SORCERER—Columbia PC-9332
MILES SMILES—Columbia PC-9401
IN EUROPE—Columbia PC-8983
FOUR & MORE—Columbia PC-9253
MY FUNNY VALENTINE—Columbia PC-9106
SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN—Columbia PC-8851

with Chick Corea

IN CONCERT, 1978—Columbia PC2-35663
COREA/HANCOCK—Polydor PD-2-6238

with Wynton Marsalis

WYNTON MARSALIS—Columbia FC-37574

been handed down to us. So I really felt strongly about Wynton's going on the tour. And I knew he could do it. Not only that, he was a great inspiration to me. What really surprised me was that we were actually able to find a way to make a quartet with rhythm section work without its just sounding like a lead trumpeter plus rhythm backing him up. It was a good marriage."

The productiveness of Hancock's most recent musical union is documented by his appearance on three tracks of Marsalis' debut album and, more plentifully, on a two-disc Columbia recording, as yet untitled, cut in Tokyo while the band was on the Far East leg of its extended tour. The release features material ranging from early Monk (*Well, You Needn't*; *'Round Midnight*) to Hancock's *Sorcerer* and *Eye Of The Hurricane*, plus contributions from Carter and Williams (notably *Parade* and *Pee Wee*, respectively). The music here leaves little question that Hancock continues to evolve as a jazz player. And judging from the fresh, crisp interplay between all members of the quartet, the secret of V.S.O.P. may just have been handed down to one well deserving of its keeping, Wynton Marsalis.

Still, the question: To jazz or not to jazz? Perhaps the issue ultimately resolves itself into a false dilemma. Perhaps a man like Hancock, large enough to embrace prayer beads and ancient ritual as well as state of the art digital technology can also successfully simultaneously reach diverse audiences without making compromises in any idiom. Perhaps Hancock answers the question most convincingly when he says, "If you don't go out and try different things that you feel are valid goals, you're not going to explore all that you really can be." Whatever the critical opinion of Hancock's several musical voyages on divergent courses, his ef-



ALAN BECKER

HERBIE HANCOCK'S EQUIPMENT

Emu Polyphonic Keyboard; Hohner Clavinet; Rhodes 88 Suitcase Piano; Prophet 5 Synthesizer; Oberheim 8 Voice Modular Synthesizer; Clavitar; Minimoog Synthesizer; Source Moog Synthesizer; ARP 2600 Synthesizer; ARP Odyssey Synthesizer; Yamaha CS-80 Electric

Grand Piano; Linn Drum Synthesizer; Moog Parametric Equalizers; Trident Parametric Equalizers; Cry Baby Wa-Wa Pedal; Morley Pedal; Sennheiser Vocoder; Roland Vox Chorus; Roland Space Echo; Roland Digital Chorus; Moog Stage Phaser; Apple II Plus Microcomputer.

forts to explore all that he might become could well serve as a reminder to musicians, critics, and listeners that there are more, not entirely incongruent, things in the musical universe than they might have imagined. **db**

It has been a perfect and ironic misconception to identify John Scofield by his associations: not incorrect, but rather like seeing light as its spectrum when refracted rather than the original, direct strand. Scofield surely has no shame for the supporting roles—with Charles Mingus, Billy Cobham, and Jay McShann, among some five dozen others—that made his name as a 26-year-old guitar prodigy, a sideman nonpareil. But they were only stations, and not necessarily the most important ones, on the way to a more real and enduring sense of self. Sometimes Scofield can see the inspired confusion of his past in the young musicians whom he tutors. "One day they want to be this and the next day they want to be that," he says, "but they can't realize they can be all that and they can only be themselves."

Now the 26-year-old prodigy is 31, married, and a father; the sideman nonpareil is the leader of his own trio, one which unifies his past and present. The bassist, Steve Swallow, was a younger Scofield's teacher; the drummer, Adam Nussbaum, was a tag-along to the basement bands of Scofield's prescient youth. And the music they make, most recently on a live European album, *Shinola*, is some of the first of his own that Scofield can bear to hear twice.

"It's only now I can listen to myself without dying," Scofield says. "It's not like I even want to think about the old stuff. Some people are to the point of real neuroticism, where you just can't listen to it, it's just, 'Oh, God. . . .' I've managed to cool that out. I feel much more secure now. It's not so scary anymore. It's become more and more obvious to me that all I can do is be there at the moment and try to follow this natural thing that's coming out of me. It's like talking."

The initial urge to play music may not have been quite so instinctual in Scofield, but it clearly resided within, waiting only to be summoned by circumstance. The germination began when, at age 11, Scofield got his first guitar. Neither of his parents, Levitt nor Anne Fay, were particularly musical, and their suburban hometown, Wilton, CT, was hardly a hotbed of creation. But Scofield received something irreplaceable: freedom. "My sister went through the rebellion and got the brunt of that," he recalls, "so I was pretty much left alone. My parents always liked the fact I loved the music, that I was really into it. But at the same time I did stop doing my homework when I was 12, so they were sort of freaked out. But I guess for some reason they gave up and allowed me to follow my dream, which doesn't happen to too many kids."

Scofield dreamt well. He began prosaically enough, seeing the Beatles on television and recognizing in their manner "sort of an escape from suburban doldrums, something revolutionary, different." But he went further, into their influences—Little Richard, Chuck Berry—and into the blues adoptees of the mid-'60s folk revival—John Lee Hooker, for one—and through them into the urban blues of B. B. King and Otis Rush. Maybe he was, he acknowledges when asked, the town ec-

centric. Certainly the salespeople at Green's, the race record store in Norwalk, puzzled over a white boy who craved the latest Otis Rush 45 on Cobra. "It actually was a white guy who sold it to me," Scofield remembers, laughing. "He thought it was all weird stuff anyway."

The urban blues, in turn, brought Scofield to the doorstep of jazz; he still recalls relating the shuffle beat of Sonny Freeman on *B.B. King Live At The Regal* to what he had heard Jo Jones do for the Count Basie Orchestra. One of the few locals who understood Scofield's tastes, who loved the music he loved, and who could take him further, was Alan Dean, his guitar teacher. Together, they would play Pat Martino records by the hour, or drive into Greenwich Village to hear Jim Hall. Scofield began to take runs by ear off *Djangology* and *Art Farmer Live At The Half Note* (with Hall) and the Hall/Bill Evans duet, *Inner Modulations*. By 15, he said, he knew he wanted to become a jazz guitarist and, in retrospect, he finds the aspiration neither romantic nor precocious.

"There was something at first about the image of New York being this great, cosmopolitan place, and jazz being the sound of New York," he says, "but all that romanticism got replaced really early by just a love for the music—abstractly, not connecting the music with any culture or groove. It was just the sound, the sound. The sound of jazz music, whatever that is, is around us all the time, even if you've never owned a record in your life: just listening to movie scores, TV scores, the rock & roll stuff I heard in the '50s that I liked—the way they moved the notes around, the beat, black singers with the gospel thing. There is a great crossover of all sorts of music, and before we were born it had blended into just American music."

Armed with this encompassing love, Scofield set off in 1970 for Boston and the Berklee School of Music, to discover, perhaps, where his voice belonged in the chorus, the cacophony, the synthesis. The Boston years were, ultimately, about technique, in all of its broadening and limiting guises. His three years there filled the middle portion of an artistic progression from random chance-taking through ascetic study of mechanics to, finally, a self-defined balance.

In the classrooms of Berklee, Scofield learned theory and sharpened his reading. In apartments and clubs around Boston, he apprenticed, by observation and conversation, his first two mentors: the vibraphonist Gary Burton, and Mic Goodrick, a little-known figure outside Boston, but something of a guru to the guitarists who passed through the city. "He was one of the first," Scofield says, "to absorb Jim Hall's lyrical, legato approach and also have a real modern concept of harmony." And his stylistic progeny, by Scofield's reckoning, include John Abercrombie, Pat Metheny, and Mike Stern.

But, those contemporaries aside, Scofield found few role models on his chosen instrument. In the vacuum, he began analyzing the work of horn players. Then John McLaughlin burst forth, a mixed blessing for Scofield. He

played McLaughlin's *Extrapolations* and *My Goal's Beyond* until the needle wore them bald, then he forced himself not to listen to McLaughlin at all. Like dozens of tenor saxophonists in the wake of Coltrane, Scofield's obsession had turned into oppression. It was typical of the battles—and growth—of the time. He remembers: "This was a time when guitar was essentially an outside instrument in jazz. You'd go into a jam session and if you had a guitar, they'd think, 'What's that country & western instrument doing here?' So you had to cop from horn players. Everybody was into Trane or Miles. I remember trying to figure out Coltrane-type lines and I started to incorporate a lot of that into my playing, but I found I was getting a little too mechanical. I was going backwards. It's a real challenge to learn to play like that, but you can get hung up in it until it's not music."

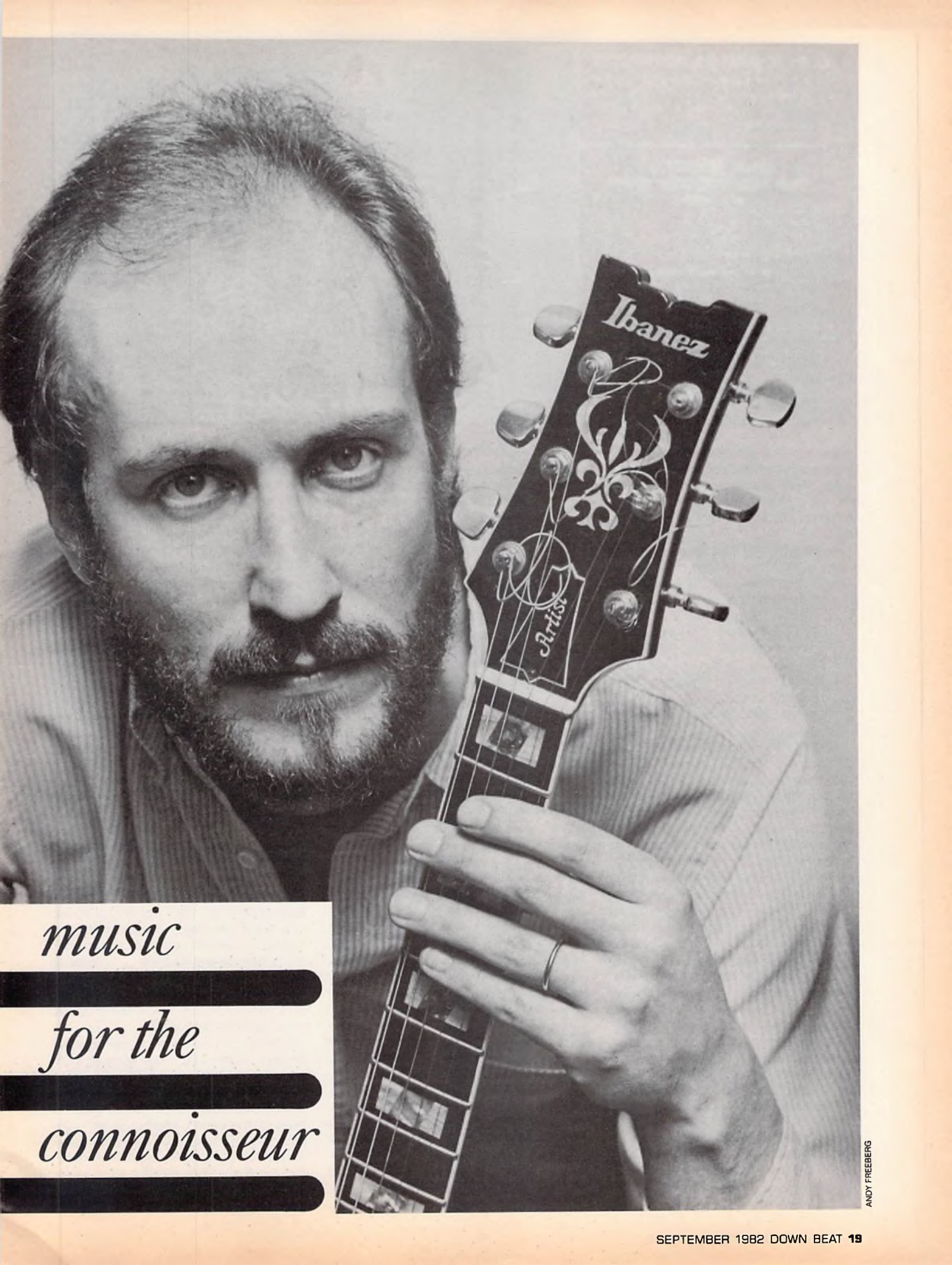
"I guess we're always going between these phases over and over again of trying to learn something real technical and ingraining it in your own playing. The nice thing about getting more mature is that you realize you can get a little technical without losing your soul."

Scofield's compass was not quite so sure when fortune plucked him from Boston. Goodrick had canceled out of a sideman assignment for the vaunted reunion of Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker in 1974, and he recommended Scofield for the Carnegie Hall job, which became two albums on CTI. "I was just as nervous as hell," Scofield recalls, and, only two weeks later, he was traveling with the Billy Cobham/George Duke fusion band. He savored his two years with the group for the steady work, the talents of the leaders and, particularly, the exposure to the Panamanian Cobham's rhythmic sensibilities; but what he saw in the symbiosis between audience and band came to color his preference for more austere ensembles and settings.

"The one thing that hurt me," Scofield says, "was playing to those huge audiences. This thing happens where the band had to rise to this dynamic peak and everyone jumps to their feet—and then you have to do it again for an encore. That overkill thing—it took me a while to realize it had nothing to do with music. To play two years of gigs like that

JOHN SCOFIELD

BY SAM FREEDMAN



music

for the

connoisseur

ANDY FREEBERG

JOHN SCOFIELD'S EQUIPMENT

John Scofield plays an Ibanez Artist Series semi-acoustic electric guitar with La Bella medium-light strings. He uses a Polytone Mini-Brute IV amplifier.

JOHN SCOFIELD SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

SHINOLA—Enja 4004
ROUGH HOUSE—Inner City 3030
BAR TALK—Arista/Novus 3022
WHO'S WHO?—Arista/Novus 3018
LIVE—Inner City 3022

with Charles Mingus

THREE OR FOUR SHADES OF BLUE—Atlantic 1700

with Jay McShann

LAST OF THE BLUE DEVILS—Atlantic 8800

with Larry Coryell

TRIBUTARIES—Arista/Novus 3017

with Gerry Mulligan/Chet Baker

CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT, VOL. 1&2—CTI
6054/6055

with Billy Cobham/George Duke

LIVE ON TOUR IN EUROPE—Atlantic 18194



ANDY FREIBERG

where everyone goes bananas because the band is so funky and loud and fast can have some effects on your own concept. It hurt, in my case. Musically, going for that overkill response should be the last thing on your mind."

Ironically, Scofield emerged as the extravagant culprit in his next extended job, a year with Burton. Wrote David Breskin, "Image: Bull Scofield charging through Burton's china shop." Scofield demures from such declarations, although he allows that he would commune more comfortably with Burton now. For all his reverence for Burton as a teacher and a musician, he did feel impinged by the vibist's ethereal compositions—"Linear City," Scofield once said—and fought the confinement in his solos.

Whatever the musical snits of the Scofield/Burton union, it did lead to, or at least coincide with, the guitarist's popularity on the sideman circuit. The jobs included work with Mingus, McShann, Ron Carter, Tony Williams, Lee Konitz, Joe Beck, Larry Coryell, Zbigniew Seifert, and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, and their sum became the easiest, and most complimentary, way to appraise Scofield. But such an analysis was dubious, for many of the jobs ended with sight-reading, and did little to assuage Scofield's self-doubts. He maintains he is not as diverse a player as critics have hailed him for being, and he says even of the sumptuous McShann disc, *Last Of The Blue Devils*, "I wish I had another chance. I wish I could change my parts, take an overdub."

Scofield was growing, without doubt, but the greatest leaps occurred off vinyl, with the Dave Liebman group. Liebman was, like Burton, a somewhat older man than Scofield, and a patient teacher of musical ideas; unlike Burton, he was a horn player, with great command of the Coltrane vocabulary, which had continued to fascinate Scofield. Again, Scofield acted out a cycle of subsuming technique and then affirming himself, first forcing himself to add chords and double-

stops to his solos in the pianoless band and then "realizing, 'Hey, why am I killing myself? I'm a Jim Hall-oriented player, just do it. Just play what you hear instead of what you think you hear.'"

It seems like the simplest of axioms, but it was, for Scofield, the epiphany that let him lead a group with confidence, let him impose his own ideas on others. After a decade of throwing into his centrifuge the lyricism of Hall, the urbane bite of Rush and King, the chordal mania of Coltrane and McLaughlin, Scofield had realized they all somehow amounted to him—without apologies.

He began to make dates leading the likes of George Mraz, Richard Beirach, Anthony Jackson, and Eddie Gomez, but he found the most stability and fulfillment in the three-year-old trio he continues to front. Adam Nussbaum—the one-time tyke who reintroduced himself to Scofield at a loft in 1977 as a balding young drummer—provides the eccentric, resonant accents of the softer side of Elvin Jones. Steve Swallow—the bassist—clearly is the linchpin of the band: an elder who nonetheless pushes Scofield to do most of the writing, and acts as an utterly irreplaceable voice on the electric bass. "He's sort of the back-seat driver," Scofield says. "There's something about him that makes a trio different. He doesn't sound like any of the other electric bassists. It's not an electric bass, per se, I wanted—it was Swallow, per se. I'd probably lean toward an upright if I was playing with someone else, but Swallow is like a concept."

Bar Talk and *Shinola* chronicle the trio, and another set recorded on the same evening as *Shinola* should be released on Enja near the end of 1982. Scofield also spent eight days in May recording an album with John Abercrombie—partially duets and partially a quartet with Mraz on bass and Peter Donald on drums—for the Palo Alto Jazz label.

Still, Scofield retains a larger audience in Europe, which he tours for two months each year, than in most of the United States. His

recordings as a leader appeared on several labels, making publicity a sticky point—or no point at all—between each; only recently has he hired a manager, Toby Byron. Scofield can joke, "Hey man, label me, label me, sell me, market me," but he does harbor frustrations, or at least longings, in terms of broadening his audience. Some of his favorite performances occurred in the least likely locales—Ames, IA, Normal, IL, western Canada—and Scofield hopes to play the heartland more often.

"It is possible to play this music I play for audiences that are not incredibly sophisticated," he says. "It's just a slow, long process. You see some really appreciative audiences outside New York and the jaded, overexposed audiences that have seen so much. The act of playing is so much more pleasurable when you see people just really respond, and you're not worried if you're meteoric that night. But I don't bitch that much, anymore. It's a connoisseur's music, let's face it."

And there are abundant reasons not to complain. Besides his music, Scofield has a family: his wife of four years, Susan, and a 13-month-old daughter, Jean (the *Jean The Bean of Shinola*). "I feel a lot more anchored in a really good way," Scofield says, "not having to mess with the bullshit you do when you're insecure and out there. . . ." The words about family life, however self-effacing, betray a significant theme: the arrival at security from futility and doubt. The same can be said of Scofield the musician.

"The reason I know I have my own identity," he says, "is because I don't worry so much about my playing. I just realize I do sound like me. It's like what people with any insight have always said about Miles [Davis]: Miles is Miles in any setting; whether it's with Tony [Williams] and those guys or Al Foster now or the Gil Evans Orchestra, it's still Miles. Now, I feel I can just play and not worry what I should sound like. Just do what I do, which is the only thing to do." **db**

A JAZZ CLASSIC

INTERVIEW BY LEE JESKE



Sixty years ago Benny Goodman celebrated two important rites of passage: his bar mitzvah and his first year as a member of the musicians' union. Today—hundreds of recordings, and thousands of concerts later—his incredible career shows no sign of flagging. After picking up an honorary doctor of music degree from Yale University, Goodman began one of his busiest summers in recent memory—playing many of the major jazz festivals in Europe and the United States, including a Carnegie Hall reunion with former bandmates Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton, to kick off Kool-New York.

Two months prior to the reunion, Goodman was seated in a box at Carnegie Hall—the site of his ground-breaking 1938 concert—for the hall debut of Richard Stolzman, hailed by the *New York Times* as “one of the world’s premiere clarinetists.” After the main portion of the program, which featured works by Debussy, Messiaen, Brahms, and Weber, Stolzman concluded his recital by playing a medley in tribute to the man to whom the concert was dedicated—Benny Goodman. Ironically, though Goodman has commissioned some of the most important pieces in the modern classical clarinet repertoire, Stolzman played *Night And Day*, *Clarinade*, *Goodbye*, and *There’ll Never Be Another You*—because, although Benny Goodman has had a distinguished career in classical music, he is one of those rare artists whose work in a popular idiom is of such high caliber that it has had an influence on the classical arts. Among the very few others who that could be said about are Goodman contemporaries James Cagney and Fred Astaire.

A few days earlier, Benny Goodman, in white shirt and tie, greets me in his Manhattan penthouse apartment with apologies for sitting amidst a pile of papers—he is sorting his mail, he explains. The walls of the apartment are filled with paintings by the world’s modern masters—a Vlaminck oil of a clarinet hangs over the mantle—and there are various mementos in the way of framed photographs on the windowsill and baby grand piano.

After several phone conversations—one to apologize to somebody for being unavailable on the day they’ll be in town (“I’ll be in Pittsburgh, of all places . . . and then I’ll be in Atlanta, of all things . . .”), another to arrange for delivery of a coffee table—the King of Swing asks an unseen secretary to hold all calls and turns his attention to the interview. He speaks in a raspy whisper, punctuated with a throaty, hearty laugh that causes his eyes to form diagonal slits behind his trademark horn-rimmed glasses. The conversation begins with a question about (what else?) swing.

Lee Jeske: There seems to once again be a renewed interest in “The Swing Era”—with young bands playing the hits of the ‘30s and ‘40s. . .

Benny Goodman: I suppose you have to say that there is something basically good about the music. You have to say that there’s some



quality to it—not to brag about it. I was talking to my granddaughter and she said there’s a place called the Red Parrot now where they’re having a big swing band, and she tells me that there are more people dancing during the swing music than there are during the rock.

And then there’s the interest in schools. They’re interested in the whole history of it. There are so many students of music now who are reading about that era. We forget, really, that it was almost a half-century ago.

I’m on a music committee at Yale and I hope to be working out there. I went up there the other day and here were these undergraduates—What age are they? 18 to 20, something like that—and here I am, 73, and telling them how to play. Ha-ha-ha. Come to think of it, in

BENNY GOODMAN

BENNY GOODMAN



Goodman in DC with pianist John Bunch and guitarist Chris Flory.

retrospect, it's funny. And they were very attentive—they look up to it. The point I'm making is, it seems to me that when we started we wouldn't listen to anybody who was 40 years older than us. We thought, "He should be dead and buried." Isn't it true?

LJ: What do you feel you can tell them?

BG: I think I can try and show them how to make music. I think I put a great deal of effort and time in learning how to *interpret* music. I think it's a great idea to pay attention to a lot of detail in music, or anything you do in your life.

LJ: Would you advise an undergraduate at Yale who wanted to play jazz to get a good classical training, or would you say, "If you feel an inclination to play jazz, just go play it."—like Scott Hamilton has done?

BG: Well, I think Scott Hamilton is a very talented young man—he's a throwback to what we like. I say we—I presume you like that kind of thing, too. On the other hand, he doesn't read very well. Well, I think it's silly that he doesn't read. It's too bad that he couldn't be thrown into an environment where he had to read.

That happened to Vico Musso, who just recently died, when he joined me. I heard him play—he auditioned and played *Rose Room*. He came up and played about 10 choruses, and I said, "That's great, you're hired." And the next day I told Hymie Schertzer, who was the first saxophone player, to get the saxophones together and run over some pieces, so that Vido would have an idea about the book. I think I was playing tennis, or something like that, and I came back and saw Hymie with this dejected face—he absolutely looked like somebody died. I said, "Well what's the matter, what happened, how'd it go? Did you get through the pieces?" He said, "Benny, he can't read . . . he can't read the *newspaper*." But, you know, I hired him. So he came in the band and he played. I don't know what the hell he did—he just watched the notes. If they went up, he went up . . . if they went down, he went down. He had a good ear and he learned how to read.

To answer your question: I don't think it does any harm to get any kind of formal education—scales and things. It just never leaves you.

LJ: There are a lot of people, like Vido Musso, who learned to read . . .

BG: Afterwards.

LJ: Right. And eventually some of them became fairly good readers.

BG: That all depends on the training one has had. When I first started, I had terrific training about transposition—we had to do those things. When I played around with Arthur Schutt and Dick McDonough, we played these little radio shows with, maybe, seven men, and we had

stock orchestrations and they had singers and we had to play whatever key *they* were in. It would be, "We have to play this a third lower and when we get to the first ending transpose the second bar a tone higher and then we'll go back to the original key." And you had to do it—after once or twice you'd get it again, and you had a pencil with you all the time so you could mark everything. So when I got a band, being used to that kind of training, I did it with my band. And I drilled it into them that this is what had to be done to keep it organized.

LJ: But, of course, you had a fairly good classical training, didn't you?

BG: Oh yes, I think I did—over the years. I sought it out.

LJ: I was reading an article recently in *The New Yorker* about Leonard Bernstein, written by his brother. His father, like yours, was a Russian Jewish immigrant, but his father was very much against Bernstein's going into music as a career. All the musicians he had heard in the *shtetl* were the *klezmerim*, who used to be like high-class beggars—roaming from town to town to earn their living. Yet, from what I understand, your father greatly encouraged your career. Isn't that so?

BG: Yeah, he loved music. On the other hand, it wasn't the ultimate to be a musician then—a doctor, a lawyer, even then. I think I remember that beneath all this he thought, "It's just temporary. Eventually he'll come to his senses and be a lawyer." Ha-ha-ha.

My father really loved music and we used to go to band concerts in the park. He felt it was always nice to have—whether we did anything with it or not, I don't think he had the slightest inclination—he just thought it was good to have something to do with music, that's all. He'd like the idea that the three boys would get together and play; he was quite proud of it.

LJ: Who made the most impression on you in your early playing days?

BG: I think in those days, the black players like Jimmie Noone. And the Original Dixieland Jazz Band—that was Larry Shields. I can still play his chorus on the *St. Louis Blues*. And Leon Roppolo, who was with the New Orleans Friar's Inn Society, or whatever the hell it was called. And Louis Armstrong . . . all those people.

LJ: Bix Beiderbecke . . .

BG: Oh, of course. We played together; I was just sort of accidentally thrown in with him on a boat—we played from Chicago to Michigan City. He was everything they said he was.

LJ: Was there any chance of anybody helping Bix before he died, or was it just hopeless, really?

BG: I guess you can say it was hopeless. Look at Bunny Berigan. What a waste—a talent like that. Just listen to that record of *Marie*—what trumpet playing.

LJ: Is it true that despite your appearance on Bessie Smith's last record date, you never really cared much for her?

BG: No, I didn't. I still don't. I heard John [Hammond] play records of her 50 years ago. I'd listen to one record and that would be enough. I never heard any real quality in that. I don't know—maybe it was the culture coming out in me. I didn't see any culture in her. Ha-ha-ha.

LJ: We're always reading about John Hammond's incredible discoveries. Did he ever send you to hear anybody who was just plain awful?

BG: Oh sure he did, sure he did. I don't think it makes very interesting reading, but there's no doubt about it.

LJ: He had something to do with getting you to use Fletcher Henderson as an arranger, didn't he?

BG: Yes. Fletcher was always having trouble with his band. He was a lovely, sweet man, but the worst businessman in the world. And I think his personal life was kind of mixed up, and he couldn't even handle that very well. When he was on the road, the bus would break down. And the manager he had wasn't the best. Of course, in those days, I don't think the blacks got the treatment they were supposed to—on the other hand, maybe the whites didn't get the treatment they were supposed to. And so Fletcher disbanded for a while, and John said, "Gee, he's a great arranger." And, luckily, we got some of the arrangements which he had already used with his band.

LJ: How important was that, ultimately, to your success, in your eyes?

BG: Terrifically, terrifically important. Of major importance. It's awful hard to realize because, on the other hand, we had Spud Murphy and Dave Rose. But I just loved Fletcher's arrangements and still do. They're still magnificent arrangements, so how can you measure that?

LJ: When you asked Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton to go on the road with you—two blacks with an all-white band—did you feel like a pioneer?

BG: No, I never did feel like a pioneer in that kind of thing, because I was used to playing with black people. I grew up with black people in the ghetto in Chicago, went to school with them, studied with them with my clarinet teacher, Franz Schoepp. We used to play duets at the end of the lesson—when the next student came in he'd play a duet with the one who was leaving. I think Buster Bailey was one of his students, and Jimmie Noone might have been, too. So I never had any feeling about that at all.

LJ: But it was fairly adventurous for the mid-'30s.

BG: I guess it was. When Lionel joined the band and the people heard that we did have blacks in the orchestra, we'd let everybody know, and if they didn't want it, well that was the end of that. We wouldn't go down there to protest and so forth. That would have been pearls before swine.

LJ: You must have received some hate mail.

BG: I suppose we did, but we just ignored it. We even went to Dallas, Texas and played. I remember Lionel and Teddy were a little scared about it, so they had two state troopers with them—sort of *around*, you know, and taking them home. But there were never any problems.

LJ: From what I gather, you and Teddy are not exactly the best of friends . . .

BG: Oh no, I think we are.

LJ: In John Hammond's book [*On Record*] he describes Teddy as saying that rather than rolling out the red carpet for you at a TV taping you were both involved with, "it ought to be live coals."

BG: Oh really? Ha-ha-ha. As far as John goes, whatever happens is



BENNY GOODMAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

- THE COMPLETE VOLUMES I-VIII—RCA Bluebird AXM 25505/15/32/37/57/66/67/68
 CARNEGIE HALL JAZZ CONCERT—Columbia CL 814/815/816
 KING OF SWING—Columbia OSL 180
 THE GREAT—Columbia PC 8643
 GREATEST HITS—Columbia PC 9283
 PLAYS SOLID GOLD INSTRUMENTAL HITS—Columbia PG 33405
 ALL-TIME GREATEST HITS—Columbia PG 31547
 A JAZZ HOLIDAY—MCA 4018
 THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY—MCA 4055
 LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL—London 2PS 918
 ON STAGE—London 44182
 TODAY—London SPB-21
 A GREAT SOLOIST—Biograph C-1
 CAMEL CARAVAN BROADCASTS—Fanfare 13-113
- 1939-40-41 BROADCASTS VOL. II—Fanfare 19-119
 THE KING—Century CRDD 1150
 ON THE AIR—Aircheck 16
 1946—Jazz Society AA 508
 A JAM SESSION—Sunbeam SB 149
 CHARLIE CHRISTIAN AND . . .—Jazz Archives JA 23
 COPLAND: CONCERTO FOR CLARINET—Columbia MS 6497
 MOZART: CONCERTO FOR CLARINET—Victrola 1402
 BARTOK: CONTRASTS FOR VIOLIN, CLARINET & PIANO—Odyssey 3216022
 WEBER: CLARINET CONCERTO 1&2—RCA LSC 3052
 NIELSEN: CONCERTO FOR CLARINET & ORCH.—RCA LSC 2920
- with Bessie Smith
 THE WORLD'S GREATEST BLUES SINGER—Columbia CG 33

BENNY GOODMAN'S EQUIPMENT

"That's a Buffet on the coffee table." He plays an old custom-made mouthpiece, he adds, and uses Vandoren #2 reeds.



indelible in his mind in only one way. And that's all there is to it. I talk much less furiously about it than I used to. As a matter of fact, a lot of things that John wrote about in that book are absolutely myths.

LJ: But your career is filled with myths.

BG: A lot of fact and a lot of myths.

LJ: One of the more popular ones is that the Swing Era began on the night that you opened at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles in 1935.

BG: Well, the interesting thing about that was that we had a previous success to that in Oakland—that's where our first, sort of, success started. I remember Helen Ward and I walking into the hotel and saying, "We must be in the wrong place . . . there's a crowd in here."

LJ: It was a surprise to you?

BG: Oh yes, completely. And then when we got down to the Palomar, there was quite a good crowd there, and we still weren't quite sure of our bearings or what to do. I think the story is that the program was rather lightweight, and finally we said, "Oh the hell with it, let's go for broke—if they like it, fine, and if they don't, forget it." And they loved it.

LJ: Did you ever feel that all the adulation you received got out of control?

BG: Well, I think there was one particular time I felt that way. It was the first or second time we played at the Paramount and there was so much noise and hoopla in the theater itself that we just couldn't play. I just sat on the stage and said, "As much as you love us, when you're through with your show, we'll go on." That quieted them down. But I think you brought up a good point—that it was beyond me. I remember thinking to myself that anybody who took that kind of a thing seriously is out of his mind—that kind of adulation.

LJ: You feel you handled it pretty well?

BG: Oh yes, I think I handled it pretty well. I think the reason I did was that I was always looking for something else. At that time I was starting to play classical music. I was thinking, "Where do you go from here? What do you do that's a little more interesting?"

LJ: You've commissioned some of the great classical clarinet pieces of the century; you must be very proud of that.

continued on page 59

DR. BACK TO JOHN MAC

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

"I belong to the KKK and the NAACP, I'm a Berkeley student in the John Birch Society. A missile erector, a propaganda collector, a woman selector and a Castro defector, a medical dissector and a States' Rights protector, a professional soldier and a conscientious objector, Hell's Angel member of the Black Panther Party, a communist member since early 1940, a Digger, a Hippie, acid head and a Saint, a Daughter of the Revolution, a Minute Man in war paint."*

That bit of doggerel was recorded back in 1968 by a heavy-lidded, gravel-throated chanter who called himself Dr. John Creaux. Costumed in sequined robe, strings of beads, and a plumed snakeskin hat, the hulking, bearded Dr. John, also known as the Night Tripper, was the self-styled voodoo shaman of the psychedelic generation, a spell-casting, snake-dancing, patois-spouting mystery man whose cajun conceptualism was concocted, seemingly, of two parts Creole gumbo, one part medicinal herbs, and one part Hollywood snake oil.

During the following decade Dr. John's snakeskin gradually molted to reveal his not-so-secret identity as Mac Rebennack, the former teenage tyro of New Orleans recording studio legend. By the time his stature as a veteran pianist, guitarist, composer, arranger, and producer came to be recognized and appreciated, Rebennack's demonic alter ego had become a commercial handicap, but his original hippie admirers had matured to the point of accepting him more for musicianship than showmanship. Hence, his latest album, *Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack*, is a nostalgic solo piano tribute to his Crescent City forebears, musical and familial.

In Mac's case, musical and familial roots are closely intertwined in the culture of his native New Orleans. Even his hoodoo moniker is something of a family heirloom, having once belonged to a flamboyant 19th century spiritualist, the paramour of his great-aunt Pauline. The present Dr. John was born Malcolm Rebennack Jr. in 1941, and was raised in the city's affluent Third Ward. His mother Dorothy was a fashion model, and baby Mac got his first break in show business posing for soap ads. Mac Sr. sold and serviced appliances, including musical equipment, and was a partner in J&M Music, a "race" record distributorship, together with Cosimo Matassa. At the time Matassa also ran the only recording studio in New Orleans.

Exposed to blues and jazz records as a tot, Mac Jr. essayed his first piano boogies while still in knee pants. He eagerly tagged along when his father made the rounds of segregated hotels with his records, or journeyed to area night clubs to repair their sound systems. It was on one of the latter errands that he first encountered Professor Longhair (Roy Byrd); soon the sprouting boogie-child was regularly sneaking out to peer at the pianist's hands through the tavern window. With a little help from Longhair's guitarist, Walter "Papoose" Nelson, he picked up that instrument too, and soon was sharing the stage with musicians twice his age.

By the early '50s Matassa had moved his studio to larger quarters on Governor Nicholls Street; there the pubescent musician would hang out after school. When the sessions had ended for the evening,

the tireless young man would haunt the city's night spots, abetted by lax enforcement of race and age laws, to take in the touring package shows of his pianistic idols, Charles Brown, Amos Milburn, and Ray Charles, as well as local masters like guitarist Smiley Lewis, pianist Archibald, and bandleader Paul Gayten. Soon he landed a steady gig playing guitar with the band of vocalist Leonard James, taking over the group when James departed. Recounts Mac: "We used to work a lot of clubs and backed up about five or six local singers, like Jerry Byrne and Frankie Ford. At that time we had the only [r&b] band in town that could read, and we picked up a lot of work backing up touring acts. The rhythm section couldn't read, but all the horn players could read good, so we could cut the shows."

Largely on the strength of his bandleadership, the 14-year-old Rebennack was hired as junior a&r man for the fledgling Ace Records of Jackson, Mississippi. Ace's founder, Johnny Vincent, had been the New Orleans a&r man for Hollywood's Specialty Records, and his first independent successes were with former Specialty artists like Earl King and Huey Smith. Specialty, like Imperial, Alladin, Atlantic, Chess, and other independent labels, had made extensive use of the house band at Cosimo's studio, which comprised mainly veterans of trumpeter Dave Bartholomew's band. Among these was saxophonist Alvin "Red" Tyler, featured prominently on the hit records of Fats Domino and Little Richard, who became Ace's senior a&r man and Mac's chief mentor.

Rebennack had begun to perform, sub rosa, on studio dates as a substitute for touring guitarists, but it was not until Paul Gayten obtained musicians' union sanction for integrated sessions that Mac could be scheduled legitimately. "At one time," he says, "we just did whatever dates we could hustle. I was like a third- or fourth-string guitar player if it was just something up for grabs. There was Justin Adams and Edgar Blanchard, and you might get in there somewhere after that. Even on my own stuff, I didn't use myself on everything. I used myself on dates rarely, if it was something I could contribute to properly—that's one of the things Red Tyler was schooling."

Among the sessions that Rebennack supervised under Tyler were those of Huey "Piano" Smith, who recorded such raucous Ace hits as *Rockin' Pneumonia And The Boogie Woogie Flu* and *High Blood Pressure*. "I played on some stuff with Huey," says Mac, "but we weren't real partial to guitars; we used guitars more as percussion instruments then. Huey didn't like the rockabilly sound that Dave

*from *The Patriotic Flag-Waver* by Dr. John Creaux, Marique-Joharv, BMI; off the album *Babylon*, Atco SD 33-270.



JAMES F. QUINN

Bartholomew used, with that dead-string guitar, so he tried to key in on the piano. He even used a lot of electric piano back then just to get distortion—get a note out of tune and just bang on it. He was always fishing for sounds. There's some things—you hear them on the records—that sound like a predominance of wrong notes, but it was just little things that Huey would hear. He used a lot of whole-tone things, quarter-tone things, that people weren't fooling around with then, and maybe sneak 'em into one little spot. A lot of people couldn't relate to it, but I always looked at it as being ahead of the times."

During the same period Mac cut an album's worth of instrumental material for Ace, but only one single was released under his name. *Storm Warning*, which featured a hot Red Tyler solo over Mac's Bo Diddley beat, became a regional hit in 1958; the rest of the album remained in the can or was issued with vocals overdubbed. A year later Mac became a vocalist himself, teaming up with Frankie Ford and Jerry Byrne as Morgus and the Three Ghouls on the horror novelty *Morgus The Magnificent*, to which he also contributed a searing guitar solo. "I was just goofing around then," he blushes.

By 1959 he no longer recorded exclusively for Ace. "I started working for their subsidiary labels, and then I worked for other people too, like Ric and Ronn Records, Spinnet Records, Instant Records. There were a lot of local labels operating under one or two distributorships that would do a lot of work." One of Mac's Ronn sessions produced a big hit for Professor Longhair, the enduring Crescent City anthem *Go To Mardi Gras*. He also wrote and produced records for local artists like Bobby Hebb, Johnny Adams, Jerry Byrne, Jimmy Clanton, and his cousin Frankie Ford.

Still a minor, Mac was now established as a member of New Orleans' musical inner circle. Ninth Ward voodoo cultists like Papoose, Jesse (*Ooh Poo Pah Doo*) Hill and Alvin (*Something You Got*) Robinson schooled him in the traditional Creole rituals, and when saxophonist Harold Battiste and trumpeter Melvin Lastie founded their musicians' collective, All For One, Mac was an early joiner. One of the artists on the AFO label was vocalist Lawrence Nelson, Papoose's

brother, who went by the name of Prince La La. Like the future Dr. John, Prince La La performed an exotic hoodoo act in the tradition of the elaborately costumed Mardi Gras "Indians."

Exotic artists were a familiar sight in New Orleans, and not only at Mardi Gras. Drag shows featuring female impersonators had long been tolerated, and classic rock & roll shouters like Esquerade, Bobby Marchan (of Huey Smith's Clowns), and Little Richard—"the Dragon Lady"—began their careers in evening gowns. "It was a real popular thing in the clubs then," avers Mac. "A lot of cats got an opening from that. Black Beauty's and a lot of those joints was the circuit they worked. We used to work gigs around there too; it was a hip circuit. They were better paying gigs and hipper audiences—less rowdy, anyway—than at the other joints we used to work in; at a lot of the joints, man, there were shootings all the time. But it was a real cultural thing at the time. Like Black Beauty used to do that act: 'I'm a woman trapped in a man's body, but I live the life I love and I love the life I live.' The first time I saw that stuff it was like dramatic shit, at least to me, but it lost its glow the more we played those shows."

Around 1960 Mac made another unreleased instrumental album, this time with a quartet that included pianist James Booker, percussionist Richard "Didimus" Washington, and drummer Ed Blackwell. Blackwell, who had previously worked some r&b sessions at Cosimo's, had temporarily returned from Los Angeles, where he had sojourned periodically since 1953 to play with Ornette Coleman.

Rebennack's freewheeling studio career hit the skids in 1962, when the musicians' union began to crack down on bootleg dates. "They had a union stoppage of all the sessions in '63," he relates, "and when that happened, AFO Records pulled out of New Orleans and went to L.A. That's when we really got in a lot of trouble, because we kept on doing sessions, and the union had already told me I couldn't do any recordings for the people I worked for. I kept getting caught, then I'd lie to them and get in more trouble because I lied. One good thing came of it, though—a lot of new studios opened. But the union would

continued on page 58

RECORD REVIEWS

★★★★★EXCELLENT

★★★★VERY GOOD

★★★GOOD

★★FAIR

★POOR

RAN BLAKE

DUKE DREAMS—Soul Note SN-1027: *DUKE DREAMS; SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR; ME AND YOU* (2 takes); *DROP ME OFF IN HARLEM; THE DUKE; BLUE ROSE; IT DON'T MEAN A THING; BLACK AND TAN FANTASY; ANIMAL CRACKERS; SOPHISTICATED LADY; TAKE THE A TRAIN.*

Personnel: Blake, piano.

★★★★★

GIORGIO GASLINI

PLAYS MONK—Soul Note SN-1020: *MONK'S MOOD; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; ASK ME NOW; BLUE MONK; LET'S CALL THIS; LET'S COOL ONE; PANNONICA; RUBY, MY DEAR; EPISTROPHY.*

Personnel: Gaslini, piano.

★★★★★

Duke Dreams, the ice blue and dissonant original which raises the curtain on pianist Ran Blake's tribute to Ellington and Strayhorn, also draws the curtains, in a way. Listening to it and to all that follows (six Ellingtons, two Strayhorns, Dave Brubeck's whimsical and deftly drawn sketch *The Duke*, and *Animal Crackers*, a pop novelty covered by the Ellington Orchestra in 1926), I feel I am attending a seance. I think it is Ellington's shade guiding Blake's fingers as they form chords with one note ominously protruding on *Something To Live For*, or toss unexpected splashes of bright color on to the bleak canvas he has chosen for *Black And Tan Fantasy*, or tickle both takes of *Me And You* to rousing stride finales. But if it is Ellington, it is an apprehensive Ellington we have not encountered before, an Ellington born of Blake's dark speculations on the body of Duke's music—an Ellington finally as real and valuable as any other. And when the record is over, I know that only Blake's hands touched the keyboard, that he is, as the skeptic John Corbit says of the spiritualist Mrs. Henderson in W. B. Yeats' *The Words Upon The Window-Pane*, an accomplished actor and scholar and no medium. But I know too that I could be wrong, just as Corbit was wrong.

What I am more certain of is that this is a haunting and rather remarkable set of performances by a genuine American original. Blake is something of an odd-man-out in contemporary music. A skilled improviser who draws upon the literature of jazz for inspiration, he is not really a jazz musician, for he seems to approach improvisation almost as a classical musician who improvises might—as an interpretive rather than as an expressive function. He is generally written about in language more becoming a man of science than an artist, and while it is true that he tends to regard a song analytically, his playing is hardly cold or uninvolved. He can thrill you with the passion of pure reason; he can give ideas substance, make them seem real and moving. Blake has



GILL SMITHERMAN

gained self-confidence and artistic generosity over the years. His almost rhapsodic, surprisingly literal reading of *Sophisticated Lady* announces that he no longer feels compelled to play devil's advocate with a pretty melody, or to cast it forcibly against tempo and mood as he once was given to doing. And there are moments here where his sly, almost secretive grasp of time convinces me that Ellington had nothing so tangible in mind as a steady four beats to the measure when he declared it didn't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

Just as Stanley Dance might scarcely recognize the Ellington Blake conjures, Ira Gitler might be appalled by Giorgio Gaslini's Thelonious Monk. If Blake is a brooder, Gaslini—an Italian pianist best known in this country for his work with Gato Barbieri and Jean-Luc Ponty—is a builder. Having made a down payment on the house that Monk built, he scurries around its rooms industriously, tapping the walls of Monk's compositions to locate the beams to which he might most securely nail his own inventions. Gaslini often employs devices associated more with new music than jazz—coughs, rustling papers, wind-up toys that play *Frere Jacques*—and his careens across the length of the keyboard and his rummages inside the housing sometimes evoke Stockhausen more clearly than they do Monk. But a muscular rhythmic sense and an almost rustic feel for the blues inform his every note, and I'm pleased to report that his silences and dissonances are punch lines, not portents. Monk the antic spirit takes his place here alongside Monk the self-taught structuralist, and it is especially useful to be reminded of Monk's humor at a time when his recent loss

perhaps tempts us to speak of him in solemn, even pious terms. Gaslini, meanwhile, is a talent to be reckoned with.

Film critic Andrew Sarris recently complained that directors like Paul Schrader and Brian DePalma tend to film revisionist critical essays on the older films they admire instead of creating films entirely their own. I might describe what Blake and Gaslini have done in their respective ways in terms similar to those Sarris uses, but I wouldn't be complaining. These two pianists suggest that much as we revere Ellington and Monk, we have hardly come close to registering their profound impact on 20th century music. And they assure us that Ellington and Monk will continue to serve as models of order and clarity no matter what tortuous directions improvised music might take. —francis davis

CARLA BLEY

LIVE!—Watt/ECM W 12: *BLUNT OBJECT; THE LORD IS LISTENIN' TO YA, HALLELUJAH; TIME AND US; STILL IN THE ROOM; REAL LIFE HITS; SONG SUNG LONG.*

Personnel: Bley, organ, piano, glockenspiel; Steve Slagle, alto, soprano saxophone; Tony Dagradi, tenor saxophone; Gary Valente, trombone; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Michael Mantler, trumpet; Earl McIntyre, tuba, bass trombone; Arturo O'Farrill, piano, organ; Steve Swallow, bass; D. Sharpe, drums.

★★★★★

Carla Bley's music is a brilliant blend of everything—healthy doses of irony, satire, and whimsy combine with a wide streak of romanticism and a raucous, bubbling energy. Bley is a swinging melodist who man-

RECORD REVIEWS

ages to produce highly original work with a sabre-toothed edge; she is one of the most consistent composers currently writing jazz. Sometimes the quality of her work is obscured by the highly theatrical trappings with which she surrounds it, yet she always manages to find just the right players to carry everything off without getting bogged down by their leader's sense of fun and high style. On one hand, it's a wonder the new wave crowd hasn't discovered Bley and hoisted her on its shoulders; on the other, it's equally surprising that she hasn't been lured out to Hollywood to try motion picture scoring. Maybe I should just shut up and be glad—because Bley is a jazzier through and through, and her yearly LPs and occasional tours are always something to look forward to.

Live! is packed with Bley stocks-in-trade—rich harmonies and aggressive soloing. It is a fairly straight album; the biting musical wit is kept mostly at bay. The tunes range from the mellifluous, poppish *Time And Us* to the mildly funky *Blunt Object* to the gospel-drenched *The Lord* . . . (which features some testifying trombone work from Valente over Bley's fill-the-cathedral organ work) to the somewhat plodding *Song Sung Long*. The combinations of trombones, tuba, and french horn (along with the organ) give the album that deep, sonorous quality that characterizes much of her writing. Yet the album falls short due to the similarity of the solos. Valente and Dagradi, who have much of the solo space, are frenetic, raunchy players and, at times, one yearns for a bit better pacing—they heat up too quickly. Mantler and Swallow are gentler players, but their opportunities to run with the ball are infrequent. Slagle falls somewhere in between—usually ending up on the more gritty side. Apparently, that is what Carla is looking for from her players but, on this album anyway, a little more variety would have been nice. In the past she has had players who have brought different textures to the band and whose personal styles were able to stand out strong and clear, here everybody seems to fit a little too snugly into Bley's musical frame of mind. —lee jeske

IRAKERÉ

CHEKERÉ SON—Milestone M9103: *CHEKERÉ SON*; *QUINCE MINUTOS*; *LA SEMILLA*; *LA COMPARSA*; *CAMAGUEY*; *CHA CHA CHA*.

Personnel: Chucho Valdés, piano, organ, keyboard bass; Paquito D'Rivera, alto, soprano, baritone saxophone, clarinet, flute; Carlos Averhoff, tenor, soprano saxophone, bass clarinet, flute; Jorge Varona, Arturo Sandoval, trumpet, valve trombone, percussion; Carlos del Puerto, bass, bass guitar, tuba; Carlos Emilio Morales, guitar, alto saxophone, fliscornio; Enrique Plá, drums; Jorge Alfonso, tumbadora, bata drums, percussion; Oscar Valdés, tumbadora, bata drums, paila, bongos, percussion, vocals; Armando Cuervo, Cuban percussion, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

Cuba's Irakeré has performed some of recent

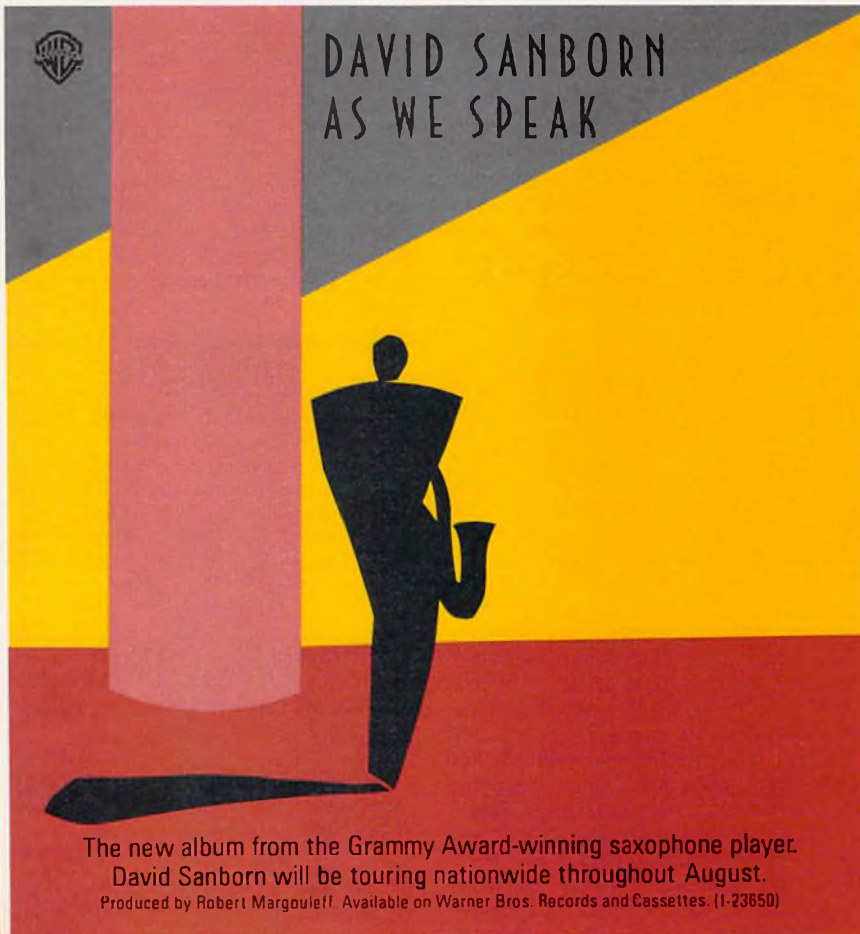
years' most creative funky music. Blending awesome technique and broad knowledge with ferocious groove instincts, the 11-piece group incorporates Afro-Cuban traditions, jazz, funk, pop, and a touch of rock. Quality bands such as Tower Of Power provide a quick, general comparison, but Irakeré is far more ambitious and accomplished. Their commercial, danceable music also offers considerable depth and substance to "serious" listeners.

Irakeré debuted in '79 with a rave-reviewed, eclectic, improvisational set recorded live at Newport and Montreux. Their second effort, 2, was heavily influenced by disco; their latest release, *Chekeré Son* (recorded three years ago), leans more towards mainstream pop, recalling the Chicano group Malo. The opening title track is an extended jam. Sax, piano, and guitar all riff loosely over heavy, polyrhythmic latin percussion, creating a rambunctious street corner mood. Once the groove is set, Paquito D'Rivera makes a lusty, vibrant thematic statement on baritone sax, answered by vocal whoops and interjections from percussionist Armando Cuervo. The brassy theme is quickly restated, then ascending accented chords lead into a long, linear tenor solo. Eventually the spotlight shifts to keyboardist/band leader Chucho Valdés. His casual, swinging

workout is anchored by popping bassist Carlos del Puerto, who's virtually soloing himself. Meanwhile, various other instruments make random comments, creating an overlapping, layered effect not unlike that of dixieland. Rowdy vocals and a theme refrain are followed by guitarist Carlos Moralés, wailing in Santana fashion; there's a final baritone blast before the game is called at 10 minutes, with gusto to spare but no harmonic/melodic climax.

Sweaty dancers get some welcome relief as Oscar Valdés croons sweetly on *Quince Minutos*. His warm, mid-range delivery becomes a rap, in the middle, while D'Rivera preaches in the background a la Junior Walker. The combination of D'Rivera's intensity with sophisticated charts transcends the simple pop format. *La Semilla* shows Perez Prado's big band influence in its frenetic arrangements and intricate rhythms. Valdés' smooth lead vocal alternates with gritty ensemble singing that's accompanied by percussion only. Latin roots are also evident on the infectious, hook-laden *Camaguey*.

Jazz sales being what they are, Irakeré is obviously eyeing the more lucrative latin market. Taste and intelligence notwithstanding, this can't help but narrow their stylistic scope. Pick up the explosive debut set, *Irakeré*, to appreciate the band's full vigor



DAVID SANBORN
AS WE SPEAK

The new album from the Grammy Award-winning saxophone player. David Sanborn will be touring nationwide throughout August. Produced by Robert Margouloff. Available on Warner Bros. Records and Cassettes. (1-23650)

RECORD REVIEWS

and ability. But *Chekeré Son* is well worthwhile, too, especially for those just discovering latin music. —ben sandmel

HEATH BROTHERS

BROTHERLY LOVE—Antilles 1003: *A SOUND FOR SORE EARS; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; NO END; LIFE IN THE CITY; HOMES; REJOICE.*

Personnel: Jimmy Heath, tenor, soprano saxophone; Percy Heath, bass, baby bass; Stanley Cowell, acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes, Oberheim synthesizer; Tony Purrone, guitar; Akira Tana, drums; Rubens Bassini, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BILL BARRON

JAZZ CAPER—Muse 5235: *JAZZ CAPER; SPRING THING; UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE; NEW LOVE; ONE FOR BIRD; HOPPIN' AND SKIPPIN'; FLIP FLOP.*

Personnel: Barron, tenor, soprano saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Jimmy Owens, trumpet; Buster Williams, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BARONE BROTHERS

BLUES & OTHER HAPPY MOMENTS—Palo Alto Jazz 8004: *DOUBLE TOE; BEEF STEW; ESTATE; OTHER HAPPY MOMENTS; SONG FOR OUR FATHER; ALMOST BLUES.*

Personnel: Mike Barone, trombone; Gary Barone, trumpet, flugelhorn; Tom Scott, Lyricon; Dick Spencer, alto saxophone; Teddy Saunders, piano; John Heard, bass; Shelly Manne, drums; Alex Acuna, percussion.

★ ★ ★

There have been many jazz groups that featured brothers, from the Dorseys to the Breckers and on to Wynton and Branford Marsalis. The closeness of the relationship fosters an intimacy—and sometimes a rivalry—that is often clearly audible in the music. That fraternal cohesion is evident on these three albums.

The Bill Barron album was not conceived as a "brother" effort, but the inclusion of Kenny Barron could hardly have been accidental. Kenny is known and respected among musicians for his taste and understanding as an accompanist, as well as for his chops as a soloist. He excels again in a supportive role on *Jazz Caper*, which represents the first album release for saxophonist/composer/educator Bill Barron in more than 15 years. (Curiously, the album was recorded in mid-1978 but not released until this year.)

Bill Barron is a professor at Wesleyan University, and the tunes he wrote for this album are all thoughtful compositions. They fall loosely into the bop idiom, but avoid clichés with unusual structural and harmonic twists. Barron plays with a full, hard-edged saxophone sound, and he solos with excellent control and understanding, if not care-free abandon. Structure is the key word throughout the album, with the individual players subordinating their work to the overall architecture of the music. That is the great

strength of *Jazz Caper*, but also its only real flaw: things sound just a bit too well-calculated, a little too careful.

Blues & Other Happy Moments is a very different album, but it has a similar problem. Mike and Gary Barone are experienced L.A. studio players and composers, and their tunes are lighter than Barron's, leaning toward latin grooves and simple structures. They are excellent technicians, but their album betrays excessive concern with the surface of the music. Everything is so smooth and glossy it shines, although pianist Teddy Saunders labors mightily to give the music some bite. His jagged, bittersweet phrases consistently enliven tunes that otherwise sound just a little too much like TV themes. The album's best moments aside from Saunders' work come from older brother Mike, who brandishes a tone that any trombonist would envy. Gary is less confident, and he has some difficulty making a convincing statement on *Beef Stew*, a straightahead Bb blues.

The Heath Brothers seem to have found the right combination, a stylistic groove that falls squarely between the academic bop of the Barrons and the slickness of the Barones. Best of all, there is a real spark to their music. Live, the Heath Brothers have always been very appealing, but their albums—until now—have never quite captured this feel. Their tunes are accessible, even catchy, yet still substantial as compositions. And Jimmy Heath's strength as an arranger really shines here: whether creating a backdrop for a solo or recasting *Autumn In New York* in a new light, Jimmy is right on the mark. His playing—always a model of taste and intelligence—is positively effervescent. *Brotherly Love* really captures the essence of the Heath Brothers as a cohesive working group. Maybe that's why this is their best album so far—or maybe it's a question of fraternal psychology. —jim roberts

TIM BERNE

SONGS AND RITUALS IN REAL TIME—Empire Productions EPC 60K-2: *SAN ANTONIO; THE UNKNOWN FACTOR; ROBERTO MIGUEL; NEW DOG/OLD TRICKS; SHIRLEY'S SONG; THE MUTANT OF ALBERAN; FLIES; THE ANCIENT ONES.*

Personnel: Berne, alto saxophone; Mack Goldsbury, tenor, soprano saxophone; Ed Schuller, bass; Paul Motion, drums.

★ ★ ★

SAHEB SARBIB

UFO! LIVE ON TOUR—Cadence Jazz Records CJR 1008: *ONE FOR MO; EGYPT; UFO; BETWEEN C & D.*

Personnel: Sarbib, bass, piano, shenai; Mark Whitecage, Daunik Lacro, alto saxophone; Martin Bues, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

Here we have two quartets stretching out in live performance with all the freedoms won first in the late '60s—two reed-players front

free-rhythmic bass and drums in both cases; Berne's band works off modes, ostinatos, and odd-metered, fairly tight heads which tend to lose their distinctions until they return as tails, while Sarbib's foursome lets brief motifs be nothing more than reference points for extended variations. The resulting musics are similar: both albums sound like ESP Disks with cleaned-up production values. Not bad for independent labels—Berne's is his own (and the package is really good looking), while Sarbib enjoys his third release from the folks who bring us *Cadence* magazine.

The sets differ on matters of spirit. Berne's friends play with the utmost sobriety, as often befits ritual but somewhat limits song. *San Antonio*, first foray of the two-fer, opens with bells and rattles, the bass sawing softly, the horns coming out and down front together. "It is our duty to inform you that for the next 20 minutes—or 80, if you're really patient—you will be listening to an artfully harmonized dirge bespeaking serious compassion for the human condition, as suggested by the sublime films of our first dedicatee, Akira Kurosawa, and the souls of our West Coast colleagues Roberto Miguel Miranda and Alex Cline. . . ." No one says this, no one has to. The bass joins the two keening saxes in threnody, and Motian sticks around airily. So it goes over four sides.

Berne himself is a capable altoist, fuller of breath than imagination here; he seldom rests, or crafts a statement out of a controlled series of thoughts—instead, the music courses on, as it possibly suffuses his being. Goldsbury has his moments, usually on tenor rather than his thin and flat soprano, employed mostly to shade the altman. There's a lot of trilling around pedal points, relieved when one of the saxophonists finally breaks free. Schuller's final solo is moving (though he has the habit, re-asserted by several players lately, of humming along with himself). Motian's pulse is right on top of the count, so that rather than pushing, his gesture is to pull off his kit at the swing point. Overall, I like this band best as it goes out—by the end of their rituals they've adjusted to each other's energy levels, and made accommodations so as to reach a nice peak, and hush. This is Berne's fourth album, his first two-fer, and contains the chart for his '78 tune *Flies*, if you'd care to play along.

Sarbib is more mysterious than Berne. In the liner interview, Sarbib won't tell Bob Rusch about his background, or where this quartet did its "50 or 60" tour gigs, or where his big band is regularly heard. But it's his playfulness, which is also apparent in his band, that inspires this attitude. Recorded in March of '79, the two altoists have fun sizing each other up, and are inspired to combine in outrageous textures or interact through melodic variation. *One For Mo* and *Egypt* aren't overly structured, but *Between C & D*, written for drummer John Betsch, is a sunny afternoon stroll down lower Manhattan streets Sarbib calls "crazy and deadly." The saxes

sound at home there. Bues, the percussionist, is a new name to me, quite capable and occasionally explosive—he matches Sarbib's bass playing brightly. When the ensemble makes really weird noises on *UFO*, they've got a concrete image to create, rather than a vague mood to conjure.

Sarbib's bass work is not profound, but it is cogent; he's not given to lengthy arco solos, or even shorter pizzicato spots alone. It's like he thinks he's got a band; they might quote Monk, they might take off on bop, the saxists might tongue and honk and twist in some Middle Eastern manner, but basically they're all playing urban American music, jazz, and not claiming it's any other sort of religious rite, or art. Good for them, and better for us, too.

—howard mandel

DIZZY GILLESPIE

MUSICIAN-COMPOSER-RACONTEUR—Pablo Live D2620116: *MANTECA; CON ALMA; S.J.K.; NIGHT IN TUNISIA; BROTHER KING; BODY AND SOUL; TANGA; OLINGA.*

Personnel: Gillespie, trumpet, percussion, narration; James Moody, alto, tenor saxophone, flute; Milt Jackson, vibes; Ed Cherry, guitar; Mike Howell, electric bass; George Hughes, drums.

★ ★ ★

THE GIANT—Jazz Man JAZ 5017: *STELLA BY STARLIGHT; I WAITED FOR YOU; GIRL OF MY DREAMS; FIESTA MO-JO; SERENITY.*

Personnel: Gillespie, trumpet; Johnny Griffin, tenor saxophone (cut 4); Kenny Drew, piano; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums; Humberto Canto, congas.

★ ★ ★ ★

AND THE DOUBLE SIX OF PARIS—Philips EXPR-1034: *OW; THE CHAMP; EMANON; ANTHROPOLOGY; TIN TIN DEO; ONE BASS HIT; TWO BASS HIT; GROOVIN' HIGH; OO-SHOO-BE-DOO-BE; HOT HOUSE; CON ALMA; BLUE N' BOOGIE.*

Personnel: Gillespie, trumpet; James Moody, tenor saxophone (9,11); Bud Powell (1-8,10,12), Kenny Barron (9,11), piano; Pierre Michelot (1-8,10,12), Chris White (9,11), bass; Kenny Clarke (1-8,10,12), Rudy Collins (9,11), drums; Mimi Perrin, Claudine Barge, Christiane Legrand, Ward Swingle, Robert Smart, Jean-Claude Briadin, Eddy Louise, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Pablo two-record set is new and from the 1981 Montreux Jazz Festival. *The Giant* was recorded in Paris in 1973 and originally received a four star rating from Dan Morgenstern (*db*, 11/11/75). Leonard Feather awarded five stars (*db*, 3/12/64) to the Philips album, which was recorded in New York, Chicago, and Paris in 1963.

Time has not dimmed the earlier ratings, but has tarnished the brilliance of Dizzy's horn. On the Montreux performances, his execution is sloppy and he does not hit the high notes clearly. His time and ideas remain nonpareil. Even flawed Dizzy is interesting and fun. Record two (the last four cuts) of the Montreux set is tighter—less rambling—than record one. Moody's tenor feature, *Body And Soul*, focuses on patterns and speech-like articulation, and is exciting. Gillespie plays warm, muted trumpet on the other three tracks. On the first four cuts, Moody's alto squawks and soars in askew Bird-flight.

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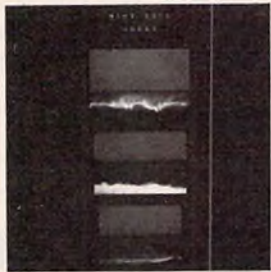
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RECORD REVIEWS

Mike Nock*



Ondas ECM 1-1220

☼ "(Mike) Nock has a remarkable sensitivity for intense compositions, outstanding for their clear thoughtfulness" (*Audio*, Germany). Joining pianist Mike Nock on *Ondas*, his ECM debut recording, are drummer Jon Christensen and bassist Eddie Gomez.

James Newton*



Axum ECM 1-1214

☼ "This recording is simply outstanding... the music swings, becomes gentle, and turns very aggressive. Recommended without hesitation." (*Music Connection*). "...an important statement for (Newton), for the flute and for the new music as a whole." (*Jazz Line*). *Axum*, the first ECM recording from flutist James Newton.

John Surman*



The Amazing Adventures of Simon Simon ECM 1-1193

☼ "Unrestrained delight! Teamed with Jack DeJohnette in a superlative duo format, the British reed player/synthesist has unveiled a brilliant and sundry canvas of musical temperments, ranging from delicate to furious... Record reviewers shouldn't be paid to critique music this wonderful!" (*down beat*).



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Everywhere, Jackson is sanctified—blues-drenched, with that beautiful touch and sound. Cherry invokes Wes Montgomery: a true compliment. Howell and Hughes flow and slosh loosely. (Have you ever noticed how the rhythmic intensity of *Manteca*, *Con Alma*, and *Night In Tunisia*, among other Dizzy staples, has become cooler in recent performances?)

The Giant presents a well-stocked, earthy Diz. The rhythm section is a rich carpet, with Pedersen's bass resonating like the great mother-fundamental. Clarke's beat is springy and bop-definitive. Drew drives, spins, and sparkles in a mood-setting, empathetic manner. On the ballads *I Waited* and *Serenity*, Dizzy is fat and sensitive. On *Stella* and *Girl*, he bounces and swings emphatically. The latin *Fiesta* has a high, tumbling yet masterly solo by the leader and soul-flurried turn by Griffin. Pedersen solos high and fast and never outruns a full tone. Clarke's brushes are particularly appropriate to the Jamalish feeling on *Girl*. Four stars for a clean, well-miked session.

The Philips album is an indispensable part of Dizzydom. There are three founders of bop (on all but two cuts), a strong French bassist (ditto), the dazzling expertise of the Double Six, and Lalo Schifrin's big band-sounding charts. The second combo is no slouch, either.

Gillespie makes everything he reaches for. Powell's decline had begun at the time of this recording, but you can sense the story behind his epigrammatic lines. Clarke is the perfect drummer for Dizzy. The Double Six are sometimes 12 (via overdubbing), sometimes six, and sometimes smaller combinations (with Perrin as soloist), but always stellar. Perrin's French lyrics are the universal language of bop. Unalterably five stars.

—owen cordle

Laurie Anderson

BIG SCIENCE—Warner Bros. BSK 3674: *FROM THE AIR*; *BIG SCIENCE*; *SWEATERS*; *WALKING & FALLING*; *BORN*, *NEVER ASKED*; *O SUPERMAN (FOR MASSENET)*; *EXAMPLE #22*; *LET X = X/It TANGO*.

Personnel: Anderson, vocals, Vocoder, keyboards, percussion, electronics, violins, marimba; Roma Baran, keyboards, glass harmonica, accordion; Bill Obrecht, alto saxophone; Peter Gordon, clarinet, tenor saxophone; David Van Tiegham, drums, percussion, marimba; Perry Hoberman, bottles, flute, piccolo; Rufus Harley, bagpipes; Richard Cohen, Bb, Eb, bass clarinet, bassoon, baritone saxophone; George Lewis, trombone.

★ ★ ★ ½

Laurie Anderson has been gathering a strong reputation over the past few years in the realm of performance art. She combines visual, sound, and text media in live performances of her *United States I-IV*, an extended, ongoing, and constantly changing composition that takes Anderson's acute perceptions of American life and dissects them with a minimalistic, dry humor. Anderson's style

evolves from the self-dialog techniques of Ken Nordine, a master of taking the ordinary and transmuling it to the bizarre. *Big Science* is a *How Are Things In Your Town?* for the '80s, except that Anderson has a better pulse on the musical development of her observations. Like her talk/sung dialogs that twist back on each other, her music is based on the minimalist cycles of Glass, Reich, and Riley. Her stark arrangements make use of zombie marching bands or simply her own voice, as on the circular breath loops of her cult hit, *O Superman*.

Big Science, constructed from excerpts of *United States I-IV*, examines a process of growing cultural alienation that transfers to vinyl with limited loss of impact. *From The Air* opens the odyssey with the proto-typical airline captain matter-of-factly reciting a litany of "Place your trays in their upright, locked position. . . ." eventually turning into a Simon Says game until you are informed, in Anderson's cool delivery, to jump out of the plane. There is no pilot. The album has just begun and already you are rootless.

The longer pieces of *Big Science* seem to work best in their slower, Escher-like journey through Anderson's modern American archetypes. The main riff of *O Superman* consists of eight minutes of Anderson breathing out (not in) in a continuous loop. Using a Vocoder to change the pitch of her voice and spread out its harmonics, Anderson creates a Kafkaesque environment of dislocation amidst Marshall McLuhan's electronic global village of answering machines, faceless vehicles, distant parents, and voices we hear, but do not know. The title track develops an anonymous American town of shopping malls, freeways, and sportscenters, ironically intoned over the ritual cycles of an American Indian rhythm.

Like Philip Glass, whose music crosses from classical to rock through his use of electronic keyboards, Anderson has also merged high art with pop consciousness. But where Glass's music resonates over the years, Anderson's is dependent on current cultural landmarks. As she says in *From The Air*, "This is the time. And this is the record of the time."

—john diliberto

İLHAN MIMAROĞLU

STRING QUARTET NO. 4 ("LIKE THERE'S TOMORROW")—Finnadar SR 9033.

Personnel: Beaux Arts String Quartet (Charles Libove, Richard Sotromme, violin; Lamar Alsop, viola; Charles McCracken, cello); Janis Siegel, vocal.

★ ★ ½

This string quartet with "voice obligato" by the Turkish-born contemporary composer İlhan Mimaroglu is a setting of political poems translated by the composer from the Turkish of Nâzım Hikmet (1902-63). Though the composer does not acknowledge any intimate musical connection, the *Quartet No. 4* recalls Arnold Schönberg's *Second Quartet*.

continued on page 32

Synthesized Winds Of Change

JACK TAMUL: *ELECTRO/ACOUSTIC* (Spectrum Records SR-134) ★ ★ ★

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *SATAN'S SERMON AND OTHER ELECTRONIC FANTASIES* (CRI SD 443) ★ ★ ½

Laurie Spiegel: *THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE* (Philo Records 9003) ★ ★ ½

GEORGE LEWIS: *CHICAGO SLOW DANCE* (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 11011) ★ ★ ★

KLAUS SCHULZE: *TRANCEFER* (Innovative Communications KS 80014) ★ ★ ★ ★

KITARO: *SILK ROAD VOLUMES 1 & 2* (Kuckuck Records 2LP 051/052) ★ ★ ★ ★

MICHAEL GARRISON: *PRISMS* (Windspell Records WS 112881) ★ ★ ★

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE: *MAGNETIC FIELDS* (Polydor Records PD-1-6325) ★ ★ ★ ★

CRAIG LEON: *NOMMOS* (Takoma Records TAK-7096) ★ ★ ★

SYNERGY: *AUDION* (Passport Records PB-6005) ★ ★ ½

IF MUSIC IS THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE, then the synthesizer may become the first instrument of the global village. Within it lies a dual capacity: to transcend cultural boundaries by creating a musical dialect of new sounds and structures, and by assimilating already existent musical traditions. These records represent a sampling of the first generation of musicians to actually grow up with synthesizers. The names of Zawinul, Herbie Hancock, and Keith Emerson may be more familiar as artists who top readers and critics polls in the synthesizer category; however, they are relative dabblers who employ the synthesizer merely as a glorified organ—one of many tone colors in their keyboard arsenals. The musicians in this article have all found the synthesizer to be a gateway to new sounds, forms, and a distinctly universal and 20th century expression.

It was the academic and classical composers of the 1940s and '50s such as Otto Luening, Pierre Henri, and Edgar Varese who first exploited the technology that created a new basis for hearing, composing, and performing electronic music, placing an emphasis on intellectual and emotional expressiveness rather than manual dexterity. This initial rush of exploratory zeal and wonder was soon submerged, however, in an atmosphere of ivory tower elitism. In the beginning only universities and other institutions could afford synthesizers. As the instruments became cheaper and more accessible, the academics were outdistanced by the fresh fervor of individuals who attacked the synthesizer like a teenager with his/her first electric guitar. The academics retreated to a realm of intellectual sterility in which the synthesizer was used for conceptual experiments that had less to do with music than with putting square pegs into round holes. For example, Swedish composer Ragnar Grippe finds himself in a typical quandary in explaining his *Musique Douze* as "an attempt to oppose instrumental sounds to their electronic equivalents, and thus to apply different conse-

quent functions to specific sequences." The meaning gets lost in transit.

Jack Tamul is among the new artists with "legitimate" credentials trying to move beyond this sterility to create personal visions. *Electro/Acoustic* merges the natural sounds of a choral group or accordion with synthesizers and tape manipulation techniques. By blurring the distinction between these sounds, Tamul moves his music to a spiritual level past theoretical considerations. For instance, *Genesis* is a textural blend of droning electronics and a tape-treated chorus. The effect formed is of being in the middle of a Buddhist chant as synthesized whips of wind create a movement and ascend towards an infinity of time. The all-electronic *Fantasia* descends like sirens from the sky, gradually coalescing around an organ cycle reminiscent of Terry Riley's *A Rainbow In Curved Air*.

Satan's Sermon And Other Electronic Fantasies is a collection of four composers from similar academic traditions as Tamul, who illustrate many of the popular impressions of electronic music. **Thomas Well's** *11.2.72, Electronic Music* is a rushing collage of jet sounds filtered, processed, and recombined into a multiple-Doppler effect—like being in the middle of O'Hare's runways at peak hour. **Daria Semegen** forms a synthesized environment on *Spectra*. Sound is placed in space with pinpoints of light and darkness shimmering with an increasingly agitated percussive metallic gleam. Like much of this music, it's more interesting to read about than to actually listen to it. The centerpiece of the record is **George Todd's** *Satan's Sermon*, a two-part exposition depicting a hellish cauldron of sound. Bending glissandos, metallic slashes, and whining feedback careen across bass tones that quake from the floor. Todd orchestrates gripping tension using sustained feedback to hold the piece suspended, then crashing through with stuttering rhythms and ripping masses of sound that crescendo into a piercing scream of sirens.

Composers of meditative music have always been fascinated by synthesizers because of their ability to produce pure tones and controlled harmonic overtones for an indefinite length of time. LaMonte Young's *Theatre Of Eternal Music* was among the first to exploit this with a simple sine wave generator that played for days. On *Satan's Sermon*, **Jan Greenwald's** *Duration 2* uses a computer and Buchla synthesizer for a similar effect of long droning lines passing through each other. Compared to Young's success with this music on a primitive level of sophistication, Greenwald's attempt amounts to an abuse of technology.

Laurie Spiegel's LP debut is also wired in to the advanced technology of computer synthesis. The imperceptible movement of *The Expanding Universe* reveals an Eastern conception of time in which the revolution of a planet on its axis isn't measurable even when

scaled to the movement of the universe. Hence, the sidelong title piece layers sparse sustained lines, similar to Greenwald's *Duration 2*, but with warmer tones. It works as meditational and ambient music, but all of the computer programming seems more trouble than it's worth. Wendy Carlos discovered that the synthesizer's sequences and capacity for precise intonation were perfect for unfolding the inner logic of contrapuntal relationships on her *Switched-On Bach* (Columbia MS-7194) recording. Spiegel uses many of the same techniques with the added precision of computer programming for an electro-plated harpsichord that spins out four-part cyclical inventions on *Patchwork*. It shares many similarities with the work of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and David Borden in what might be referred to as 20th century Baroque.

Trombonist **George Lewis** and synthesist **Richard Teitelbaum** are best known for their playing with avant gardists such as Sam Rivers, Anthony Braxton, and Musica Electronica Viva. *Chicago Slow Dance* is typical of the music they've made, in using electronics to thread together evocations of African and Eastern ritual music. *Slow Dance* drifts through movements of dialogs, solo meditations, and frenetic exchanges. Teitelbaum creates an obliterating backdrop of electronic castanets to contain the reed squabbling of Douglas Ewart and J. D. Parran on musette and nagaswarum respectively. They then switch to bass clarinet and baritone saxophone for a mournful call-and-response with Lewis' tenor trombone that recalls the grumbling of Tibetan trumpets. Teitelbaum is one of the few synthesists who can interact freely and in real time with traditional instruments. His electronics are subtly used for misty environments that link this pan-cultural music together.

The biggest pitfall of many artists in the academic tradition is a grim austerity, an absence of enthusiasm, ecstasy, awe, or even a sense of mission or purpose in their music. It has fallen to artists who have ignored this tradition and learned about the synthesizer on a grassroots level, to place these elements back in the music. As in every artistic movement, there is one person who stands out in the same way as Coltrane, Hendrix, or Bach. **Klaus Schulze** is an artist of wide renown in Europe, but is little known in the U.S. He spent his formative years in the late '60s playing guitar and drums in German acid rock groups, eventually becoming a founding member of Tangerine Dream and Ash Ra Tempel in their pre-synthesizer days. Schulze switched to the synthesizer in the early 1970s and forged a unique and widely influential style often associated with "cosmic" and "space" music. Looking back over the course of Schulze's 16 albums, *Trancefer* can be viewed as a further advancement in his steady musical evolution.

continued on page 45

RECORD REVIEWS

tet, which includes a soprano setting of verses by Stefan George. Indeed, Mimaroglu's quartet often sounds like the early atonality of Schönberg, though lacking his structural complexity. It also recalls the dark sonorities of Bartok's early quartets, without his folk-inspired vigor; but perhaps its austerity of hue most resembles Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 14*, a somber orchestral setting of poems on death, though without the Russian's subtly varied textures and, of course, the expanded palette of the orchestra.

Quartet No. 4 is terribly somber, with a singleness of emotion not so much overwhelming as oppressive. Mimaroglu's melodies, which hover between tonality and atonality, are plaintive rather than aspiring, rarely rising above the deepest registers of the string quartet. Not the first violin, but the cello is most in evidence here, playing tunes of commiseration rather than yearning. Except for a brief martial interlude, the music is monochromatic, melodically and harmonically monolithic, an effect which, in the course of a half-hour, becomes inevitably turgid.

This is not necessarily due to a failure of the composer's musical imagination. The music, after all, perfectly suits the anger and despair that dominate the political themes of the

poems, which are luzzy abstractions about oppression and the disenfranchisement of the individual in our century. This is a didactic work; although the composer calls the voice part *obbligato*, it is actually the instruments of the quartet that are *obbligato*, serving mainly to illustrate the poems, sometimes sung and sometimes spoken. The music is effective enough as illustration, but its subject—the poetry—is undistinguished and abstract, having (for all I know) suffered badly in the translation from Turkish to English. In any language, however writing like this is simply bland: "But when will it be/That no one will be hungry in our world/That no one will fear anyone/That no one will command anyone/That no one will censure anyone/That no one will steal anyone's hopes?"

The best feature of this record is the singing of Janis Siegel (yes, of Manhattan Transfer), for whom the work was written. Despite undistinguished lyrics, her richly jazz-inflected singing plays a tender foil to the merciless instrumental material. Siegel negotiates the difficult vocal writing, much of it conceived in wide interval leaps as a kind of loose bluesy serialism, with a sensitivity that reminds one of Lorraine Cousins on Charles Mingus' *Weird Nightmare*. In fact, remote as it is from the world of Manhattan Transfer, this album will probably be of interest to hardcore

Siegel fans.

The Beaux Arts String Quartet, in the opinion of the composer, has delivered a "definitive" performance here. Given the bleakness of the composition, with its murky integrity of mood, the instrumentalists' task is formidable: to realize what meager variation of texture the music allows. They succeed in this, as do the Finnadar engineers, who have recorded the piece impressively.

—alan axelrod

KIP HANRAHAN

COUP DE TETE—American Clave 1007: *WHATEVER I WANT; AT THE MOMENT OF THE SERVE; THIS NIGHT COMES OUT OF BOTH OF US; INDIA SONG; A LOVER DIVIDES TIME (TO HEAR HOW IT SOUNDS); NO ONE GETS TO TRANSCEND ANYTHING (NO ONE EXCEPT OIL COMPANY EXECUTIVES); SHADOW TO SHADOW; SKETCH FROM TWO CUBAS; HEART ON MY SLEEVE.*
Personnel: Hanrahan, percussion, voice (cuts 1-3, 6, 8); string synthesizer (8); Daniel Ponce, Jerry Gonzalez, Nicky Marrero, percussion (1-3, 5, 7); Anton Fier, Ignacio Berroa, drums (2, 5, 6); Lisa Herman, voice (3, 5, 7); Chico Freeman, tenor saxophone, clarinet (1, 2, 4, 9); Carlos Ward, alto saxophone (2, 4, 7, 9); George Cartwright, alto saxophone, flute, piccolo (1, 3, 4); Byard Lancaster, flute, wooden flute (3); Bill Laswell (1, 3, 4, 7), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (2, 5, 6), electric bass; Arto Lindsay, George Naha (2, 3), Bern Nix (6), Fred Frith (7), electric guitar; Don Um Romao, percussion (7); Carla Bley, piano, voice (4); Orlando DiGirolamo (Lanny Day), accordion (4, 9); Billy Bang, violin (4); John Clark, french horn (4); Angel Perez (6), Gene Golden (6, 8), percussion; John Stubblefield, tenor saxophone (6); Carlos Mestre, congas (8); Michael Mantler, trumpet (8); Cecil McBee, bass (9); Teo Macero, tenor saxophone (9); David Liebman, soprano saxophone (9); Victor Lewis, drums (9).

★ ★ ★ ★

JOHN GREAVES/ PETER BLEGVAD

KEW. RHONE.—Europa JP2004: *GOOD EVENING; TWENTY-TWO PROVERBS; SEVEN SCENES FROM THE PAINTING "EXHUMING THE FIRST AMERICAN MASTEDON" BY C. W. PEALE; KEW. RHONE.; PIPELINE; CATALOGUE OF FIFTEEN OBJECTS AND THEIR TITLES; ONE FOOTNOTE (TO KEW. RHONE.); THREE TENSES ONAMISM; NINE MINERAL EMBLEMS; APRICOT; GEGENSTAND.*
Personnel: Lisa Herman, vocals; Greaves, piano, organ, bass, vocals, percussion (7); Blegvad, vocals, guitars, tenor saxophone (5); Andrew Cyrille, drums, percussion; Mike Mantler, trumpet, trombone; Carla Bley, vocals, tenor saxophone (1, 7); Michael Levine, violin, viola, vocals (9); Vito Rendance, alto, tenor saxophone, flute; April Lang (5, 8), Dana Johnson (2), vocals; Boris Kinberg, claves (5).

★ ★ ★

Imagine, if you can, "Michael Franks meets Ornette Coleman," and you are close to the concept of Kip Hanrahan's *Coup De Tete*. Then throw in some mod new wavers and



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avant gardeners for good measure.

The beatniks used to do something like this, didn't they? Hanrahan accompanies himself on percussion as he sings/talks his prose. (There are a half-dozen other percussionists present, and they do outstanding work throughout the record.) Hanrahan's lyrics have sensual and political overtones—he writes of love affairs in oblique terms, and takes a potshot at the oil magnates at one point. Lisa Herman is quite impressive in her vocal performance here, giving sultry, sexy readings. She has a smooth polish to her tone. On *This Night Comes Out Of Both Of Us*, Herman rides gentle melodies over Bill Laswell's solid bass groove and the thoroughly smart drum work. The flutes of George Cartwright and Byard Lancaster and guitars of Arto Lindsay and George Naha create strong tension with their unprompted colorings.

Jamaaladeen Tacuma sets the tone for *At The Moment Of The Serve* with a melody-stretching bass riff. Scratching guitars send out echo-tinged blasts. Carlos Ward and Chico Freeman enjoy the harmolodic freedom, offering subdued, searching solos that fit compactly around Hanrahan's vocals. Hanrahan seems on the verge of laughing through much of his recitation, maybe because he so enjoys throwing unexpected hooks to his listeners. *India Song* sounds like a Parisian cafe, thanks to the accordion work of Lanny DiJay, the piano and husky voice of Carla Bley, and some nice violin filler by Billy Bang. No one sounds out of place here. *Shadow To Shadow* builds to a strong climax. Herman breathes, "It's almost as if we could have both yes and no," as Dom Um Romao and Anton Fier pound out a huge rhythm, and Fred Frith and Lindsay create discordant guitar landscapes. Mike Mantler's sustained trumpet notes color the haunting *Sketch From Two Cubas*.

Producer Hanrahan deserves a great deal of credit in making this ambitious session happen. There is a delightful urgency, both compelling and calming, about *Coup De Tete*. It is one of the truly romantic records I've heard recently.

Kew. Rhone. is the 1977 creation of former Henry Cow members John Greaves and Peter Blegvad. The British art-rock invasion here meets Bley, Mantler, and the Grog Kill Studio gang. While Hanrahan's *Coup De Tete* sounds fresh off the streets, *Kew. Rhone.* sounds fresh out of the conservatory.

This album is a visual experience as well as an audio one, with Blegvad contributing jacket artwork corresponding to his lyrics. Blegvad's tongue is firmly in cheek as he offers the instructional and informative *Twenty-Two Proverbs*, *Catalogue Of Fifteen Objects And Their Titles*, and *Nine Mineral Emblems*. Lisa Herman is programmed a bit more extensively than on the Hanrahan record, as the music here is so much more rhythmically structured. Herman's vocalese is convincing, though she does whatever each song calls for, even sounding foolish at

times with Blegvad's more ridiculous words.

There is humor and a sort of cabaret feeling in *Kew. Rhone.*, but there is also some very serious playing. Mantler's trumpet and trombone work is rich in body, and his soloing is distinctive. He blows from hot to cool on (*The Lady's Assertion*) from *Pipeline*, a spry latin groove that also features some of Herman's most steadfast vocals. *One Footnote* is decidedly bouncy and joyous in the vein of the Art Ensemble. This session catches Andrew Cyrille in some very splashy playing. Though the arrangements keep him from stretching out in his grooves, he does get to do some quick, creative thinking.

Let no more be said before mentioning John Greaves. He has composed and arranged these vignettes, and certainly has put more than enough on paper to keep all his musicians busy. Listeners will be busy trying to keep up with it too. Greaves' work on keyboards and bass, like Blegvad's on guitars and vocals, seldom stands out in any way. Ultimately, I enjoy the concept and applaud the effort of *Kew. Rhone.*, but in real terms I liked side one, and began to get a little bored by the time side two was finished. This one suffers from its stiffness.

—robin tolleson

PEE WEE RUSSELL

THE PIED PIPER OF JAZZ—Commodore XFL-16440: *JIG WALK; DEUCES WILD* (2 takes); *THE LAST TIME I SAW CHICAGO* (2 takes); *ABOUT FACE* (2 takes); *TAKE ME TO THE LAND OF JAZZ* (2 takes); *ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE* (2 takes); *KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW* (2 takes); *D.A. BLUES* (2 takes).
Personnel: Russell, clarinet; Joe Sullivan (cuts 1-7), Jess Stacy (8-15), piano; Sid Weiss, bass (8-15); Zutty Singleton (1-7), George Wettling (8-15), drums.

★★★★★

COLEMAN HAWKINS

JAZZ REUNION—Jazz Man JAZ-5042: *If I COULD BE WITH YOU (ONE HOUR TONIGHT); TIN TIN DEO; MARIOOCH; ALL TOO SOON; 28TH AND 8TH; WHAT AM I HERE FOR?*
Personnel: Hawkins, tenor saxophone (1,2,4-6); Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Bob Brookmeyer, trombone (1,2,4-6); Emmett Berry, trumpet (1,2,4-6); Nat Pierce, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; Jo Jones, drums.

★★★★★

Pee Wee Russell, the Trad mainstay who was "adopted" by modernists late in the 1950s, succeeded updating a cliché-ridden instrument into a vehicle for purely emotional expression. Russell employed a malleable as taffy tone to make roller coasters of most every solo: diving deep into *chalmereau* it would surface with handfuls of Old Muddy, then switch to gauzy truculence, or blare high-pitched wails proposing (Albert) Ayler astringency until he squeezed them into a 12-bar structure. No clarinet sound could match

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his for personality, humor, and just plain *bite*.

The Pied Piper Of Jazz assembles 15 performances including seven alternate takes from the two Commodore sessions led by the clarinetist. Luckily for Russellians, Condon's Mob sat these two out. The trio sides waxed in 1941, on which Russell, Zutty Singleton, and Joe Sullivan united as the Three Deuces, pour straight doses of "hot" and blues (no chaser). The 1944 Hot Four session adds bass and new rhythm but subtracts somewhat the adrenal force of its counterpart. Russell held down the front line alone at both dates, and with the Deuces especially his passionate, iconoclastic playing stands as naked as it ever got captured on record.

Singleton and Sullivan were ideal accompanists. Sounding like nothing so much as Zutty's "mice in the walls," *About Face's* blink-quick cowbell, crackling wood block, and spitting cymbal demonstrate just how to pack hooks into a drum solo. One soon realizes the magnitude of influences at work here: an African "talking drum" strain (*Deuces Wild*, both takes) that hints at the ancestry of Ed Blackwell's style, wedded to a penchant for pleasing accentual detail that predicts the work of contemporary colorists such as Barry Altschul. Joe Sullivan lends grittiness to the proceedings. Called "Teddy Wilson with brass knuckles" in John McDonough's liner notes, the striding, boogieing pianist is just that—a back-alley pounder with a ballerina's sense of form; a craps shooter poised on haunches at Versailles. He clears the decks for action (note *About Face's* introductions) with stomping rhythms of Chicago in the 1920s, eight-to-the-bar forever young.

The Deuces session ranks as an unqualified classic not only for the superlative interplay of Singleton and Sullivan, but also for the leader's choice stepping. The 1944 sides produced solid performances in comparison, more reserved but still flowing with musical invention, as Russell's spiky out-chorus on *D.A. Blues* clearly establishes.

Another welcome reissue, *Jazz Reunion* teamed Russell with Coleman Hawkins 32 years after their collaboration on 1929 discs by the Mound City Blue Blowers. Framing a jam session format, the wispy but effective charts of Nat Pierce leave generous blowing room over four standards and two Russell originals. The freedom is put to maximum use by swing veterans "Papa Jo" Jones, Emmett Berry, and Milt Hinton, as well as Bob Brookmeyer, Pierce, and the two principals.

No shotgun wedding, this reunion has partnerships that really gel. *If I Could Be With You (One Hour Tonight)* revisits a chestnut from the original Blue Blowers session. Russell's schoolboy-shy melodizing on the ensemble causes the "break-in and entry" of Bean's blustery tenor solo to be all the more astounding; following Berry's muted essay, Russell's tender break woos the title "you" by an opposite route. *Mariöoch*, a slow blues dedicated to (Mrs.) Mary Russell, features the clarinetist all the way communicating the tartness and ecstasy of his art. The first half taken submerged and breathy, the song gathers volume and definition of line as Russell progresses, eventually spitting out notes to the gutbucket's very brink.

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RECORD REVIEWS

Throughout *Jazz Reunion* the listener will hardly need reminding these are the living statements of improvisers perennially young, never the curious testaments of old men in their decline. Thank God for reissues: these albums beg to be worn out through unremitting replays! *Pied Piper*, moreover, may be the year's best "jazz on the rebound" (*Reunion* certainly wins honorable mention).

—peter kostakis

DAVID FRIESEN

STORYTELLER—Muse MR 5255: *CAROUSEL*

PARADE; PATHWAY; SPIRIT LAKE; CLOUDS; STORYTELLER; DANCE OF LIFE.

Personnel: Friesen, bass; John Stowell, guitar, 12-string guitar; Paul McCandless, oboe, english horn; Gary Hobbs, drums; Tom Harrell, flugelhorn (cuts 2,5,6).

★ ★ ½

GALLERY

GALLERY—ECM 1-1206: *SOARING; PRELUDE; A LOST GAME; PAINTING; PALE SUN; EGRET; NIGHT RAIN.*

Personnel: David Samuels, vibraphone, marimba; Michael Di Pasqua, drums, percussion; Paul McCandless, soprano saxophone, oboe, english horn; David Darling, cello; Ratzo Harris, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

DAVID FRIEDMAN

OF THE WIND'S EYE—Enja 3089: *MR. CLOSE; FONQUE; FOR NOW; A SWISS CELEBRATION; FOUR IN ONE; A UNICORN IN CAPTIVITY, PART II.*

Personnel: Friedman, marimba, vibraphone, percussion; Jane Ira Bloom, soprano saxophone; Harvie Swartz, bass; Daniel Humair, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

A softer side of jazz has crept onto the scene over the past decade; it contains folk and country elements, has wholesome flavors of natural grains, contains more humors of air and water than earth and fire, and is intellectual rather than visceral. The Winter Consort and Oregon are its forebears. The style has no formal shape or boundaries, but has loose adherents and influences far and wide: West (Friesen), Midwest (Pat Metheny), East (Double Image). To some degree, conceptually, it reacts calmly to bebop and black blues tradition, bringing in country blues, Eastern modes and instruments (sitar, double-reeds); it uses as much 6/8 as 4/4 and other meters, has a gently bucolic air and pleasantly soft-edged fervor. These three albums have emerged as second generation out of that embroidered canvas bag; each maintains its share of elegance, innocent sophistication, and melodic freshness. Yet each takes his own tack: Friesen trying the two-horn front line he's not recorded with for some time; Gallery an arranged, ensemble approach; Friedman a loose-limbed, back-to-

bop urbanity.

Friesen early on played bebop bass (jamming with Johnny Griffin and Art Taylor in Paris, later with modern players like Woody Shaw, Joe Henderson, George Adams, and Ted Curson), but he emerged as leader born again with gentle and beautiful original songs and textures. His longstanding and delightful duo with John Stowell (well documented on *Inner City*, as were his larger, bell-clear ensembles) is here fleshed out to quintet, which consequently diffuses the pair's intensity and verve. After the *Inner City* magic, this Muse sounds muddy, hasty, unfocused. Reedman McCandless—one of the main voices of the soft school's urban groups—sounds curt and restless; hear his inconsequential peeping over the strong vamps on *Clouds*, pretty enough in the hands of Stowell and Friesen. Guest flugler Harrell sounds tacked on; no wonder, since two of his features are hurried—the boxed-in title tune and the unsettled *Dance Of Life*. Of all Friesen's careful, ringing work as leader, this is one of the less integral and less memorable efforts, less due to his own fine playing and a couple of good tunes than to lack of group jell (Hobbs often seems bumptious and superfluous) and murky mix.

McCandless is the pivot man between *Storyteller* and *Gallery*; he sounds much more in his element in the latter's airborne environs. *Gallery* and *Of The Wind's Eye* chart the continued collaborations of the two halves of Double Image, the provocative, exotic mallet quartet that ran from 1977-80. Samuels and Di Pasqua made up its gentler side, Friedman and Swartz its funkier one. *Gallery's* string section is the fine bassist Ratzo Harris and cellist David Darling, who worked long with Paul Winter (1970-78) and recorded well with Oregon's bassist, Glen Moore. The album has an uncanny ability to soar; from the outset Samuels lays down a Steve Reichian vamp foundation of lily pads for all sorts of swallow flights by the group. Ensemble textures are glorious (cello, bass, marimba, english horn at points) and indeed are paramount. Salient solos are few, but McCandless spreads his wings on *Pale Sun*, and Darling bows manfully on *A Lost Game*. A couple of melodies are magnificent (*Egret*, *A Lost Game*), but arrangements are stressed as insistently as a chamber orchestra (*Painting* is a still landscape) and more room for individual stretching would have been welcome. Di Pasqua's superb, light double-time lifts the whole ensemble: hear his featherweight cymbal triplets and bell tree on *Egret*, his brush hiss on *Night Rain*. This quiet, interior music is full of luminous joy and dance.

Friedman's date is the most straightahead, changes-based, and earthy of the lot. He provided the angles and grit of Double Image; he and mate Swartz bare their bluesy latin streak and streetwise chops. They perform as trio with Bloom, and a most expansive, exploratory, hard-listening triumvirate it is. Daniel Humair, however, the legendary

Swiss timekeeper, woefully underrecorded in this country, threatens to steal the show (much as Di Pasqua did in *Gallery*). Four Friedman originals show deft touch, variety, pacing, humor: *Mr. Close*, a marimba callypso, and *Fonque*, a slow, slithery latin number, both use mallet recitatives to optimum effect; *For Now*, an extraordinarily poignant ballad with tremendous warmth from the leader, and *Celebration*, featuring a percussion whoop-up, show off the guests in high relief. All is loose and brisk, confidently played. Sound and balance are excellent. Monk's *Four In One*, a brief joy, explores further Friedman's penchant for acute angles (he soloed *Trinkle Tinkle* years back). Bloom's *Unicorn* is a dashing showstopper, wound tight and timed to explode. Bloom cultivates a capacious, walk-in sound which immeasurably enhances ensembles, and Swartz has unique presence and solo capability; it seems a sad blind spot not to have afforded them more than one or two brief solos.

—fred bouchard

GARY LEFEBVRE

QUARTET—Discovery DS-849: *AUTUMN SHADES; SOME OTHER TIME; FOOTPRINTS; WALKIN' THE SUNRISE; WINDOWS; MILESTONES.*

Personnel: LeFebvre, tenor, soprano saxophone; Kei Akagi, electric piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Frank Butler, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

LANNY MORGAN

IT'S ABOUT TIME—Palo Alto Jazz PA 8007:

FRIENDS AGAIN; JITTERBUG WALTZ; KOKO; IT'S ABOUT TIME; EASY LIVING; BAGATELLE; ACAPULCO HOT.

Personnel: Morgan, alto, soprano saxophone; Don Rader, flugelhorn (cut 4); Bruce Forman, guitar; Lou Levy, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Nick Ceroli, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Forty-eight-year-old Lanny Morgan, one of the current members of Supersax, airs an early Art Pepper influence. In Morgan's hands, this boils down to West Coast bebop alto par excellence. Forty-three-year-old Gary LeFebvre is more eclectic, calling on the spirits of Warne Marsh, Oliver Nelson, Stan Getz, and John Coltrane to catalyze his post-bop originality. Both attended high school in California and have been West Coast big band and combo fixtures. Both are consummate technicians, and both are also older than the average record leader debutante. This gives them a certain maturity, which is easily detected in their repertoire, balance of improvisational logic and emotional excitement, and leadership.

Though very good, the LeFebvre album is slightly less successful because of the timbral limitations of Akagi's electric piano (the instrument, not the player who is hip and sequential-neat throughout) and Vinnegar's narrow solo range (mostly middle-to-low register walking, although he does uncork some

fine variations on *Windows*). Butler is frisky and holds himself and the group together well.

But one tends to focus on the leader's overdubbed saxophone harmonies (cuts 1,3,4, and 6), sumptuous and beautiful held soprano notes on *Some Other Time*, Oliver Nelson-like fluidity on the same instrument on *Milestones* (why does this tune always feel so nostalgic and free no matter who plays it?), flying Trane soprano on *Footprints*, Marsh-wan tenor inflections and phrasing on *Walkin' The Sunrise*, and bop/neo-bop tenor on *Autumn Shades* (*Leaves* really) and *Windows*. He is a warm, interesting modern saxophonist who shares a keen flair for linear construction with his influences.

Morgan's album boasts his supple, bluesy, clean improvising, Forman's amazing Tal Farlow/Jimmy Raney touch and relaxation, Levy's Bud Powell/Al Haig/Bill Evans bop sparseness-yet-completeness, and the light (weight and visual) dance of bassist Budwig and drummer Ceroli. Rader appears on a single cut, the moving minor key title tune, and stays within the scintillating, perky mood.

Koko is hot. *Jitterbug* is an uncluttered alto pas de deux of laidback grooving and brisk double-timing. Forman's long, tumbling melodies and Levy's wistful keyboard touch grace *Easy Living*. *Acapulco Hot* features, in a Spanish mode, Morgan's only soprano outing. The instrument doesn't lend itself to bop as well as the alto, but Morgan plays it skillfully. The remaining performances reflect his alto craftsmanship on familiar (*Just Friends*) and modal changes.

These albums are welcome for their maturity, old/new West Coast melodicism, friendly repertoire, and love of blowing.

—owen cordle

MEL LEWIS

LIVE IN MONTREUX—Pausa 7115: *ONE FINGER SNAP; DOLPHIN DANCE; WIGGLE WAGGLE; SPEAK LIKE A CHILD; EYE OF THE HURRICANE.*

Personnel: Lewis, drums; Dick Oatts, Steve Coleman, Gary Pribek, Richard Perry, Joe Lovano, reeds; Earl Gardner, John Marshall, Simo Salminen, Joe Mosello, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Mosca, Douglas Purviance, Earl McIntyre, Lee Robertson, trombone; Stephanie Fauber, french horn; Jim McNeely, piano; John Lockwood, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

MELLIFLUOUS—Gatemouth 1006: *BLUE NOTE; GIVING WAY; AUDREY; I'M OLD FASHIONED; WARM VALLEY; JOHN'S ABBEY.*

Personnel: Lewis, drums; Oatts, reeds; Mosca, trombone; Marc Johnson, bass; McNeely, piano.

★ ★ ½

Mel Lewis deserves a lot of credit. When Thad Jones departed from the States, he not only left the big band that he co-led with Lewis without his co-leadership, he left it without its front man and chief composer/arranger. When Mel recovered from the shock of that departure, the logical thing for him to do was pack the band away and go back to free-lancing—he is, after all, a vibrant big band drummer and one that a number of leaders might have been glad to

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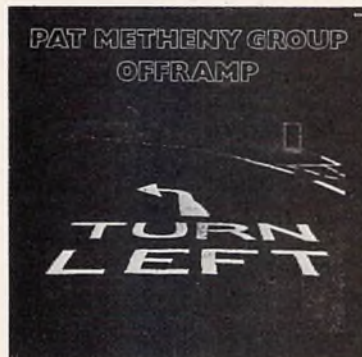
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have behind the traps. But Mel persisted—he wanted that band, even if it meant taking the full share of responsibility for leading it and going to outside sources for arrangements. Judging from the Montreux date, recorded in 1980, Mel has things fairly firmly in hand.

The Montreux album is made up entirely of Bob Mintzer's arrangements of Herbie Hancock compositions. Mintzer is a first-class arranger who shares Thad Jones' subtle harmonic sense. He has fashioned five Hancock originals into impressive and forceful big band charts. The players seem well-rehearsed and cohesive, and the recording is crisp and clear. Surprisingly, much of the elan that was so important in the old band is still present—there is a power that comes through on this album, and it is very clear that Lewis' scintillating and breathless cymbal work is keeping the coals hot.

Eye Of The Hurricane and *Wiggle Waggle* display the band's ability to stomp and roar, while *Dolphin Dance* shows its ability to play prettily and lushly. In other words, this is fine, fine big band work all around. If there is a problem it's that while Mel's band is blessed here with good charts and strong ensemble work, it is not blessed with particularly earth-shaking soloists. This is a young band and one that would have been better served by much, much shorter solos. There are lively and exciting solos by Pribek and Lovano, but they are just too damned long. And Dick Oatts, who has most of the solo space here, just is not developed enough to carry the load. His endless explorations are repetitious and pointless. He can easily sustain a chorus or two but, at this stage, is incapable of carrying the burden of principal soloist. There isn't a chart here that is shorter than seven-and-a-half-minutes and the longest one is nearly 12. Mel would be well-served to tighten up each number so it has enough solo space to show off the players without giving them the chance to over-stay their welcome. This is all that keeps *Live In Montreux* from being one of the most impressive big band albums in quite a while. But, even at that, it's a hell of a good album.

Unfortunately, *Mellifluous* has most of the first album's bad points, but few of its strengths. Four of the five players present here are on the big band LP, with only bassist Johnson a recent addition. Basically, this is a rather bland, indistinctive album that is not bad by any means, but is quite ordinary. Again, Lewis is the flame-fanner, but he and Johnson are so over-recorded as to make all the other players sound muddy. Johnson's high-toned bass and Lewis' cymbals are front and center, and rather than setting a strong foundation, they obliterate the other three players.

Dick Oatts is the main soloist and, again, he suffers from distended playing. Much of his work here is endless wandering—his *Warm Valley* feature shows little distinctiveness or sense of pacing. His most impressive work is his first soprano chorus on Bud

Powell's blues, *John's Abbey*; it's only a two-chorus solo but by the second Oatts already seems to be tuckering out. Jim McNeely, normally a resourceful soloist and accompanist, similarly goes on too long here without much to say. Only trombonist John Mosca is impressive, combining a quick mind with equally quick staccato passages. Whenever he steps forward, he perks things up, but it is too rarely.

Basically, run-of-the-mill stuff in an over-used format: two horns and rhythm. It's workmanlike, but there's too much of that already glutting the jazz record market.

—lee jeske

GLENN BRANCA

THE ASCENSION—99 Records 99-01-LP:

LESSON NO. 2; THE SPECTACULAR COMMODITY; STRUCTURE; LIGHT FIELD (IN CONSONANCE); THE ASCENSION.

Personnel: Branca, Ned Sublette, David Rosenbloom, Lee Ranaldo, electric guitar; Jeffrey Glenn, electric bass; Stephan Wischerth, drums.

★ ★ ★

HENRY KAISER

ALOHA—Metalinguage ML-109: *THE SHADOW LINE; WHAT THE DEAD MEN SAY; CHRISTMAS ON BEAR MOUNTAIN; 945; THE EMPTY SET; TWENTY-FOUR EYES; THE INVISIBLE HAND; JOAQUIN MILLER; ALOHA GAMERA; LYNN'S MAD MONEY; ALOHA SLACK KEY; THE BOOK OF JOEL; PALE FLOWER; FUTURE BLUES/THE JINX BLUES.*

Personnel: Kaiser, electric, acoustic guitars, electric bass; Bob Adams, Scott Colby, electric, bass guitars; Erling Wold, electric guitar; John French, drums; Greg Goodman, piano.

★ ★ ★

Superficially, the music of Henry Kaiser and Glenn Branca is at least as far apart as their geographical locations, California and New York respectively. But both artists use the electric guitar in very unconventional ways to seek forms that draw on past traditions in order to break them down and rebuild them into something new and wholly individualistic.

Branca uses the devices of rock to forge a music that has less to do with the Rolling Stones than it does with the texture music of the Polish composer Penderecki and the minimalism of Steve Reich. Branca lines up four electric guitars, cranks them up to full volume along with an electric bassist and a plodding drummer, and blasts through a series of repeated rhythmic variations. The unison playing, coupled with the loud volume and close frequencies of the guitars causes several overtone rows to appear, creating aural illusions that simply aren't there on paper. The title track is the most spectacular example of this, as darkly tremulous glissandos, horns, bell chimes, and violins seem to arise out of the murky depths. The clanging chords that introduce *The Spectacular Commodity* are translated into gongs by their

sharp attacks and resonant decays.

Underneath this barrage of chording and overtones, the guitars depart from the dominant pattern and pick out new, short melodic fragments that gradually rise to the forefront in a manner similar to Reich's recent work, *Music For A Large Ensemble*. Though at a glance the pieces appear to be static, they swell and rise relentlessly, building to crescendos that have the heroic quality of rock guitar music without the machismo. On *Light Field (In Consonance)* Branca builds tension with counterpoints of density that are similar to the giant sound of Tibetan trumpets, with their subterranean growls welling up from the earth and fading patterns through each other like a film dissolve. The use of drummer Stephan Wischerth is an erroneous concession to "the beat" of Branca's rock conventions. He thuds along, usually a step behind the pulse, with his occasional rolls tripping over each other trying to get out of the way of Branca's merciless march of guitars.

Branca's rigid guitar orchestrations represent the authoritarian approach to Henry Kaiser's free-improvisational anarchy. At his best, Kaiser is able to translate the feeling of the moment into an aural dialog that is simultaneously experienced by the listener. However, the fact the Kaiser is attempting a new tradition far removed from Western concepts often renders his expressions solipsistic to say the least. Kaiser's preferred format of solo guitar is suited to this, and as such, he has British guitarist Derek Bailey as his most obvious precursor in expanding the guitar's vocabulary. But as the younger of the two, Kaiser's music would not be possible without Jimi Hendrix' re-invention of the electric guitar. Kaiser uses several signal processors, the most evident being a pitch transposer and a digital delay system. Not only do these create a variety of sounds and effects, but they afford Kaiser the ability to play several independent lines concurrently. This is most effective on the sidelong piece *The Shadow Line*, where sustained sirens and banshees wail amidst a chorus of bomb explosions and organ chords. After this frenzy of clashing harmonics, Kaiser brings the music into a quieter space with slow-moving organ drones spilling through each other like rivers of colored molasses. Remember, this is done on one electric guitar.

Kaiser pulls out all the stops on the multi-tracked *Aloha Gamera* and reveals his Asian influences. Sitar strums mutate into drones with kotos and gongs plucking abstracted melodies. A flourish of flamenco picking gives way to a violin backdrop for gamelan-styled percussives that hang suspended between resounding chordal explosions. There are few curves, gentle valleys, or rhythmic devices in Kaiser's work. This is a music of sharp edges, ragged angles, and abridged contours. According to his notes, he considers the fourth side of these records to be related to pop-rock. It may be more structured and feature other musicians and the hint of a melody, but only someone who

has totally lost sight of convention would consider this music related to anything other than itself.

Kaiser has been making uncompromising music for several years now with barely a cult following to show for it. On the other hand, Branca, because he is clearly working with the established conventions of rock and the avant garde, has garnered an instant following and good press among the new music/new wave interface. Ironically, it is Branca's adherence to accepted sounds, and Kaiser's total lack of the same, that limits the scope of their respective musics. —*John Diliberto*

WILD BILL DAVISON

WILD BILL DAVISON—Aircheck 31: *THE BLUES; AIN'T GONNA GIVE NOBODY NONE OF MY JELLY ROLL* (2 takes); *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE; AT THE JAZZ BAND BALL; MANDY; EASTER PARADE; WILLOW WEEP FOR ME; I'M COMING VIRGINIA; DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE FROM ME; OH, BY JINGO.*

Personnel: Davison, cornet; George Lugg, Cutty Cutshall, trombone; Pee Wee Russell, Ed Hall, clarinet; Joe Bushkin, James P. Johnson, Gene Schroeder, piano; Eddie Condon, guitar; Pops Foster, Bob Casey, bass; Kansas Fields, Buzzy Drootin, Cliff Leeman, drums; Jimmy Rushing, vocals.

★ ★ ★

LIVE! MIAMI BEACH, 1955—Pumpkin 111: *BEALE STREET BLUES; JUDY; I'M IN THE MARKET FOR YOU; ROCKING CHAIR; JELLY ROLL; STRUTTIN' WITH SOME BARBECUE; SINGIN' THE BLUES; DIPPERMOUTH BLUES; SQUEEZE ME; I WANT TO BE HAPPY.*

Personnel: Davison, cornet; Lou McGarity, trombone; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Gene Schroeder, piano; Walter Page, bass; George Wettling, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

BUT BEAUTIFUL—Storyville SLP 4048: *AM I BLUE; YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME; I CAN'T GET STARTED; BUT BEAUTIFUL; GHOST OF A CHANCE; I'M CONFESSIN'; A RAINY DAY; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; MEMORIES OF YOU; BLUE TURNING GRAY OVER YOU.*

Personnel: Davison, cornet; Jesper Thilo, Uffe Kraskov, Per Carsten Petersen, Flemming Madsen, reeds; Neils Jorgen Steen, Jorn Jensen, piano; Hugo Rasmussen, Jens Solund, bass; Torben Munk, Lars Blach, guitar; Ove Rex, Kund Ryskov Madsen, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

WILD BILL DAVISON AND EDDIE MILLER PLAY HOAGY CARMICHAEL—Real Time RT-306: *JUBILEE; NEW ORLEANS; SKYLARK; GEORGIA ON MY MIND; STARDUST; RIVERBOAT SHUFFLE; ROCKING CHAIR; ONE MORNING IN MAY; NEARNESS OF YOU; TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE.*

Personnel: Davison, cornet; Miller, tenor saxophone; Howard Alden, guitar; Nat Pierce, piano; Bob Maize, bass; Frank Capp, drums.

★ ★ ½

Wild Bill Davison is one of those cornetists who must make other brass players of his generation lie awake at nights wondering where they went wrong. Because at an age when most of his colleagues have retired to singing, or just retired, Davison continues along pretty much as always playing ripping, rasping, lip-crunching solos full of sweet-and-sour lyricism and just plain fire. These

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four LPs embrace a period from 1944 to the present, and unlike the work of some veteran players, the best records aren't necessarily the oldest.

Wild Bill Davison on Aircheck 31, for instance, comes from that period during the war when Davison was making what are probably the definitive traditional dixieland records of all time for Commodore (consult the CBS/Commodore series XFL 14939 and 15354 for these masterworks). Yet the 1944 V-Disc session on side one here is anything but definitive. The opening *Blues* goes for nine minutes but stops growing fairly early on. There is a playfulness that suggests it was probably a warm-up item. The piano solo is by James P. Johnson, who is unlisted among the personnel. As on *Jelly Roll* and *Honeysuckle Rose*, which follow, there are some admirable parts to be found—Pee Wee Russell and Ed Hall together, for example—but they fail to click in any special way. This is the sort of session that should have been issued in its entirety (three alternates were deleted) for collectors or simply left alone and forgotten. Side two is taken from some 1952 broadcasts from Condon's club in the Village. The ensembles are smoother, with Cutty Cutshall replacing George Lugg on trombone, and with Pops Foster's clanking bass out. One might have hoped for better sound, however. In any case, there are other, more choice Davison performances from this period. When you have them, it will be time for this.

One of them might be *Live! Miami Beach, 1955*. This is a loose-limbed pleasure, catching Davison, Pee Wee, Condon, and the others during one of their most potent periods—the time when George Avakian was producing the wonderful series of Condon albums for Columbia. These numbers lack the cohesiveness of the Columbians, but there's a mischievousness and spontaneity here that's good fun. Unlike the Aircheck LP, the excellent fidelity on this concert recording lets the listeners share the fun rather than keeping them at a distance. Pee Wee and Davison especially are at the top of their form, resulting in an album that, while generally predictable, is a complete pleasure.

We hear quite another Davison as we jump forward 20 years to *But Beautiful*, a 1975 album of ballads that possesses considerable beauty and passion and a sound and texture from Davison's horn that's as broad and rich as ever. Moreover, the spirit of Louis Armstrong soaks through nearly every note he plays, particularly in the spectacular melodrama of *Confessin'*, *Memories*, *Turning Gray*, *Started*—tunes that allow for a big finish. As for the more recent ballads like *Rainy Day* and *But Beautiful*, one normally expects to hear them in a lush, sweet vein. Davison will jar your ear with a strikingly different approach. Their cool melancholy becomes a splashy, throbbing emotionalism full of hot reds and oranges. In stepping away from his regular dixieland niche, Davison's made a very good album. Support is gener-

ally limited to a soft rhythm section, although a team of four reeds provide a welcome underpinning on three cuts.

Davison's most recent album, *Plays Hoagy Carmichael*, might have been equally as successful. The chops are still there as of 1981—no doubt about that—but his pairing with Eddie Miller on tenor produces no sparks at all. Miller's Freemanesque sound is shallow and bland against Davison's pig-iron intonation. As co-stars, no real rapport seems to develop. Davison is a hot player. Miller is not. Nor is guitarist Howard Alden, whose nicely turned solos would be more at home in a Red Norvo or George Shearing group. Contrasts sometimes produce interesting results. Here, however, they tend to run toward a general mismatch. On Miller's solo numbers (*Sleepy People*, *Skylark*) there is a balanced, though uneventful, blend of tenor and guitar as Davison sits out. It's proper, pleasant, but really not very interesting. The numbers are mostly short—three to four minutes—some with split choruses. Nobody plays badly, but no one sounds very interested in doing any real blowing. It just doesn't get off the ground.

—john mcdonough

VARIOUS ARTISTS

FATHERS & SONS—Columbia FC 37972:

TWELVE'S IT; A JOY FOREVER; NOSTALGIC IMPRESSIONS; FUTURISTIC; LUSH LIFE; JUG AIN'T GONE; TIME MARCHES ON; I CAN'T GET STARTED; TRIBUTE TO OUR FATHERS.

Personnel: cuts 1-5—Ellis Marsalis, piano; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Branford Marsalis, tenor, soprano saxophone; Charles Fambrough, bass; James Black, drums; cuts 6-9—Von Freeman, Chico Freeman, tenor saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

Fathers & Sons closes the generation gap. The Marsalis brothers, Wynton and Branford, honor their father by playing his music, bebop. Von Freeman speaks son Chico's language, 1980s jazz, with no accent.

The Marsalis side of the album wastes no time making its point. *Twelve's It*, the first of four compositions by the family patriarch, pianist Ellis Marsalis, opens the album with a fast one-two shot from the horns. The surety with which Wynton Marsalis handles his trumpet and brother Branford his tenor saxophone makes it obvious they are not playing around. This is no nostalgic lark for them. This is serious bebop.

The three Marsalises solo, with varying degrees of success, by paying close attention to the wide-open spaces between notes. The most successful is Wynton. His playing has the confidence his brother's lacks. Where Wynton makes every note count by forcefully making sure every note is heard, Branford shortchanges potentially interesting passages with halfhearted notes. This is particularly evident when he picks up his

soprano for *Nostalgic Impressions* and *Futuristic*. With a light left hand, Ellis Marsalis produces a rather thin line on the piano. But then, composing, not improvising, is his forte. His suite of bebop sketches, *Nostalgic Impressions*, out-Bernsteins Leonard in painting melodic big city panoramas suitable for framing on Broadway.

The Freeman side is clearly more adventuresome than the Marsalis. Von and Chico Freeman take their tenor playing beyond bebop. After the ode to Gene Ammons, *Jug Ain't Gone*, they update the classic tenor duel with *Time Marches On*. The two-theme, double-rhythm work contrasts Chico's cleaner, more forceful, more accessible tone, with his father Von's narrow range of timbres and emotions. Yet, the latter's flattened notes and twisted phrases say as much as his son's efforts.

The best tenor-to-tenor communicating comes on *Tribute To Our Fathers*. The elder Freeman begins his son's song with the big romantic sound of the '40s and '50s. The tone changes as the piece proceeds to a Horace Silver-inspired latin tempo, highlighted by Kenny Barron's extraordinary piano solo recalling the close, Caribbean harmonies of a steel-drum band. After Barron's masterpiece for two hands, the tenor is handed down from father to son. The sound switches from big and dreamy to blunt and strident. Such is the way the torch of jazz passes from one generation to another.

—cliff radel

MAYNARD FERGUSON

HOLLYWOOD—Columbia FC 37713: *DON'T*

STOP 'TIL YOU GET ENOUGH; DÉJÀ VU; HOLLYWOOD; NINE TO FIVE; FOR YOUR EYES ONLY; HERE TODAY; PORTUGUESE LOVE; TOUCH AND GO.

Personnel: Ferguson, trumpet, flugelhorn, Superbone, Firebird, soprano saxophone, baritone horn; David Sanborn, alto saxophone (cut 3); Todd Cochran, keyboards; Denizil "Broadway" Miller, electric piano (8); George Duke (8); Greg Phillinganes (1), piano; Mike Sembello, Lee Ritenour (2,5), Marty Walsh (4), guitar; Larry McNeely, banjo (4); Stanley Clarke, bass, piano (3); Abe Laboriel (4), Nathan East (1,3,7), bass; Ndugu Chancler (1,3,7), Rick Schlosser (2,4-6), Steve Ferrone (8), drums; Alex Acuna, percussion; Pattie Brooks, Marti McCall, Denise Maynelli, vocals (1,2,4,7,8).

★ ★ ½

Maynard Ferguson just can't keep his fingers out of the rock & pop pie. The last 10 years of his career have been spent chasing younger and younger ears, not only because he tours the high school auditorium circuit, but also because he really does seem to revel in the energy and the excitement that young fans give off when their juices are flowing. Maynard's effusive stage mixture of jazz and pizzazz may turn away many jazz purists, but he still manages to get some screamers in his crowds.

RECORD REVIEWS

A little bit of hysteria can be dangerous, and Ferguson often threatens to go overboard in his playing of the trends. Here he has linked up with the rockiest bass player in jazz, Stanley Clarke, who not only produced *Hollywood*, but also played on it, directed it, arranged half the cuts, and contributed composing skills to *Touch And Go* and the title track. In addition to Clarke and the other all-stars listed above, this LP employs George del Barrio, Jerry Hey, Bill Meyers, and others to do the charts; a 12-man brass section full of familiar studio names; and a large string section led by Charles Veal and including Buell Neidlinger on acoustic bass.

Mix this with eight commercial tunes that sink as far as Dolly Parton's cutesy *Nine To Five* and you've got somebody's idea of a hit album. Ferguson rarely fails to be entertaining in the most obvious ways, but "extroverted" has sometimes been too kind a description of his jazz style. And yet, *Hollywood* largely resists the sensationalistic ear-splitting solos that have disrupted some of Ferguson's past music; indeed, MF's horns sound just fine. The brass is beautifully engineered throughout, and one of the album's strong points has to be production quality.

Tunes like Michael Jackson's *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough* and Teena Marie's *Portuguese Love* are decent enough listening, but why recycle them so soon? And in such non-improvisational fashion? In a nutshell, that's the problem with *Hollywood*. Great musicians, brass polished to a shine, but no real use of the imagination. Even Stan The Man Clarke's unbeatable beat has been homogenized right out of the game.

—robert henschen

ART FARMER

LISTEN TO ART FARMER AND THE

ORCHESTRA—Mercury EXP-1020: *STREET OF DREAMS*; *RAINCHECK*; *RUE PREVAIL*; *THE SWEETEST SOUNDS*; *MY ROMANCE*; *FLY ME TO THE MOON*; *NAIMA*; *RUBY*.

Personnel: Farmer, flugelhorn; Tommy Flanagan, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Charli Persip, drums; orchestra arranged and conducted by Oliver Nelson.

★ ★ ★ ½

WORK OF ART—Concord Jazz CJ-179: *RED CROSS*; *YOU KNOW I CARE*; *SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY*; *CHANGE PARTNERS*; *SUMMERSONG*; *LOVE WALKED IN*; *ONE FOR SAM*.

Personnel: Farmer, flugelhorn; Fred Hersch, piano; Bob Bodley, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ½

I'd forgotten how optimistic the early '60s were. Twenty years after its release, *Listen To Art Farmer And The Orchestra* still sounds inspired, despite the degeneration of this swinging, bubbly stuff into Hollywood cliché. Arranger Oliver Nelson forged a commercial music of integrity and intelligence: harmonically bold, angular, full of dovetailing brass suspensions and reeds in close, exposed harmonies. The tandem trumpets and low-

register clarinets on Billy Strayhorn's peppy *Raincheck* take "movie jazz" to a place of classic durability. At times, Nelson gets excited and sophomoric; *My Romance* descends into the dark pretension of out-of-tempo mallets and oboe/trombone pomposity. Coltrane's *Naima* (a bold choice for 1962) squashes the melody with sunset melodrama. But even Farmer's clever, suspense-movie blues, *Rue Prevail*, charms with unpretentious innocence.

Never overbearing or postured, Farmer the soloist rises from his customary matter-of-fact modesty to just the right level of concerto heroism. Listen how he anticipates a note or phrase from the orchestra on the ballad *Street Of Dreams* and the bouncy *Ruby* (another good choice with a brilliant solo). His burnished, fat tone (except on *Fly Me To The Moon*'s ill-advised high D) sports a little buzz Farmer probably regards now as early flugelhorn ineptitude, but which I find attractive for its edge. This record, driven flawlessly by Charli Persip's big band drumming (Polygram omitted the other credits—inexcusable), dates well, sparkling as it does with the life of another era.

Work Of Art, on the other hand, Farmer's latest quartet effort, already feels oddly faded, despite a couple of strong tracks. And not because it's old-fashioned, either; it just lacks inspiration. Farmer's return from CTI to the pure jazz fold is a mixed blessing: I like the old romantic beat, but when is Concord Jazz going to venture from the hackneyed soloist-and-rhythm-section, head-solo-head format and come up with a concept of its own?

Not that Farmer's buttery, lustrous sound, seamless articulation (one would think the horn valveless!), or ability to sift out just the right melody note have diminished: he sounds more refined and composed than ever. Still improvising at a micro-melodic level of sensitivity—a push here, hesitation there, unexpected leaps and scales—his danceable, candle-lit sensibility glows behind the gently swinging *She's Funny That Way*. This is the track I'll play for friends—the ingenious route of eighth notes Farmer takes back to the melody on his 16-bar solo is a model of improvised tension and release. He also tames Hersch's pretty, contemporary *Summersong* with a design that can run right through its harmonic leaps.

But despite some fugue-ish horseplay between Hersch and Farmer, this session rarely gels. Farmer, based in Vienna, has rendezvoused individually and as a group with this rhythm section before, but Billy Hart's sympathetic fire feels consistently at odds with the lackluster, pedestrian Bodley. Hersch, featured as much as Farmer, plays with strength, feeling, and authority, but often loses direction mid-solo. Most of the tunes (particularly Charlie Parker's *Red Cross*) gather no emotional center. Perhaps Farmer's future projects at Concord will be more lively, maybe even as enduring as his fruitful paring with Oliver Nelson 20 years ago. —paul de Barros

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RECORD REVIEWS

MILDRED BAILEY

HER GREATEST PERFORMANCES—Columbia JC3L 22: *WHEN DAY IS DONE; HARLEM LULLABY; GIVE ME LIBERTY; SHOUTIN' IN THE AMEN CORNER; CABIN IN THE PINES; IS THAT RELIGION; WHAT KIND O' MAN; JUNK MAN; OL' PAPPY; EMALINE; SOMEDAY SWEETHEART; HONEYSUCKLE ROSE; WILLOW TREE; SQUEEZE ME; DOWNHEARTED BLUES; LONG ABOUT MIDNIGHT; ROCKIN' CHAIR; SMOKE DREAMS; LOVE TO KEEP ME WARM; HEAVEN HELP THIS HEART OF MINE; BOB WHITE; THANKS FOR THE MEMORY; ALWAYS AND ALWAYS; LAND OF SKY BLUE WATERS; WEEKEND OF A PRIVATE SECRETARY; DON'T BE THAT WAY; ROCK IT FOR ME; ST. LOUIS BLUES; TAINT WHAT YOU DO; PRISONER OF LOVE; BARRELHOUSE MUSIC; ARKANSAS BLUES; OLD FOLKS; YOU DON'T KNOW MY MIND BLUES; CHANGES; GULF COAST BLUES; GHOST OF A CHANCE; HOLD ON; I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU; DARN THAT DREAM; PEACE BROTHER; NOBODY'S BABY; FOOLS RUSH IN; ARTHUR MURRAY; IN LOVE IN VAIN; I'LL CLOSE MY EYES; ME AND THE BLUES; LOVER COME BACK.*

Personnel: Bailey, vocals; with various instrumentalists including Bunny Berigan, Roy Eldridge, Buck Clayton, trumpet; Tommy Dorsey, trombone; Benny Goodman, Ed Hall, Jimmy Dorsey, Chu Berry, Artie Shaw, reeds; Red Norvo, xylophone; Teddy Wilson, Mary Lou Williams, Fletcher Henderson, piano; Sid Catlett, Cozy Cole, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Not everybody agrees that Billie Holiday was the greatest female vocalist of the 1930s. There is a minority opinion, especially among musicians who were around then, that Mildred Bailey was the one to whom that accolade really belongs. I guess that puts me in the minority too. But now that Columbia Special Products has done us the service of reissuing the original 1962 boxed compilation of Mildred's "greatest performances," there's reason to think more listeners may be won over to her side.

Mildred Bailey was a contradiction to the eye and ear. She had a tiny, toy poodle voice encased in a dinosaur of a body. It violated all the accustomed logic of scale, but it sounded fantastic. Her timbre was full of bright sunlight, her phrasing was immaculate without ever turning stilted, and she could make almost any lyric swing like an improvised solo. Of all her remarkable characteristics, though, the most remarkable was her vibrato. She could take aim at a high note and shoot an electrical charge through it with her incredible tremor. Listen to what she does with the words "I" and "like" on *Squeeze Me* in the 11th and 23rd bars. There is a passion here; the whole performance shakes down to its roots. (Many of these qualities were echoed by Maria Muldaur and Benny Carter in the 1974 *Waitress In A Donut Shop* LP.) You hear it everywhere, but always perfectly placed at the emotional pinnacle of a phrase. She swings furiously on *Day Is Done* and *Nobody's Baby*. *Someday Sweetheart* (with a masterful Teddy Wilson accompaniment)

has never been matched. And her musicianship and pitch control within the labyrinthine polytonalities of Eddie Sauter's arrangement of *Smoke Dreams* is nothing short of miraculous. Red Norvo's wry xylophone sounds equally skillful.

The first of the album's six sides is by far the weakest. Mildred and her accompaniments are conspicuously trapped in the pop disciplines of early '30s sentimentality, and neither is well served by the mixture of gospel and Jim Crow (*Harlem Lullaby*) tunes. Most of what follows, however, is timeless, notwithstanding even the bad songs.

—john mcdonough

SYNTHESIZERS cont. from page 31

Schulze's pieces are often long and slowly developed, with a myriad of inner movements. Like Laurie Spiegel and the minimalists, Schulze is concerned with the sounds within and between notes. *Silent Running* generates a sense of kinetic motion and floating space simultaneously. One is plunged into a whirlpool of insistent rhythms that propel crystallized electronic images and the arcing cello of Wolfgang Tiepold through a cascade of synthistrings. Rhythm builds in a relentless synchronization of synthesized percussion and the drums of Michael Shrieve (ex-Santana), giving the illusion of an eight-limbed drummer. Like Spiegel, Schulze's music is moored to an Eastern concept of time and spirituality, but it's housed in a cathedral plummeting through space.

Schulze's musical metaphysics have been a dominant influence on musicians in Eastern and Western countries including Japan and America. While Schulze reflects his Germanic background and the influences of Bach and Wagner in ambience if not form, Kitaro's references are distinctly Asian. His music is delicately balanced by reedy synthesized melodies laced with acoustic guitars, windchimes, and gurgling sequencers. *Silk Road* is seductive and intoxicating, forming a musical veil with the translucency of Japanese rice paper. Where so much Western music attempts to break through in an orgasmic rush, Kitaro presents a slow merging through sound. *Silk Road* segues several themes together into sidelong suites, often moving from rapturous tribal dance rhythms to sonic meditations. Occasionally these transitions make for some forced cross-fades that disrupt the flow and indicate a compositional weakness of expansive thematic material.

Bend, Oregon is one of the last places I'd look for a Schulze disciple, but that's where Michael Garrlson produces his music. He is more derivative of the European synthesists than Kitaro, but reveals a distinctly American flavor. He works with shorter forms and uses a sometimes redundant 4/4 synthy-rhythm to drive his expansively heroic melodies. *Eruption* introduces his second self-produced



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RECORD REVIEWS

album, waking from a dawn of chirping birds and fading dream tones that explode into a thudding sequencer rhythm and skyscraping electronic wails that segue into a rolling fugue. Where Schulze and Kitaro explore interior psychosis and spiritual mystique, Garrison projects an exuberant naivete. His simple melodies course through different voicings and riveting counterpoints that ricochet with the synthesizer's expanded dynamics. *Prisms* is an engaging statement from a young artist still in the shadows of the new masters.

Another major influence on Garrison is **Jean-Michel Jarre**, son of French film composer Maurice Jarre. Though he has only three LPs out, his debut, *Oxygene*, brought him the greatest international acclaim of any synthesist. *Magnetic Fields* departs from the romanticism of *Oxygene* and explores a world of ethnic rhythms, with a battery of synthesized percussion sounds that stack up in a polyrhythmic spiral. The beat isn't exactly reggae, but Jarre takes Jamaican dub music to a more sophisticated plane. He drops rhythms in and out of the mix, sometimes filling in with densely packed chords, or a floating weave of sounds with no rhythm at all. At one point a kalimba and kora emerge out of a space-train warp with glass harmonica tones glimmering in the back-

ground. *Magnetic Fields* doesn't forsake Jarre's sweeping melodicism, it's just that now they're driven by maniacal Burundi drummers.

Craig Leon is an American who has also discovered the synthesizer's precise percussion effects and ability to out-syncopate any human drummer. *Nommos* is an album of delirium dance music powered by dervish drummers and metallic percussion. The few elements that aren't percussive support the rhythms with hypnotically swirling electronic whines. *Four Eyes To See The Afterlife* jerks to life with a stop-start rhythm repeated in an additive process similar to Steve Reich's. Intensity builds with a trance-inducing gurgling drone, and soon voices speaking in tongues emerge to complete the possession. *Nommos* segues together in a non-stop dance groove, but it's doubtful you'll find it on the disco floor.

In some regards, Larry Fast is a throwback to the academic concept of making electronic music for its own sake. Fast is known for his **Synergy** albums, a collective name for a one-man rock orchestra which uses the synthesizer to mimic traditional instruments. At times it seems like imitation is the only statement Fast has to make, but *Audion* is easily his most listenable effort to date. Side one finds guitar, bass, organ, and drums

imitated by Fast's synthesizer as the basis for overblown pyrotechnics in a rock context. He does a good job of it in the mode of Emerson, Lake, and Palmer on *Revolt On L-5*. *Ancestors* is especially impressive with a cavernous ostinato bassline that pulses through sweeping gothic chords in an atmospheric funeral dirge. Side two uses a full-blown synthetic orchestra to much the same end.

These records indicate that the synthesizer is not just a spacey gimmick or a cold unemotional machine. All instruments lack emotion until an artist breathes life into the mouthpiece or heats up the circuitry. Kraftwerk's Ralf Hutter takes the extreme position that electronic instruments are the only musical devices worth considering in a modern age. That is simply a new elitism ignored by the best electronic artists who prove that an understanding of past and present cultures is necessary for developing the infinite possibilities of synthesized music in the future.

Spectrum, CRI, and Lovely Music/Vital Records are available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012. Kuckuck is available from Celestial Harmonies, 605 Ridgefield Rd., Wilton, CT 06897. Innovative Communications, Windspell, and Passport Records can be obtained from Jem Records, 3619 Kennedy Rd., South Plainfield, NJ 07080. —john diliberto



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THE STRIKERS

BODY MUSIC—Prelude PRL-D 608

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Okay, because of spatial limitations I'm going to jam a lot of names and a lot of truth about a musical phenomenon that, I feel, reflects the times more accurately and creatively than any of the other styles of popular music around today. I've had the good fortune of being sent a letter by DJ Afrika Bambaataa through friends in New York City and in Chicago. I'd like to quote from Mr. Bambaataa's letter where he says, "Break music is that certain part of the record that you wait for to come up . . . with all those drums and congas [where] it makes you dance real wild . . . but that break is so short [and] not long enough for you to get down to do your thing."

During 1972-73 at dances in the Bronx, three DJs—Kool DJ Herc, DJ Afrika Bambaataa, and DJ Grandmaster Flash—began to use an invention of Pablo Picasso's—the collage—by segueing the instrumental break from one song to the break in another, backup, and breakup again in a seamless, endless series of heated musical climaxes. Break music, B-beat, hip-hop, funk, whatever you call it, a type of hybrid was literally pieced together from songs that often had only the break in common. To compensate for one tune having a somewhat different tempo than another the DJs would adjust the turntable's speed until each matched BPMs (beats-per-minute). DJ Afrika Bambaataa generously admits that it was probably Kool DJ Herc who first threw open the mic switch and started rapping in rhyme over the groove he was creating. I think it's important to understand that the music here is funk and not disco—the difference between squeaky clean disco and its black sheep cousin can be compared to, say, the difference between Brooke Shields and Nastassia Kinski . . . you get the idea. As time went on various independent labels began releasing longer versions of their disco hits on special 12-inch 45s that featured funk breaks of congas, whistles, and isolated bass lines. Until now, we have three record companies—West End, Sugar Hill, and Enjoy—who cater to the B-beat audience and to them alone. A typical B-beat 12-inch has a rapper or group of rappers trading lines of sexual one-upmanship between the breaks, and an instrumental version of the same song on the B-side, so a DJ

playing a party or dance can put his own rap in. Got it?

The 12-inchers under review here are all fairly recent and, for the most part, I'm going to focus in on the instrumental sides simply because of the astoundingly fresh musicianship all of them contain. Before I go any further I should add that this is truly "inside" music, and these labels may be hard to find outside of the largest American cities. It is a music that is a world unto itself and, simultaneously, represents how an atypical example of American culture can be ground into a palatable mass product whose cretinous configuration bears only a slight resemblance to its original. There is, for example, a "rap" McDonald's restaurant ad on radio that I perversely like.

If I were spinning at your party I'd start out with *Ice Theme* on Bobby Robinson's Harlem-based Enjoy Records. *Ice* is credited to Bobby though it's played by his in-house band, Pumpkin and Friends (for my money the strongest studio band in this genre). Pumpkin is the guitar heir-apparent to James Brown's guitarist, Jimmie Nolan, who was probably the most imitated funk guitarist of the past 15 years and who is, outside of a very small circle of musicians, a virtual unknown. Think of all the bar bands, all the new wave and funk outfits who've copped Jimmie's angular contorted licks; Jimmie Nolan—absolute funkmaster! Back to *Ice Theme* which uses guitar, bass, drums, and conga—the most basic of funk rhythm sections. In B-beat each musician plays a repetitive part that is so catchy that it could, in itself, be the main melodic line of the song. The closest musical comparison I can make goes back to the Kansas City bands where the riff was *it*. Each part interconnects and overlaps onto the hook of the other instrumental parts. Jazz listeners may have a little trouble getting used to the regimentation of the way B-beat is constructed until you realize the beauty is in the effortless architecture of each player's part dovetailing and complementing the rest of the components. *Ice* starts out with a siren and drums joined by Pumpkin and the bassist playing the same riff—wham!, Pumpkin out to a different pattern, bass repeats the head, break to just the bass line, then drums reappear backing up over its own beat until all come in opening up their patterns to slight nuances, break to drums and conga while the bassist whumps at double time, and for the finale, everyone sliding and screaming around Pumpkin's guitar ringing in beautiful double spirals back in upon itself. Eight minutes and it goes by in a flash. Extraordinary tune whose sonic quality shimmers in the air so clearly as to suggest a solid visible form. What I would give to match this band behind the primeval brontosaurus growlings of Dewey Redman or David Murray's cerebral hurt-guy squalls!

On to Kenton Nix' West End Records and Stone's hot B-beat record *Time*, which begins with a woody tick-tock punctuated by an electric piano and bassist grooving on the same riff counterpointed by a bubbly under-recorded guitar. Whack—another guitar, synthesizer, and is that a second bass?, appear syncopating in zig-zagged designs; break to bass and synthesizer squaring off

on a macho riff and back up again to yet another layer of keyboards, synthesizers, and guitars, and you have a percolating popping groove that Bill Basie could get a kick out of. Very good arranging and ensemble playing but (at over four minutes) way too short for the hearty dancer. An absolute got-to-have nevertheless.

Have you noticed that I haven't talked about the rappers on the A-sides of these discs yet? It's because, so far, the raps have not been of note. However, when we ride across the river to New Jersey to Sylvia's (ex-Pillow Talk, ex-Mickey and Sylvia) Sugar Hill Records, the emphasis is on punchy sing-song hip-hop strong raps by the Funky 4 + 1, Spoonie Gee, and the legendary Grandmaster Flash. "I'm like the knucklebone on the microphone/If you can't get with it then you got to go home!" sings Angie B. of Sequence on *Monster Jam*. Sugar Hill fuses the rap closer to the instrumental and works in a seamless flow that seems less forced and more entertaining than the other labels though why Nix or Bobby Robinson haven't recorded Afrika Bambaataa or Kool DJ Herc is a mystery to me. Oh well, at Sugar Hill *Monster Jam* is built upon the much copied bass line of Chic's *Good Times*. In fact this bass line has been built into so many of the rap records that it has become the classical riff of rap. *Jam* features the longest breaks with a full array of whistles, congas, bass stops, timbales, and hand claps, and is closest to being the most quintessential rap record discussed here. Once again an in-house band, Funk Box, is used and recorded extremely well.

Body Music by the Strikers on Prelude isn't a rap record per se but is definite B-beat and claims one of the raunchiest spoken lines in funkdom. Good singing on the A-side is emphasized by jingle warbles and a great chorus on the break that, in clubs, is usually repeated by segueing from two copies of the same tune so that the Strikers', "Huh!/Huh!/Body Music!" can spin on into a frenzied infinity. The B-side contains the instrumental version but is a different, tighter take than the A-side's. What also distinguishes this record is some of the finest guitar interplay since Pal Rakes, Norman Harris, and Bobby Eli tried to understate and outsublime (for that is the very essence of this type of guitar) each other on William DeVaughn's *Blood Is Thicker Than Water*. The Strikers are the only working/touring band I've talked about.

Okay, there you have it . . . four huge wonderful B-beaters that define B-beat and can leave the listener as well as the dancer breathless. I can recommend all of these records as being the genuine article . . . not the daubings of half-hearted pretenders. These records are not heard on black Top 40 nor on the disco floor but in the packed dance halls of America's ghetto youth who have made this music their own from the scraps and shards of another that wasn't strong enough or creative enough to hold their interest. Sugar Hill Records: 96 West St., Englewood, NJ 07631; Enjoy Records: 3205 Broadway, NYC 10027; West End Records: 250 W. 57th St., NYC 10019; Prelude Records, 200 W. 57th St., NYC 10019.

—jim brinsfield

must choose the right school or schools. Serious music students must remember that it's *their* money (taxes, tuition, or loans) and *their* life.

- A sad but important lesson: writers and performers keep each other at arm's length. The writer's integrity and the performer's career negate close friendships—mutual respect, yes; close friendship, no.

- The ability of children to make music is seriously underestimated by most educators and parents.

- "You can't play out, if you can't play in."—Cannonball Adderley

- With some exceptions, schools of music education are mostly counter-productive in their effort to train future music educators. The schools' admission and graduation standards are too low, their curricula too limited and stifflingly traditional. In this eighth decade of the 20th century, it is a disgrace to the teaching profession and an affront to common sense that a young man or woman who is to be entrusted with the music education of

our children need not learn the fundamental values of American music.

- Fear—pure, naked fear of being wrong—is the biggest single obstacle to a music educator granting parity to contemporary music.

- A good, involved teacher makes all the difference. A less than concerned teacher wastes money, time and, tragically, young people's musical potential. This is the best time and place to thank and salute the teachers who have made a difference. Among them are: Jamey Aebersold, David Baker, Alvin Batiste, the Berk family, Billy Byers, Jerry Coker, Robin Crest, Alan Dawson, Art Dredrick, Clem DeRosa, Bill Dobbins, Jim Dutton, Colleen Forster, Bill Fowler, John Garvey, Bunky Green, Dick Grove, Gene Hall, Joe Hebert, John LaPorta, Ralph McDonald, Lena McLin, Bob Morgan, Ralph Mutchler, Oliver Nelson, Roger Pemberton, Jack Petersen, Herb Pomeroy, Rufus Reid, George Russell, Bill Russo, Ray Santisi, Bob Share, Ed Soph, Lanny Steele, Billy Taylor, Clark Terry, Joe Viola, Jack Wheaton, Andy White, Phil Wilson, George Wiskirchen, and Ray Wright.

- It would take a book (that I may do one of these days) to list and thank the musicians from whom I learned about talent, dedication, professionalism, and the inexorable pursuit of excellence.

- The importance of a person being able to make music is becoming more and more important as life becomes more and more crowded and complex. Unfortunately, for all of us, those who know this best have been unable to unite and make their case known to politicians, school boards, and taxpayers.

- It's not always been easy but I cannot think of anything else I would rather have done in the last 30 years. But the ball isn't over. My main mandate on the new job is to make it possible for more people to make more music. What I have learned from all of you will come in right handy.

See you around.

Next Issue features a cover story on the new Weather Report, an in-depth report on Kool Fest New York, Cleanhead Vinson, and Jimi Hendrix' influence on jazz. Also fill out the postcard in this issue (page 43) with your Readers Poll selections—deadline is September 1.

db



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BLINDFOLD TEST

1 STAN GETZ. *BLUE SERGE* (from *ANOTHER WORLD*, Columbia). Getz, tenor saxophone; Andy Laveme, piano; Mike Richmond, bass; Billy Hart, drums; Efrain Toro, percussion; Mercer Ellington, composer.

It sounded like Stan Getz; I've never heard the song before, but it was a nice tune, a modern ballad. If that wasn't Stan Getz, he has a real similar tone, a lot of control of the instrument. It was pretty. The rhythm section—there are a lot of people who play like that. Three stars. I didn't listen to Stan a lot when I was learning to play because I wanted to go in a different direction, not listen to too many people and screw up what I was trying to do. Now I can listen to Stan Getz; I always admired him.

2 SONNY ROLLINS. *DOUBLE FEATURE* (from *LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT*, Milestone). Rollins, tenor saxophone; Stanley Clarke, bass guitar.

The style sounded like Stanley Turrentine, but Turrentine has a lot more control than that. I don't recognize who it is at all, I don't know who the background was either. It was all right, I liked the style, but I've heard that style played a lot better. It's the stuff that started with those organ groups and things like that. The tenor players with them were Stanley Turrentine, Willis Jackson, those guys. Two stars.

3 THE NEW YORK SAXOPHONE QUARTET. *CHANT D'AMOUR* (from *THE NEW YORK SAXOPHONE QUARTET*, Stash). Ray Beckenstein, soprano saxophone; Dennis Anderson, alto saxophone; Billy Kerr, tenor saxophone; Wally Kane, baritone saxophone; Isaac Albeniz, composer.

I don't know much about that style of sax playing, only heard it a few times, but that was probably the best sounding classical-type sax that I've ever heard, really. The other records I've heard of legitimate-type saxophonists don't sound like saxophones at all to me, they sound like violins, but this was much warmer and nicer. I've no idea what the composition was, but it was beautiful. Three stars.

4 THE WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET. *RA-TA-TA.* (from *STEPPIN' OUT*, Black Saint). Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, alto saxophone; David Murray, tenor saxophone; Hamiet Bluiett, baritone saxophone; Lake, composer.

I don't know who it was, but I've heard a lot of records that sound like that. For me, that's impossible to rate at all. That's even farther out than the stuff where they have a rhythm section involved. I know what they're doing—I mean *technically* I know what they're doing

Scott Hamilton

BY LEONARD FEATHER

When Scott Hamilton's first album was released five years ago, I characterized him in the liner notes as "a good wind who is blowing us no ill." His career since then, on numerous Concord LPs as leader or sideman (including albums with Buddy Tate, Warren Vache, and Derek Smith), and in concerts, festivals, and cruises, many of them organized by Concord's Carl Jefferson, has amply justified that claim.

Born Sep. 12, 1954, in Providence, RI (where Paul Gonsalves was raised), Hamilton caught Gonsalves whenever he was in town with the Ellington band. He listened to old records by Lucky Thompson and Flip Phillips. "I listened to Trane," he said, "but never heard anything I wanted to take out of that. I always played the way I play now."

That kind of thing is not new anymore; I mean, Christ, it's been around for 20-some years, so it's not a shock anymore; but it's still just as hard for me to listen to as it was when I first heard it. All I can say is, they've got the right instrument for that kind of stuff, because the sax lends itself better than anything else.

I wouldn't know how to evaluate it creatively, because we're not using the same language. The art world has been like that for a long time; it's hard to judge who's doing the right thing and who's bullshitting.

5 LUCKY THOMPSON. *I GOT IT BAD* (from *BODY AND SOUL*, Nessa). Thompson, tenor saxophone; Tete Montoliu, piano.

I liked that a lot; I've never heard it before. It sounded like it might have been Lucky Thompson. The piano solo was very nice, and I really liked the feeling of the whole thing. Four stars. Real good. I didn't think it was Lucky Thompson until the bridge, and I still don't know if it was him or not. Over the years he's had a bunch of different styles, but something in the vibrato sounded a little bit like him to me. Nice, whoever it was.

6 BUD FREEMAN. *STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN* (from *TEST OF TIME*, Bethlehem). Freeman, tenor saxophone; Dave Bowman, piano; George Wettling, drums.

It sounded like Bud Freeman, and a nice rhythm section. I don't know exactly who that was, but I love Bud. I don't play anything like



COLLIS DAVIS/SHALDA

After playing piano, clarinet, and harmonica, he took up tenor sax at 17. He was assisted, after moving to New York in 1976, by Roy Eldridge, who helped him to find jobs, and by Benny Goodman, with whom he toured in 1977.

Hamilton is a sincere artist with an obviously firm belief in what he is doing. This was his first Blindfold Test. He was given no information about the records played.

him, but I've heard him ever since I was a little kid. He's a very musical guy and I like his ideas—he's humorous somehow. That was a nice record, too. It was catchy. I liked the whole thing. I'll give it four stars.

7 CHICO FREEMAN. *DESTINY'S DANCE* (from *DESTINY'S DANCE*, Contemporary). Freeman, tenor saxophone; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes; Dennis Moorman, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Ronnie Burrage, drums.

I didn't recognize any of the guys. It's impressive. I know how difficult it is to play like that; the guys really know what they're doing. They're together, it's deep stuff, but not up my alley at all. I don't feel anything except a little admiration for their ability; I don't get much out of it. Nobody was familiar to me, but they're good players. I wouldn't be able to rate it, it wouldn't be fair.

8 SONNY STITT. *IS YOU IS OR IS YOU AIN'T MY BABY?* (from *IN STYLE*, Muse). Stitt, tenor saxophone; Barry Harris, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

I should know who that is, 'cause it's so familiar—first I thought it was Al Cohn, then I didn't. It's someone I know very well, and like. I know the song, it's that Louis Jordan song. The rhythm section I don't know about, but that was four stars, that was nice.

That was Sonny Stitt? Damn, he sounded good!

db

Peter Warren

Travels through Las Vegas (with Dionne Warwick) and Atlanta (the symphony) have led the stringman to the Special Edition at the end of the road.

BY LEE JESKE

In 1967 Peter Warren was playing bass with Dionne Warwick and raking in some two grand a week. But he fell under the influence. Let him tell it: "It's funny—what happened was, I started to hear Charlie Haden and all these great bass players. I heard Paul Chambers and I started hanging out with Miroslav Vitous and Steve Swallow, who was still playing upright at the time. George Wein booked Dionne on the Schlitz jazz tour, so I got to hear all the cats and hang out on the road with them. And I'd go back to Dionne Warwick, which was 'one-two, one-two.' All these other guys were kind of like my heroes, and I was making all the bread. So I just left Dionne. And that's one thing that blew my mind—my phone rang off the hook. It was all my idols calling for the gig. And that kind of messed me up, in a way, because I was kind of leaving that gig to do *that* and . . ."

Let's backtrack. Peter Warren was born in Hempstead, Long Island—grandson of a gypsy fiddle-playing tailor, son of a polka bass-playing electronics engineer. Peter inherited the string bug and became a cello protege—debuting at age 17 in Carnegie Recital Hall to "terrible reviews." Two years later, his teacher laid it on the line, "You haven't made it—forget it as a soloist. You have to be content with playing in orchestras."

From high school, where he was a "problem student," Peter went into Juilliard, from Juilliard into the air force where he "found out that they were sending me to a drum and bugle corps in Cheyenne, Wyoming. I never even saw a drum and bugle corps. So I decided that I was going to get out of the air force. I arranged my own demise, got out of the air force and went right into the Atlanta Symphony."

He was still a cellist, feeling "that bass players were really cellists who couldn't get it together." One day he was hanging out with one of the reed players from the symphony—many of whom would play jazz gigs at night—and was asked if he'd come down to a club and play the bass. He taped up his fingers, went down to the gig, and began playing bass. And began playing something



RICHARD LARND

other than classical music for the first time in his life. It wasn't exactly a case of a fish taking to water. "I hated the bass, but it was a job."

At that point, Peter got married and wound up in Dallas. "I was going to go in the symphony there, but I found out that the first cellist of that symphony and my ex-teacher were mortal enemies. There was *no way* I was going to get in this orchestra. So at that point I started thinking about trying to make a living playing the bass. I figured, 'Well, I am going to make a lot of money now. I'm going to move to Las Vegas,' which at that time had the highest scale of anywhere in the United States. So I went to Vegas and all the string players said, 'Yeah, well he's a bass player who plays cello.' And all the jazz guys said, 'Yeah, he's a cello player who plays bass.' So I was stuck in the middle and really didn't work at too much of anything."

But he began listening and he began hanging out and when he got a gig to come east with the Tommy Dorsey band, he grabbed it. "By this time I had heard enough jazz to want to do it. I knew that I liked it—I liked the swing part of it—but I wasn't doing any swinging at the time. The idea of coming to New York was to study. I thought I could play the bass, until I got to New York with the Dorsey band. The first bass player I heard *destroyed* me. I knew that this instrument was to be studied."

The Dorsey gig lasted a month—a month of playing behind the likes of Frank Sinatra Jr. A month that ended with the entire band getting stranded in Arizona. Warren got himself back to New York and took his first bass lesson, with Chuck Israels. Then he started playing around and, eventually, landed the gig with Warwick, who was just launching her career. It was her first band and by the time Peter departed, three years later, his salary had increased tenfold.

When he left Warwick, things were good. He had a fat bankroll, two cars—one of them

a Porsche—and no attachments, having been divorced some time earlier. He moved into a loft with Barry Altschul and "did a lot of listening, a lot of playing in those beautiful '60s, and a lot of hanging out, banging on pots and pans, and making music. But soon the bread ran out and the cars were gone and like all the other cats, I was struggling for a gig. I met my lady—who I'm with now—at that time, and we got a loft together. I put together my first record date, *Bass Is . . .* [Enja 2018], which is an underground classic, and I had a thing with David Izenzon called the New York Bass Revolution, which was 10 bass players. Because of my classical stuff, I got to bow the bass really quick. So that was kind of my thing at that period, to play a lot with the bow."

By this time, says Peter, "things had gotten rough in New York—people were getting shot on the streets and stuff—so we decided that we would take whatever money we had and go to India, find our man, and cancel out. But to cool out, we went to Italy and hung out with a guy named Giovanni, who was a friend of Barry's, and wore dungarees."

During the summer they drove to Switzerland to attend the Montreux Festival, and Warren ran into Stu Martin, the late American drummer who lived and worked in Europe, and who had played on *Bass Is . . .* "We got to talking," remembers Peter, "and Stu said to me, 'You don't want to go to India. You want to play music, man, you're a bass player. If you want to cool your head out, do it in the music.'"

"So my lady and I moved in with Martin in Belgium and lived there for about two years. And Stu turned me on to the bass and how to play and what a bass player's supposed to be. He got me my first gig and was really influential to me. I caught on in Europe—I made 13 records the first year I was there, and I hadn't had 13 records in my life. I was, at that time, the guy from New York with the bow. I played with Jean-Luc Ponty, Anthony Braxton, had my own gigs, and worked a lot—until the point where I progressed in my playing and started unloading all my classical stuff, which I'm glad I have; I started getting the feeling of *swing* together."

"Finally, in 1974, I came back to the States and Stu told Jack DeJohnette, who was looking for a bass player, 'Hey, why don't you play with Peter? He lives right down the block from you; see how he plays. see if he'll fit in the band.' And Jack found something that he dug in me, and he decided to let me play in the band. I played in Jack's very first band for a year-and-a-half, and Jack always said, 'I'll make a bass player out of you if it kills me.'"

Although he played with various DeJohnette bands—and appeared on the *Cosmic Chicken* LP (Prestige 10094)—Warren wasn't on Jack's early ECM albums. "But I knew," he says, "that one day, if I got my shit together, I'd make it to a record. One day I was jamming with Jack and he said, 'You know, I have a project in mind.' " The project was Special Edition and though the saxophonists have changed—David Murray and

Arthur Blythe first, Chico Freeman and John Purcell currently—the bassist has remained the same.

When Jack wasn't working—which was often—Warren would find that his phone rarely rang, something he attributes to his being an "insular person—you have to go to the clubs and hang out and I've never been a guy for doing that," and his having "a reputation for being an avant garde bass player, whatever that means." Presently, though, that's changing. He's just finished his first album as a leader in a dozen years—*Solidarity* (Japo)—and he has been working in clubs at the helm of a band featuring the double-barreled guitar action of John Scofield and Mike Stern.

About his current status, Warren says, "What I've been trying to do lately is just become visible and play with as many people as I possibly can, because I don't put myself in a slot. This is like my fourth career—I've been a classical cellist, I've been with an orchestra, I was with Dionne Warwick. Now I'd just be happy if I could stimulate some work, 'cause that's what I want to do now—I want to play as much as I can." **db**

Steve Turre

Woody Shaw's brass cohort traces his musical education through the universities of Rashaan Roland Kirk, Art Blakey, and Ray Charles.

BY TOM NUCCIO

Steve Turre has a unique concept of trombone playing which sheds updated light on the instrument's original application. In his hands the horn becomes more than its usual melodic and harmonic self. "I'm a rhythmical player," he proudly declares, "I play my horn as though it was a drum. If you changed all the notes to a monotone, it would sound like a drum [he scats a percussive cadence]. You are part of the rhythm section as well as a soloist." That spoken, the details of his early development should come as little surprise and offer an explanation for this unusual orientation.

Born in Omaha in 1949 but raised shortly thereafter in the San Francisco bay area, the statuesque trombonist received a stimulating and diverse musical upbringing within his household. His mother played stride piano, clicked castanets, danced flamenco, and in brief, introduced Turre to the rhythms indigenous to his Mexican cultural heritage.

Though not a musician himself, his father did have a sizable collection of big band albums which were played constantly.

Encouraged by this conducive homelife, Turre took up trombone at the age of 10. By the time he reached junior high school, he was busy co-leading a combo with his sax-playing older brother. "We played a variety of music from New Orleans traditional jazz to standards and dance tunes. At that time I was attracted to the New Orleans thing—it was more rhythmic and gutsy than the big band players. It was more from the heart."

The preference for gutbucket traditional trombonists lasted right into high school until "someone gave me a J. J. Johnson album. Upon hearing J. J., I said, 'Wow, you mean you can play trombone like that? It's capable of that kind of tone and execution?' From that point I was drawn like a magnet to his style."

Fresh out of high school in 1967, he went to Sacramento State on, of all things, a football scholarship. He studied music theory there for two years before transferring to North Texas State where he acquired the how-to's of sight reading from classes and a good deal more from two of his classmates. "I credit some of my real learning experience at North Texas State to playing in a band led by trumpeter [not-yet-Hannibal] Marvin Peterson called the Soulmasters. Also there was a wonderful trumpet player and composer there named Tex Allen who really pulled my coat to the II-V-I progression and how to apply it to my own playing."

Around 1970 Turre returned to the bay area and started working with altoist Bishop Norman Williams. At about the same time he

formed a little-known, avant garde trio with drummer Phillip Wilson and reedman Keshavan Maslak. This also began a period of sitting-in during which he established a solid playing reputation and won the approval of several visiting musicians. Weeklong stints with Rashaan Roland Kirk, a recording session with Santana, and concert dates with Van Morrison are a few of the memorable events which ensued.

In 1972 he learned of an opening in the Ray Charles Orchestra and, on the recommendation of a trombonist formerly with the group, was flown to L.A. for an audition. "When I got there I found out they were looking for a bass trombonist, and although I hadn't played bass trombone all that much, I wanted the gig bad enough to tell them that I had. As it turned out, I got hired and traveled the world for nine months. It was the best vocal-fronted big band I've ever played with. Ray Charles is a genius... I mean I just memorized my parts so I could sit back and listen to Ray sing. That was school right there!" Toward the end of the tour Turre became ill and spent the next month recuperating in San Francisco.

He bounced back into action soon after and in 1973 had an opportunity to sit in with Woody Shaw. He remembers the night well. "The first time we played together we struck a groove. We could blend like we were both in one mind and instinctively breathe in the same place." When Art Blakey came to San Francisco a couple of months later, Shaw joined the Messengers and introduced Turre to the drummer. "I sat in with the band," he recalls, "and Art asked me if I wanted to join the Jazz Messengers and come to New York."



I said, 'When?' and he said, 'Now' and I said, 'You bet!' So I packed my suitcase and I've been in New York ever since."

Turre worked steadily with the Messengers for the next six months, but as their bookings dissipated, he spent some of his time with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. When the big band embarked on a European tour, Turre went along and received a trombone lesson of sorts. "I sat alongside Quentin 'Butter' Jackson who schooled me in plunger technique. He would insert a narrow mute in the bell and then cover it with the plunger. The small mute gives the horn a slightly nasal quality which makes for more 'talk' and 'wah' effects when manipulating the plunger."

After returning to New York in 1974, he left the Jones/Lewis aggregation and joined Chico Hamilton's group—at first sharing front-line chores with altoist Alex Foster. When the group's bassist Mike Richmond suddenly left to work with Horace Silver, Hamilton had a vacancy in the rhythm section which the trombonist filled at the last second. "Chico gave me a nice raise to stay on electric bass and said, 'You can play your trombone too,' which meant that I was featured on one ballad each night accompanied

by the guitarist." As time went on Hamilton omitted the trombone feature and in so doing, incited Turre's displeasure and subsequent departure.

Out of work and depressed, he remained inactive for about two weeks until Rahsaan Roland Kirk contacted him about joining a new group he was forming. This marked the start of what would become an indelible, two-and-a-half-year tenure with Kirk's Vibration Society which lasted until the reed wizard's untimely death in December of 1977. Of that time he says, "If Ray Charles and Art Blakey were universities, then Rahsaan was the graduate school. He schooled me in all the styles from New Orleans all the way up, and made me aware of a lot of the great trombonists who came before J. J. To see Rahsaan do the things he did in the condition he was in made me feel that there was no excuse for not getting my own playing together."

In the two years following Kirk's death, Turre has been featured in a variety of settings. He did projects with Slide Hampton's World of Trombones ensemble—an outfit comprised of nine trombones plus rhythm. In this group he pitched in arrangements and read some of the most challenging trombone

parts he'd ever seen. When not working with Hampton, he led his own group which included John Blake, Hilton Ruiz, and Victor Lewis. At the same time he toured with Cedar Walton and also frequently appeared with Woody Shaw's expanded concert ensembles. When reedman Carter Jefferson left Shaw's regular quintet in the spring of 1980, Turre replaced him to create a unique trumpet/trombone front line which has remained intact to this day. "Woody made me aware of backing off, because I had a lot of energy and sometimes I got a little too enthusiastic. I wouldn't pace myself and he made me aware of pacing. My control of the horn has really opened up after joining Woody."

Evidence of this control can be heard on Shaw's *United* (Columbia 37390), and especially the newly released *Master Of The Art* (Elektra/Musician 60131) which display some of Turre's finest solo work. However, to hear him speak now, one can only suspect that his best has yet to come. "Regardless of what type of music you're playing, I like a big, full-bodied sound. To me that's playing the horn right. I'm trying to get to the highest level I'm capable of and in this respect, I feel I'm just scratching the surface of my potential." **db**

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by Jamey Abersold

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find out the addresses, and they'd come in and bust them all. You'd think it was a police bust the way they would operate."

Expelled from the union, Mac continued to perform with organ combos and at strip shows, straw-bossing several local bands. The golden age of New Orleans rhythm & blues was ending, as record companies shifted their sessions to Memphis, Houston, or Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The cream of the studio players were lured away to New York, Los Angeles, or Detroit (where they influenced the early Motown sound). Many of those who remained were drawn underground into the Coltrane-inspired maelstrom of new wave jazz.

One of the earliest of the new wavers was Harold Battiste, who had traveled to L.A. with Ed Blackwell, pianist Ellis Marsalis, and clarinetist Alvin Batiste to join Ornette Coleman's quartet in 1956. Unable to peddle the group's demo tapes, Battiste got a job arranging Sam Cooke's records for producer Bumps Blackwell, the ex-New Orleansian who had recorded Little Richard's Specialty hits. Back in New Orleans as a producer for Specialty, Battiste had organized the abortive AFO venture, then returned to the West Coast with his partners and hooked up with Sonny Bono, himself a former Specialty songwriter.

Battiste was arranging for Sonny and Cher's records by the time Rebennack arrived out west in 1965. Mac started free-lancing at various L.A. studios, but sessions with Hollywood denizens like the Allman brothers and Frank Zappa left him with a lingering distaste for acid rock. "I was gonna play piano for Zappa when he was first putting his band together," he says. "I did some shit like *Son of Monster Maggots* [actually *The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet*, from the *Freak Out LP*], and I walked off the date. I probably insulted the cat or pissed him off, but I didn't know what was happening. Later on I realized he wasn't just full of shit—he was into something—but at the time it was just too freakish for me."

He had almost decided to head back home when he began to get session work with Battiste's AFO clique, who were then experimenting with "wall-of-sound" production techniques under Bono and producer Phil Spector. It was at that point Rebennack conceived the Dr. John persona, initially intending to record a one-shot album with organist Ronnie Barron in the title role. On the advice of his managers, Barron demurred, and Rebennack undertook the part himself. Through Battiste, he was permitted to produce one of his own songs for Cher; then, while she and Sonny were busy making a movie, he used their studio time to record *Gris-Gris*, the first Dr. John LP and Mac's full-fledged vocal debut.

The musicians on the *Gris-Gris* sessions, identified only by pseudonyms on the eventual album jacket, were some of the Crescent City's finest. "It was like John Boudreaux on drums, Harold Battiste and Ron Robinson or Al Frazier on bass—on some things we had two basses—and me and Ernest McLean and Steve Mann did guitar. We didn't use much keyboards; I did a few things on organ, but we had a great percussion section that doubled on a lot of instruments, cats like Didimus and John McAllister." Also included were tenorman Plas Johnson, flutist Walter Bolden, and Ronnie Barron, now dubbed the "Baron of Ronyards." Notes Mac: "All these cats were really fluent, creative players, and we had a lot of vocalists too. I think we had as many people from New Orleans in the L.A. area at that time as you could have picked up in the studio in New Orleans."

The album was taken to Sonny and Cher's label, Atlantic's Atco subsidiary, where it sat on the shelf for a couple of years before Atlantic's reluctant Ahmet Ertegun finally released it. Indifferently promoted, *Gris-Gris* won a small but ardent following among serious music lovers and would-be cult worshipers. Rebennack toured as Dr. John and elaborated his original formula on two other, less successful albums. His fourth attempt, *The Sun Moon & Herbs*, was a botched transatlantic extravaganza that featured Eric Clapton, Mick Jagger, and the Memphis Horns, but he soon recovered with *Gumbo* an extended medley of New Orleans r&b classics again performed by an ensemble of native all-stars.

New Orleans was no longer the recording center it had once been,



JAMES F. QUINN

DR. JOHN'S EQUIPMENT

Dr. John currently tours with a Yamaha electric piano; heaven only knows what stuff he left behind.

DR. JOHN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

DR. JOHN PLAYS MAC REBENNACK—Clean Cuts CC 705	GUMBO—Atco SD 7006
LOVE POTION—Accord Records SN 7118	THE SUN MOON & HERBS—Atco SD 33-362
TANGO PALACE—Horizon SP-740	REMEDIES—Atco SD 33-316
CITY LIGHTS—Horizon SP-732	BABYLON—Atco SD 33-270
DESITIVELY BONNAROO—Atco SD 7043	GRIS-GRIS—Atco SD33-234
IN THE RIGHT PLACE—Atco SD 7018	ONE NIGHT LATE—Karate Records KSD-5404
	DR. JOHN—Springboard SP 4018

but sessions had continued there in Mac's absence; pianist Allen Toussaint, with whom he had first joined the musicians' union, had become the city's leading producer. In 1973 Toussaint and his favorite session band, the Meters, accompanied Rebennack on *In The Right Place*; the album spawned two nationwide hits, *Right Place Wrong Time* and *Such A Night*. The follow-up LP, *Desitively Bonnaroo*, also with Toussaint and the Meters, is considered by many to be Dr. John's post-*Gris-Gris* best, but the disappointing seller was to be his last album for Atco.

For a time Dr. John received considerable radio, television, and even movie exposure, but in later years he has maintained a lower profile. He recorded an album for United Artists and two more for A&M Horizon, but he had wearied of the L.A. studio scene and in 1980 relocated in New York. Since his arrival there, he has been active in the studios, recording commercial jingles for Popeye's Chicken, Tic-Tacs, and Wendy's Hamburgers, and appearing on recent albums by the Neville Brothers and the late Professor Longhair. He also toured the country with a smoke-curdling New Orleans funk group he calls the Louisiana Luminoids. "It's good to be with all New Orleans musicians," he says, "so we can play our stuff properly."

Last year he cut *Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack* for the Baltimore-based Clean Cuts label, soloing on acoustic piano throughout, singing only on Hoagy Carmichael's *The Nearness Of You*. Predictably, the album is a gumbo of keyboard styles: jazz, blues, gospel, boogie woogie, standards, latin, and swing. Mac pays tribute to his parents on a pair of original tunes, and to such musical precursors as Pinetop Smith, Joe Liggins, and of course, Professor Longhair. On his latest tour he sat alone at the grand piano and pumped out an evening's worth of superb music, from his own delicate ballads to the seminal boogies of Cow Cow Davenport. Rebennack's virtuosity never faltered through the most convoluted melodic excursions and intricately interwoven rhythms, as he tossed off filigreed flurries with his right hand over the pulsing syncopations of his left. There is no doubt that Mac has become an authentic master of the New Orleans piano tradition; Professor Longhair would have been proud. **db**

BG: Yes, I am—the Copland, the Hindemith, Bartok's *Contrasts*.
LJ: Did you ever consider making classical music a full-time career?
BG: No. I don't think there's enough substance to make it a full-time career. I don't think you can find that many composers really. One always kind of hits a particular time in history when a lot of these people are available. It's almost like if you had wanted to do a show some 25 or 30 years ago, you could have had Cole Porter, Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hammerstein. And then that's gone.

When I commissioned Bartok and Copland, it was the right time for that kind of thing. As a matter of fact, I was even considering Benjamin Britten and, unfortunately, we couldn't get together on the business part of it, and I say that sincerely. And Milhaud did a piece for me, too, but for some reason or other it didn't have much success.

LJ: When you started playing classical pieces, did you ever feel resentment from classical musicians who might have thought, "What's this jazz player doing?"

BG: Was I ever influenced by what other people thought you mean? I don't think so. I'm my own worst critic and I'm a pretty good critic of myself.

LJ: Didn't Jose Iturbi once refuse to conduct for you?

BG: I think so, yes. That was a silly thing to do because he'd just been in some boogie woogie pictures for MGM. I don't really pay any attention to that.

LJ: How about your own experience with having *The Benny Goodman Story* made as a film?

BG: I think it was kind of a silly movie. The only saving grace was the music. When my family used to see it, we'd laugh like hell. It just wasn't done very cleverly. For instance, *The Glenn Miller Story*—he had that particular sound and that was a big, integral part of the picture, when they showed him getting that sound. Remember? I said, "I don't believe this—they're going to make this movie like looking for the Holy Grail." Ha-ha-ha. But that's what makes movies.

LJ: Another myth surrounding you is your infamous temper.

BG: Well, there's no doubt about that. That's true, I do have a very mercurial kind of temper, which I know about and have learned more about. I think I did some terribly nasty things on the spur of the moment when I've maybe been completely exhausted or emotionally over-tired. But I think those are perfectly normal human feelings which have certain degrees—certain people have less and other people have more.

LJ: Does it have something to do with a certain perfectionist quality? Do you expect more from people than they can sometimes give?

BG: Probably. It takes a little time to find that out. There's an old Yiddish expression that you can't squeeze blood out of a turnip. Ha.

LJ: Didn't you once have an argument with another person with a famous temper, Nikita Khrushchev?

BG: No, not an argument. I rather liked him, I thought he was very frank. He said he didn't like jazz, he said it was all "boom-boom-boom." And I said, "Oh, maybe one of these days you'll get used to it because a lot of people didn't like, at one time, a lot of pictures that are hanging in the Hermitage, and I think if they were very shortsighted, there wouldn't have been a museum." Or something like that. But he was perfectly frank about it and I liked his candor.

LJ: Having been involved in both fields, do you think the best of jazz stands up with the best of classical music?

BG: I think so. Some of the records of Louis Armstrong and Bunny Berigan and Bix Beiderbecke and so forth. . . .

LJ: What do you consider your own best work?

BG: I think those things that my band made on that series on Bluebird that's out now were pretty hot recordings.

LJ: This summer you're fairly busy. Did you ever consider hanging it up?

BG: No, never.

LJ: Do you still practice?

BG: Yeah.

LJ: Is there anything you'd like to do that hasn't been done yet?

BG: Well that's a difficult question. I think I'll just wait until . . . until . . . the real things come along.

db

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