KOOL Fest/NY Report

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downbeat

THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE

New Weather Report
ON TOUR

Jimi Hendrix:
The Jazz Connection

Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson
Bluesy Brand Of Swing

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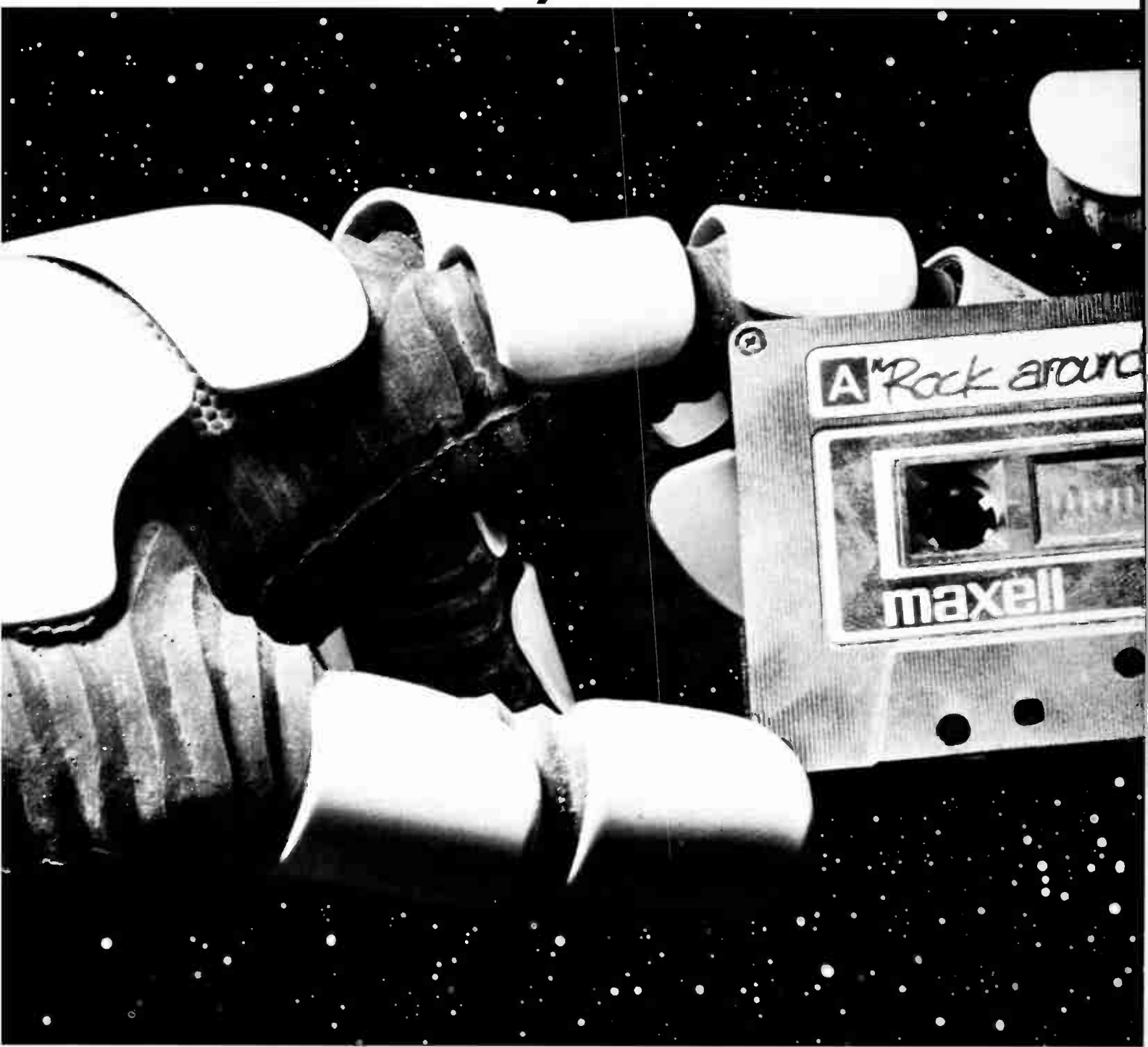

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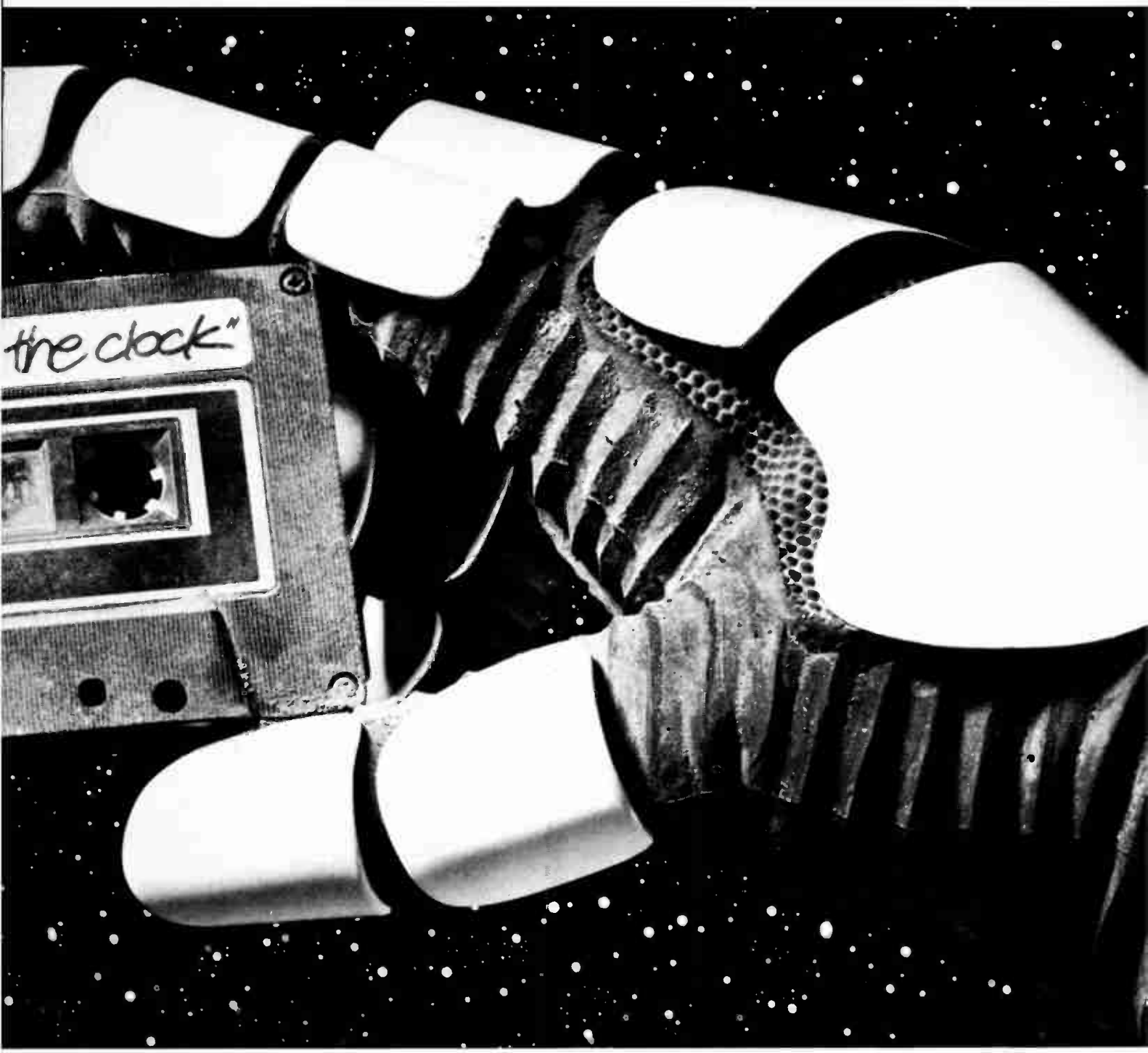

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OCTOBER down beat THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC MAGAZINE 1982
VOLUME 49 NO. 10

FEATURES


JOSEPH SIA
Jimi Hendrix


D. SHIGLEY
Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson

DEPARTMENTS

Miscellany

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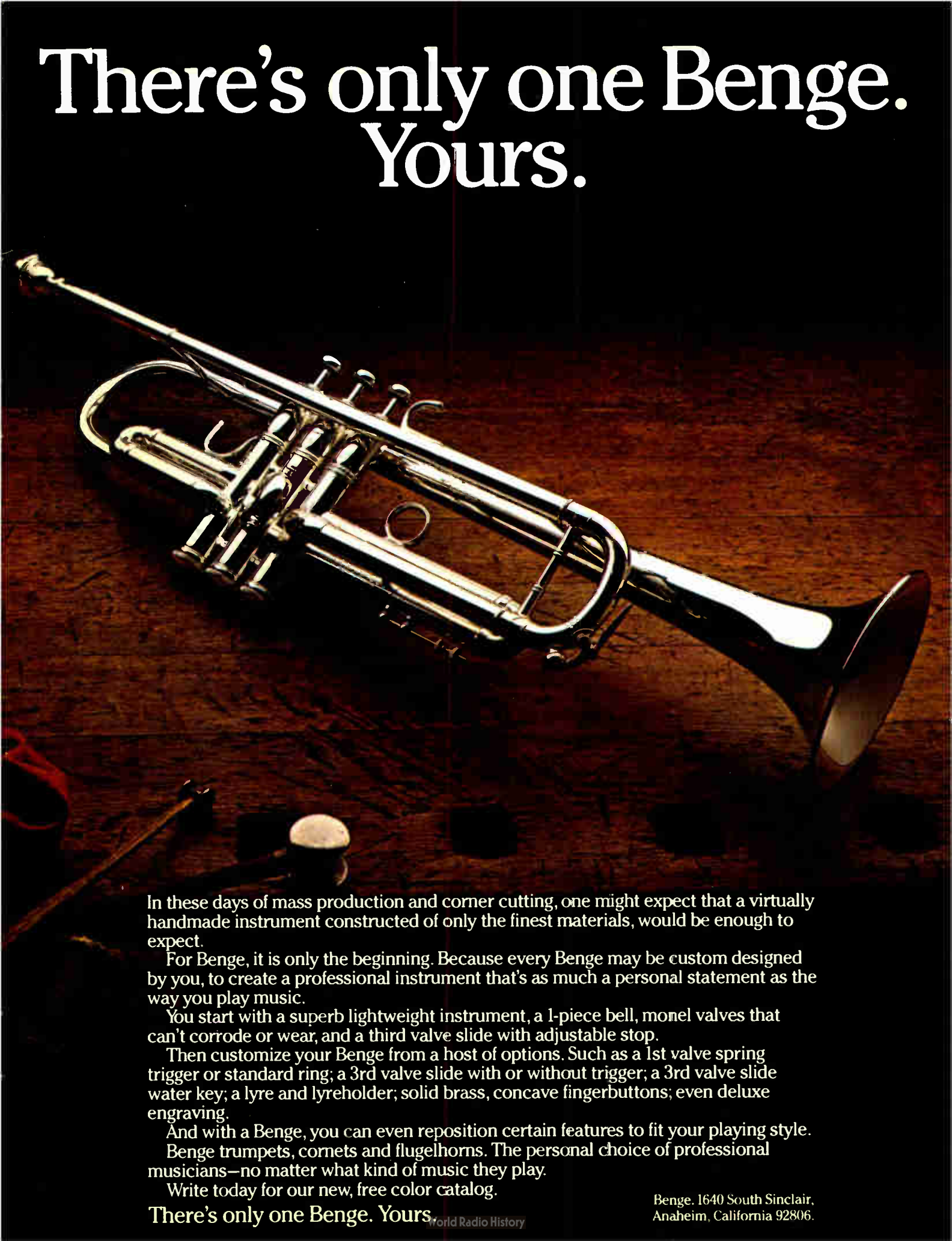

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STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS

THE 1983 SIXTH ANNUAL "DEEBEE" awards are expanding—musically, to include fusion as a separate category, and to welcome the endorsement of the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD)

NASMD participating dealers will not only increase the school, educator, and student level of participation in the contest, but each dealer will contribute to a "deebee" NASMD scholarship fund. We have the ear of several music industry associations for additional scholarship funds. Co-sponsoring colleges offering direct scholarships are also still to be finalized.

Everything considered, the "deebees" for '83 are looking better, stronger with more participation than ever. Keep in touch with your school music dealer for information and availability of entry forms, plus additional helpful "deebee" material. And stay tuned to these pages for continuing developments, along with the latest coverage of the contemporary music scene. Our November issue will feature articles on the ever-popular electric guitarist Pat Metheny, Carla Bley's (and many others') electric bassist Steve Swallow, clarinetist John Carter, and Phil Woods' present pianist Hal Galper; plus Profiles of reedman Tim Berne and cellist Abdul Wadud; and coverage of the New Music America '82 festival.

—the editors

Coming in December:
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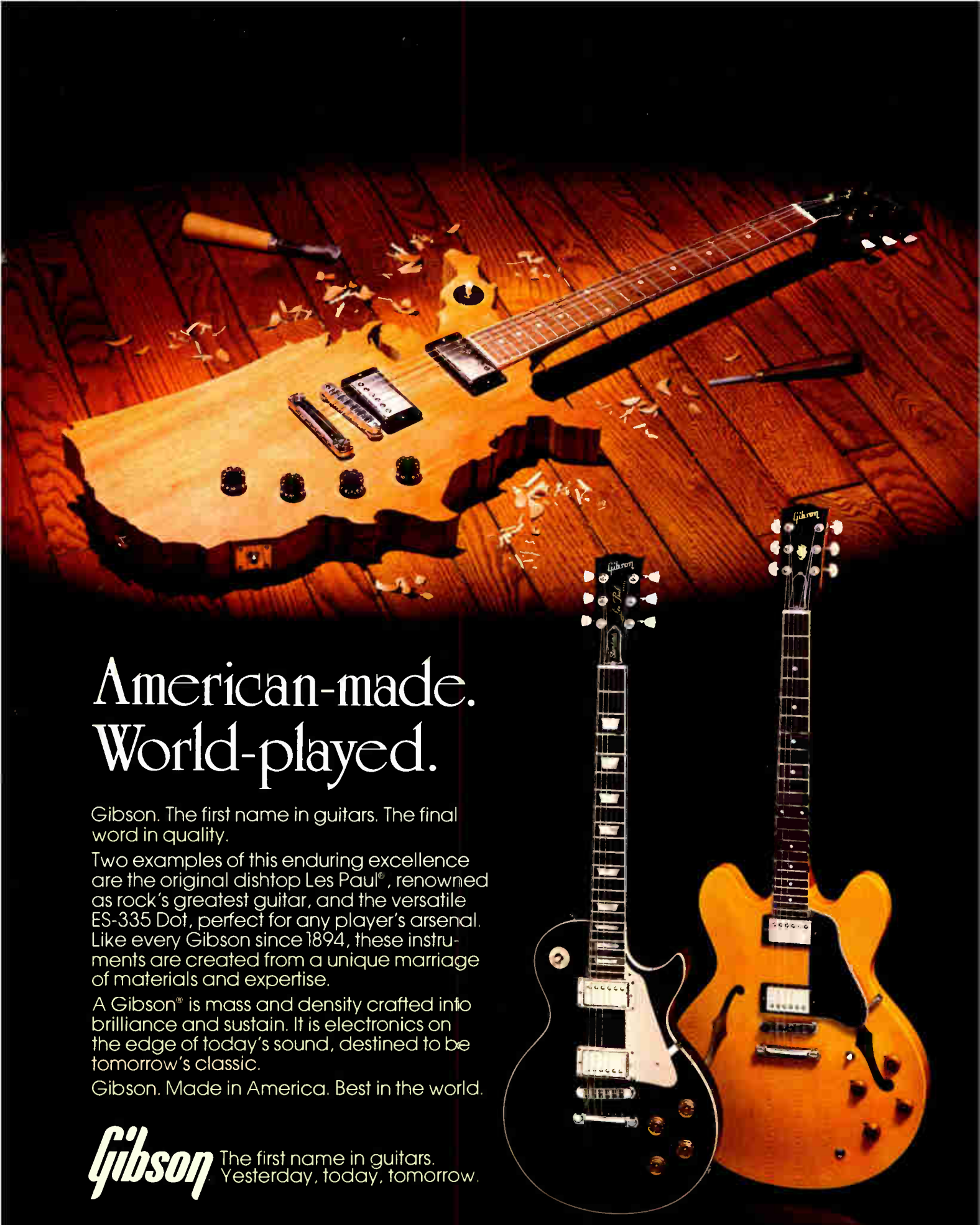

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CHORDS & DISCORDS

Choice critics

You critics are finally catching up with today (Critics Poll, **db**, Aug. '82), but your alto sax picks are still pretty anachronistic. (I did dig harmolodic poet, gonzomusicologist, King of France . . . most of you guys are still playing it pretty straight.) And now I gotta cut up my **down beat** and spend an extra 20¢ for a stamp to participate in the Big Deal Poll? Cheez . . .

Glad your articles are keeping up with the latest; I make sure to buy the mag every month. More interviews with Sun Ra! Have him debate Pythagoras—*it's all sound.*

M. Grain Seattle

Safe at home

I think it would be safe to say that I represent the younger generation of jazz lovers (I'm just 17). Speaking from this point of view, I would like to commend **db** for keeping up with the times by bringing us the best in contemporary music.

It angers me to see letters and hear people criticizing jazz-rock just because it's not straight (such as E. R. Di Stasio, Chords, **db**, June '82). My feelings are that people with this attitude are unaware of the evolution of jazz. In time, my generation will replace the oldies, making straightahead jazz less dominant. For me, personally, the closest thing to straightahead jazz that I listen to would be Pat Metheny's title track, *Offramp*.

P.S. Please do an article on the Metheny group.

Ron Di Cesare Rochester, NY

Metheny's up next month; Lyle Mays on deck.—Ed.

Cause and effect

I would like to make you aware of the effect that your publication has had upon me, an 18-year-old University of Virginia student. In the past three years, **db**, more than any other single factor, has helped foster my burgeoning interest in jazz music to the point where I now am a knowledgeable listener, fair musician, and a regular concert-goer. By helping satiate my desire for information concerning the myriad of jazz musicians and their recordings, **db** has helped familiarize me with many artists who had previously been nothing more than insignificant names brought up in my parents' discussions. **db** has done all this while also providing insightful articles concerning innovative pop performers such as Steely Dan, Stevie Wonder, and Earth, Wind and Fire.

db effectively presents jazz as a true alternative to those who prefer sounds other than those which dominate the FM airwaves. Jazz (electric, Third Stream, fusion, cool, mainstream, and all other irrelevant categories aside) is currently experiencing a period of resurgence; however, it will not last without the support of younger listeners. If others my age are initially drawn to jazz by publications such as **db**, the return of jazz to its pre-Beatles status will become more than a hoped-for-event—it will become a reality.

P.S. The "new" Weather Report was *hot* in Norfolk.

Stephen A. Riddick Chesapeake, VA

Glad for Gadd

Very nice article and interview on Steve Gadd (**db**, July '82). Among all the references to groups and artists he has played with, the group Charlie was not mentioned. Charlie has three albums that Gadd played on. The music is very good and tight, and of course Steve Gadd is true to his exceptional style. It's worth listening to (at least as good as the Bee Gees)!

Heidi L. Larisch Colorado Springs

Thanks for the great Steve Gadd interview (**db**, July '82). Refreshing and honest. I also dug how he didn't fall into any of the TrapsSet by the interviewer Darryl Pitt.

Nancy Wade Stillwater, NY

continued on page 61

NEWS

Crescent City flaunts its music

NEW ORLEANS—"When you've got it, flaunt it!" was once the proud slogan of a high-flying airline. With that corporation now in bankruptcy, the phrase might fittingly be appropriated by this city which flaunted a cornucopia of music and cuisine at its 13th annual Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Perhaps no other city can boast such an opulence of indigenous musical culture, from traditional and modern jazz to ragtime, blues, boogie woogie, rhythm & blues, gospel, country & western, latin, Afro-Caribbean, and cajun. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, local residents have tended to take their legacy for granted, but since the inception of the festival, native pride has made a healthy resurgence. Under the production of George Wein and the sponsorship of Schlitz beer, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival has become a tourist attraction second only to the Mardi Gras, drawing over 200,000 people this year, mostly from Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, but also from all over the U.S., Europe, and Japan.

In conjunction with this year's festival, Tulane University hosted its first Hot Jazz Classic, spotlighting New Orleans' unique historical contributions to the development of America's foremost native art form. Together with shows on the moored riverboat President, night club performances around town, and the huge multi-stage Louisiana Heritage Fair, the Tulane Classic helped create a 10-day, city-wide musical potpourri that transcended all stylistic bounds. Besides the mind-boggling array of festival-sponsored performances, there were non-festival attractions like the Preservation Hall Jazz Band in the French Quarter, Clifton Chenier's zydeco show band at Tipitina's, Pete Fountain and Al Hirt in their own haunts, and even New Orleans' own punk combo, the Red Rockers, at the Rose Tattoo.

Among the festival's many highlights: Dr. John with members of the old Ray Charles band on the President; scholar/violinist William Russell leading the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra at Tulane; a nightlong jam session at Prout's Club Alhambra featuring such contemporary jazzmen as pianist Ellis Marsalis, saxophonist Red Tyler, and clarinetist Alvin Batiste.

MARC PEKEMPNER

And at the Fairgrounds: costumed "Indian" tribes like the Wild Magnolias and Golden Eagles; cajun stompers like Rockin' Dopsie, Preston Frank, Dewey Balfa, and Belton Richard; bluesmen Henry Gray, Johnny Adams, and Earl King; piano masters like James Booker and Roosevelt Sykes; Dave Bartholomew's r&b big band; folk timpanist Bongo Joe; the turn-of-the-century recreations of the New Leviathan Oriental Foxtrot Orchestra; and a variety of traditional marching bands.

Some of the most popular acts were raising joyful noises under the gospel tent; the jazz tent, too, was solidly packed. But the biggest crowd pleasers were local r&b favorites like Fats Domino, Irma Thomas, the Neville Brothers, and Allen Toussaint—the latter closing the festival to the roaring approval of a tremendous mob.

The Heritage Fair also featured displays of local Afro-American and cajun craftwork, not to mention the Creole smorgasbord of culinary delights, from jambalaya, crawfish pie, and file gumbo to turtle soup, frog's legs, barbecued goat's ribs, and the spicy cajun sausage called boudin.

The only major disappointment was the rainout of a planned traditional jazz picnic, but many of the scheduled artists were integrated into the remaining Fairgrounds program. In any case, there was more than sufficient entertainment to sate the appetites of the most voracious music lovers, at least until next year. —*larry birnbaum* □

BIG CITY BEAT

JAMES LEE SOFFER

AIRTO DAY: *That'd be Oct. 18 in Chicago when Slingerland and Bill Crowden's Drums Ltd. sponsor the award-winning percussionist in a special clinic at the Hillside Holiday Inn, 4400 Frontage Rd., Hillside, at 7 p.m. Call (312) 427-8480 for details.*

CHICAGO

Jam's Park West gathers the **Great Guitars**—Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, Charlie Byrd—10/9; (312) 929-5959 • • • Stan Getz swings **Rick's** thru 9/25; Sylvia Sims follows 9/28-10/9; (312) 943-9200 • • • Stages has **Jan Garbarek** on 10/7; double-check at (312) 549-0203 • • •

HOUSTON

Rockefeller's continues its jazz policy by bringing in hometown heroes the Crusaders for a rare local club appearance 9/24; Gil Scott-Heron plays 9/27-28, and the Great Guitars 10/14 • • •

NEW ORLEANS

The Crescent City edition of the **Kool Jazz Fest** has lost a day (now 9/18-19) but found a locale (City Park), times (1-7 p.m. both days), and signed a few acts (the Crusaders, Earl Klugh, Art Blakey, Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, George Benson, Spyro Gyra, and the local bebop-oriented brass band the Dirty Dozen, with more to come); latest at (504) 522-4786 • • •

NEW YORK

Jack Kleinsinger's *Highlights In Jazz* series begins its 10th season with Marian and Jimmy McPartland (10/6) and continues with "Saxophone Splendor": Al Cohn, Fathead Newman, Richie Cole (11/4); a salute to Doc Cheatham with Vic Dickenson, Budd Johnson, Kenny Davern, and others (12/8); and Zoot Sims, Bucky Pizzarelli, Maxine Sullivan, more (2/5/83); all concerts are at NYU's Loeb Student Center; for info (212) 598-5737 • • • the **Brooklyn Academy of Music** is presenting "The Next Wave" a concert series that will present Steve Reich (9/30, 10/2); Laurie Anderson (10/28-11/7); Gavin Bryars/Robert Wilson's *Medea* (12/16-22); Glenn Branca (1/13-16); Dana Reitz (2/10-13); Max Roach/Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane (2/24-27); subscriptions are available and further info's at (212) 636-4100 • • •

PHOENIX

The third annual outdoor **Jazz In AZ** freebee fest kicks off in the Scottsdale Mall 9/26, 4-8 p.m., and heralds the start of the jazz series at the Scottsdale center for the Arts: the Concord gang is in for two indoor concerts 10/2; Cleo Laine and John Dankworth hit 11/13; Mel Lewis Orchestra 1/8/83; Gerry Mulligan 2/19/83; Charlie Byrd/Laurindo Almeida 3/11/83; George Shearing Trio 3/30/83; info at (602) 994-ARTS (2787) or Jazz in AZ, Box 13363. Phoenix 85002 • • •

SAN DIEGO

The 4th annual **San Diego** (nee La Jolla) **Jazz Festival** runs 9/24-26 at the Old Globe three-theater complex with (Fri.) Dizzy, Jon Hendricks & Co., Billy Taylor; (Sat.) Billy Taylor Trio, Anthony Davis/Episteme, Jack DeJohnette/Special Edition, Shannon Jackson/Decoding Society, United Front, Bobby McFerrin; (Sun.) Gatemouth Brown Ornette/Prime Time; also U. CA-S.D. Extension offers morning workshops on Sat. with Taylor and Davis, and Sun. with Cecil Lytle and fest guests; (714) 459-1404 • • •

MITCHELL SEIDEL

WYNTON SITTIN': *Trumpet phenom Wynton Marsalis was a surprise guest at the recent WBGO-FM Jazz-a-thon in NYC's Greene Street club when he sat in with bassist Reggie Workman's group Top Shelf which includes baritonist Howard Johnson, drummer Newman Baker, and tenorist John Stubblefield.*

Jazz Alive! fall sked

WASHINGTON, DC—The fall quarter of *Jazz Alive!*, National Public Radio's award-winning series that broadcasts America's indigenous classical music, kicks off with a special fifth anniversary show October 2 (see Potpourri). Regrettably, Dr. Billy Taylor steps down as host this fall, but he keeps busy on the airwaves with his own 13-part jazz piano series (Pot again).

Here are the rest of the upcoming shows with their release dates; most NPR outlets schedule the shows within a week of their release, so check with your local to hear:

October 9—*Interpretations Of Monk*, from the '81 Columbia U. show with Barry Harris, Anthony Davis, Mal Waldron, Muhal Richard Abrams, Steve Lacy, Charlie Rouse, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, Richard Davis, Ben Riley, and Ed Blackwell; **10/16**—New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival '82, with Hubert Laws' fusion ensemble, the Freddie Hubbard Quartet, the Stanley Turrentine Quintet, the Neville Bros.; **10/23**—From the '81 KJAZ fest in San Fran come the MJQ, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and Bobby McFerrin; **10/30**—*Mel, Gerry & George: The Great Songs*, Tormé, Mulligan, and Shearing play standards and originals from Kool/NY '82.

November 6—Jaco Pastorius & Word Of Mouth all-star band, again from Kool/NY '82, as is Oscar *Peterson Meets Herbie Hancock* (**11/13**), where the two pianists square off backed by NHØP and Martin Drew (other Kool pianists may be added here); **11/20**—*Buddy Rich: A Retrospective*, more Kool, as the Ludwig van Beethoven of drums is honored by Tormé, Dizzy, Sweets, Zoot, Eddie Bert, Phil Woods, John Bunch, and the Rich Big Band; **11/27**—Highlights of the KC Women's Jazz Fest '82 features Nancy Wilson, Barbara Carroll, the Fest All-Stars (with JoAnne Grauer and Ann Patterson), Boston's Bougainvillea, Toronto's Swing Sisters (with Stacy Rowles), and Sweden's Tintomara.

December 4—Jack Elliott directs and Henry Mancini conducts the 84-piece New American Orchestra with guest composer/soloists Gerry Mulligan, John Lewis, and Joe Roccisano, and guest soloists Shelly Manne and Ernie Watts; **12/11**—New Year's Eve ('81) with Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, Andy Simpkins, Tom Brechtlein, John Dentz, Don Alias, Mike Garson, Joe Farrell, Gayle Moran, and George Duke; **12/18**—Monterey Jazz Fest '81 highlights include Rob McConnell's Boss Brass, the Hi-Lo's, and Bug Alley; **12/25**—*Salute To W. C. Handy*, Dick Hyman is the musical director of the Handy Jubilee Orchestra that includes Doc Cheatham, George Duvivier, Bob Rosengarden, and Frank Wess, and featured performers include Katherine Handy-Lewis, Bobbie Short, McHenry Boatwright, Geanie Faulkner, Wyer Handy, Carrie Smith, and the 100-voice New York Concert Choir conducted by John Motley.

And blow in the New Year in style with *Osteology* (**January 1, 1983**), a program about 'bones and the people who play them best, Bob Brookmeyer, Curtis Fuller, and Slide Hampton, each fronting their own all-star bands, from NYC's Jazz Forum. □

Canadian summer swing

MONTREAL—Between 80-100,000 people visited the St. Denis Village this summer, as the Montreal International Jazz Festival completed its third, and most successful, year. Over 50,000 attended three concert series: one at the St. Denis Theatre, opened by native son Maynard Ferguson and closed by Miles Davis with the likes of Metheny, Tyner, Pastorius, Rollins, Marsalis, and Ornette in between; and two at the U. of Quebec at Montreal, both featuring Canadians and one a competition for local bands won by the quintet of bassist Michel Donato. Most of the main series' concerts were filmed for TV sales, and the Montreal big band of Vic Vogel was recorded for release on the fest's own label.

Wynton Marsalis brought the festival its purest jazz (an ailing Dexter Gordon had been forced to cancel), and the Canadian bands of reedman Charles Papasoff, pianist Jean Beaudet, and drummer Claude Ranger—as well as G.U.M. (la Grande Urkestre de Montreal)—offered the event a much-needed touch of the cutting edge.

The St. Denis Village activities included street concerts by guitarist Sonny Greenwich and others, and nightly performances on the terraces of several bars by the likes of drummer Guy Nadon, pianist Steve Holt, and L'Orchestre Sympathique.

The Montreal festival overlapped with a three-day event in Toronto at the Ontario Place Forum—a collection of big names (Rich, Jaco, Oscar, Ornette, Rollins, Cleo, Weather Report) highlighted by the performances of the saxophonists, Zawinul and Co. powered by the remarkable drumming of Omar Hakim, and Rob McConnell's Boss Brass. Attendance for the outdoor event topped 30,000. Weather in both cities was excellent, a rarity in this particular Canadian summer. *—mark miller* □

FINAL BAR

JAN PERSSON

Edward (Sonny) Stitt, prolific alto and tenor saxophonist, died July 22 in Washington, DC at 58, after cutting short a tour of Japan.

Respected for independently developing a Parkeresque bop style in the '40s and credited by Miles Davis for offering him his first job (Miles declined the offer in '42), Stitt came into prominence when he replaced Bird in Dizzy Gillespie's band from '45 to '46, and later ('49 to '51) when he co-led a big band with Gene "Jug" Ammons, with whom he later continued to extend the famous "tenor battle" format. Stitt was well known for his droll wit, and occasionally showed an acerbic attitude towards these "cutting contests."

Winner of the *Esquire* New Star award in '47, widely acknowledged as a blues player of exceptional depth and a soloist of unusual clarity, Stitt toured with Norman Granz' JATP in '58 and '59, and later with the Giants of Jazz tour which included Thelonious Monk and Art Blakey.

One of the first jazz musicians to employ electronic amplification and effects, Stitt developed a distinctive approach on Varitone and enjoyed some success with his recording of *Stardust*. He recorded countless albums as sideman and leader—including those with Diz, Roy Eldridge, Bud Powell, and Jug, and was also featured in the 1958 film *Jazz On A Summer's Day* from the '58 Newport Festival. Stitt was reportedly about to enter into a collaboration with Richie Cole later this year.

NEWS

Mayport jazz on the move

JACKSONVILLE, FL—Maynard Ferguson, Dizzy Gillespie, and Della Reese headline the third annual free Mayport and All That Jazz fest here 10/9. Also scheduled is the Billy Taylor Trio and the duos of George Shearing, Marian McPartland, and Adam Makowicz (the latter three pianists to also jam for an hour-long PBS special to be taped at the event), plus returnees Paul Gray & the Gaslight Gang from KC and the New Orleans-based Excelsior Brass Band. Area talent slated includes teenage keyboard whiz Marcus Roberts, the 16-piece big band Illumination, and contemporary jazz quartet Trayn.

A new site for the arts and crafts (300 exhibitors), seafood and ethnic food (25 concessions), and musical marathon (about 80 performers) has been prepared at Metropolitan Park on the banks of the St. Johns River, near downtown and adjacent to the huge Gator Bowl complex. Attracting about 70,000 and 100,000 music lovers in its first two years, the 11-hour bash outgrew its origins in the nearby fishing village of Mayport.

It's being billed as "America's Largest One-Day Free Festival" by its organizers (the city of Jacksonville and corporate sponsors), who happily note that the new location is next to major highways and interstates, and offers vast parking facilities at the Gator Bowl. The all-outdoor activities begin at 10 a.m., with the bigger jazz names winding things up around 11 p.m. Call (904) 633-2890 for details.

—pete mandell □

DIZZY IN WONDERLAND: *World-renowned trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie (left) guested on Stevie Wonder's single* Do I Do *from his recent LP* Original Musiquarium I. *Look for the collaboration to continue in the video production of the hit 45.*

POTPOURRI

Heard thru the grapevine: that little old winemaker **Herble Hancock** recently traveled to Tokyo with Bruce and Katherine Veniero, officers of HH's new Hancock Vineyards, and California Sec'y of State March Fong Eu to promote California vino in the Japanese market . . . Kool deal: **Berklee College of Music**, in cooperation with the Kool Jazz Fests, is offering a half-million in scholarships ($25,000 to a resident of each city of the 20 Kool tour stops this year); instrumentalists and vocalists between the ages of 17 and 24 are invited to apply by submitting a brief description of their musical accomplishments along with a cassette recorded performance or compositional sample to Scholarship Committee, Berklee College of Music, 1140 Boylston St., Boston 02215 . . . keep the beat: the Percussive Arts Society announced that their 10th annual **Percussion Composition Contest**'s '82-83 competition category will be an original duet for one percussionist and one wind instrument; deadline is 6/1/83 and complete details available from PAS, 214 W. Main St., Box 697, Urbana, IL 61801 . . . old and new airwaves: NPR's ***Jazz Alive!*** celebrates its fifth birthday 10/2 with a special four-hour retrospective of the show's history that includes the historic premiere of the program when Stevie Wonder unexpectedly dropped in to guest with Ella Fitzgerald in New Orleans, and tapes of recently deceased jazz greats Bill Evans (in Europe), Eddie Jefferson and Sonny Stitt (in a performance from Chicago's Jazz Showcase), Charles Mingus, Helen Humes, Art Pepper, and others; the special concludes with a preview of the upcoming four-parter on the Kool Fest/NY '82. The following week the 13-part series *Taylor Made Piano: A Jazz History With Dr. Billy Taylor* debuts; check your local . . . on the move: ***Voice of America*** operations moved to the Jacob Javits Building, 26 Federal Plaza, NYC where two modern studios will permit more efficient production of shows . . . new team in town: industry vets Philip Wilson (former drummer with both the Butterfield Blues Band and the Art Ensemble of Chicago) and Alan Leeds (promoter for James Brown, Kool and the Gang, etc.) have formed **CABA Productions**; the Brooklyn-based outfit's initial sessions have included bassist Stanley Banks (George Benson band) and keyboarder Michael Beinhorn (Material) . . . stepping out: Elektra/Musician's latest signing is the all-star band **Steps** (Michael Brecker, Peter Erskine, Eddie Gomez, Don Grolnick, Mike Mainieri), a group with hit LPs in Japan but, as yet, no American product . . . in with the new: dedicated to the motto "All musics are created equal" is **G M Recordings**, a new record company formed by Gunther Schuller; out already are LPs by Tom McKinley/Ed Schuller and Michael Bocian and friends; soon to follow are discs by Eric Dolphy (live from the early '60s), the piano music of Robert DiDomenica premiered by his wife, Harvey Phillips' tuba work, some things by GS hisself, and more . . . out with the old: the **MMO Music Group**, which includes Inner City and Classic Jazz records, has filed for a Chapter XI reorganization in bankruptcy court . . . fit benefits: Tony Bennett headlined, Nat Adderley, Max Roach, Grady Tate, Pepper Adams, and a host of others played, Billy Taylor was the musical director, and the **Jackie Robinson Foundation** got the bucks at the ninth annual Afternoon of Jazz Concert in Stamford, CT recently . . . the rockers not HRH: all proceeds from the sales of the LP *The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Plays The Queen Collection* (EMI/Angel 37910) goes to **Cancer Research** . . . faces and places: the Glenn Miller Orchestra has added the services of well-known jazz educator **Clem DeRosa** to help meet its developing need for marketing coordination . . . **Dr. Ted J. Crager**, a performing musician whose teaching and administrative experience spans three decades, was named Dean of the School of Music (interim) at U. Miami, succeeding Dr. William F. Lee III who was promoted to Provost and Executive VP last spring . . . and the Dick Grove School of Music (Studio City, CA) announced the addition of **David Garibaldi** to the faculty of the percussion program . . . transatlantic callings: the **Clark College Orchestra** (Atlanta) returned for an encore to the Montreux International Jazz Festival in Switzerland this summer, right after their debut at the La Grande Parade du Jazz in Nice, France . . . red-hot: **Chick Corea** and **Gary Burton** had the Soviets swinging at an unusual concert in Moscow recently; the performance was hosted by the usually stuffy Soviet Composers' Union, and the jazzers were invited by U.S. Ambassador Arthur Hartman, who was surprised at the interest Soviet officials (who tend to avoid American functions) showed at the hour-long performance: "The *Voice Of America* must be getting through somehow." . . . on neutral ground: the International Society for Contemporary Music has organized the **World Music Meeting 1982**, from 10/29-11/7 in Graz, Austria; for the first time, the entire range of jazz and jazz-related music will be considered in concert and competitions that include: works for jazz orchestra, experimental jazz forms, non-commercial rock, song writers, and other experimental music forms . . . part of the disc tribe? the 11th annual **Canadian Collectors' Convention**, a get-togetner of serious jazz, blues, and hot dance record collectors and discographers, is skedded for 10/2-3 in Ottawa; for more info call Ron Sweetman (Ottawa, 613/236-5602), Pierre Brosseau (Montreal, 514/453-2294), or Gene Miller (Toronto, 416/231-4055) . . .

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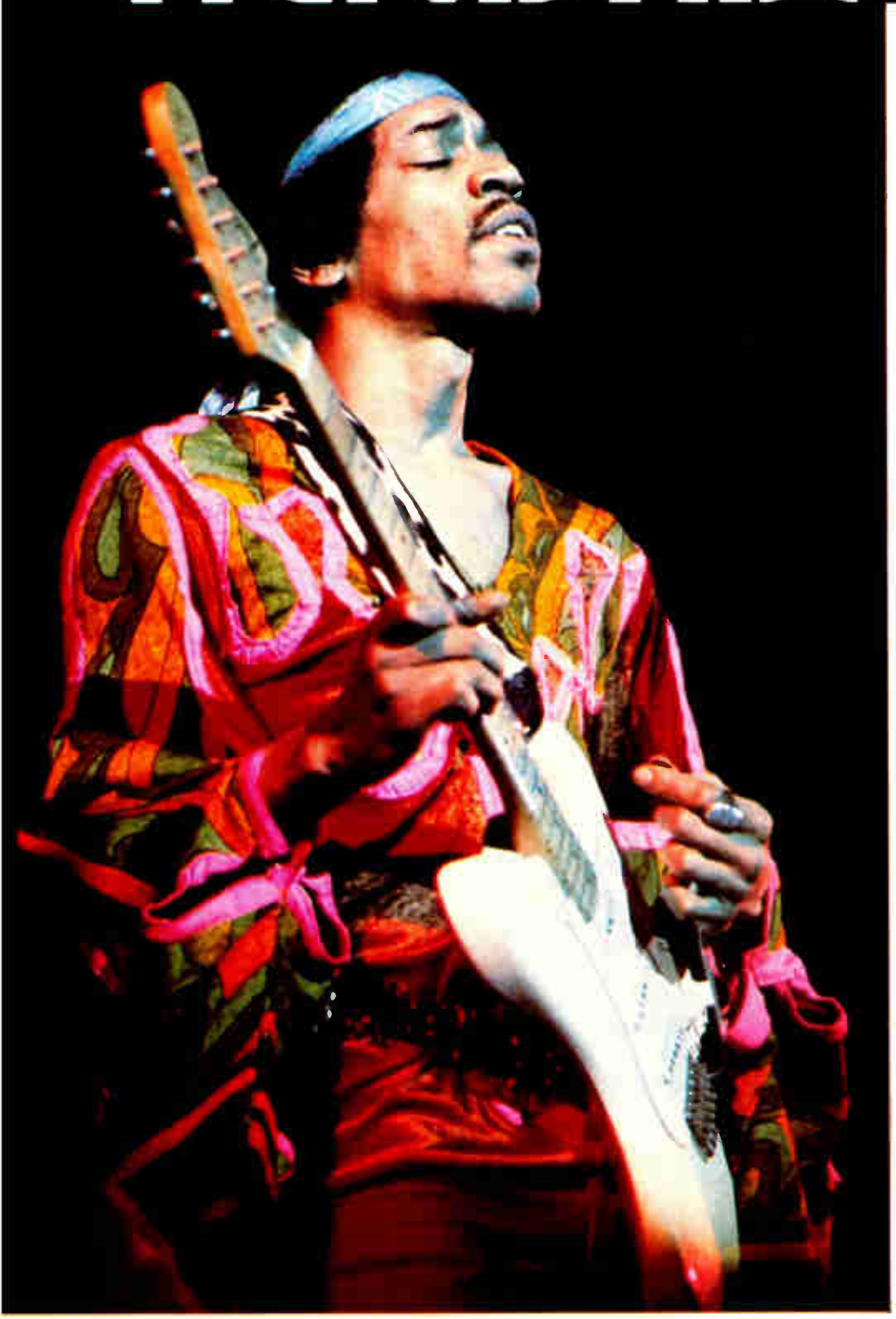
JIMI HENDRIX



DON'T BOTHER LOOKING UNDER "H" FOR the name of Jimi Hendrix in any current jazz encyclopedia or text on the market. You won't find it. Authors and archivists over the years have slighted Hendrix in the jazz history books, failing to recognize any contribution that Jimi may have made to the music (although **down beat** readers did vote him into the Hall of Fame in 1970). Yet Hendrix, who would have turned 40 this year, was clearly at the forefront of a movement that gradually brought about the ultimate cross-pollination of rock and jazz.

Miles Davis is generally credited with originating so-called fusion music in 1970 with his landmark LP, *Bitches Brew* (Columbia PG-26), which sold half-a-million copies in its first year. But groups such as Dreams (with Billy Cobham, Michael and Randy Brecker) or the English group Soft Machine had already been toying with the idea in 1969, and Hendrix had hinted at this fusion of idioms as early as 1967 with his revolutionary debut album, *Are You Experienced*.

Given Miles' stature in the jazz world, he was probably the only one at the time who could have solidified the movement by lending it credibility. For this reason, he may in fact be considered more of a popularizer of fusion music than its original innovator. By the time *Bitches Brew* hit, Hendrix had already been there, if only in an embryonic form.

Before Hendrix, the lines were more clearly drawn—there was rock on the one side and jazz on the other, with blues straddling the fence. After Hendrix, nothing would ever be quite so cut-and-dried. The impact of his explosive emergence in 1967 stretched the boundaries of rock, and at time of extreme exploration (*Third Stone From The Sun* from *Are You Experienced*, or the free-form tag on *If 6 Was 9* from the follow-up LP, *Axis: Bold As Love*) touched directly into the realm of jazz, whether or not he actually intended to.

There is a solid body of evidence supporting the theory that Jimi was indeed moving away from the more simplistic forms of rock and beginning to embrace jazz more closely. Right up to the time of his death on September 18, 1970, he often mentioned a dream he had for a big band setting with vocal backing that would help him work out new musical ideas he had.

In one of the last interviews of his life,

Photo by Joseph Sia

THE JAZZ CONNECTION

appearing in *Melody Maker* magazine on Sep. 13, 1970, Jimi revealed some startling insights about the state of his music and where he would have liked to take it: "I've turned full circle. I'm right back where I started. I've given this era of music everything, but I still sound the same. My music's the same and I can't think of anything new to add to it in its present state. When the last American tour finished, I started thinking about the future, thinking that this era of music sparked by the Beatles had come to an end. Something new has to come, and Jimi Hendrix will be there." He went on to speculate about this ideal orchestra to carry out these new musical ideas he was hearing: "I want a big band. I don't mean three harps and 14 violins. I mean a big band full of competent musicians that I can conduct and write for. And with the music we will paint pictures of Earth and space so that the listener can be taken somewhere."

Hendrix would come within a week of realizing his dream band. He died while on tour in England, shortly before he was to begin preliminaries on a collaboration with Gil Evans. The respected jazz arranger was fashioning an album of Jimi's tunes and wanted Hendrix himself to be playing on top of his big band arrangements, just as he had done with Miles on *Miles Ahead* in 1957, *Porgy And Bess* in 1958, and *Sketches Of Spain* in 1959. Evans eventually completed the project in 1974 using Japanese fusion guitarist Ryo Kawasaki for the guitar parts on *The Gil Evans Orchestra Plays The Music Of Jimi Hendrix* (RCA CPL1-0667). That posthumous release contained such lyrical Hendrix classics as *Castles Made Of Sand*, *Little Wing*, and other selections that Evans presented in an all-Hendrix tribute concert at Carnegie Hall as part of the New York Jazz Repertory Company's 1974 season.

Jimi's body was buried at the Greenwood Cemetery in Seattle on Oct. 1, 1970. Included at the funeral among the mourners were Jimi's father Al, his brother Leon, Buddy Miles, Mitch Mitchell, Noel Redding, bluesmen Johnny Winter and John Hammond Jr., and Miles Davis, whose presence there was as much a symbolic gesture as one of true friendship. It was in essence a statement of support for Jimi's music, and with Miles' stamp of approval, other jazz musicians could feel more comfortable about borrowing from this rock idiom as well.

Today, nearly every young fusion musician who came up with rock during the '60s and later got formal schooling in jazz conservatories will invariably list the name of Hendrix alongside the names of Coltrane, Bird, and Miles as major influences.

Mike Stern, who plays guitar in Miles' latest edition, and touted fusion guitarist Al DiMeola have both captured some of Jimi's fire in their own playing, but their appreciation of Hendrix goes well beyond the hot licks and biting sound he patented. "One of my favorite Hendrix songs," says DiMeola, "was a very pretty, very underrated tune he did on his first album called *May This Be Love*. He does this solo that sounds like his guitar is underwater, which was so totally foreign to me at the time. I mean, there I was, 13 years old in Bergenfield, New Jersey, learning everything from jazz to bossa nova to classical from my mentor [guitar teacher Robert Aslanian], and this guy comes out with underwater guitar sounds! It was so revolutionary at the time. Hendrix was such an innovator. He was just into experimenting with sounds and taking tunes out with long solos that took you on a little bit of an adventure. And this is what is gradually slipping away in the music industry today, not so much in jazz but especially in the music you hear on the radio. It's so hip to be able to be as free and experimental as Hendrix was, but today the pressure is on so much for anyone who's into the business of selling records to make pop music in the A-B-A form. And I don't think that the pressure was on as heavily back then."

Of the Hendrix technique, DiMeola adds, "His soloing was definitely in the jazz tradition, and a lot of members of the jazz community picked up on it. Not everyone, of course—there's a lot of players from the old school who couldn't stand to listen to Hendrix. But of my generation, most everyone will admit that Jimi was a leader."

Mike Stern remembers Hendrix mostly for the evocative quality of his playing on tunes like *The Wind Cries Mary* from *Experienced* and *One Rainy Wish* from *Axis*. "His playing on those tunes is so lyrical. It has that same singing quality that I dig in Jim Hall's playing or in Wes Montgomery's playing. But the thing about Hendrix was he had that sound, he would articulate that lyrical feeling with a fatter sound on his Strat than you could get with a regular hollow-bodied jazz guitar.

"Jimi was definitely a legato player, and whether he intended to or not, he started a movement among guitar players with his long sustaining, legato lines. He sounded more like a horn player than anyone before him, and he influenced everybody that followed him. I'm after that same horn-like quality in my own playing, either when I'm with Miles or when I'm playing a straightahead bebop gig. Of course, on a bebop gig I'll go for a darker, warmer sound, more like Jim or Wes, but Miles wants me to play loud. At Avery Fisher Hall last year [where Miles unveiled his current group to New York critics at the 1981 Kool Jazz Festival], he went over and turned my amp up at one point. And he's always saying things to me like 'Play some Hendrix! Turn it up or turn it off!' Miles loves Hendrix. Jimi and Charlie Christian are his favorite cats as far as guitarists are concerned. So right now with this band he wants to hear volume. My own natural instinct is to play a little softer, which I've been able to do on tunes like *My Man Is Gone*, where my playing is a little darker. But Miles wants me to fill a certain role with this band, so I'm playing loud and my solos are usually speeded up to double-time where I have to play kind of rock-style, whatever that is. So while I'm going for Jim and Wes, there's some Jimi in there too, I guess."

Fusion pioneer Larry Coryell speaks of Hendrix as having the talent of Stravinsky. Others have likened his inventive instincts to Ornette Coleman's visionary concepts. In fact, the ultra-funky, multi-layering guitar textures that Jimi explored in the studio on cuts like *Night Bird Flying* (which was to have appeared on a double LP Hendrix was working on at the time of his death called *First Rays Of The New Rising Sun* but was later included in the posthumously released LP, *Cry Of Love*) suggest some of the sounds that Coleman would expand on years later with his electrified Prime Time band. And today, many of the harmolodic offshoots

BY BILL MILKOWSKI

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picking up on Coleman's lead—groups like Material and Curlew or solo artists like guitarist James Blood Ulmer—can trace their musical roots directly to Hendrix.

The link between Hendrix and Ulmer becomes especially eerie when you listen to Blood's vocal style on tunes like *Stand Up To Yourself* and *Pleasure Control* from his *Free Lancing* LP (Columbia ARC-37493). His slightly strangled, semi-talking yet highly expressive singing style on those cuts is hauntingly reminiscent of Jimi's own husky-toned, sensual style.

Another fusion pioneer, guitarist John McLaughlin, calls Hendrix a revolutionary force. "Jimi single-handedly shifted the whole course of guitar playing, and he did it with such finesse and real passion."

But perhaps Jaco Pastorius put it best, in his own succinct way, when asked to comment on what influence Hendrix has made on the current state of jazz. From his base in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where he is hard at work on his next solo album, the ex-Weather Report bassist summed it up with: "All I gotta say is . . . *Third Stone From The Sun*. And for anyone who doesn't know about that by now, they should've checked Jimi out a lot earlier."

He's referring to the extended "sound painting" that Hendrix introduced on his debut album, *Are You Experienced*. In that number, drummer Mitch Mitchell displays his fondness for jazz (his background with the Georgie Fame band gave him a foundation in jazz rhythms), and Jimi blows what amounts to free form sax lines on top of it, perhaps borrowing from the free jazz movement which was in its ascendancy at the time with John Coltrane as its leading light. Jaco invariably pays homage to Hendrix during his live performances by using *Third Stone From The Sun* or *Purple Haze* as a springboard for one of his customary fuzzed-out feedback sessions on his beat-up Fender bass. And he generally sandwiches that segment between tributes to Coltrane (*Giant Steps*) and Charlie Parker (*Donna Lee*), as if to demonstrate some kind of common thread among these three musical forces.

Of course, Jimi never presumed to be a jazz player. He was actually shy about approaching jazz musicians, probably because he could neither read nor write music. But by the summer of 1969, he was listening to more jazz, enjoying the sounds of Coltrane, Coleman, McCoy Tyner, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk—who was like an idol to him. Jimi's own musical ideas were probably closer to Kirk's than to the modal concepts of Coltrane or Miles. Since Hendrix was able to play three guitar parts simultaneously, he must have felt an immediate affinity for Kirk, who could play three wind instruments at once. And Kirk's amazing mastery of circular breathing techniques allowed him to blow unusually long, sustained lines, which matched Jimi's own legato guitar lines. From the start of their early jams in London at Ronnie Scott's club (around the early part of '67), Kirk and Jimi communicated on a mutual plane, recognizing that the blues was at

JOSEPH SIA

JIMI HENDRIX' EQUIPMENT

By today's standards—where even the average guitarist has at his or her disposal such prime pieces of technology as compressors for greater sustain, graphic equalizers to control frequency bands, digital and analog delays as well as a variety of flangers, phasers, and chorus boxes for time delay effects—Hendrix' basic setup was modest and archaic. Yet the magic he achieved with his stock setup was undeniable.

Rather than leaving such matters to technology, Hendrix seemed to have an innate sense of how to control sustain and feedback. As the late Michael Bloomfield once pointed out: "Jimi was just a super expert at bending strings and sustaining notes. Sometimes he would bend seven or eight frets and know where he was going, not like a lot of guys who are just jerking their strings around. In seven frets there are seven half half-steps [quarter-tones] . . . that's 14 possible notes he could find within seven frets. He would hear where he was going, he wasn't just bending out in space somewhere. He had an immense vocabulary of controlled sounds."

Jimi didn't rely on the pedals as a crutch for incompetence, as some critics of electronic music charge. He used them in a legitimate technique which was to influence a whole range of young guitarists, from such rockers as Neal Schon of Journey, Brian May of Queen, and Steve Morse of the Dregs, to such jazz-inspired guitarists as Robben Ford, Larry Carlton, Lee Ritenour, and Pat Metheny. Said Jimi once: "We don't use gimmicks for their own sake. I get accused of being electronically hung up, but what happens there on-stage is what I do myself."

The name of Hendrix became synonymous with the name of Fender (Stratocaster guitars) and Marshall (amplifiers) during the '60s. This combination proved to be the perfect match to convey Jimi's passionate feelings. And playing a restrung right-handed Fender Strat allowed him easier access to the volume controls and tremolo bar, which was essential to achieving that trademark Hendrix sound.

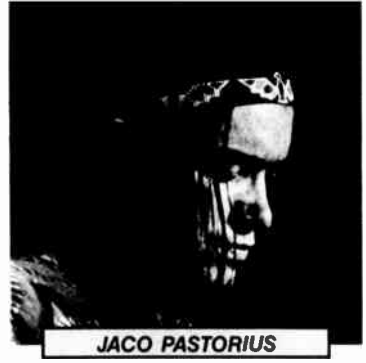
He owned innumerable Stratocasters and usually traveled with a collection of a dozen or more in various colors, one to fit each mood. As backups, he carried with him at least one Gibson Les Paul and one Gibson Flying V. He also kept a Fender Telecaster for studio use.

Guitars were probably Jimi's most precious possession, and he amassed a huge collection over the years—everything from a Gibson 330 to a Firebird to a Guild 12-string acoustic to an 8-string Hagstrom bass (which he used on *Spanish Castle Magic* from the *Axis: Bold As Love* LP). But these were merely showpieces. Up to the time of his death, his main axe was the iconic Fender Strat.

Hendrix started out with a small Fender Twin Reverb amp, back in the leaner pre-Experience days, before switching to his trademark stack of large Marshalls. In '67 Jimi tested out some customized amps on tour for a period of about a year; he then went back to his old reliable Marshalls, sometimes using as many as three 200-watters miked through p.a. systems with as many as six 4×12 cabinets and a seventh for a monitor on-stage. Since Jimi always performed with the settings cranked all the way up, these systems generally wore out faster than usual and had to be constantly checked and replaced by the road crew.

The customary Hendrix foot pedals included the Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face, the Univox Univibe (which simulates a rotating speaker sound with a wide-band variable speed control, originally designed for use with electric organs but adapted for Jimi) and the Vox Cry-Baby wah-wah. One other "toy" made especially for Hendrix by Roger Mayer was a device called the Octavia, which could change octaves at a touch. Roadies kept at least a dozen of each of these pedals on hand during their tours.


JOHN McLAUGHLIN


JACO PASTORIUS


MIKE STERN


AL DIMEOLA

the heart of their respective styles.

They also shared a common feel for rhythm, which was all-important to Jimi's playing. The rhythm of the guitar, he felt, was the key to blues, jazz, and rock. He had forged his own solid rhythmic comping style while playing backup on the chitlin' circuit during the early '60s with the likes of Sam Cooke, Ike & Tina Turner, and Little Richard before moving on to New York and taking up with the Isley Brothers and Curtis Knight. Young British counterparts like Eric Clapton or Jeff Beck didn't have anything remotely as earthy and real to draw from in their formative years as guitarists, having learned nearly all their blues licks from records and radio rather than by osmosis and experience, as Jimi had. As a result, their respective styles come across as far more precise and intellectual than Jimi's, lacking the grit and soul that was so much a part of the Hendrix style.

Listen to Jimi's extended bluesy jazz jam on *Rainy Day Dream Away* from *Electric Ladyland*. Together with organist Mike Finnigan, drummer Buddy Miles, bassist Noel Redding, and saxist Freddie Smith, Hendrix creates a swinging, intimate, smoky jazz-club ambiance that is closer to Grant Green and Charles Earland than to the frenzy of a rock concert setting.

In the tradition of jazz players, Jimi loved to jam. He was wide open to a whole spectrum of musicians who were intrigued by new sounds and were not tied down to any one root. The list of names he jammed with during his brief but brilliant career is endless, including the likes of blues guitarist Johnny Winter, and jazz organist Larry Young (Khalid Yasin), who went on to play in Miles' band for the now-historic *Bitches Brew* session, recorded in Columbia Studios in New York City on Aug. 19, 1969, the same day that the Woodstock Music Festival officially opened. At one other fabled jam, Jimi locked horns with bassist Dave Holland, drummer Tony Williams, and guitarist John McLaughlin. But McLaughlin is less than ecstatic about the result of this late-night session at Jimi's Electric Ladyland Studios in Greenwich Village. "It was just a jam, really just a party in the studio. It was four o'clock in the morning, and everybody was a bit tired. I've only heard a few minutes of it on tape, but what I heard is just not up to it. If they found something that was really good, I'd be the first one to say, 'Let's release that.' But there's maybe three minutes of material, the rest is not up to par."

Besides these celebrated jams, there are also rumors that some kind of collaboration took place between Jimi and Miles in the studio. It was around the time of Miles' *Filles De Kilimanjaro* (Columbia PC-9750, recorded in 1968) that he began communicating with Hendrix. By this album, with its debut of electronic instruments and heavier beats, it was clear that Miles was beginning to flirt with rock, perhaps in response to the phenomenal success he saw that Hendrix had attained. By 1969 Miles was urged by Clive Davis, then president of Columbia, to face the rock challenge head-on. The result was *In A Silent Way* (Columbia PC-9875), on which Miles employed electric guitarist McLaughlin. Then in 1970 came *Bitches Brew*. As Miles has gone down in history as the Christopher Columbus of this new, uncharted land called fusion music, Hendrix might be considered its Leif Erikson. While the one consciously and meticulously established a strategy to explore this new land, the other merely sailed off course and aimlessly landed there, not really acknowledging the significance of his discovery at the time.

JIMI HENDRIX
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Producer Alan Douglas, who had worked with Eric Dolphy in his formative stages, was rumored to have tried orchestrating a summit meeting in the studio between Miles and Hendrix, but both were said to have a reluctance to work together. Douglas, who later gained control of some 600 hours of Hendrix tapes as the designated curator of the Hendrix estate, is of the opinion that Jimi was definitely heading to a closer connection with jazz at the time of his death. To further support his theory of Hendrix as the emerging jazz musician, Douglas released an album in 1980 called *Nine To The Universe*, a collection of jams with organist Larry Young and others that shows Jimi's natural affinity for the jazz idiom.

In the early stages of his career, it was easy for skeptics to dismiss Hendrix as nothing more than just another freaked-out rock star whose only contribution was his pioneering efforts in the mastery of decibels. His explosion onto the British scene in 1967, a carefully calculated campaign masterminded by impresario Chas Chandler, was met with almost unanimous ridicule by the London press, which immediately labeled Jimi as a kind of black anti-hero. One paper called him a Mau-Mau in banner headlines while another tagged him as "The Wild Man of Pop." Hendrix received similar treatment from the American press as well, at least initially. The *New York Times*, for example, referred to him as "a Black Elvis" in a laudatory review on Feb. 25, 1968. This early scrutiny obviously focused on Hendrix' surface appeal and ignored the richness or depth of his musical ideas.

Of course, Jimi often gave the skeptics plenty of ammunition to write him off as an exhibitionist (he was thrown off a Monkees tour in 1968 for shocking the pre-pubescent teenybopper crowd with his blatant X-rated stage antics) or as a gimmicky carnival attraction (by virtue of his showy, acrobatic presence and dental daring on guitar) or as a jive-talking sexual tease (no doubt reinforced by such come-on tunes as *Foxy Lady* and *Little Miss Lover*). This was certainly a part of the Hendrix mystique in those early days of the Experience. But toward the end of his life, Jimi began expressing strong desires of shunning the whole packaged and processed world of pop and getting into more serious music.

As he put it in that final interview with *Melody Maker*: "The main thing that used to bug me was that the people wanted too many visual things from me. I never wanted it to be so much of a visual thing. When I didn't do it, people thought I was being moody, but I can only freak when I really feel like doing so. Now I just want the music to get across, so that people can just sit back and close their eyes and know exactly what is going on without caring a damn about what we are doing while we're on-stage."

But by 1970, with a collaboration with Gil Evans on the horizon, Jimi Hendrix had long grown beyond the showmanship of 1967, when he felt a certain amount of responsibility to play guitar with his teeth and smash amplifiers. He was indeed headed in more challenging musical directions, and we can only dream about how far he would've gone and where he would be today. db

Photos by (from left) Andy Freeberg, Tom Copi, Noel Neuburger, and Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve.

WEATHER REPORT ON THE ROAD WITH

BY A. JAMES LISKA

PHOTOS BY ANDY FREEBERG

SAN DIEGO—THE ENCROACHING DARKness promised cool relief from a long, hot first day of June. The day had been uneventful, boring in its sunny sameness with only momentary bursts of ocean wind to offer respite. An edge of anxiety had been omnipresent, its foreboding detracting from the city's recreational offerings.

A visit to the afternoon soundcheck was dismissed as too inside a look; it could well remove that initial moment of anticipation, excitement that would no doubt come that evening when, against the darkness, Weather Report would take to the stage in its latest incarnation.

The hours passed and the city's Starlight Bowl began filling to half-capacity. Backstage was crowded but quiet. The band was sequestered in a guarded dressing room. Only Wayne Shorter was not. He was gently pacing behind the back curtain, worrying aloud about his horns which had been left on-stage. "I'm not going to say anything," he said. "You'll just have to wait."

A set list was distributed to the few members of the press. A perusal gave no hint as to what would come; only *Dara Factors 1* and *2* were familiar. The "if needed" encore, presumably, would also be familiar.

Against a backdrop of pre-recorded fanfare, Weather Report took the stage, holding it for nearly three hours with an array of musical colors and textures that have come to characterize its output for some 12 years. The new members of the band—bassist Victor Bailey, drummer Omar Hakim, percussionist Jose Rossy—were well-rehearsed and well-versed in their roles. The image of a former Weather Report faded, and the new one took its rightful place [Caught, page 56].

The pre-show quiet of back-stage turned to after-debut jubilation. Back-patting and hugging were rampant. A victory, as such, had been won in San Diego; Weather Report, after a 10-month absence and risky personnel changes, was back.

Shorter, quiet and reserved, beamed, accepting graciously the compliments being offered. Zawinul, posed and intense, smiled broadly, countering each compliment with a reminder that this was the band's first-ever performance. "Just wait," he warned. "I think this is the best band; these musicians are the best."

• • •

Zawinul faces people like a boxing contender. Unintimidated and forthright, he stands squarely, his arms taut, pulled back and away from his sides. His wide shoulders and narrow waist form a V-shaped torso. His hands—hands that so effortlessly pull music from keyboards—are the hands of a worker's, and they are slightly clenched, as if ready to become fists.

Zawinul is in complete control. But he is sensitive to those facing him, and he relaxes when he thinks they need him to relax. His eyes stare—always—and he smiles readily. With a wave of his hand, as if he was literally pulling an idea from the right side of his brain, he extends an invitation to a tour. "You come on the road, man," he says, his Germanic accent lending a demanding precision to his words. "You observe; watch us."

• • •

ROCHESTER, NY—THE BLACK SILK JACKET, emblazoned with the familiar "WR" logo, had been seen in Chicago a few hours earlier, across a crowded O'Hare Airport.

At baggage claim Brian Risner, the house sound engineer, and Coy Featherston, the band's lighting designer, waited patiently by a borrowed handtruck. One by one, the heavy Anvil cases marked "Weather Report" inched their ways out on the conveyor belt, their corners threatening leather suitcases and impatient travelers whose knees projected into the baggage path. The arriving passengers looked curiously at the heavy cases, wondering what they contained and why there were so many of them. Risner's jacket drew more curious looks; only a few seemed to translate the "WR."

"This is it," Risner says, instructing a skycap to pull the handtruck to the curb. "Weather Report, huh?" the skycap says, a smile indicating familiarity. "Y'all playing in town tomorrow night. I'm gonna be there."

A bus, big and two-toned brown and silver, is awaiting the band's arrival. A hotel limousine is at the curb. The skycap attends the luggage as a first tour of the bus—home for the next several days, weeks—is afforded. It

OMAR HAKIM

is impressive, from its hokey depictions of a Western saga on its sides, to its two plush living rooms and nine berths, to the imposing "Ego Trips" in the space reserved for a more typical, and modest, "Charter."

"Must be the band's," Risner says, dodging traffic on his way to the hotel car.

• • •

"Where is this place?" Featherston asks the driver, a young kid in a ridiculous, ill-fitting bell captain's suit. "Over there," he says, pointing straight ahead. "Where's Rochester?" is the logical follow-up. "Back there," the driver says, pointing blindly behind him. "Terrific."

• • •

Traveling salesmen are busy hustling the girls at the hotel's reception desk, and the first arrivals of Weather Report's 14-man entourage grow impatient waiting for service. Finally, keys are distributed, but not without much confusion over who is who and why 11 names are absent.

• • •

Hours pass before Wayne Shorter and Brian Condliffe, the band's road manager, arrive. Zawinul is en route from Vienna and won't arrive until much later. One by one, the rest of the entourage, minus bassist Victor Bailey and drummer Omar Hakim, arrives. Struggling to carry his own horns and declining any offers of help, Shorter ambles through the maze-like hallway to his room. Bidding an early goodnight, he closes the door behind him.

• • •

Jose Rossy's arrival is as full of excitement as any. Energetic barely begins to describe the percussionist's demeanor. Brash, animated, and funny, he is a totally positive force.

"I want," he says, concentrating on pronouncing each consonant, "a Heineken and a Courvoisier." The barmaid's surprised look is greeted by Rossy's quick smile and twinkling brown eyes. She grows more flustered when those surrounding him order four more of the same. She isn't finished calculating the bills when another round is ordered.

"Oh man," Rossy says excitedly, "I'm ready! We're ready! This is great!" Without a word, he turns heel and runs to where the lounge act is preparing for its nightly venture into MOR dance music. Like long-lost friends, Rossy is greeting the players. Pleased to know somebody from Weather Report, they gladly return the greetings.

• • •

Morning becomes elective, with the crew assembling in the hotel lobby for its day-long chore of preparing for that night's concert. The band's bus, Ego Trips, sits idling outside as late-arriving crew members exchange muffled pleasantries and greetings. Finally, the crew boards the bus which takes it across town to the Auditorium Theatre.

As the bus pulls away, Victor Bailey and Omar Hakim emerge from a cab. Bailey, a cigarette hanging from his mouth, looks bent under the weight of his leather-cased bass which is slung across his back. Hakim, bright-eyed and always smiling, looks over the pile of gear at curbside.

The first order of business is relaxing, and the bar is chosen as the logical place. Rossy, refreshed from a long night's sleep, bounds in and embraces his Weather Report cohorts. Chatter is rampant and the threesome, representing the new rhythm section, excitedly relate their pleasure at being in the band.

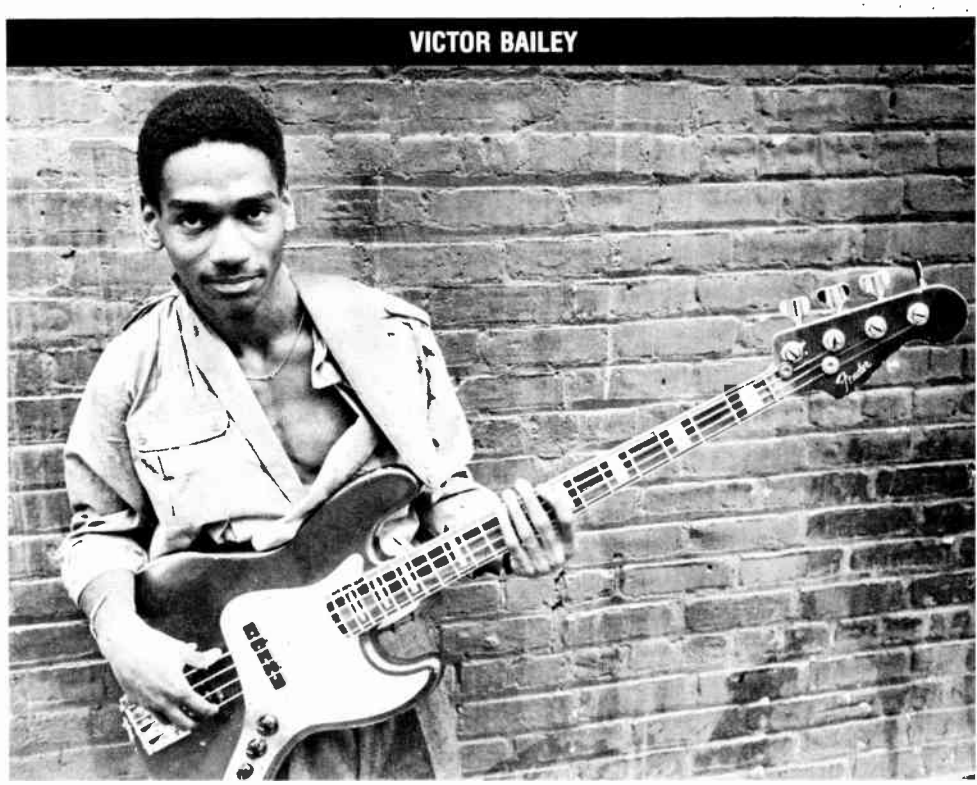
• • •

Omar, friendly and reserved, is of a serious demeanor. He is neither a smoker nor a drinker. He is a serious vegetarian who seems always to have a bag of "bird seed" in hand. He is frequently on the lookout for tofu.

"I started to play drums when I was six," he would later recall. "You see, there was this drummer named Buck Jones, and his son Sal and I used to hang out all the time. Well, one day Sal and I were playing, and Buck said that he didn't want us kids to be messing around with his drums. So, naturally, as soon as Buck left, Sal and I went upstairs and started messing around with the drums. Of course, Buck walked in. But what we didn't know was that he was downstairs listening for a while before he came upstairs and sent Sal to his room and me to the basement. A little while later, Buck came down and gave me a practice pad and a pair of sticks. He told me there was some thought and sensitivity to what I was playing. It wasn't just banging."

Hakim's father must have been pleased at his son's interest in the drums, for three years later a nine-year-old Omar was playing in his father's band. "He had me swinging," Omar recalls, "playing the modern stuff of the day." Through piano playing at his aunt and uncle's house on Sundays and his learning the violin so he could play in the school orchestra, Hakim went the way of funk, playing in various bands in his native Queens, NY and picking up the guitar and bass along the way. When he was 15, he took time away from his studies at New York's Music and Art High School to go on the road with Jay Mason in a band that opened for Bruce Springsteen.

At 23 Hakim looks back on a career that has included stints with such divergent musical styles as those represented by Bobbi



VICTOR BAILEY

Humphrey, Roy Ayers, Carly Simon, Tom Browne, Mike Mainieri, David Sanborn, George Benson, Gil Evans, Bobby Broom, and Patti LaBelle. A multi-instrumentalist who has been working on a solo album on which he plays all of the instruments, Hakim was recommended to Zawinul by violinist Michal Urbaniak. "It was a dream come true," he says. "Joe just said, 'C'mon, you got it.' Then I brought Jose and Victor."

• • •

Ego Trips is again idling in front of the hotel as Zawinul sits in the restaurant, scanning the day's newspaper and vigorously enjoying his steak lunch. An inquiry about his trip to Vienna is answered with, "Ridiculous, man, ridiculous." An invite to food or beverage changes the subject, and Joe lays the ground rules: "No interviews. Observe and we'll talk."

News of Jaco's newborn twins had greeted Zawinul upon his stateside arrival, and any thoughts about there being any animosity behind the personnel change were quickly dispelled.

• • •

The 4 p.m. bus trip to the Auditorium Theatre is as uneventful as the return trip eight hours later will be. Careful inspection of the bus is left until later, when Zawinul will announce that the rear quarters will become a traveling rehearsal hall by week's end.

"Did you know that Ellington could only sleep sitting up toward the end of his life?" Zawinul asks of no one in particular. "Man," he says, shaking his head, "when you have to travel on the road, you can decide to do it right." He smiles and looks around the spacious vehicle.

• • •

Soundchecks attract hangers-on and Rochester's downtown theater attracts plenty. But the curious who show up on this rainy afternoon are quiet and unobtrusive. They can stay. As the players check their setups, huge scaffoldings are moved into place. Monitors are moved mere inches to satisfy the players' demands, and their levels checked and rechecked. Miles of cable are secured to the floor with silver insulation tape.

A musical giant is being nurtured; its life to be given with a single dimming of lights and cueing of a taped fanfare.

• • •

The catered dinner back-stage is outrageous: pasta and sausages, salads, fresh vegetables and pastries. Tofu, cooked delicately and prepared to Omar's liking, is vastly passed over.

Band, crew, and stagehands sit together, eating and finding common interests for discussion. Zawinul talks food and promises tastes of some prune schnapps, bottled in 1928 by his grandfather in Austria. The band then retires to its dressing rooms, content with the unitary solitude.

• • •

A two-hour-plus performance leaves the audience suitably impressed and the band inspired. Several days had passed without a performance, and things gelled together nicely. Another victory celebration—quiet and private—precedes the back-stage reception of old friends and admirers. The exit to the sanctuary of the bus is quick, and the ride back to the hotel quiet. Zawinul, reassuring in tone and diffident, speaks about the emerging quality of the band. Good-naturedly, he complains about a visual projection he didn't like. "Those innards, or whatever they were, have to go," he laughs, making a face. There are complaining moans in anticipation of the next day's 8 a.m. departure time.

Back at the hotel, Zawinul bids goodnight and retires to the privacy of his room. Others do likewise, some emerging a while later for late-night beers and a listen to the lounge band's dance music. A 4 a.m. departure is scheduled for the crew, and most plan to stay up, preferring to get their sleep on the bus. But the crew bus falls through and 7 a.m. flights to Philly are quickly arranged. The equipment truck is long gone.

• • •

Morning is not elective and only Zawinul appears rested. The mood on the bus is mixed. Rossy's excited antics are met with consternation; Wayne, before retiring to his berth for the trip's duration, entertains with his accurate impressions of Humphrey Bogart and Ida Lupino in *High Sierra*.

Bus sleep on the thruways is disturbed. Brian Condliffe, his British accent and formal language lending emphasis, lectures briefly on the vagaries of road life.

Lunch at some roadside cafe is a challenge. The bus is greatly admired by the diner's patrons.

• • •

PHILADELPHIA IS VICTOR BAILEY'S HOMEtown, and he emerges from his basement dressing room in coat and tie, properly ready to meet family and friends who arrive backstage in droves.

A wide smile crosses his face, and he is standing straighter than usual. There is an added edge to any homecoming, and considering that just two years ago Bailey was a music student at Berklee, he is aware of this gig's particular importance.

Bailey's father, Morris Bailey Jr.—a pioneer in the "Philly sound" in r&b—is cool on the outside. Inside, he is bursting with pride. He must be remembering his son's seventh year when Victor, without any prompting or preparation, picked out the melody to Bill Withers' *Lean On Me* on the family piano. That moment was the start of a musical career that has led the 22-year-old bassist to his current berth in Weather Report.

"In the fourth grade, I started playing drums, and all the way through high school, I played in the orchestras and bands," Victor says, in a manner more like thinking out loud than conversational. "Then, in the ninth grade, I started messing around with the bass. I got my first bass for Christmas in 1975. It was an electric bass, but I started playing acoustic bass at the same time, and played that in the orchestra until I graduated from high school.

"I wanted to join the navy after high school and get in their music program," he contin-

continued on page 66

JOSE ROSSY

WEATHER REPORT DISCOGRAPHY

WEATHER REPORT—Columbia FC-37616
NIGHT PASSAGE—Columbia JC-36793
8:30—Columbia PCZ-36030
MR. GONE—Columbia PC-35358
HAVANA JAM II—Columbia PC2 36180
HAVANA JAM I—Columbia PC2 36053
HEAVY WEATHER—Columbia PC-34418
BLACK MARKET—Columbia PC-34099
TALE SPINNIN'—Columbia PC-33417
MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER—Columbia PC-32494
SWEETNIGHTER—Columbia PC-33210
I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC—Columbia PC-31352
WEATHER REPORT—Columbia PC-30661

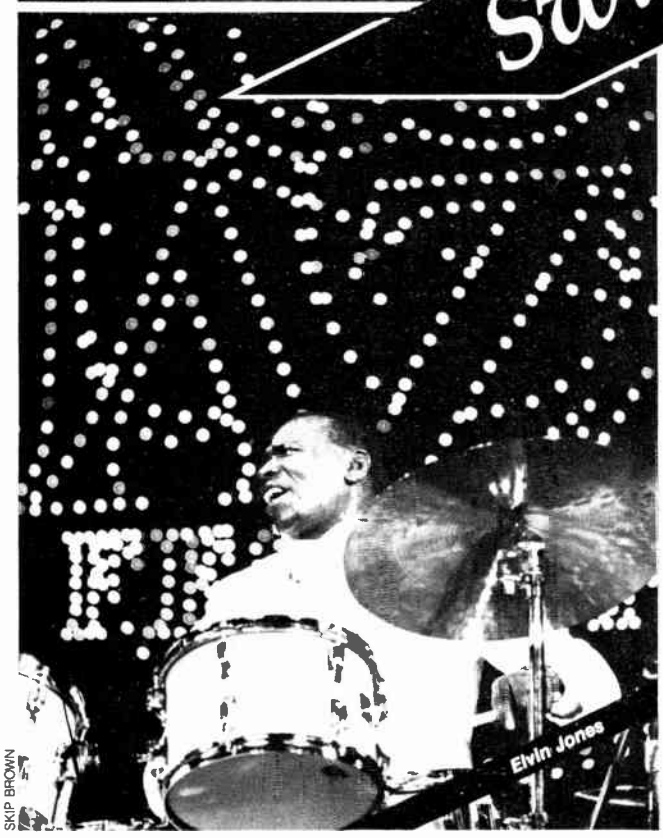
WEATHER REPORT'S EQUIPMENT

Production manager Howard Burke leads a crew of seven on the band's tours. House sound engineer Brian Risner and stage monitor mix man Steve "Flash" Callahan rent local p.a. equipment at each stop. Keyboard technician Jim Swanson helps arrange **Zawinul**'s equipment which includes a Yamaha CP-80 electric piano, an Oberheim X-1 synthesizer, two Sequential Circuits Prophet 5 synthesizers, a Korg vocoder, and an Arp Quadra-Synthesizer (a Rhodes/Chroma is expected soon). **Wayne Shorter** plays Selmer tenor and soprano saxophones, both with Rica #3 reeds and Otto Link #10 mouthpieces. **Victor Bailey** plays an old Fender Jazz Bass and an Ibanez Artist Series bass through a Peavey amplifier head into a Flag Systems custom-made cabinet with two 15-inch Gauss speakers. **Omar Hakim** uses a Gretsch drum kit with a 22-inch bass, complemented with a 6×14 Ludwig snare, A. Zildjian cymbals, and a large aluminum garbage can lid of unknown origin. **Jose Rossy**'s percussion array includes Gon Bops congas, Latin Percussion timbales, four Slingerland concert tom-toms, A. Zildjian cymbals, SpectaSound chimes, "and anything else that you can strike," according to Burke.

KOOL NEW YORK '82

Swing Is The Thing

BY LEE JESKE



SKIP BROWN

IF SWING IS YOUR THING, IF THE GREAT STANDARD American popular songs send you swooning, if there is nobody you'd rather see at a jazz festival than Stan Getz, then Kool/New York, 1982 fashion, was for you.

It's not that the playing wasn't quite exceptional throughout—it was. It's just that the festival fell into a stylish, mainstream groove and neglected to offer a representative cross-section of jazz—something a jazz festival should go out of its way to do. Oh sure, there were a couple of concerts dedicated to new music, a couple of fusion concerts a couple of concerts where bebop was spoken, and even one harmolodic act, but the backbone of this year's festival was swing and standards. The tribute concerts were to Lester Young, Buddy Rich, Alec Wilder, Stan Kenton, and female writers of popular songs; there were evenings presided over by Lionel Hampton, Nancy Wilson, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormé, Oscar Peterson, and Benny Goodman, and the aforementioned Stan Getz managed to appear seven out of the 10 nights that the festival held forth. By the end of it al , there was a feeling of having heard a lot of it before.

The festival opened, as is customary, with a reception on the lawn of Gracie Mansion, the residence of the mayor of New York, who is currently trying to become the Governor of New York, so he was noticeably absent. Oddly, the set of music that was played was one of the best of the week—a model of a relaxed jam session where everything came together. Lionel Hampton, Getz, Freddie Hubbard, Toots Thielemans, Gerry Mulligan, Sweets Edison, Roger Kellaway, Bill Pemberton, and Elvin Jones were the participants, and everybody—in particular Elvin—played up to their highest levels. Maybe it was the bright sunshine, maybe it was the Nathan's hot dogs—whatever it was, it was a magnificent meeting of a handful of heavyweights.

Then it was on to Avery Fisher Hall for a trio of quartets: the Max Roach Quartet in tandem with a string quartet, and the Great Quartet (Hubbard, Elvin, McCoy Tyner, Ron Carter). Max's set had its moments; the strings managed to swing like strings rarely do, especially on Cecil Bridgewater's *Bird Says*, and the leader snapped off drum explosions like swatting flies. But it also had its share of dead spots: Bridgewater and tenorist Odean Pope ran out of inspiration choruses before ending their solos; the strings and Max played a piece called *Survivors*, which was undoubtedly named after the members of the audience who managed to stay awake through it; and Roach made classless comments about how little he was getting paid (he was to make three festival appearances and was to whine about money at every one; c'mon Max, we expect more professionalism from you). The Great Quartet, meanwhile, easily lived up to its billing: Hubbard and Jones traded crystalline phrases on *Rhythm-A-Ning*, Freddie stood flat-footed, *blowing*; Carter's deep, booming passages on *Birdlike*; Tyner being . . . well . . . Tyner. They looked and played like champions.

Saturday night opened with Anne Marie Moss doing her big-lunged thing—standing still and belting a couple of good songs and a lot of clinkers as it every one was a grand aria. Avery Fisher Hall later that night was the site of a four-hour show called *Jazz And World Music* that was poorly attended and, for the most part, sloppy and pretentious. Paul Horn opened the evening with an endless set for flute and occasional tapes of pop-flavored music—if jazz is world music, this is the perfect stuff to play at its airports. John Handy's Rainbow followed with some sparkling work from violinist L. Subramanian and sarodist Ashish Khan, but as a fusion of Indian classical music and jazz it did justice to neither form. This was followed by the best set of the concert--Codona (Don Cherry, Colin Walcott, and Nana Vasconcelos) mesmerizing on truly pan-global instrumentation: sitars, berimbaus, a hunter's guitar from Bali. It was a spellbinding and funky ethnic blend until American Indian saxophonist Jim Pepper came on to turn the set into a less-than-riveting chantfest. The concert ended in a fog of pomposity as Karl Berger led 35 musicians, two dancers, and a couple of out-of-tune singers (notably his wife, IngRid) through two noisy, exotic epics. The fact that there were great players buried in the ensemble—Leroy Jenkins, Ed Blackwell, Lee Konitz, for example —made the whole thing even more of a waste.

On Sunday I headed up to Purchase, NJ (which is one of the places where the Kool/NY Festival acts like a festival) with a half-dozen stages in continuous use for 10 hours in one spanking-new arts complex. In the time I was there, I saw a groaning board of acts, as the unlikely named Big Sky Mudflaps offered convincing western swing versions of jazz standards; the marvelous pianist Dave Burrell led a sextet through a truly magnificent set of his own compositions which can only be stylized as "rag-bop"; the Vibration Society captured bits and pieces of Rahsaan Roland Kirk's greatness as they stomped through a number of his blues lines; Teddy Charles and Teo Macero reformed their tentet, which though featuring some good soloing from the likes of Ricky Ford, didn't swing one whit; and tenorman Buck Hill left his mailbag at home and blew away Arnie Lawrence and Cecil Payne in a jam.

I then rushed back into the city for what was to be, pound for pound, the best concert of the week—a Buddy Rich retrospective. What made the concert so spectacular was its pacing—there was just enough of everything to make its point: like him or not, Buddy Rich is a hell of a drummer. The concert breezed by with Mel Tormé narrating a biographical slide show (showing the two-year-old Rich as "Traps, the drum wonder"), a couple of film clips of the Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey bands, and Buddy making a touching bow to the enfeebled Jo Jones (who even managed to get in a few drum licks). And there was music: a special-guest small group (featuring Phil Woods, Zoot Sims, and others), Dizzy Gillespie in front of Buddy's big band, Mel Tormé in front of Buddy's big band, tap dancer Honi Coles in front of Buddy's big band and, most spectacularly, Buddy's big band by themselves *roaring* through John LaBarbera's canny updating of such old chestnuts as *Well Git It*. Burt Korall produced the show and *he* deserves a lot of the credit.

Monday night started with a Dolo Coker solo piano recital—the West Coast bebopper playing tentatively and without much fire through rococo versions of things like Dexter Gordon's *Fried Bananas*. Things continued apace at Alice Tully Hall for a meeting of Mabel Mercer and Eileen Farrell, two of the *grande dames* of American popular song. They are a perfect match; Mercer's half-talking/half-singing silken splendor goes hand-in-hand with Farrell's no-holds-barred explosions (she's really a hip Ethel Merman). They did a number of dusty ditties, but made them all quite firmly their own—a couple of Mercer's John Houseman-like readings had people reaching for their hankies to mop up the tears. A lovely afternoon.

Back when candy bars were a penny, Count Basie led his orchestra east and played the Roseland Ballroom. The band has changed, the ballroom has changed but, amazingly, both are still around. Judging by some of the lindy-hoppers at this meeting of two institutions, there were some people this time around who wore out some shoe leather on that first go-around too.

Tuesday's festivities got underway with an afternoon concert devoted to two of the finest purveyors of new music—David Murray and Henry Threadgill—at Avery Fisher Hall. The crowd was unfortunately sparse, but the music was extremely rich. Murray had a substitute-laden version of his octet, one of the premier units in contemporary jazz thanks to the leader's beautifully dense writing; Threadgill presented a septet, featuring a burning John Betsch and Pheeroan Ak Laff at the drums and Olu Dara's time-warp trumpeting. I prefer Murray's writing and playing, but Threadgill closed his set with a thunderous foray that sounded like a super-charged *Tiger Rag*. The concert was called Freedom Swings and it does, it does. The question is how to convince Zoot Sims fans to give a listen.

The answer is to schedule shows like the late concert in the same hall. The World Saxophone Quartet (Murray, Hamiet Bluiett, Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake) met a version of Woody Herman's "Four Brothers" (Sims, Getz, Al Cohn, Jimmy Giuffre). The idea was great and the music was substantial—the WSQ proving their versatility, maturity, and ability to provide their own rhythm section work (with baritone and bass clarinet) and the "Four Brothers" proving that they can't help but swing (at least three of them, anyway), even if they *need* a rhythm section. But, unfortunately, the concert was short on sparks, and the expected eight horn blow-out that would have proved something-or-other never was to be. The point, though, was well made. I think the Woody Herman fans in the house were pleasantly surprised by the WSQ (I'm sure the WSQ fans were just as pleased with the Hermanites, though I'm sure they weren't caught by surprise).

Tuesday's early show at Carnegie was, in some ways, the most ambitious program of the festival. Entitled The Young Lions (originally called The Young Turks, but co-producer Nesuhi Ertegun, a less-than-young Turk, nixed that), it grouped 17 of the most interesting *young* players (although at least one of the players, Hamiet Bluiett, is about as young as the MGM lion, but no matter) on the scene to prove that, by gosh, jazz ain't about to die on us. The concert was very lengthy and a bit unwieldy---everybody had their own showcase and there was constant reshuffling of personnel. The high spots included Bobby McFerrin wordlessly mimicking various instrumental sounds in tandem with Wynton Marsalis and bassist Avery Sharpe; James Newton displaying his effortless virtuosity in a solid-gold salute to Mingus; a John Blake composition that combined African rhythms with his good down-home fiddling; Craig Harris delivering a blowsy tone poem that built to an explosive climax; and on and on and on. The evening was recorded live and, hopefully, will surface on several volumes of LPs.

Later that night, same place, a half-dozen tenor men joined forces to pay tribute to Lester Young. And though they were Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, the ever-popular Getz, the rarely seen Allen Eager (whose playing is still a bit off following a long retirement), Budd Johnson, and Buddy Tate---and though they played exceptionally well—it's no insult to any of them to announce that the best tenor playing of the evening was on the timeless recordings of Prez himself piped into Carnegie Hall in all their monaural glory. For the on-stagers, five stars to Johnson for his sparkling arrangements of such Basie chestnuts as *Every Tub* played by an ad-hoc big band; five stars to Oliver Jackson for his wave-the-flag drumming; and one hundred stars for such vets as Vic Dickenson, John Lewis, Teddy Wilson, and Jo Jones. They all leapt in and swung like mad.


Saxophonist Budd Johnson (left) conducts "Salute To Prez" rehearsal.

MITCHELL SEIDEL

Thursday night was a run-around-the-towner. Max Roach had the recitalist's chair; there's only one man who can sustain an hour of solo drums, and he's the guy---playing like a man with 10 arms and one *very* clever head. Then it was across the street to Carnegie for a mixed grill that began with pianist Amina Claudine Myers' three numbers—one of which was bogged down by inane lyrics—that never really got going, followed by something called Chico Hamilton With Kathleen Adair And The Guitar Choir which was pure, shameless pap (the set was notable for being the moment when this particular festival hit bottom and dragged along for an hour), and capped by the always excellent James Moody—who played tenor well, played flute well, and told very old jokes well; the funkiness of his rhythm section—drummer Michael Carvin, pianist Harold Mabern, and bassist Rufus Reid—pushed him hard and he responded.

I then tore across town to catch Herbie Hancock's solo piano recital (which was seconded by a solo set by Oscar Peterson, but a man has got to eat, folks). Herbie, I am happy to report, played brilliantly (even if somebody did have the poor sense to attempt to amplify a Bösendorfer in a classical music hall). He pulled out his bluesy side, his heavily romantic side, and his light, tip-toeing side. He peaked with a stunning *Stella By Starlight* that featured waterfalls of sustained-pedal arpeggios with the gloved-hand touch of a man juggling Waterford goblets. There was even a touch of Otis Spann-like two-fisted blues romping.

The late, late show at Carnegie was called *Musicians For Monk* and was nothing of the sort. This benefit to raise some petty cash money for needy musicians had a whole lot of jamming going on, but the Monk tunes were few and far between. A *lot* of people played in the four hours---notable were the oddball teaming of Gillespie and Getz (remember them?) with McCoy, Eddie Gomez, and Shelly Manne, for

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KOOL NEW YORK '82

Sam Freedman Reports

THIS LISTENER'S JOURNEY THROUGH the Kool Jazz Festival was, largely, on the road most traveled by the big name, mainstream, vocalist-oriented events on which the festival makes its money, the money that, with hope, is plowed back into riskier bookings. Only one of the events reviewed herein—a Shannon Jackson/Daniel Ponce/Archie Shepp outdoor show—defied the formula. And it was not coincidental that they were among the highlights of the dozen performers and ensembles. Taste, artistry, and newness, after all, never have had much to say to the cash register.

Chief among the calculated shows—and an often excellent one nonetheless—contrasted Dave Brubeck and the Modern Jazz Quartet. From the moment Milt Jackson walked on-stage—collar askew on his tuxedo, diffident in his bow—it was clear the MJQ could conjure the tension urgent to its artistry: Jackson's turbulence against the tidiness of John Lewis, Percy Heath, and Connie Kay. The set was lovely, well-conceived, well-integrated, typically treating *Woody'n You* more as a composition than a piece of reckless energy. That choice is neither good nor bad, it's simply MJQ. But how much more can one say other than the quartet recaptured what they once did?

Brubeck, unfortunately, cannot reincarnate Paul Desmond and his own classic quartet. But when he wants to, he can still intrigue and compel. This night, though, his piano was mired in a poor mix with the busy, unfocused drumming of Randy Jones. But the latter part of the set, turning on an enchanting reading of *Koto Song*, simply shined.

Like Brubeck or the MJQ, Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan can be imprisoned by their fame, their pasts. Still, both rose to the occasion of their Avery Fisher Hall show. Gillespie, whose jazz-funk quartet has only disconcerted me in the past, answered to all sorts of stimuli: the crackling Clark College band behind him; the awarding of an honorary doctorate from the school; the presence of Jon Faddis, a player of tonal lightning; and the improvement, with the addition of Ignacio Berroa on drums, of his own band. It is true he uses more space now, but when he blurts out a blaze, as he did on *A Night In Tunisia*, he lets everyone know he is still a contender.

Vaughan was positively transcendent. Her ballads—*Someone To Watch Over Me, My Funny Valentine*—were luscious and enveloping. She slurred for a certain feel, dropped to throaty lows, projected without overpowering; the litany of virtues could go on. Her closing *Send In The Clowns*, a bathetic exercise on record, here ended the evening on a suitably warm, humane, and magnificent note.

Mel Tormé, Gerry Mulligan, and George Shearing were to have paid tribute to the American popular song. That they did not in any obvious way hardly mattered, for their show exemplified a well-scripted, well-balanced all-star engagement. It was lean on dead air, even-handed in exposure, and never unduly slick. Tormé and Shearing profit when they keep jazzier company, in this case Mulligan and his band. Tormé's intensity began with his scat break on *Everyday I Have The Blues*, and rarely ebbed; Shearing balanced ballads with the likes of *Oleo*, giving a full-bodied reading of Sonny Rollins' jagged head. Mulligan, for his part, took too few solos, seemed stilted mugging with Tormé, but, with his band and his compositions, catalyzed a performance with pop possibilities into something far more interesting.

The pairing of David Sanborn and Spyro Gyra represented the festival's nod to fusion and, with two sold-out shows, hardly an altruistic nod at that. Sanborn was good enough within his limits, which he clearly knows. Let Marcus Miller lay down a bass groove, James Shelton sweeten it on organ, and Sanborn blows r&b lines without, thankfully, the studio overdubs. But if the saxman fares best outside the studio, Spyro Gyra should stick to it. There they fashion tasteful pop-jazz; in concert, they grind out monolithic, overblown pap. Lost in the volume, the cued lighting, the seamless plotting of songs was, sadly, Jay Beckenstein, who is not only the band's leader but also an estimable saxophonist. He deserves a much better, and much more demanding setting; the choice is his whether to seek it.

One could hardly find a more perfect contrast to Spyro Gyra's overkill than the Fourth of July show by Shannon Jackson, Ponce, and Shepp, who, inexplicably, filled only half the South Street Seaport. Jackson began kinetically, thrashing cross-rhythms and parrying ideas with his band, but the Decoding Society soon lost either the energy or invention. What is missing is a constantly, equally powerful foil to the drummer in the horn line. Ponce, though, had energy and invention in abundance. His New York Now—an ensemble of Cuban drummers, singers, and dancers, and one saxophonist, Paquito D'Rivera—was so devoid of pretense it was joyous on those terms alone. But there was much more to recommend it—from a circuitous, wildly percussive version of *Green Dolphin Street* to the austere call-and-response of the vocalists. One wanted only one thing: more. In lieu of that, Shepp closed the night and, for me, the festival with what a philosopher might call the Idea of Jazz: a distillation of freshened standards (*Body And Soul*), fire-hot contemporary vehicles (*Things Have Got To Change*, punctuated by a driven, driven reading of the poem *Mama Rose*), and a synthesis of assured group performance and passionate soloing, especially by Shepp, trumpeter Charles McGhee, and drummer Marvin Smith. That Shepp looked to be, by far, the elder of this group is assurance enough that the next generation of inventors are rising to the Kool Jazz Festivals yet to come. **db**

From left, Tony Williams, Branford Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, and Jimmy Owens, all "Musicians For Monk."

IT'S TRUE, THIS YEAR'S KOOL FEST/NYC had even more of a nostalgic flavor than usual—however, this was due as much to unfortunate circumstances as festival planning. Recent losses in the jazz world affected the programming of at least two concerts and at the same time served to remind us of the value not only of the music's past and ever fragile heritage, but also of those who helped *create* that heritage and yet are still active, to varying degrees.

Concrete examples of the latter were in abundance at two of the opening night recitals. The festival proper began with a solo piano set by 78-year-young Art Hodes, who has contributed his keyboard prowess alongside nearly every Chicago and New York traditional-styled musician of note from the '20s to date. His version of *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter* loosened up the crowd into a party-like atmosphere, and they responded audibly throughout with chuckles at a sly turn of phrase, little gasps of breath at an unexpected chord modulation, and a few whispered sing-alongs with familiar songs. The pianist's stomps (left hand bobbing like a life preserver), rags, waltzes, spirituals, pop songs, and especially blues (featuring a left hand snorting like an angry lover, while the right hand caressed the melody) simply captivated.

Three more survivors reunited in the evening's second show, and from note one Benny Goodman looked and sounded impish and ready to *play*, jumping right into *After You've Gone* with upper register squeals and flurries, then goosing Teddy Wilson's piano solo with exhortations and short supportive riffs. Lionel Hampton, of course, comes pre-goosed. Unfortunately, this energy seemed to deflate almost immediately into a thoroughly pleasant but less-than-challenging program of chestnuts (*Body And Soul* with a star-kissed Wilson outing; a softly swaying *Moonglow* sustained by the satin-sheeted rhythm team of Phil Flanagan's bass, Wilson, and Panama Francis' drums; *Seven Come Eleven*, as B.G. squirted little notes and pushed the tempo way up) interrupted by mock jousts of gamesmanship and one-upsmanship between Hamp and Goodman. Benny's trying to coax Lionel *out* of *Flying Home* after a single chorus was something to see. (Stan Getz started this concert with his poorly miked quartet, but the tenorist's rejection of the sound system for two ballads, *We'll Be Together Again* and Billy Strayhorn's final *Blood Count*, accentuated the velvet in his tone and the passion of his playing.)

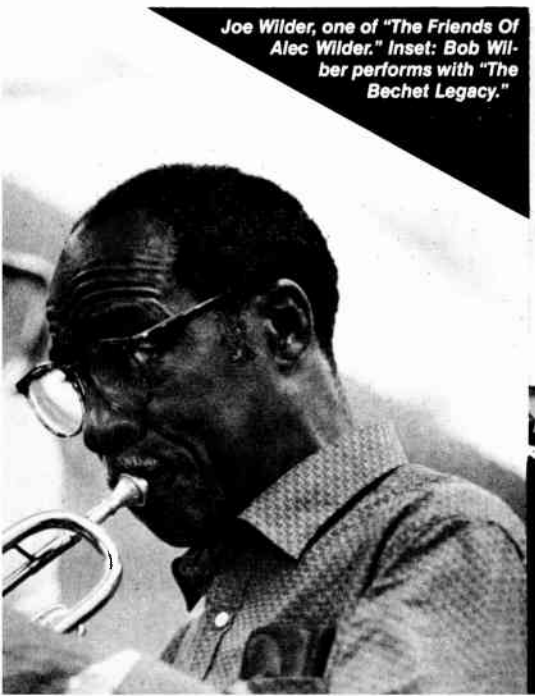
Three nights later, also at Carnegie Hall, an Alto Summit was held, originally conceived to compare and contrast the styles of Phil Woods and Art Pepper. The latter's specter hung in the air, visibly in a vintage '59 film clip of the late altoist scorching through a Coltrane/Coleman-influenced trip, and audibly by Woods' heartfelt dedication. Woods' playing was typically fervent: a marvelous Rollinsish a capella cadenza segueing *Goodbye Mr. Evans* and *Petite Chanson* dripped quotes like sauce on a duck. As Pepper had, Woods has begun rediscovering the clarinet, and *You're Me* exhibited a steel-wool tone and nimble variations. Too bad his cohorts' solos were so anti-climactic.

The Sonny Stitt/Richie Cole quintet filled in for Pepper, and as it turned out to be one of Sonny's last performances, it's impossible to find fault with his weaker moments on-stage. Let it be said that he took a valedictorian essay on *Lover Man* that exuded grace and power. Cole's playing was characteristically brash but not outlandish, and the rhythm team (Larry Willis, Walter Booker, and the cooking Jimmy Cobb) was a delight.

A shot of youthful vitality was injected into the fest by Jaco Pastorius' big band—their introductory *Invitation* was a harbinger of things to come: silvery slivers of punctuation from the ensemble, Bobby Mintzer's tenor hot, Randy Brecker's trumpet spiky, Jaco's bass bubbling and sliding—he plays like he's wrestling a snake—including out-of-tempo chords, harmonics, and rhythmic asides that bear little resemblance to the tune at hand. Highlights were an infectious r&b stomp with fanfare brass intro (shades of Gil Evans' arranging), and a remarkable tuba solo by Dave Bargeron (with hummed chords a la Mangelsdorff) leading to a puckishly voiced *Donna Lee* by a front line of—get this—tuba, steel drum, bass clarinet, electric trumpet, and electric bass.

George Wein's programming has often included retrospectives of important artists, and this year's were for Buddy Rich (still with us, fortunately) plus Lester Young and Stan Kenton. Kenton's homage closed the fest on July 4th, and plenty of fireworks were provided inside too, as charts like *Eager Beaver*, Gerry Mulligan's *Young Blood*, and the brass and percussion extravaganza *The Peanut Vendor* sizzled courtesy of Mel Lewis' big band. Their ensemble heft and deftness displayed the work of Kenton's arrangers to good end—Pete Rugolo, Shorty Rogers, Johnny Richards, and especially Bill Holman, whose elegaic *The Tall Guy* emphasized the multiple sides of Kenton's personality through alternating aggressive and dour riffs. Lewis' band unfortunately lacks the outstanding soloists of Kenton's various aggregations, but guests Maynard Ferguson (offering trumpet and vocal chops and hip swivel), Kai Winding (soothingly familiar trombone on *Collaboration*), Laurindo Almeida (captivating guitar variations on Stan's theme *Artistry In Rhythm*), Shelly Manne (drums and warm, comfortable emceeing) filled the gap. Bud Shank took top honors, however, with plaintive and razor's-edge alto on Holman's arrangement of *Stella By Starlight*, invoking another Kenton alumni, Art Pepper, in the process and bringing home the bittersweet mood of much of the festival.

Photos by MITCHELL SEIDEL

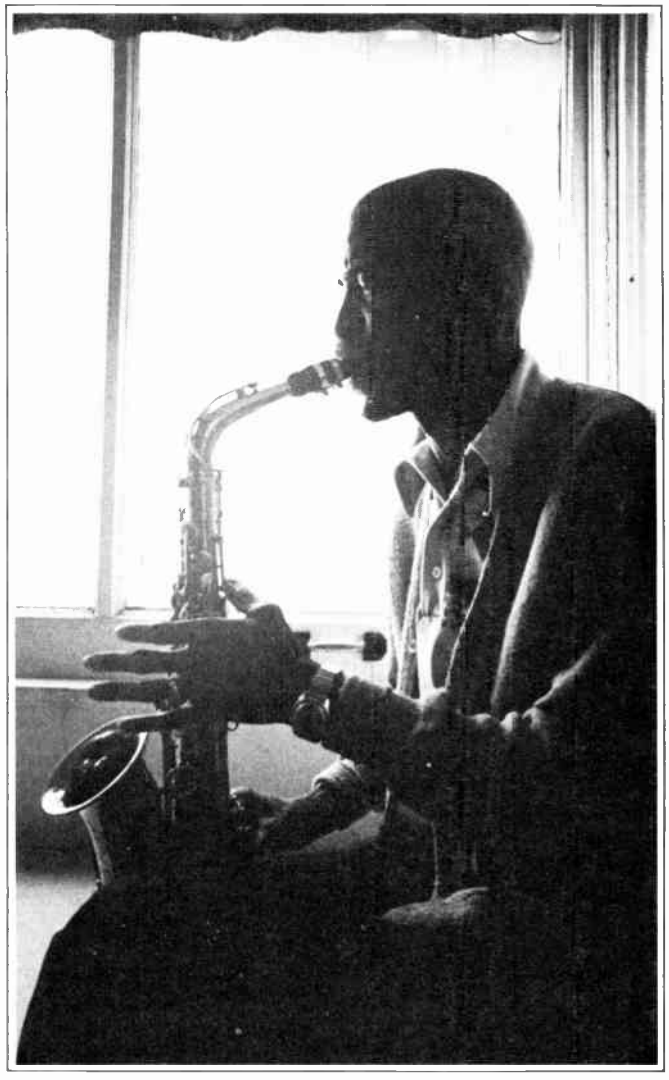


Joe Wilder, one of "The Friends Of Alec Wilder." Inset: Bob Wilber performs with "The Bechet Legacy."

"Buddy Rich: A Retrospective," from left, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Eddie Bert, Rich, and Zoot Sims.

EDDIE CLEANHEAD VINSON

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM



D. SHIGLEY

In an industry that lives by categorization, Eddie Vinson is a baldheaded pigeon without a hole. A hard-swinging saxophonist in the tradition of Illinois Jacquet and Arnett Cobb, he is omitted from the illustrious roster of Texas tenorists because he plays alto. An outstanding blues shouter who influenced a generation of blues and rock singers, he is slighted by blues scholars who consider him more of a jazzman. Too urbane for rhythm & blues fans, too earthy for jazz purists, "Mr. Cleanhead" enjoyed a brief heyday in the transitional postwar years, then spent the next two decades in relative obscurity.

Since his belated rediscovery in Europe, Eddie has pursued an increasingly hectic schedule of festival appearances, club dates, and studio sessions on both sides of the Atlantic. He is featured on a pair of recent albums: *I Want A Little Girl* for Pablo and *Live At Sandy's* (from the same set as similarly titled LPs by Arnett Cobb and Buddy Tate) for Muse; his 1979 Delmark release, *Kidney Stew Is Fine* (recorded for Black & Blue in 1970), was nominated for a Grammy award.

Although he has been showcased in variously jazzy or bluesy settings throughout his career, Vinson has not markedly changed his style since he made his first hit single, *Cherry Red*, with the Cootie Williams band in 1944. He still plays alto with a boppish lilt and a hearty, muscular tone, and he still sings his ribald blues with a distinctive creak at the end of each phrase. Of the latter he confides: "It used to really come natural, but I have to work at it now. During the time I was with Cootie, I was quite young and it just came right out."

At Chicago's Jazz Showcase recently, Eddie opened instrumentally with an authoritative reading of *Tune Up*, a tune that Miles Davis took from him. Next came the haunting theme from *Laura*, which he played and then sang with the same wistful poignancy. Having established his jazz credentials, Mr. Cleanhead launched into an earthier lyric: "My baby left me sitting on a coatroom seat, and now the judge says I got to pay her 50 bucks a week." *Alimony Blues* segued into *Juice Head Baby*, *Old Maid Boogie*, and his 1947 hit, *Kidney Stew*. One inebriated fan, utterly smitten, began to dance her way up the center aisle. "Cleanhead, baby!" she yelled. "I been looking for you for 25 years and now I've found you." When at length she embraced the startled saxist and almost dragged him off the stage, impresario Joe Segal was forced to declare a temporary adjournment.

Lean and dapper at 63, Eddie lives in Los Angeles with his wife of many years—"Boy, she's always buggin' me to do more ballads"—but spends much of his time playing festival dates across the U.S. and Europe, "plus all the night clubs in the [NYC's Greenwich] Village—the Village Vanguard, Sweet Basil. I was just there and they want me to come right back. I said, 'Good God I just left.'" When he is at home he golfs daily: he grew up next door to a country club in Houston and caddied from the age of 14.

Vinson's grandfather was a fiddler; both his parents were pianists. Eddie had a high school chum who played alto and asked his

father, "Piano" Sam Wilson, to buy him one, too: he got his horn and his first lesson with Dr. James Lett the same day. Soon he was playing in the band at Jack Yates High School; during summer vacations he alternated with then-altoist Illinois Jacquet in Chester Boone's big band. When stars like Duke Ellington and Jimmy Lunceford toured Houston, Eddie and his mates would work the after-hours parties. "When the dance was over, you didn't have any restrictions on the hours, and we would take it from one to two, three, or four in the morning, every time a band would come to town."

Trumpeter Milton Larkins took over the Boone band in 1936, and with players like Vinson, Jacquet, Arnett Cobb, and Wild Bill Davis, the outfit quickly became a top attraction on the Southwestern "territory" circuit. In 1939 they met up with another territory band—Jay McShann's out of Kansas City, featuring a teenaged altoist named Charlie Parker—and engaged them in an after-hours "carving contest" in Shreveport, Indiana. Eddie maintains he was already playing in a sort of bebop style by then. "I had never heard Charlie Parker before and he had never heard me, but when I was playing, one of the guys said, 'You ever hear Bird?' I said no, so he said, 'You sure you never heard Bird before?' I had never heard him, but I heard him later that night and that's how we got together." Vinson was so impressed that he kept Parker up all night comparing techniques, then "kidnapped him," as he puts it, "from Shreveport to my home in Houston. Every morning we would have a little get-together before the performance."

The following year Larkins' orchestra became known as the Floyd Ray Jump Band, although their bluesy brand of swing was essentially unaltered. "Floyd Ray was just fronting the band, because he had a bigger name at that time," Vinson explains, "but it was a big band—five reeds, trombones—and we were doing swing music with big arrangements, parallel harmonies, the whole thing." Inspired by Big Joe Turner's sophisticated blues "shouting," Eddie essayed his first vocal on Turner's *Wee Baby Blues*. "Actually, I started singing when we were pulling out the music for the next set, and to break the lull during the dance, I would start singing the blues. I was just doing the blues for the heck of it—I didn't know it would take."

Around the same time he met Big Bill Broonzy, then at the peak of his career with a string of citified blues records far jazzier than his later efforts as a "folk singer" would suggest. Between band dates, Vinson toured the South with Broonzy as an accompanist to singer Lil Green, picking up some of Big Bill's tunes along the way. "I liked the way he sang, so I did a couple of his numbers, *Somebody's Got To Go* and *Just A Dream*, but I sang the blues in my own voice, however I felt."

Jay McShann had a national hit in 1941 with Walter Brown's *Confessin' The Blues*; vocalist Brown immediately became the star of the band. Duke Ellington's lead trumpeter, Cootie Williams, had formed a band of his own after a short stint with Benny Goodman, and journeyed to Houston in search of a similar drawing card. "I was playing saxophone, man," recounts the unsuspecting Vinson, "first alto in the band, a few little solos and things, and then Cootie came down when he left Duke. He was organizing his band, and I guess Basie told him about me singing the blues, because he wanted a blues singer, so he came down."

Vinson was so reluctant to move to New York that Williams had to send for him three times. "I was having a ball in Houston, I didn't want to leave home, but I suffered asthma in those days and my daddy told me, 'You go on to New York, and if it doesn't work out, it still might help your asthma.' He was very wise, because that cool weather did me good, and after a couple of years up there I never had asthma no more."

Eddie joined Williams in 1942, but it was not until two years later, after the musicians' union recording ban, that he waxed Joe Turner's *Cherry Red*, not inappropriately on the Hit label. "*Cherry Red* was a big thing for Cootie," he asserts, "because it turned out to be a great big record for him." The follow-up *Somebody's Got To Go* was another success, and "Mr. Cleanhead"—he had initially shaved his scalp after a botched hair-straightening attempt—toured coast-to-coast with Williams in a show that starred Ella Fitzgerald and the Ink Spots.

In 1945 Vinson left Cootie—his replacement was Charlie Parker—to headline on Broadway with his own 16-piece orchestra, which included Gus Johnson and Clark Terry. Regularly featured on NBC radio remotes from the Club Zanzibar, Cleanhead was one of the first artists to sign with the new Mercury label, recording original songs like *Juice Head Baby* and *Old Maid Boogie*. By 1947 Mercury had achieved national distribution, but Eddie had had to break his band down to seven pieces shortly before he made his biggest solo hit, *Kidney Stew*. Once again he went out on the RKO circuit with the Ink Spots, and played package shows with combos like Nat Cole's and Louis Jordan's.

An accomplished altoist who had originally modeled himself after Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges, and Willie Smith, Vinson was promoted almost exclusively as a blues singer. "It didn't make any difference after a while," he says, "I got a chance to play the things I wanted to play." While in New York he had frequented the jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse, and became a popular figure with boppers and traditionalists alike. "That was a fun thing, going to Minton's place. Bird was there, Don Byas, Ben Webster—everybody was there."

Vinson sponsored progressive young musicians in his septet, which at one point included Red Garland, Johnny Coles, and John Coltrane. Trane was fresh out of the navy when Eddie discovered him at the Philadelphia union hall and switched him from alto sax to tenor. "The first night he played with me, I knew what was happening," says Eddie. "The first night he got on the tenor, you knew it was something different. But after he left me, Miles got most of the guys in my band." Miles also got Eddie's consent to record (but not to copyright) two of his more sophisticated compositions, *Tune Up* and *Four*, which the saxophonist, because of his blues singer image, could not take to the studio.

The swing-styled "jump blues" survived the demise of the big bands. Former band vocalists like Wynonie Harris and Jimmy Witherspoon received top billing on their own, and were soon joined by newcomer Roy Brown. Like Vinson, these were city-born singers, not deeply schooled in earlier blues forms, who relied heavily on novelty lyrics and sexual innuendo to reach a wider public. "I do a different kind of blues," admits Eddie. "I try to make it a little happy, have a little truth in it, with a message in it, but not that depressing blues thing. I don't have that background."

These "shouters" sang with great exuberance, but their comparatively suave deliveries contrasted sharply with those of the roughhewn Delta bluesmen who had begun to make an impact on the newly renamed "rhythm & blues" charts. The shouters coarsened their vocals accordingly, with simplified instrumentals to match, and were able to extend their appeal into the infancy of the rock & roll era.

After the American Federation of Musicians strike of 1948, Eddie signed with King Records of Cincinnati, where he recorded the successful *Person To Person* with a band that included Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Wynton Kelly, Slide Hampton, and Milt Buckner. King had almost managed to monopolize the shouting genre, acquiring first Wynonie Harris and Bullmoose Jackson, then Roy Brown, and finally Jimmy Witherspoon. Vinson recorded prolifically for King, but few of his titles were ever released. "See, the way they were doing it then, they had favorites on the label, and they were pushing Wynonie and

EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

I WANT A LITTLE GIRL—Pablo 2310866
LIVE AT SANDY'S—Muse 5208
THE CLEAN MACHINE—Muse 5116
KIDNEY STEW IS FINE—Delmark DS-631
FUN IN LONDON—JSP Records 1012
GREAT RHYTHM & BLUES OLDIES, VOL. II—Blues Spectrum BS 111
CLEANHEAD'S BACK IN TOWN—Bethlehem BCP-6038
CHERRY RED BLUES—Gusto GD-5035X(2)
EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON & ORCHESTRA—Trip TLP-5590

with Count Basie

KANSAS CITY SHOUT—Pablo 2310859
KANSAS CITY 6—Pablo 2310871

with Clark Terry

YES, THE BLUES—Pablo Today 2312-127

with Cootie Williams

COOTIE WILLIAMS SEXTET AND ORCHESTRA—Phoenix Jazz LP 1

EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON'S EQUIPMENT

"I play a Selmer saxophone. I use a Rico reed, soft or medium, and a regular stock mouthpiece."

Roy Brown. It was just one of those things in those days." Harris and Brown dominated the r&b charts through the early '50s, while Vinson's output was largely limited to rehashes of his earlier hits, like *Somebody Done Stole My Cherry Red*.

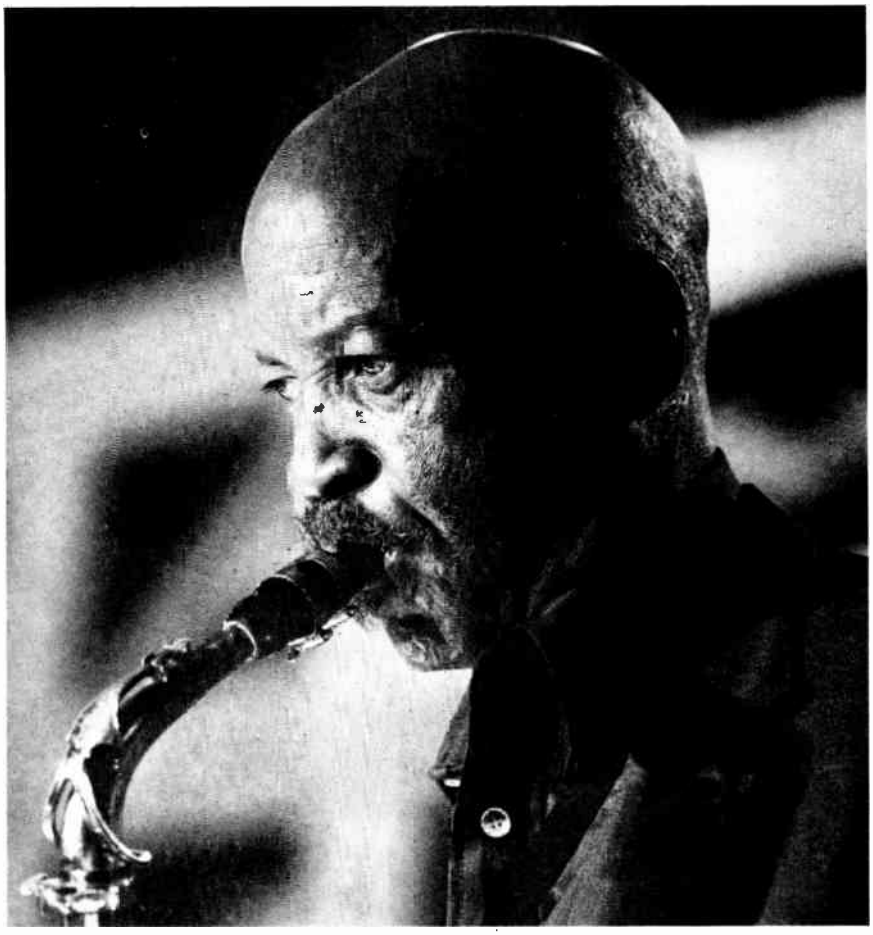
Although Eddie was popular enough in his prime to spawn flamboyant vocal imitators like Eddie Mack and "Chicago" Carl Davis, he remained a jazz musician at heart, ill-at-ease with the histrionic posturings that were demanded of r&b performers. "In the old days you *had* to walk around," he recalls. "It was a show thing—you had to blow and jump up and down. I've even walked the bars and all that, but I never did like it. Whenever the mood would hit me, I would do it for the night, but I never made a habit of doing it." As for the hysterical saxophonics of the period: "I never did like that squealing, never did like to do it. It was just for excitement, but it really wasn't nothin'."

Eddie reduced his band to a sextet, then worked as a single until 1954, when he briefly rejoined Cootie Williams. "It was just a little light tour," he says, "but it wouldn't last. We came out to Chicago and I stayed for about a year, working out on Cottage Grove with Johnny Griffin, Wilbur Ware, and Junior Mance." A new musical craze was sweeping the country, and although rock & rollers like Little Richard and Elvis Presley were certainly influenced by singers like Harris and Brown, none of the shouters—with the ironic exception of Big Joe Turner—was able to adapt to the tastes of the white teenage market. "At that time," says Vinson, "if you weren't doing those kinds of things, you could hardly work—you weren't out there, but there was always a joint where you could work weekends and that sort of thing."

Eddie returned to Houston, where he played occasional gigs while supporting himself with music lessons and a day job at a hospital. Rather than attempting to follow Turner's lead, he took the opposite tack: in 1957 he cut an album for Bethlehem with members of the Basie band, reframing his old material in slicked-up, modern swing arrangements by Ernie Wilkins. Four years later he got his next recording opportunity on a Cannonball Adderley date for Riverside. By then he was living in Omaha; after a couple of years he moved on to Kansas City, and again back to Houston, where he sat out the lean mid-'60s playing backstreet clubs with Arnett Cobb.

Vinson's fortunes began to improve in 1967, when producer Bob Thiele recruited him for a Bluesway session. Soon afterward he received an invitation to tour Europe with Jay McShann, and recorded his first Black & Blue album in Paris. Upon his return he made another LP for Bluestime in New York, then resettled in Los Angeles and joined the Johnny Otis Revue, touring with the r&b oldies show intermittently through the mid-'70s.

Meanwhile he shuttled regularly across the Atlantic. "I was making a tour of Europe maybe two times a year. I've even gone over just to do a one-night thing and come back home." His French *Wee Baby Blues* album (issued in the U.S. as *Kidney Stew Is Fine*), featuring McShann and T-Bone Walker, was awarded the Grand Prix of both the Hot Club of France and the International Jazz Club. A Montreux appearance in 1971 yielded two albums for Thiele's Flying Dutchman label, Oliver Nelson's *Swiss Suite*, also featuring Gato Barbieri, and Vinson's own *You Can't Make Love Alone*, with Larry Coryell. A scheduled Newport performance the same year was canceled when rioting forced the suspension of the Rhode Island affair—"I got there," says Eddie, "and you could smell the tear gas"—and he had to content himself with the Monterey and Ann Arbor festivals until Newport relocated in New York in 1973.



ANDY FREEBERG

Back in L.A. he established an extended residency at the Rubaiyat Lounge—"It was good, just drive to work and drive home"—and began to do sessions for Pablo Records. "Norman Granz tried to get me for years. He told me to just let him know when I wanted to record." So far Vinson has appeared on the label with Joe Turner, Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Milt Jackson, Clark Terry, and finally under his own name. That his recent offerings display him in a jazzier context than those of a decade ago is more reflective of a fickle musical climate than of any personal mutation. "People have been complaining—why don't I do more jazz instead of my blues?—so I do more of it now. I write a lot of jazz tunes, so I do most of my jazz originals, but I keep the blues in there."

With traditional idioms enjoying a popular resurgence, Eddie's music has largely transcended the artificial stylistic barriers that once divided his audiences up the middle. "They're getting better now," he says. "They seem like they enjoy the stuff I do more. Music had gotten so crazy that I didn't know what they were doing. I was sittin' over here knowin' they were going too far out—no pattin' foot, you know. They had pushed that stuff down people's throats so much that they lost a lot of people. Now people are coming out again to hear all the jazz groups.

"And you notice now they're teaching kids swing and jazz in school. That's what's happening—getting back to Ellington and Basie, and swinging. Those youngsters, boy, they're playing that stuff, too. A lot of them wouldn't know how to improvise for themselves, though. They play everything that's on the record, even the wrong notes. But I love the big bands, man, I love the sound. In fact, we have a workshop band with Tony Perez out in Los Angeles. It's just a bunch of guys who get together at the union and play to keep their reading up to par, and whenever they get a club date, it's just for union scale."

Mr. Cleanhead has two new albums in the works, another jazz outing for Pablo and a session with r&b revivalists Roomful of Blues on Muse. His outlook for the future is decidedly mellow. "I'm just goint to keep doing these little festivals, and cool—do me a festival, go back home, get me my golf clubs, pay my green fees, and go out on the golf course. I love it, I just love to play all the time."

JAMES P. JOHNSON

GIANTS OF JAZZ—Time Life STL-J18: *Keep Off The Grass; Carolina Shout; Preachin' The Blues; Back Water Blues; All That I Had Is Gone; Snowy Morning Blues; Lucy Long; What's The Use Of Being Alone; Chicago Blues; Guess Who's In Town; My Handy Man; Riffs; Fare Thee Honey Blues; What Is This Thing Called Love; You've Got To Be Modernistic; Jingles; How Could I Be Blue; Go Harlem; Dinah; Everybody Loves My Baby; Rosetta; Who?; Hungry Blues; After Tonight; If Dreams Come True; A-Flat Dream; Blueberry Rhyme; Old Fashioned Love; Carolina Balmoral; Mule Walk-Stomp; Arkansaw Blues; After You've Gone; Hesitation Blues; Hot Harlem; Make Me A Pallet On The Floor; I Know That You Know; If I Could Be With You; At The Ball; Harlem Hotcha; Liza.*

Personnel: *Johnson, piano, vocal (cut 33); various other instrumentalists including Henry "Red" Allen, Frankie Newton, trumpet; J.C. Higginbotham, trombone; Gene Sedric, Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Pee Wee Russell, Omer Simeon, Rod Cless, clarinet; Clarence Williams, Fats Waller, piano; Pops Foster, bass; Zutty Singleton, Sid Catlett, drums; Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Andy Razaf, vocals*

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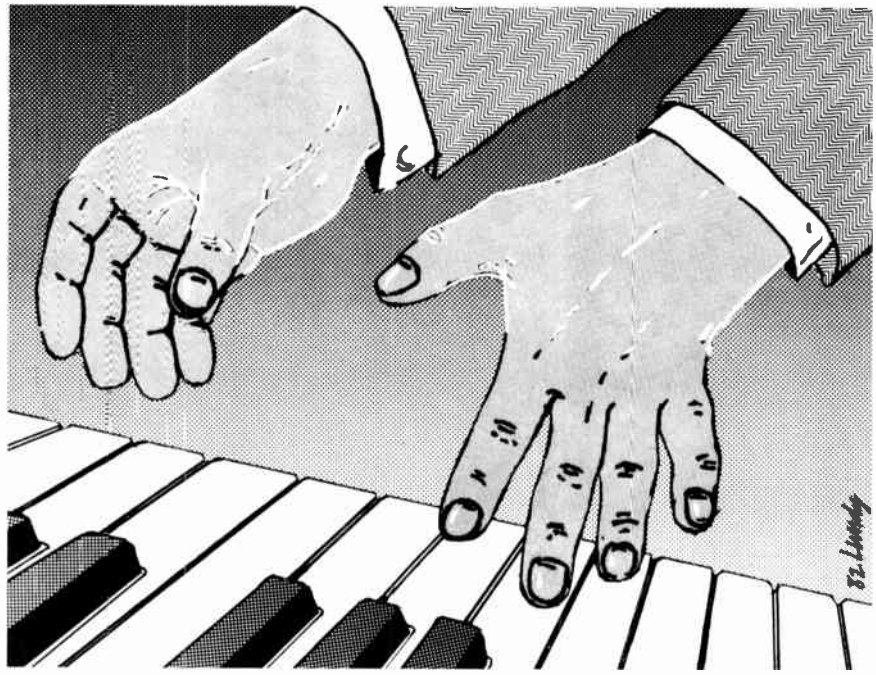

LARRY LUNDY

The most famous criticism of James P. Johnson's music is an off-handed summary by Dick Wellstood: "James P. is the focal point. The rags, cotillions, mazurkas, and all those other phenomena came together in him, and he made jazz out of them. And then the harmonies of James P. went into Duke, the showiness into Tatum, the good timiness into Fats, and the rhythmic potentialities into Monk, or something like that. The thing was not a chronological development, and Basie stole the skeleton."

It is so good to have this anthology, for all its faults. With the Columbia LP now deleted, it is the only Johnson album that includes some of his major works, though his piano version of *Yamekraw*, some lesser and later recordings, and some early piano rolls are still available on discs. In the way of these Time-Life boxes, we are given a musical biography of Johnson up to 1945, some dull tracks among the great ones upon which Johnson's value rests. Included are dixie and swing band pieces, smaller combinations and, as it turns out, most importantly, 15 solo piano performances, mostly on his own compositions. Since his art was so thoroughly conceived in terms of the piano, unlike Ellington, Monk, or Basie, it's the solos that tell us most, both about Johnson and about just how the art of jazz works.

Johnson himself told how, as a very young pianist in a Hell's Kitchen, New York "dancing school," he played cakewalks, rags, cotillions (such as his *Charleston*), and country dances—"breakdown music"—for the homesick Southern dancers in the big city; "Instead of playing straight, I'd break into a rag in certain places . . . the younger ones would scream when I got good to them with a bit of rag in the dance music." And jazz began when players like Johnson transformed these popular and folk musics with syncopation and elaboration. So many of these piano solos reveal their sources in folk music—the square dance of *Carolina Balmoral*, the "ring shout" *Carolina Shout*, the beautiful *Blueberry Rhyme*. A sense of ragtime lingers in the showier pieces (*Keep Off*, *Modernistic*), but he was an Eastern player, without the atmosphere of blues that surrounds the pianists from New Orleans and the West. This had some compensating advantages, particularly in the stride effects he achieved when his left hand line deviated from its supportive role, that of swinging the busier right hand melodies, to disrupting and opposing them—and nobody, it seems, not even Fats Waller, was more ingenious with a swinging left hand.

So *Carolina Shout* (this version is from 1921) begins with an introduction to tantalizing theme fragments and then the famous dance melody, what Johnson called a "ragtime arrangement." With the trio strain comes a call-and-answer section that intensifies as it narrows into shorter and shorter phrases, over several choruses until the performance concludes in blast furnace heat. And for all of Johnson's resources as an improviser, this kind of rhythmic intensity along with phrase concentration was his most powerful means of organization. It certainly makes *Carolina Balmoral* sparkle, especially in those choruses where held, ringing chords call out for the stomping responses. *Balmoral* and *Mule Walk* are especially wonderful performances, both from 1943, in which he plays all the compositions' themes and improvises on them not once but several times, the rhythmic intensity increasing gradually and imperceptibly. These are certainly hard-blowing solos, in the best sense of the term. Johnson used to play *Mule Walk* when the dancers yelled, "Put us in the alley!," and hearing his variety of variations, you can well understand how he could stretch out on it for a half-hour at a time.

There are other exciting solos such as *Riffs* and *Jingles* that are direct ancestors of Herbie Nichols compositions like *Third World* and *Dance Line*—indeed, the links between these two extroverted composers deserves critical examination—and the sense of playing hard for dancers continues through all of Johnson's faster and fastest solos here. Did any pianist swing more than Johnson? Yes, I know Waller swung harder, that powerful left hand propelling his lines, but the evenly rocking swing of Johnson's brought both hands into the rhythmic play, and if anything, Johnson's rhythm was the more avant garde. His swing is consistent through the quite different blues and pop song strains of *A-Flat Dream*, too, but more interesting is his flowing swing in the art songs *Snowy Morning* and *Blueberry Rhyme*. *Snowy* has a faintly wistful melody that becomes a solitary dance over the lightly rocking left hand, while *Blueberry* moves from wistfulness to melancholy in its sad, folk song second theme with the sensitivity of a Paul Robeson. The yearning of the call and denial is heightened by modulating the strain up a fifth, and sadness deepens into sorrow with this theme's octave rise. Charles Ives, Jelly Roll Morton, Ellington, and Johnson—were there any other great American composers before World War II?

These works are landmarks of American music, but his solos on others' songs are hardly less satisfying. Perhaps *Arkansaw* is the best of them, a bluesy performance even if not a blues solo; *Liza* gains its sunlight from his mockery of Gershwin in a substitute theme and changes, rising in the middle to tickling strains. There are great moments in *If Dreams* such as Johnson playing a chorus of falling snowflake chords and another wherein his theme calls have afterthought responses in lightly brushed chords. He adds clumping stride to the verse of *What Is This Thing,* his takeoff on early (almost Mortonish) jazz, then a little later includes the striding and stalking of Ellington's "jungle" band. He plays fine variations on the simple melodies of *All That I Had:* tremolos over a shuffle rhythm, two hands in opposition, tremolos over a stalking bass (with two-bar breaks), and tremolos over a stride line, with spaced chord clusters in a contrary rhythm. Hearing these solos, you get the feeling that Johnson's gifts are endless.

The greatest blues accompanist was not a blues pianist at all. It was Johnson, for whom the blues was a structure and methodology, but his dramatic gifts make his sympathy for Bessie Smith's music work so well. He plays a fine introduction to *Preachin'* and intricate triplet lines behind "Down in Atlanta, G.A.," rumbles when she sings, "Moan them blues, holler them blues," and rises to *forte* with his eight bars of orchestral piano solo. *Back Water* is the greatest of blues dramas. Behind Smith's first chorus is Johnson's *Grand Canyon Suite* rhythm that he liked to substitute for blues lines, with trills between her phrases for rain falling; he plays downward bass lines in her "thunder" chorus, and stalks behind "a high old lonesome hill"; the finality of his replies to "pack my things and go" and the strength of his ending make the performance an aria. Since the Ethel Waters songs are less provocative, his accompaniments are less outstanding, though *Guess Who's* is imaginative enough, Johnson subsiding for her scat chorus, then playing delightful, busy lines when she returns to the lyrics.

Although most of this collection is Johnson playing with others, the pianist is often the center of attention. For instance, apart from the vaudeville patter in *How Could I,* Clarence Williams' role is just to keep time for a characteristically hot Johnson improvisation; *I Know* opens with three choruses of Johnson's simplification and intensification of line before the horns enter and the performance goes kep-plunk. In *What's The Use,* along with Johnson and Waller together, there's the nervous, fiery attack of Dunn's trumpet, a classic sort of ensemble-derived style in solo—and so very blue, in contrast to the rocking, sophisticated pianists. Of the two Pee Wee Russell pieces, *Dinah* is a succession of quickly moving contrasts, the rhythmically acute clarinet narrowing his wrenched lines to a single, gasped note, and after Freddie Green's jerky guitar solo and Dicky Wells' sleek lines, Johnson sparkles. He is the extrovert in the trio *Everybody Loves,* dueting with Russell for two choruses- and notice how Zutty Singleton's solo anticipates Sunny Murray by about a quarter-century.

Hungry Blues begins as a 16-bar song. But in bar 15, when Robinson sings of "a brand-new world, so sweet and fine/Nobody's hungry, there ain't no color line," the descending changes that stretch the strain also mock the lyrics. The delicate Johnson solo that opens the performance, with pretty runs attached to the bluesy theme, has a genuine blues phrase played with a more direct attack to end the first strain. Robinson sings the difficult lyrics well, and the performance is ennobled by Allen's detailed trumpet solo. *Hungry* is all that survives of *De Organizer,* an opera by Johnson with lyrics and libretto by Langston Hughes, and apart from Johnson's piano recording of *Yamekraw,* is all that remains of Johnson's second career as a composer. The matter is especially painful because Johnson's orchestral works, including two symphonies and a piano/orchestra sonata on *St. Louis Blues,* took so much of his energies, especially as the years went on. Could he translate his compositional piano conceptions into valuable orchestral works? Did the music establishment frown on this jazz artist having the nerve to create extended compositions? Whatever the reason, these pieces were performed rarely or not at all in Johnson's lifetime, and so they amount to a second musical life as secret as Nichols' or Waller's. Is it possible that, somewhere in this mass of music, there are unacknowledged masterpieces? For an artist of Johnson's gifts, jazz as it was customarily presented in his lifetime was hardly sufficient to contain his interests, and I hope more light will be shed on this major area of his work.

Time-Life anthologies seem to be chosen by committees, and some of the duds in this box must be compromise choices. The stuff that surrounds them is sometimes a heavy price to pay for the odd solos by Johnson, Higginbotham, and Webster; *Lucy Long* is the low point, Perry Bradford talking over the brief piano solo. You can rationalize these weak performances of *One Hour* and *Old Fashioned Love* only if they're the best versions Johnson did of these most popular of his tunes (they may well be the best—it was other performers who made them famous) *and* if superior Johnson pieces were already available to the public (they aren't). There are at least eight other relatively weak tracks in this collection, an unsatisfactory selection considering that any number of early piano solos, some of the Columbia pieces like *Lonesome Reverie,* five of the eight 1943 Blue Notes, and his Fats Waller tribute were ignored. But over half of this box is indeed great music, and since Johnson's era is gone forever, supplanted by quaint period piece "revivals" of Johnson, it immediately assumes more value and significance than most other Time-Life collections.

—john litweiler

DAVID SANBORN

AS WE SPEAK—Warner Bros. 23650-1: *Port Of Call; Better Believe It; Rush Hour; Over And Over; Back Again; As We Speak; Straight To The Heart; Rain On Christmas; Love Will Come Someday.*

Personnel: *Sanborn, alto, soprano saxophone; Bill Evans, tenor saxophone; Omar Hakim, drums; Marcus Miller, bass guitar; Michael Sembello, guitar; Don Freeman, keyboards; Paulinho de Costa, percussion.*

★ ★ ★ ½

David Sanborn is still playing the blues, and *As We Speak* is another in a string of pop-r&b albums which define the distinctive style of this saxophonist. On a superficial level listeners might say this LP is "more of the same" from a studio player who can be heard almost as often as Steve Gadd. A close listen, especially by those who have followed Sanborn's development reveals, however, that his playing continues to grow more complex, both emotionally and intellectually.

The compositions on *As We Speak* are harmonically basic and obviously commercially oriented (not to say that harmonic structure is the criteria for excellence, as any musician will attest; it takes as much thought and ability to solo on one chord as on a progression of six or more). It is Sanborn's highly sensitive playing and creativity which redeem the musicality of this album. Two vocal cuts sung by guitarist Sembello, *Back Again* and *Love Will Come Someday*, aim for the crossover market. Though Sembello's voice doesn't lack quality, and despite the exceptional melody of *Love Will Come Someday*, it takes an outstanding singer (like Carly Simon) to match the phrasing of Sanborn's saxophone—Sembello doesn't seem up to the challenge.

What makes *As We Speak*'s second side noteworthy is two Sanborn compositions, the title tune and *Rain On Christmas*—the only two pieces penned here by the saxophonist. As on his last two LPs, *Hideway* and *Voyeur*, Sanborn's compositions tend to be the most musical and least typical. *As We Speak* moves slightly away from the funk feel on most of side one and goes through more interesting chord movements. *Rain On Christmas* is Sanborn at his best—on alto screaming with emotion. He never plays a line the same way twice, and his horn sings throughout. This cut ends with extended interplay between sax and strings, having the effect of two instruments playing together, working off of each other's ideas.

Port Of Call, which at this writing has already received considerable airplay for an instrumental, and *Over And Over* (both on side one) feature a "saxophone section," which is simply overdubbing by Sanborn and, on *Over And Over*, Bill Evans. Though the section parts add color and accents, they are typical of funk and in some ways seem to be missing something.

As We Speak is more than just good, and Sanborn fans will enjoy hearing that the

saxophonist hasn't stagnated with commercial success; however, those wanting a solid introduction to David Sanborn might do better with *Voyeur* or *Taking Off.*

—albert de genova

PAT METHENY

OFFRAMP—ECM-1-1216: BARCAROLE; ARE YOU GOING WITH ME?; AU LAIT; EIGHTEEN; OFFRAMP; JAMES; THE BAT-PART II.

Personnel: *Metheny, guitar, guitar synthesizer, Synclavier guitar; Lyle Mays, piano, synthesizer, autoharp, organ, Synclavier; Steve Rodby, acoustic, electric bass; Dan Gottlieb, drums; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion.*

★ ★ ★ ★

You have to hand it to Pat Metheny; he's managed to grow immensely popular without backtracking into a predictable rut. Recent albums like *80/81* and *As Falls Wichita* . . . found the still-young Missouri guitar progeny in the company of contemporary jazz giants (DeJohnette, Haden, Redman, Brecker) and turning out fine music of genuine meat and merit.

Offramp is different . . . but not in terms of quality input. Metheny here conspires to exit his own road to glory, change course slightly, then establish new directions that may ultimately yield continued accolades. *Offramp* is swollen with melodies in a diversity of highly accessible (the title track being one rather free form exception) styles. Some of the tunes, even the mellow ones, seem at first startlingly different from what the guitarist has done before. You'd swear that was Toots Thielemans doing a harmonica solo on the Midnight Cowboyish *Are You Going With Me?*, but Metheny seems to have wrung that plaintive sound out of some guitar apparatus or other.

After a few listenings, one realizes that there's most definitely a connection to prior work, an organic evolution to each of these new Metheny sounds. The transformation takes place with a Mays & grace, and more than a little help from the guitarist's friends. Lyle Mays has developed into one of the most tasteful and subtly innovative of today's electronic keyboardists, a magic man when it comes to setting up a musical environment (hear *Barcarole*). And when it comes to setting *off* a musical environment, there may be no one better than Nana Vasconcelos (as on *The Bat-Part II*), who joins the Metheny regulars with something that again goes beyond considerable percussion skills, to real affinity for the Metheny method of mood making and breaking. His vocal touches on *The Bat* and *Au Lait* even serve to enhance the equatorial mix.

The rock appeal of *Eighteen* and the quintessential Metheny pop sound of *James* are enough to quench the desires of longtime fans. Other cuts seem almost fickle as they range from the honeyed melancholy of *Are You Going With Me?* to the harried, hard-core soloing of *Offramp*. And yet, somehow it's not all that inconsistent, and you have to appreciate how much this man's band's sound has expanded in such a short period of time.

—robert henschen

TERRY GIBBS/ BUDDY DE FRANCO

JAZZ PARTY: FIRST TIME TOGETHER—Palo Alto PA 8011; AIR MAIL SPECIAL; YESTERDAYS; BODY AND SOUL; AUSTIN MOOD; LOVE FOR SALE; TRISTE; PRELUDE TO A KISS; SAMBA WAZOO.

Personnel: *De Franco, clarinet; Gibbs, vibraphone; Frank Collett, piano; Andy Simpkins, bass; Jimmie Smith, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

By now, the unsurpassed idiomatic and technical fluency of both Terry Gibbs and Buddy De Franco must be considered axiomatic to all but the most estranged outlanders from the world of bop. But ironically, despite their commonality of age, milieu, and experience, the two had never before played as a team

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until a joint 1980 booking at London's Ronnie Scott's finally brought them together. However, the electricity sparked by their star-crossed union overseas was soon to result in this, their first conjugal recording in over 35 years of mutual readiness.

Recorded late last year during an engagement at Carmelo's, the two major protagonists, with the supportive aid of an especially tight rhythm section, repeatedly hurl in to ridicule the ignorant, prejudicial notions concerning the unsuitability of the clarinet and vibes for hard bop. Just one unbiased listen to either *Air Mail Special* or *Love For Sale*, for example, should forever lay to rest this groundless, untutored suggestion.

Though long associated with Benny Goodman and Lionel Hampton, the first mentioned title receives little in the way of nostalgic reverence. On the contrary, it is treated as a way uptempo, driving showpiece for De Franco, whose chromatic substitute harmonies, liquid agility, and huge, warm sound recall not the classical, reflective grace of a Goodman but rather the burning intensity of a Charlie Parker. Maintaining the same caloric level, but at a slightly more reasonable tempo, the quintet sails through *Yesterdays*, which is further notable for an excellent solo by pianist Collett. *Body And Soul* is handled by the two stars as an opportunity for, first, a series of alternating eights in solo, and then later as a course in dual improvisation, a technique also favored by Red Norvo.

Gibbs the composer comes to the front in the boppishly latinized *Austin Mood* and *Samba Wazoo*, both of which are attractive, swinging melodies, while the remainder of the numbers can easily serve as examplars of the group's communal temperament. Tellingly, there are no blues represented in this first collection, but, considering the expertise both artists hold in this area of expression, a redress of the omission should be shortly forthcoming. —*jack sohmer*

OLIVER LAKE

CLEVONT FITZHUBERT (A Good Friend of Mine)—Black Saint BSR 0054: *November '80; Sop; Clevont Fitzhubert; King; Tap Dancer; Hmbay.*

Personnel: *Lake, alto, soprano saxophone, flute; Baikida Carroll, trumpet, flugelhorn; Donald Smith, piano; Pheeroan Ak Laff, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

JUMP UP—Gramavision GR8106: *Trouble; Consume; Sun People; Don't Go Crazy; Ska'd To Move; Hey Lady; You Only Believe; One Foot.*

Personnel: *Lake, alto, tenor saxophone, flute, vocals; Jerome Harris, bass guitar, guitar, synthesizer, vocals; Alphonia Tims, guitar; Frank Abel, piano, organ, clavinet; Billy Grant, bass; Pheeroan Ak Laff, drums, percussion; Jawara, percussion.*

★ ★

An ongoing struggle between the imagination and the pressures of reality exists for any artist and can be updated with each new work. On the basis of these two releases, this struggle for Oliver Lake, one of the very few major American saxophonists to surface in the '70s, seems to have stalemated. While being less sharply edged than his first recordings, *Clevont Fitzhubert* taps Lake's resourcefulness as improviser and composer in the intriguing setting of a bassless jazz quartet. As it never transforms its popular medium and only occasionally attempts to creatively fuse reggae, funk, and jazz, *Jump Up* appears to be a purely commercial venture.

In addition to removing the bass from a standard jazz quintet format to gain rhythmic flexibility and freshened relationships within the quartet, Lake also tinkers with the time-honored theme-solos-theme structuring of jazz compositions on *Clevont Fitzhubert*, replacing accompaniment with collective supporting improvisation. With musicians of a less intuitive nature and little or no shared history, Lake would have been unable to extract the unified depth of feeling from the program on the open-ended terms he has with Baikida Carroll, Donald Smith, and Pheeroan Ak Laff.

Clevont Fitzhubert is an album with character, and characters. The meshing of rounded and pinched phrases in the title composition suggests that Lake's "good friend" may have an unwittingly humorous gait. *Tap Dancer*, on the other hand, is a portrait of lubricous movement outlined by a graceful theme stated by Carroll and Lake on flute, which Ak Laff colors with vibrant brush solos. Carroll's piercingly dramatic *King*—his wife's maiden name—maximizes the collective approach, as the quartet echoes and dovetails their intense, lyrical materials the way family members end sentences for each other.

Like Lake's work in the past, *Clevont Fitzhubert* defies labels, as it melds old and new traditions with a high level of personal vision. Yet, when approaching an often trivialized medium that demands this quality, *Jump Up* only garnishes the staples of black popular musics. And, except for short bursts in solos and ensemble passages, there is little on *Jump Up* to indicate that Lake is indeed a masterful saxophonist. At its best, *Jump Up* has the presence and the hooks for progressive radio programming; at its worst, it is AM pulp. Several tunes offer bright, clean, airbrushed reggae, the most durable material for both listeners and dancers. The funk excursions are simplistic and, overall, the lyrics are never more than clever.

The problem that confronted Ayler in his rock experiments, and that Coleman has partly solved with Prime Time, exists for Lake here—the regimented durations, rhythms, and harmonic structures of popular musics do not promote the unbridled give-and-take that is central to jazz (and the success of *Clevont Fitzhubert*). Only on *Ska'd To Move* and *One Foot* does Lake have the space to establish his identity, if only at an incremental pace. The popish *Sun People*, however,

straitjackets Lake into a tedious, watered-down groove. Unless Lake can raise the common denominators of popular musics, instead of conforming to them, his future pursuits in this vein will remain of minimal interest to his jazz audience.

—bill shoemaker

BLUE MITCHELL

LAST DANCE—Jazz America Marketing 5002: *STABLE MATES; PORTRAIT OF JENNY; THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU; GETTIN' SENTIMENTAL OVER BLUE; I CAN'T GET STARTED WITH YOU; OW.*

Personnel: *Mitchell, trumpet; Dick Spencer, alto saxophone; Victor Feldman, piano; John Heard, bass; Dick Berk, drums.*

★ ★

BILL HARDMAN

POLITELY—Muse MR 5184: *LOVE LETTERS; POLITELY; LAZYBIRD; CORAL KEYS; SMOOCH.*

Personnel: *Hardman, trumpet; Junior Cook, tenor saxophone; Walter Bishop Jr., piano; Paul Brown, bass; Leroy Williams, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

Out of the mid-'50s hard-bop explosion came trumpeters Blue Mitchell and Bill Hardman, the former identified with Horace Silver's combative blues and the latter known for being a hard-hitting member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. The physical wear from making their horns sing, shout, and cry through the years resulted in a more temperate playing approach in later years, but what has been lost in fleetness and raw feeling has been made up in maturity and wisdom. Only illness or quietus—to which Mitchell submitted in 1979—can truly silence the original advocates of funky blues-based bop.

Mitchell's *Last Dance*, recorded in 1977 with a workaday Los Angeles foursome, is an inconsequential postmortem release. The trumpeter works hard, but his best efforts are squashed by the others' criminally banal work. His melodic expressiveness, rooted in a kindly disposition, is shown to good effect on the standard *I Can't Get Started*; unfortunately, the costive piano and saxophone convey nothing save feeble sentimentality. Similarly, the ballad *Portrait Of Jenny* is attractive for Mitchell's elegant, deeply felt phrases, and unattractive for pianist Victor Feldman's narcotized contributions.

The hotter *Gettin' Sentimental Over Blue* finds Mitchell resorting to cliches in his exchanges with struggling altoman Dick Spencer, and the outcome is as tedious as a ballgame between the Toronto Blue Jays and Seattle Mariners. Although he is in sharper form on Dizzy Gillespie's *Ow* and Benny Golson's *Stable Mates*, showing some of his instinctive excitement, the songs are massacred by his plodding companions. You get the picture.

Hardman's *Politely*, his second headliner for Muse, has a cover photograph of the trumpeter with chin nestled on upper chest, instrument set to lips, and bloodshot, steely eyes revealing an incisive sense of purpose. The man means business. Pitted alongside the members of his working group, luminaries Junior Cook and Walter Bishop in-

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cluded, he gives us a no-nonsense bop exposition.

Hardman, his muted horn articulation accurate and ideas fresh, grabs on to the melody of *Love Letters*, shaking loose only for veteran Cook's fervent tenor spot; follow-up solos by pianist Bishop and bassist Paul Brown (using bow) are equally rousing. Hardman's rendering of Miles Davis and Charles Mingus' *Smooch* hints that behind those eyes lies a sophisticated romantic: his mute work is both delicate and tough, his every shift in pitch or volume aligned to changing emotions. The title song, an earthy blues booted along by Brown and drummer Leroy Williams, is the very definition of "soulful." Also meritorious are the versions of John Coltrane's *Lazybird* and Bishop's *Coral Keys*. A splendid record. —*frank-john hadley*

DAVE BRUBECK

THE DAVE BRUBECK TRIO—Fantasy F-24726: *You Stepped Out Of A Dream; Lullaby In Rhythm; Singin' In The Rain; I'll Remember April; Body And Soul; Let's Fall In Love; Laura; Indiana; Blue Moon; Tea For Two; Undecided; That Old Black Magic; September Song; Sweet Georgia Brown; Spring Is Here; 'S Wonderful; Perfidia; Avalon; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Always; How High The Moon; Squeeze Me; Heart And Soul; Too Marvelous For Words.*
***Personnel**: Brubeck, piano; Cal Tjader, vibes, drums; Ron Crotty, bass.*

★ ★ ★

DAVE BRUBECK/PAUL DESMOND—Fantasy F-24727: *Jeepers Creepers; On A Little Street In Singapore; Trolley Song (rehearsal); Trolley Song; I May Be Wrong; Blue Moon; My Heart Stood Still; Let's Fall In Love; Over The Rainbow; You Go To My Head; Crazy Chris; Give A Little Whistle; Oh, Lady Be Good; Tea For Two; This Can't Be Love.*
***Personnel**: Brubeck, piano; Desmond, alto saxophone; Ron Crotty (cuts 1, 3, 4, 6, 11, 14), Wyatt Ruther (2, 5, 15), bass; Lloyd Davis (1, 2, 5, 6, 12-14), Joe Dodge (3, 4, 11), Herb Barman (15), drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

PAPER MOON—Concord Jazz-CJ-178: *Music, Maestro, Please!; I Hear A Rhapsody; Symphony; I Thought About You; It's Only A Paper Moon; Long Ago And Far Away; St. Louis Blues.*
***Personnel**: Brubeck, piano; Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone, bass (5); Chris Brubeck, bass, bass trombone (5); Randy Jones, drums.*

★ ★

These three albums are a chemistry lesson. *The Dave Brubeck Trio*, a reissue of the 24 sides that launched Brubeck's recording career, is of greater historical than aesthetic interest. *Paper Moon*, Brubeck's latest release, is more admirable as an ambitious curiosity than as a well-wrought whole. Of the three albums, only *Dave Brubeck/Paul Desmond*, 15 tunes recorded between 1951 and 1953, is very successful. It is a lovely album because the chemistry is marvelously right and complete, a craftsmanly mixture and product of careful artifice that seems to claim the spontaneous authority of nature.

Listening to the earliest recordings, made before Brubeck and Desmond joined forces, requires considerable exercise of historical imagination. It is difficult to understand how serious jazz listeners in the late '40s and '50s could have called the music reissued on *The Dave Brubeck Trio* "cerebral," let alone "progressive" and "radical." Nevertheless, such were the adjectives universally applied to the early Brubeck. The impression made by these first recordings today is anything but cerebral, progressive, or radical. It is very true that Brubeck often builds his changes imaginatively here, removing chord structures so far from the tunes upon which they are based that the original songs are barely recognizable. Despite this, most of the resulting charts sound distressingly close to '50s pop-jazz, though cut up into block chords and heavy four-square angular rhythms.

You Stepped Out Of A Dream, the album's opener, is typical, with its florid cocktail piano vamp that makes the "cerebral" Brubeck sound more like 50 percent of Ferrante and Teicher. The introduction of a latin bongo beat further marks this cut as a period piece. And that latin beat, by the way, is also applied indiscriminately and most incongruously to *Spring Is Here* and, worse yet, *Body And Soul*—the performance of which is insensitive and downright tasteless.

That's the worst of it. Fortunately, there *is* much better on these two discs. Cal Tjader made his co-debut with Brubeck on these sides, playing drums—including those misbegotten bongos—and, more impressively here, vibes. As *You Stepped Out Of A Dream* is typical of the early Brubeck at his most dated, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, with brilliant mallet work by Tjader, is Brubeck at his most enduring. Again, it is a question of chemistry: Tjader reacts with Brubeck, kicks him along when necessary, and warms up the cool contrapuntalism of the pianist—bops the cool school just right.

Paul Desmond's effect on Dave Brubeck is similarly catalytic. First, like Tjader, Desmond reacts with the pianist, weaving his fluent, sinuous, but lovingly reticent alto into the spaces created by Brubeck's block chords and angular rhythms. Desmond's reluctant sensuality in *On A Little Street In Singapore* or in the verse to the *Trolley Song* recalls the fine, dry clarinet of Pee Wee Russell. Framed by Brubeck's hard-edged piano, its exquisite fragility is almost heartbreaking.

But Desmond has a second, more truly catalytic effect on Brubeck. His presence frees and warms the pianist, doesn't merely contrast with him. Most of what sounds dated, contrived, and florid in the releases of 1949-51 is transformed in these 1951-53 collaborations into something enduring, highly crafted, but also playful and genuinely architectonic.

In his latest release, *Paper Moon*, Brubeck seems to be trying consciously to create

another effective chemistry. The quartet here features a particularly stunning musician, Jerry Bergonzi, whose tenor horn—founded in bop but congenial to the generation of Coltrane and Rollins—is a daring contrast to Brubeck's detached geniality. The project of this album is admirable, calling to mind the unlikely partnership of Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Al Hibbler on *A Meeting Of The Times*—that gratifying classic exercise in studied incongruity. Unfortunately, the incongruity of Brubeck and Bergonzi remains simply incongruity, neither classic nor gratifying.

The opening number, *Music, Maestro, Please!*, features a relaxed and engaging Brubeck. Then Bergonzi enters, brilliantly, but in an idiom so highly charged and stylistically at odds with the pianist that the final effect is strained, even awkward, at times grotesque. Put most straightforwardly, the problem here is one of taste—at its worst in *Symphony*, which begins lightly and charmingly with a dialog among Brubeck, bassist Chris Brubeck, and drummer Randy Jones, only to be interrupted pointlessly by atonal athletics from Bergonzi a la Sonny Rollins. Great in its place, but that place is clearly not here.

Paper Moon has many valuable moments—the sweetest being the contemplative tenor solo on *I Thought About You*, which alone comes near to being worth the price of the album. The record is admirable, too, for Brubeck's willingness to experiment with the likes of Bergonzi. But this experiment fails. The chemistry is bad. —*alan axelrod*

ALBERT AYLER

LÖRRACH/PARIS 1966—hat Music 3500: *Bells; Jesus; Our Prayer; Spirits; Holy Ghost; Ghost (1st Variation); Ghost; Holy Family.*

Personnel: *Ayler, tenor saxophone; Don Ayler, trumpet; Michel Sampson, violin; William Folwell, bass; Beaver Harris, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In many ways, Anthony Braxton is correct in referring to this phase of American creative music as the post-Ayler period. And while I'm not convinced that Coltrane, Coleman, and Taylor are moot cases just yet, Ayler's influence on today's avant garde is much more pervasive than most realize. Listen closely to Roscoe Mitchell, David Murray, or almost any important avant garde saxophonist and you'll detect the pointed influence of Ayler's layered multiphonics and piercing forays into the instrument's altissimo register. In a broader sense, Ayler's aesthetics have filtered down into every corner of today's vanguard—consciously or not. Ayler's overriding use of and respect for the roots of Afro-American music have almost become cliches on the current scene, while his pioneering ventures into the extremes of high energy improvisation and his rekindling of the polyphonic flame of the music's African genesis still serve as epitomes of the genre.

In this light, any recording from Ayler's tragically short career is of great importance, and as powerful and unadulterated as this live European date is, it is simply a milestone. Recorded about a month before the Village Vanguard performance that became the second side of *Albert Ayler In Greenwich Village*, this album features the same personnel (with the exception of the latter date's addition of a second bassist), some of Albert's and Don's most important compositions, and a potent dose of beauty and joy. Every cut is vintage Ayler reflecting all the spiritual impact of his playing. The compositions are litanies of simplicity and emotional expression, ranging from Don's hymn-like *Jesus* and *Our Prayer* to Albert's New Orleans-inspired classics *Bells* and the versions of *Ghost* (doesn't hat Music mean *Ghosts*?). *Holy Ghost, Holy Family* and both versions of *Ghost* contain classic Ayler solos

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in addition to exceptionally sympathetic ensemble exchanges. Brother Don's trumpet work is at its best throughout. And while many critics point to Don Cherry as the perfect complement to Ayler's tenor, I think his brother's clarion sound and thematic solo constructions fit perfectly into the Ayler aesthetic. We also get a much appreciated further documentation of the pioneering avant garde violin work of Danish violinist Michel Sampson.

Ayler sought to rediscover some of the most basic principles of music, but in doing so propelled us into the future. If you're like myself and haven't graced your turntable with an Ayler record in some time, this album can provide some amazing insights to contemporary music—especially how the Ayler lineage comes to us through the Chicago school. This music glows with the basic spiritual spark that has engendered the development of music and kept it an inexorable part of the human experience. Ayler's message remains constant: music is the healing force of the universe. —*cliff tinder*

RAY CHARLES

A LIFE IN MUSIC—Atlantic AD 5-3700: *The Sun's Gonna Shine; What Would I Do Without You; Ain't Misbehavin'; Leave My Woman Alone; Love On My Mind; Swanee River Rock; The Genius After Hours; I Got A Woman; How Long Blues; Yes Indeed!; Just For A Thrill; Soul Brothers; Sinner's Prayer; That's Enough; Lonely Avenue; Let The Good Times Roll; Greenbacks; Mr. Charles Blues; Music, Music, Music; It Should've Been Me; What'd I Say; Funny (But I Still Love You); Losing Hand; A Bit Of Soul; Cosmic Ray; A Fool For You; I Want A Little Girl; This Little Girl Of Mine; Soul Meeting; Blackjack; Drown In My Own Tears; Ain't That Love; The Man I Love; Come Rain Or Come Shine; Hard Times; You Be My Baby; What Kind Of Man Are You; It's Alright; I Wonder Who; Talkin' 'Bout You; Heartbreaker; Bag Of Blues; Hallelujah I Love Her So; Rockhouse; Tell Me How Do You Feel; Sweet Sixteen Bars; I Believe To My Soul.*

Personnel: *Charles, piano, alto saxophone, vocals; various other instrumentalists including David "Fathead" Newman, Zoot Sims, saxophones; Oscar Pettiford, Percy Heath, bass; Mickey Baker, Kenny Burrell, guitar; Milt Jackson, vibes, piano; Panama Francis, drums.*

★★★★

This five-record, three-and-a-half-hour set covers Charles' first decade with Atlantic Records, starting in 1952. Some real gems are included, but other seemingly obvious choices are not, and the packaging smacks of a rush job. Inconsistencies aside, though, the collection is a real pleasure, and notable for its focus on Charles' lesser known jazz skills.

Ray's rural Florida blues roots are evident on *Sinner's Prayer, Losing Hand*, and *Rockhouse*. His next influence was the smooth crooning of Charles Brown and Nat "King" Cole, whose slick sound permeates *Just For A Thrill* and *Funny (But I Still Love You)*. Charles soon defined his own style, though—breaking a black cultural taboo in the process—when he blended gospelish vocals with sensual, wordly subject matter. Structurally, of course, the two traditions are nearly identical, but no one before Ray dared to preach bluesy lyrics. This powerhouse merger paved the way for modern soul music, and is considered Charles' major contribution and achievement. *I Got A Woman, What'd I Say,* and *Hallelujah I Love Her So* were big hits in this blues-gospel vein. Less famous fine performances are *Drown In My Own Tears* (recorded live) and *Leave My Woman Alone*, an ominous warning with a slapping "sanctified" backbeat. Sadly missing is the frantic classic *Mess Around*; fans will also search in vain for *Busted, Hit The Road Jack*, and Charles' country hits.

By the mid-'50s Charles was a name act with a constant stream of commercial efforts; *Yes Indeed* and *Swanee River Rock* sound dated now but reflect Ray's aggressive pop consciousness. Comedy tunes like *Greenbacks* and *It Should've Been Me* remain fresh, however, as do *Let The Good Times Roll* and Doc Pomus' *Lonely Avenue*. Harold Arlen's *Come Rain Or Come Shine* is nearly drowned by a soupy orchestra, but Ray's heartfelt vocal cuts through to do the lyrics justice.

Success allowed Charles to carry a large band with horns, and indulge his penchant for soul-jazz, bebop, and blue-tinged swing. The eight-bar blues standard *How Long* gets an extended treatment here; in addition to his typically grooving piano work, Ray also steps out on alto sax, in terse honking fashion. Shimmering solos from Milt Jackson and Oscar Pettiford are contrastingly complemented by raw guitar work from unknown Skeeter Best; Jackson moves to the keys when Ray picks up his horn. *Soul Brothers* presents the same group at uptempo, altoist Charles trading nimble fours with Billy Mitchell on tenor. Other notable soloists to grace this collection include Kenny Burrell, Mickey Baker, and Charles' saxophone mainstay, David "Fathead" Newman.

While the personnel on each cut is painstakingly listed, the lack of recording dates (at least the year) is a sloppy oversight. Nat Hentoff's liner notes graphically illuminate Charles' forceful personality, but are similarly vague on the details of his career. Particularly disappointing on such a major compilation are the dull half-baked graphics. Charles' performances are consistently strong, however—brilliant at times and never disinterested. Ray claims a commitment to "the kind of music where you can't fake the feeling"; 30-odd years of diverse material have never seen him fall short.

—*ben sandmel*

MANDINGO GRIOT SOCIETY

MIGHTY RHYTHM—Flying Fish FF 269: *One Man Dancing; Disco Gate; I Haven't Seen My Lover; Dusu Mungu; Ndan Ndang Nyaria; Woman Dance With Me; Demba Tenkren; Serri Nsamba; Sunjata Keita; Festival On Crazy Street.*

Personnel: *Jali Foday Musa Suso, lead vocals, kora, dusungoni, tamo, bala, dundungo, harmonica, kalimba; Adam Rudolph, congas, bongos, gembe, tabla; Hamidu Drake, drums, tabla; Joseph Thomas, bass guitar; John Markiss, guitar; Isatou Walker, Ka T'Etta Aton, vocals; Maulawi Nururdin, saxophones; Billy Brimfield, trumpet.*

★ ★ ★ ★

VARIOUS ARTISTS

SOUND D'AFRIQUE—Mango MLPS 9697: *Me Bowa Ya; Massoua Mo; Dounougnan; Bo Mbanda; Jalo; Moboma.*

Personnel: *Mekongo (cut 1, from Cameroun); Eba Aka Jerome (2, Ivory Coast); Kambou Clement (3, Upper Volta); Pablo (4, Zaire); Etoile De Dakar (5, Senegal); Menga Mokombi (6, Congo).*

★ ★ ★ ★

More evidence that the world is getting smaller, musically. Jali Foday Musa Suso, a Gambian Mandingo Griot, has added women singers, a psychedelic blues guitarist raised on Chicago's West Side sound, and disco lyrics to his sprightly traditional style—besides the funk bass and percussion-from-the-world-over that spiced his first Flying Fish album—losing none of his authenticity. And several ensembles from (formerly French) West Africa have referred to contemporary pop formats, fashioning high-spirited and eminently rhythmic songs, apparently based on their indigenous modes and chants.

After the relatively lengthy improvisations and heavily accented narratives on his U.S. band's eponymously titled debut LP, the Mandingo Griot has moved away from a jazz influence (Don Cherry appears on that earlier issue) towards easier accessibility. It's fine; the seamless, polyrhythmic section work of Messrs. Thomas, Rudolph, and Drake stimulates lots of hip, shoulder, and foot shaking, and Suso's singing is more relaxed than before, as he offers simple sentiments made a little bit exotic by the lilt in his voice. Of course, it's still his 25-string kora (a harp-guitar with a gourd resonator) that defines the Griot's art: bright, strong licks fly from his fingers like just-spun finery. Suso also gets off some good harmonica blowing in overdub; John Markiss, the young guitarist added to the touring band, lets his Hendrixisms loose on *Festival*. Hornmen Maulawi and Brimfield are limited to riffing, and there are also some quiet, *really* traditionally Wolof songs, in relief of the more electric tracks. In all, a well-planned album that seems to end before you've had your fill of Mandingo-derived modern music.

Sound D'Afrique, despite being an anthology, doesn't offer as much diversity. Oh, there are sharply performed horn arrangements framing the choruses of *Me Bowa Ya*, *Bo Mbanda*, and *Moboma*, different beats and

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different singers on every song, but there's a sameness throughout the disc—which only attests to a shared understanding of what Afro-pop is.

It is a thoroughly professional entertainment music, as presented here, fast and accurate from the trap drumming to the quick-witted guitar fills (sadly, the ace plectrists picking so confidently go uncredited). Though the vamps are basic, they launch heartfelt vocal improvisations (in French and Wolof dialects) similar to the efforts of salsa singers. The words aren't heavy—one couplet I make out as "It's easy to live/It's easy to love," but the language is most musical in itself, and for partying, this album will get faster action than, say, reggae syncopations. There's not a bum cut—for unpretentious fun, few recent releases match this unassuming collection, imported, pressed and distributed by a sub-label of Island Records.

—howard mandel

DICKY WELLS

LONESOME ROAD—Uptown UP 27.07: *Honeysuckle Rose; Lonesome Road; I Surrender Dear; Dicky Wells' New Blues, Take I; Dicky Wells' New Blues, Take II; Black And Blue; Tweedledee Dee Dum; Dicky's Famous Break; She's Funny That Way.*

Personnel: *Wells, trombone, vocals (cuts 2, 4, 5, 9); Buddy Tate, tenor saxophone, clarinet (1, 2, 7-9); Dick Katz, piano; George Duvivier (1, 2, 7-9), Michael Moore (3-6), bass; Oliver Jackson, drums.*

★ ★ ★

SACKVILLE ALL-STARS

SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION—Sackville 3028: *John Hardy's Wife; Trouble In Mind; Jive At Five; Russian Lullaby; Good Queen Bess; Arkansas Blues; Saturday Night Function; Rosalie.*

Personnel: *Buddy Tate, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Jim Galloway, soprano, tenor, baritone saxophone; Jay McShann, piano; Don Thompson, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Dicky Wells, Buddy Tate, and Jay McShann are true KC knights by association with time and place. The Count Basie band, the legendary epitome of Kansas City swing, included Wells from 1938-50 (except for a short hiatus in 1946) and Tate from 1939-49. McShann of course was a prominent KC bandleader during the 1930s.

The other players on these albums are knights by assimilation. Pianist Katz especially captures the essence, assuming on the Wells album a light-fingered, Basieish role. This contrasts richly with the trombonist's labored (gone chops) phrasing, moon-faced tone, and lyrical lament as well as his broad-shaped vocals. Of the bassists, Duvivier is more straightahead, walking and soloing with the clear logic of dovetailing lines and sinewy resonance. But Moore seems closer to Wells. There is his Wells-like lyricism on *I Surrender Dear*, warmth and high flightiness on *New Blues, Take II*, and shapely counterpoint on *Black And Blue*, where Wells reveals the tonal source of trombonist Jimmy Knepper's expressiveness.

Black And Blue in this performance is a cameo, and marks the album's impressionistic beauty. *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Tweedledee*, a Wells/Tate head on *Ain't Misbehavin'*, represent the Southwestern legacy of swing, riffing, bluesiness, moaning (Tate), and spaciousness, with that special feeling of dynamic control and cleanliness in the drums (Jackson is well on-target here). Wells tries for some modern ideas—a snorting, whinnying abstraction on *Honeysuckle*; a high, speech-like break on *Dicky's Famous Break*—and makes good use of tone colors everywhere. His tone is strangely affecting, his soul is right, and the company is smooth.

The Sackville All-Stars record is *very* smooth. Canadians Galloway, Thompson, and Clarke produce with Tate and McShann an uncluttered, relentlessly swinging yet relaxing festival of melody and rhythm. Tate's plaintive tenor moans and nudging-each-note articulation complement Galloway's savoring-each-held-note vibrato and sinuous (but not nasal) phrasing on soprano. The horns echo the rocking, see-saw pulse of McShann's piano and the effortless heartbeat of Thompson and Clarke. (What versatile musicians they are!)

Tate seems always to mirror and inspire his mates (notice this on the Wells album, too). His clarinet will not scare the technicians, but it has personality and a laughing-at-life Prezence on *Russian Lullaby*, *Arkansas Blues*, and the title cut. Galloway's tenor and baritone are genial, but the soprano is his true horn: honey and blood (to borrow an image from Czech novelist Josef Skvorecky) on *Good Queen Bess*, *John Hardy's Wife*, *Trouble In Mind*, *Russian Lullaby*, and *Saturday Night*.

The successful evocation of Kansas City lies vividly in McShann's beat. There is the same feeling here as in the scene in the film *Last Of The Blue Devils* where McShann has the whole room rocking, including the walls and furniture—or so it appears. That's jazz and its still viable swing roots.

—owen cordle

BILL EVANS

ELOQUENCE—Fantasy F-9618: *Gone With The Wind; Saudade Do Brasil; In A Sentimental Mood; But Beautiful; All Of You; Since We Met; But Not For Me; Isn't It Romantic; The Opener; When In Rome; It Amazes Me.*

Personnel: *Evans, acoustic, electric piano; Eddie Gomez, bass (cuts 1-4).*

★ ★ ★ ★

It is by now well known that Bill Evans was one of the most prodigious of all modern-day pianists, and his recording history is extensive. So it was natural that after his death many treasures would be unearthed and brought out for our delight.

In *Eloquence*, we have a collection of tracks dating back to 1973, '74, and '75. Five are studio dates, four are live. *When in Rome* and *It Amazes Me* are themselves collectors' items in that they emanate from a trio appearance at the now defunct, but once famous, Shelly's Manne Hole in Hollywood. According to Don Nelsen's liner notes, "Bill was playing solo toward the end of the evening . . . he had never recorded these before." Both songs were composed by Cy Coleman, an oft-overlooked but exceptional writer of themes superbly suited to such artists as Evans.

The other two live tracks are *In A Sentimental Mood* and *But Beautiful*, both part of a festival concert at Montreux in 1975. It's in familiar melodies like these that one really gets a sense of what Evans the explorer was all about. You really have to listen closely at first to recognize the tune through the outer trappings of arpeggios and long strings of single notes in the right hand.

Backtracking—all of side one is Evans with his long-time companion bassist Eddie Gomez. The word "eloquence" applies equally to Gomez, and we tend to forget, in the rash of NHØP, Pastorius, et al., what strength and character is in his playing. One may sometimes sense (especially noticeable on *In A Sentimental Mood*) that Gomez feels somehow limited by the capabilities of his instrument, and that he could go much further in his explorations.

As soloist on side two, Evans appears to be searching for ever new directions. He has, as always, an appealing way of using ascending and descending figures, yet often becoming quite abstruse; one can hear in *Since We Met*, for instance, the outgrowth of his influence in such later pianists as JoAnne Brackeen, whenever he becomes thus involved.

Again, quoting the liner notes, "He moves into *But Not For Me* tentatively, stating the melody, and apparently marking time until some idea or inspiration happens . . . it doesn't . . . he saunters on to musical doodling . . . ." And yet, this is a Bill Evans statement as surely as everything else contained on these two sides.

—frankie nemko-graham

PEPPER ADAMS

URBAN DREAMS—Polo Alto Jazz PA 8009: *Dexter Rides Again; Urban Dreams; Three Little Words; Time On My Hands; Pent Up House; Trentino.*

Personnel: *Adams, baritone saxophone; Jimmy Rowles, piano; George Mraz, bass; Billy Hart, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ½

Pepper Adams is among the most aggressive baritone saxophonists on the scene—at least within the realm of civility and traditional forms. If he's not exactly a hot player—and how many hot players have come along since the mid-'40s?—he is at least a descendent from the line of big-toned reed players whose extended family includes Coleman Hawkins, Harry Carney, Sonny Rollins, and others. Here, once again, he proves why.

This album is a fine, no-nonsense workout for Adams, who manages to make the honks

of his baritone sing in big, high-balling style. He is so strong, I'm not really sure whether the gentle Jimmy Rowles is the best possible partner for Adams. On the fast pieces Rowles is witty and subtle, but is outshouted by Adams' torrent of driving eighth notes. He provides no ballast. But Adams has his own built-in gyroscopes, and this is, after all, his showcase.

Playing popular standards apparently reminds Adams of other standards. Fleeting quotes from *Witchcraft* and Harry James' *Music Makers* are woven nicely into *Time On My Hands*. And glimpses of *Yes Sir That's My Baby* and *Cheek To Cheek* turn up in *Three Little Words*.

The one-horn-with-rhythm format has its limits, both emotionally and musically. An awful lot of them seem to get recorded every year, and not many of them become essential buys. But nobody has pulled one off lately better than the one Adams does here. He's one of the best, and this showcases him well.

—*john mcdonough*

WAXING ON

Audiophile Jazz

KENNY BURRELL: *Heritage (AudioSource ASD-1)*
ELLIS LARKINS: *Ellis Larkins (DGTL Records 101)*
ALLEN VIZZUTTI: *(Headfirst Records 9700)*
ROSS/LEVINE BAND: *That Summer Something (Headfirst Records 9701)*
DON MENZA: *Burnin' (M&K RealTime 301)*
JACK SHELDON: *Playin' It Straight (M&K RealTime 303)*
FREDDIE HUBBARD: *Back To Birdland (M&K RealTime 305)*
WILD BILL DAVISON/EDDIE MILLER: *Play Hoagy Carmichael (M&K RealTime 306)*
OSCAR PETERSON: *Digital At Montreux (Pablo 2308224)*
MILT JACKSON: *Night Mist (Pablo 2312124)*

THIS IS A SURVEY-REVIEW OF THE SOUND quality of 10 recent albums of jazz music recorded in the new digital technology, itself not actually new, only its widespread application to sound recording. A detailed explanation of how the digital process works is beyond the scope of this article and, to be candid, of its writer's technical expertise. But a brief one may be helpful. In conventional analog recording, the audio signal is recorded onto the tape in the form of patterns of magnetization that correspond or are analogous to the music soundwaves. In digital, the signal is passed from the microphones through an analog-to-digital (a/d) convertor that samples the incoming signal at the rate of 40,000-50,000 times a second, then assigns numbers to the voltage of each sample. What eventually winds up being recorded onto the tape is thus not an electrical analog to the soundwaves; rather, it is a series of numbers, a binary code, that consists essentially in measurements of the soundwaves. Just prior to disc cutting or tape duplication, the digitalized signal is passed through a digital-to-analog (d/a) convertor, and the disc is cut or the tape duplicated as with conventional recording.

The chief advantages to digital over analog are claimed to be increased dynamic range (of an order of a very significant 20 dB), lower distortion, and lower noise. Also, since all that is recorded on the tape is a numerical code, the quality of the tape itself, critical in analog recording, is alleged to be essentially irrelevant to the final quality of the reproduced sound; this is because the tape has only to record a numerical code, not a complex analog to an equally complex music signal, thus obviating the need to be concerned with such factors as the tape's distortion, frequency response, or saturation characteristics.

Of course, as is often the case, real-world conditions have a way of equalizing out theoretical advantages. To begin with, the dynamic range of digital is in actuality not that much better than standard analog because of the limitations in even the best disc-cutting and reproducing equipment, and the inherent noise of most discs themselves. In fact, digital's dynamic range is arguably not superior at all to carefully engineered analog.

A NOTE ON EQUIPMENT

The main audio system used for evaluating these albums is my own, which consists of: a Linn Sondek LP-12 turntable, an Ittok LV II tonearm, and an Asak DC-2100K moving-coil pickup; a PS Audio headamp alternated with the moving-coil stage of a PS IVa phono preamplifier (with optional power-supply), a PS VK dual-volume and selector box, and two PS Audio Model II power amplifiers, each strapped for mono; and a poir of Acoustat Model 3 electrostatic speaker systems (latest versions). Interconnects are by Spica and Audio Technica, alternated with PS Audioribbons which I constructed myself; speaker cables consisted of 30 feet per side of Litz Livewire Blue, occasionally alternated with the same lengths of Monster Cable or Great Lynx. Before playing, each side of every disc was zapped with a Zerostat, then wiped clean with a Decca Record Brush; and the stylus was cleaned with a Hervic "Pro" electronic stylus-cleaner. Absolute phase was checked on each album (i.e., reversing the plus/minus leads to both speakers); and the entire system was optimized for correct AC line-polarity (both by ear and with a voltmeter).

The albums were spot-checked on other systems and/or components, including speaker systems by Acoustat (Model 2, original versions), Thiel (all models, all versions), Rogers (LS3/5a), Metronome (model 7), and Advent (the original large Advent); electronics by PS (Model III), Hafler (DH-200), and NAD (3045, and 3020 and 7020, used in various configurations); turntables and arms by Rega (Planar 3), Linn (Basik), and Sony (PS-X75); and pickups by Dynavector (Ruby), Grace (F9E), and Grado (FTE+1). Especial thanks is extended to Gene Rubin of Gene Rubin Audio (Monterey Park, CA) for lending equipment and assisting in the evaluations; and to Lynne Goldstein for much technical advice and information.

As to the lower distortion of digital: with reference to recorded signal-levels at or very near maximum, digital is indeed better than analog. However, this is a dubious advantage inasmuch as maximum levels obtain at only a few moments across the length of even fairly high-powered discs. At lower, more normal and common levels, digital distortion is higher than that of analog; and, for reasons beyond the scope of this article, digital distortion tends to be more irritating than that of analog, even when analog's measure nominally higher. As regards frequency response, owing to limitations in the present technology, all digital recordings must be filtered at values half those of the sampling rates. For example, if the sampling rate is 50,000, a 25,000-cycle filter must be used. Now this is a filter that no self-respecting audiophile would dream of using in any high-quality music system. For one thing, this particular application requires a very steep slope above the nominal cut-off frequency, which has a disastrous effect upon phase response at frequencies far below the cut-off, which is to say frequencies in the standard, *audible* 20-20,000-cycle audio range. Such a filter also causes large amplitude-response anomalies, again at frequencies far below the cut-off. The practical effect in most digital recordings, even the best of them, seems to be a distinct lack of air and ambience, a closed-in or closed-down quality which militates against accurate reproduction of the acoustic space in which the performance takes place. Another explanation for this failing is that the present sampling rates are just too low; that sampling rates double those now in use, on the order of 90,000 to 120,000, will be necessary to reproduce the full range of the upper end of the frequency spectrum. A related limitation, which seems to have a direct effect upon the reproduction of ambience and also upon definition, resolution of detail, and the amount of sheer sonic information that digital can capture, has to do with the number of binary bits in the numerical coding, which in present digital systems typically varies from 12 to 18. However, many professionals, scientists, and theorists believe that 20-bit codes are necessary for even minimally accurate high fidelity, and that a lot higher would be much preferable. It may be this limitation which accounts for digital's inferiority to analog in the matter of resolution and retrieval of low-level information. One simply often hears more detail in analog because in analog it is possible to hear signal levels that occur below the noise floor, whereas in digital it is not.

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Kenny Burrell's album *Heritage*, which uses the Soundstream system, manifests many of the typical digital characteristics. In live music, cymbals and wire brushes have a magical, shimmery quality and a real feathery delicacy. Here, much of the shimmer and delicacy is missing, and so is the authentic metallic ring and bite of the real thing. They sound papery, flat, and dead. So does the snare drum, which is completely lacking in the transient impact one can hear on the best direct-to-disc and analog recordings, and live. Indeed, there is little detail throughout the whole upper end of the frequency spec-

trum. Listen, for example, to any of the drum solos. On a good recording and good equipment, you can usually hear the skin of the drum, but you don't on this disc. The imaging is better than on many discs in this survey, but the focus is flat, by which I mean that depth is perceived as a receding series of discrete layers rather than as a continuous space. The same problem afflicts the reproduction of some of the instruments, trumpet and saxophone in particular lacking their natural rounded quality, sounding instead two-dimensional and often pinched. Like too many of these digitals, the overall sound picture is dark, veiled, and grainy at the top. There is, however, some good rendition of image height (listen to the cymbals on *Strut-tin' With Some Barbecue*). Absolute phase makes a considerable difference in focus and dynamic range (which is good), and the disc itself is excellently pressed with pretty quiet surfaces.

DGTL, a division of Island Records, recorded the **Ellis Larkins** LP with the Sony system; as the music is low-keyed, laidback, and mellow, it's practically a textbook of all the problems associated with low-level signals of digital recordings. Cymbals and wire brushes disappear into a mist; bass is ill-defined; the piano, while recognizably a piano, is veiled, dark, and closed-down sounding. Background hiss and hash are very noticeable, and sometimes one hears the hiss level suddenly swell and diminish. Gain riding? Digital anomalies? Pressing defects? Warps? Who knows? When the piano keys are struck and released, there is almost no decay to the sound, particularly high up, though the lower ranges seem artificially reverberant. When the trio plays, the stereo image is of the bunched variety, piano squeezed up against the left speaker, bass and percussion against the right, nothing but fine hiss in the center. On side two the piano solos have obviously different microphone placements as the piano spreads all over the place. Reversing absolute phase makes a difference but doesn't make the sound good.

Despite the use of two different digital systems—3M on Headfirst's record by **Allen Vizzutti**, Sony on their **Ross/Levine Band** album—the sonics share certain similarities: veiled, grainy, congested, hard, and compressed. Even acoustic instruments come out with electronic colorations, especially piano and strings—the violins on the Vizzutti sounding thinner, shriller, and grainier than usual, like pieces of wire with five-o'clock shadow. The stereo image on the Vizzutti tends to bunch up on either side, while the cymbals splatter all over the place during the big moments. By contrast, the Ross/Levine ensemble is spread convincingly across and beyond the stage set by the speaker systems, the saxophone solos in particular emerging beautifully free and open sounding. But the background remains in a fog, and on both albums during full ensemble passages the sound thickens to the point of congealing, with a near total loss of inner detail, instrumental separation, and timbral definition. Bass tends to be ill-defined, ambience absent, and dynamic range nonexistent; surfaces are moderately noisy. Reversing absolute phase brings the sound back from worse to bad but no further. The best that can be said for these two releases is that they cost no more than ordinary albums.

"M&K" stands for the Miller and Kreisel Sound Corporation, a manufacturer of subwoofers and satellite speaker systems, and a producer of audiophile recordings (direct-to-disc, and now digital) on the RealTime label. M&K supplies the most complete technical data of any of the companies in this survey. Each of their discs was recorded with a Sony digital recorder modified to M&K's specifications; the mastering was done at their own laboratories, and the masters were then flown to West Germany where they were plated, pressed, and manufactured by Teldec. These discs are for all practical purposes flawless, with surfaces nearly dead silent even at fearsomely high listening levels.

I don't care for **Don Menza**'s *Burnin'* at all, and it must be judged the one real sonic failure in the M&K batch. The perspective is incredibly close up and dense, with little inner detail or textural clarity. Reversing absolute phase smooths things out a little but also reduces dynamic range, not wide to begin with. There is little bite to the cymbals, which sound thin, papery, and bereft of overtones; the piano tinkles, the string bass disappears as it goes lower, and all the brass instruments have a horrible electronic edge that becomes fatiguing within minutes of listening. The saxophone in particular has an ugly buzz, rasp, and fluttery quality in its lower registers that sounds as if the tone is breaking up into tiny particles of fuzz and splinters. There is no air or ambience, for which there may be an explanation apart from the close miking and the digital recording: the notes indicate that the sessions took place at the previous location of Jonas Miller's stereo shop in Beverley Hills, a room large by the standards of most living rooms but still a rather small area in which to squeeze 20 musicians playing occasionally at full tilt. The literal effect is as if the band had been deposited into your living room, that is, into a space too small to contain them. You c*annot* therefore play this record loud, not because the disc isn't clean and quiet, but because of the orchestra-in-a-phone-booth effect: no matter how beautiful the playing may be, you're so close it's unbearable. Yet if you turn down to more comfortable levels, the effect is not to move you farther from the performers, as this particular location has only so much distance; rather, it is to shrink them to an unnaturally small size, as if a midget ensemble on midget instruments was performing.

Jack Sheldon's *Playin' It Straight* is a little more like it. Reasonably clean, clear recording with good dynamic range and definition (particularly on solos) and even some air and ambience despite the closeness of the miking. Cymbals, for once, sound almost like themselves with at least a smidgin of their overtones. The piano sounds lightened in overall tonal quality yet closed-down and confined, too. Trumpets and saxophone are more naturally reproduced here than on *Burnin'*, still with that electronic hardness, glare, and edge, but at least they don't have claws on them. Unfortunately, there's not a truly mellow sound anywhere on the disc,

even when, as in *That Old Feeling*, that quality is called for. Wire brushes on drums are okay but without that spooky real quality you'll hear on the best direct-to-disc and analog recordings, and when other instruments come in, the brushes lose even more detail. Nor do the snare and other drums have anything like the impact and transient attack of direct-to-disc and good analog and, of course, live. Some instruments decay nicely, suggesting a not unattractive acoustic if only the recording equipment or the technology could capture it. By and large I'd call this decent enough, but *completely* artificial reproduction: no matter what kind of system you play it on and no matter how you adjust the controls, you'll never get an illusion of reality.

Though miked with unnatural closeness, the performances on **Freddie Hubbard**'s *Back To Birdland* sound vibrant and almost alive, with the most potent and detailed bass response thus far. The miking unfortunately throws the instrumental balance off, as the star sounds spotlighted—listen, for example, to his duo with Richie Cole's saxophone on *Byrdlike*, where the latter is made to sound more like an accompanist than an equal partner. Cymbals are nicely metallic, if just the slightest bit tinny and still relatively airless. It is such instruments that reveal all too prominently digital technology's present limitations: there are simply not enough bits in the codes and not enough samples in the sampling rates to capture high-end detail realistically. Still, I found there to be less electronic edge and glare to the brass and saxophone than on any of the releases so far.

Wild Bill Davison *And* **Eddie Miller** *Play Hoagy Carmichael* reveals a more distant perspective than seems the norm for M&K's digitals, laidback, grainy, hardly the last word in definition, detail, and transparency, but with a homogeneity that conveys the sense of a performance taking place. There is nevertheless still not the illusion of a consistent sound field, as air and ambience are at best only sporadically present with all sorts of oddities and anomalies. For example, when cymbals are played in rhythmic accompaniment to the whole ensemble, they are toward the rear and appear to have been placed in their own little echo chamber unique unto themselves. Overall, however, there is some welcome freedom from edginess and glare (save for when the cornet gets really high and/or loud, e.g. *Stardust*), and at last a saxophone is reproduced with a tone you feel you might like to curl up against. The dynamic range, though not ideally free and open, keeps getting wider than you expect.

A Sony digital recorder was used for **Oscar Peterson**'s *Digital At Montreux*, but who knows whether to blame the *absolute* lack of air and ambience on it or the bad miking, which places the piano all over the stereo spectrum. To be specific: the instrument seems to emerge from about four different spots at once, each with its own closed-down, veiled, murky acoustic dissimilar from the others. There is so little transparency that in order to get any presence at all you must turn the volume level so high that the already loud surface hiss and hash is raised to stratospheric levels—the music is accompa-

nied by what sounds like softly frying eggs. Moderate applause originates from behind the performers, loud applause from the same plane as the performers, if not slightly forward of them. Otherwise there is no indication of depth or focus to the stereo image. As regards technology and recording technique alone, this disc is a disgrace.

If you put on **Milt Jackson**'s *Night Mist* right after *Digital At Montreux*, your first thought will be that Jackson and colleagues have been much better served than Peterson. The one pleasant surprise is the amount of air captured above the high percussion. But cymbals and brushes still fizzle and sizzle rather than shimmer and glimmer, and at lower levels what detail there is drops out entirely. The imaging and focus are an improvement over the Peterson disc. Drums and bass are placed toward the rear, center, and slightly left of center respectively, but the piano is bunched up on the far left, and when the trumpet comes in, it's right on top of the piano. Jackson's vibes are all over the place and, what's worse, sound like they've had a lot of reverb added to them. The cover photograph, of Jackson performing amid a forest of microphones, gives the show away and may help to explain why in runs up and down the scale, the vibes leap forward over part of the range and recede over other parts. Surface noise is not so bad as on the Peterson disc but still not of audiophile caliber.

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Were I to rewrite the entire survey it would be only to deepen, broaden, and intensify the criticisms I've made of all these digitally processed recordings, even the few I've found some favor with. And "processed" is, I am afraid, precisely the right word, both literally and metaphorically, as they seem to me to bear exactly the same relationship to the sound of live music as the cellophane-wrapped product on the supermarket shelf does to natural food. They sound by comparison, or rather, by contrast, positively sick—pale, anemic, drained, washed out, colorless, odorless, and flavorless, almost like parodies of the real thing.

Still, I can already hear some voices out there protesting that it is unfair to compare a standard digital recording to direct-to-disc recordings made for the express purpose of providing a tool for evaluating sound-reproducing equipment, and with a degree of care and thus expense that are impractical and virtually impossible in ordinary recording. Point well taken, admitted, and granted. May I draw upon an analog recording? Reference Recordings (of San Francisco) not long ago released an album of music by the Red Norvo Quintet called *The Forward Look* from tapes made by Keith Johnson. The album has been issued in two versions, one at the standard 33⅓ rpm speed (RR-8), the other at 45 rpm (RR-8/45) for even better reproduction. Both versions are, according to nearly every parameter and aspect of sound recording and reproduction including dynamic range and detail, dramatically and decisively superior to every digital recording of jazz I have heard. So realistic and natural is the reproduction that you can sit back and enjoy the splendid musicmaking without ever being aware of the sound quality as such; yet if you care to attend to it, you can enjoy it for its truly *high* fidelity, that is to say, its faithfulness to the real thing. If the comparison still seems unfair—after all, the disc has been pressed and manufactured with unusual care (but then so have many of the digitals in the survey) and has also been half-speed mastered (but then so have some digitals)—let me now reveal some facts I have been holding in reserve. This recording was not made yesterday or the day before, this year or last; it was not made in a studio under controlled or supposedly optimal conditions; nothing in the way of high-powered fancy new "advanced" technology was employed such as elaborate mixing boards, pan potters, compressors, expanders, companders, noise reducers, equalizers, or a proliferation of microphones. It was, rather, made with vacuum-tube electronics on an early three-channel stereo tape recorder fed by only three microphones; the location, a night club above a store in Palo Alto, California; the circumstances, live; the date, New Year's Eve, 1957, over 24 years ago. . . .

Do I hear a voice or two out there mumbling something about progress? —*paul seydor*

The author is an audio consultant from Los Angeles whose firm, Audio Arts By Paul Seydor, specializes in the design and installation of home music systems. He is also assistant professor of English at the University of Southern California, and has written for Audio *and* The Absolute Sound, *among other publications.*

NEW RELEASES

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

ATLANTIC

Ray Charles, 5 LPs of early mono classics trace a soulful LIFE IN MUSIC. **Albert King**, bluesman in 18 searing samples of mid-'70s guitar/vocal interplay, MASTERWORKS. **Professor Longhair**, New Orleans' great boogie and blues giant in '78 club setting. THE LAST MARDI GRAS. **The Coasters**, epic million-selling soul/r&b group of the '50s w/ their greatest, reissued, YOUNG BLOOD.

ELEKTRA MUSICIAN

Dexter Gordon, plus special guests Grover Washington and Shirley Scott paint an AMERICAN CLASSIC. **Woody Shaw**, trumpeter adds fellow ex-Dolphy bandsman Bobby Hutcherson to live '82 date, MASTER OF THE ART. **Clifford Brown/Max Roach**, newly discovered tapes of the classic quintet from '56, PURE GENIUS, VOL. ONE. **Bobby McFerrin**, debut of the remarkable vocalizer inc. a duet w/ Phoebe Snow, BOBBY MCFERRIN. **Mose Allison**, streetwise singer from the South with originals, chestnuts, and blues, MIDDLE CLASS WHITE BOY. **David Sanclous**, piano improvisations (w/ subtle occ. overdubs) of atmospheric nature, THE BRIDGE. **Bud Powell**, '53 live recording w/Mingus and Roy Haynes, previously unreleased, THE GENIUS. **Billy Cobham**, drummer's new slant on fusion in a guitar/bass/keyboards combo, OBSERVATIONS &.

FANTASY/MILESTONE

Bill Evans, previously unissued live (duo w/ Eddie Gomez) and studio (solo) piano sounds of ELOQUENCE. **Art Pepper**, posthumous release of live '81 club date under a full moon, ROADGAME. **Red Garland**, pianist w/ front line of Julian Priester & George Coleman from '79, STRIKE UP THE BAND. **Johnny Griffin**, the Little Giant of the tenor offers a '79 quartet date TO THE LADIES.

POLYGRAM (Emarcy/Philips/Limelight)

Gerry Mulligan, '63 sextet led by Jeru's baritone and arrangements, NIGHT LIGHTS. **Dizzy Gillespie**, in a latin mood w/ Moody, Kenny Barron, from '64, JAMBO CARIBE. **Helen Merrill**, songstress backed by, among others, Clifford Brown's trumpet, from '55, HELEN MERRILL. **Maynard Ferguson**, West Coast-flavored all-stars do two sidelong numbers in a JAM SESSION. **Herb Geller**, altoist w/ a taste of Pepper supplies a dozen '64 samples of how he PLAYS.

Clifford Brown/Max Roach, '55 studio session of timeless proportions, BROWN & ROACH. **Oscar Peterson**, '67 vintage of pianist plus guest trumpeter/mumbler Clark Terry, TRIO + ONE. **Oscar Peterson**, travels south of the border circa '67 with trio and extra percussion, SOUL ESPAÑOL. **The Three Sounds**, popular '65 piano trio provides 10 examples in THREE MOODS. **Art Blakey**, kicks the Jazz Messengers of '65 (inc. Lee Morgan, Curtis Fuller, & John Gilmore) thru seven swingers, 's MAKE IT.

INDIA NAVIGATION

Chet Baker/Lee Konitz, live Tristano/bop excursions caught in Ornette's loft, IN CONCERT. **James Newton**, flutist fronts quintet in waxings of four of his PORTRAITS. **Phill Niblock**, composer explores trombone sonorities in microscopic detail, NOTHIN' TO LOOK AT JUST A RECORD. **Yoshi Wada**, modal singing and bagpipe drones researching microtonal intervals, LAMENT FOR THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ELEPHANTINE CROCODILE. **Arnold Dreyblatt**, examination of harmonic overtones created by self-invented Orchestra of Excited Strings, NODAL EXCITATION. **Philip Perkins**, short audio works recreating neighborhood sounds, NEIGHBORHOOD WITH A SKY (BIRD VARIATIONS). **Tom**

continued on page 48

Johnson, composer/critic walks through various patterns striking differing combinations of NINE BELLS.

INDEPENDENTS

(Available from NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012, or contact **db**.)

Various Artists, inc. Stan Getz, Joe Farrell, Paul Horn, perform live at Cannes, from Personal Choice Records, THE GREAT JAZZ GALA '80. **Sonny Stitt/Sweets Edison/ Lockjaw Davis**, triumvirate caught live at Bubba's in '81, from Who's Who In Jazz, SONNY, SWEETS, & JAWS. **Ahmad Jamal/ Gary Burton**, first-time meeting of pianist & vibist, recorded live in '81, from Personal Choice, IN CONCERT. **Oscar Pettiford**, bassist in '59 & '60 Danish date, from Jazz Man Records, BLUE BROTHERS. **Clark Terry**, trumpeter leads '60 octet originally done for Candid, now on Jazz Man, COLOR CHANGES. **Tony Dagradi**, reedman with his New Orleans regulars in multifaceted program, from Gramavision, LUNAR ECLIPSE. **Clare Fischer**, '70 and '73 solo piano sojourns, from Revelation Records, HEAD, HEART AND HANDS. **Jack Reilly**, solo piano improvisations inc. homages to Bach and Chopin, another Revelation, THE BRINKSMAN. **George Winston**, soothing solo piano meditations, via Windham Hill Records, WINTER INTO SPRING. **Darol Anger/ Barbara Higbie**, mostly violin/piano duets from former-David Grismanite, also Windham Hill, TIDELINE. **John Ramo/Zenon Slawinski**, folk-inspired guitar/piano/flute/ etc. gentle improvisations, from Lavenham Records, POLARITIES. **Michael William Gilbert**, synthesist combines w/ acoustic instruments, from Palace of Lights Records, IN THE DREAMTIME.

Buddy Guy/Junior Wells, Chicago South Side's blues masters, produced (and joined on bass) by Bill Wyman, from Blind Pig Records, DRINKIN' TNT 'N' SMOKIN' DYNAMITE. **Andrew Brown**, Mississippi-born guitarist/vocalist plays, from Black Magic Records, BIG BROWN'S CHICAGO BLUES. **Various Artists**, 10 of Phoenix' top bands captured live on location, from Chaton Records, RHYTHM OF THE CITY. **Nighthawks**, one live & one studio LP of blues & rockabilly, from Adelphi Records, TIMES FOUR. **Robin Flower**, vocal/guitar/mandolin/fiddle plus guests in folk/Irish/c&w/bluegrass-inspired outing, from Flying Fish Records, GREEN SNEAKERS. **New York Saxophone Quartet**, this time w/ rhythm section in classical and jazz pieces, from Stash Records, AN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.

Tom McKinley/Ed Schuller, pianist and bassist and drums, reeds, brass guests in various settings, from GM Records, LIFE CYCLE. **Michael Boclan**, guitarist leads various acoustic instruments in improvisations, from GM Records, FOR THIS GIFT. **Jim Shannon**, Texas guitarist in '81 quintet setting, from Shandi Productions, STREET TALK. **Jim Thompson**, solo guitar pieces, from Philco Records, CLAZZ GUITAR. **Robert Yelin**, brief solo guitar in standards, from Capri Records, NIGHT RAIN. **Rick Bishop**, bassist leads trio and quartet in seven songs, from Pep Records, MISTER HIDE.

Mel Tormé, 12 songs given the Velvet Fog touch from '47, originally for Musicraft, now on Discovery Records, VOL. ONE. **Maury Gainen**, reedman's debut alongside Milcho Leviev, Roy McCurdy, from Discovery Records, JAZZ SUNRISE. **Lionel Hampton**, vibist with big band roars thru' eight swingers, from '80 and Timeless Records, OUTRAGEOUS. **Machito**, legendary Latin bandleader's orchestra, from Timeless, SALSA BIG BAND '82. **Rich Szabo**, 10 numbers given big band treatment by young trumpeter, from BBW Records, BEST OF BOTH WORLDS. **Various Artists**, second volume of Swedish jazz history, from Caprice Records, chronicling the HOT EPOCH, 1930-36. **Prince Billy Madhi Wright**, Chicago reedman's debut alongside Chicago sidemen, from Raenii Records, YOU GOT DAT WRIGHT. **Patrick Brennen**, reedman leads ensemble through five originals, from Deep Dish Records, SOUP. **db**

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BLINDFOLD TEST

Lee Konitz

BY FRED BOUCHARD


VERYL OAKLAND

SALT-AND-PEPPER HAIR FRAMES THE quizzical grin of Lee Konitz, who began forging a Charlie Parker alternative on alto sax in 1947 with Claude Thornhill and in 1949 with Miles Davis' nonet. His playing today sounds timeless and individualistic as ever, whether in small groups or his own superb nonet.

A disciple of Lennie Tristano, Konitz recorded with the pianist early in his career and a recently issued set of performances from '55 (Quartet, Atlantic 7006) are five-star examples of their collaboration. Other classic samples of the Konitz alto touch are available on the Milestone, Chiaroscuro, Progressive, Choice, and SteepleChase labels.

Konitz was fun to play records for. He speaks with as much dynamics, timing, wit, and surprise as he plays, his clear tenor voice bringing candor, standards, and critical acumen to the fore. He peppered comments, playful but jive-free, throughout all numbers. He suggested turning the tables by playing a blindfold tape for me and Steve Schwartz (of WMBR-FM, who supplied the Handy and Masuo albums); it turned out to be a pretty waltz that he recorded with Chick Corea recently. (We gave it four stars.) This was his first Blindfold Test in over a decade.

1 SONNY STITT. *Singing In The Rain (from Stitt Plays Jimmy Giuffre Arrangements, Verve). Stitt, alto saxophone; Giuffre, arranger.*

Well, I smiled throughout most of that. This guy loves to sing. Toward the end, I felt that I'd like to hear a bit of a different dynamic. I'm thinking Cannonball, Phil Woods, Charlie Mariano: the kinda guys who blow air through a garden hose instead of a straw. That open, beautiful singing sound is thrilling, and this nice, unexpected framework is very effective. Then he goes into his number, and after a minute it starts to wear thin for me—3½ stars.

2 RICHIE COLE/PHIL WOODS. *Donna Lee (from Side By Side, Muse). Woods, Cole, alto saxophone.*

Too fast! Phil Woods! I hope I'm not the other alto player, 'cause I'm in trouble! Phooey! I don't wanta hear no more. Makes me noivous. Hold it! Play that [unaccompanied alto] duet again. Whoever that second alto was is a very spunky guy, but he needs to pay some more dues. He's still far from the mark. Phil is such a great musician that he can handle this overly fast tempo and make music out of it. This kind of flagwaver doesn't pull my heartstrings. That duet gets into something interesting, however—2½, mostly for Phil.

3 BENNY CARTER. *I Can't Get Started (from Big Band Bounce, Capitol). Carter, alto saxophone, leader; Max Roach, drums. Rec. 1943.*

That might be George Russell on drums. That's Carter of course; he got a few good licks in. It's always a pleasure. It was vintage fare, but sounds very dated now—3¾, because it was well done, Benny's arrangement and marvelous playing. What is it that makes something recorded 40 years ago sound so old? This gets locked into its time slot; it doesn't survive its generation.

4 LANNY MORGAN. *Koko (from It's About Time, Palo Alto). Morgan, alto saxophone; Bruce Forman, guitar; Charlie Parker, composer.*

How can you miss with that tune? But somebody's going to have to follow Bird's choruses. That's rough! Pretty good! Very emotional vibrato. I have no idea who it is. He should've saved his chorus for the end and led up to it, for a better development. Good guitar on that lick—4 stars.

5 CHARLES MINGUS. *Bemoanable Lady (from Pre-Bird, Limelight). Eric Dolphy, alto saxophone; Mingus, bass.*

Eric was another young, brilliant player who I feel was actualized more on flute and bass clarinet. He did fantastic things emotionally and technically on the alto, opening up interval skips and all, but it always sounded forced to me, and I hate that, even in myself. The exaggeration of Johnny Hodges' ballad style sounds like caricature to me, and I don't appreciate that, because he's [Hodges] my first love, and I don't take it lightly—3 stars, because there were some nice voicings, and the nice tune probably is by Mingus; wherever he is, the old fart, I wish him well.

6 GEORGE HANDY. *Pegasus (from Handyland U.S.A., X). Handy, pianist, composer; Davey Schildkraut, alto saxophone; Ernie Royal, trumpet; Allen Eager, tenor saxophone; Kai Winding, trombone.*

West Coast! Sounds like Davey Schildkraut! He's a good one. Warne Marsh once thought he was Bird. Jack Sheldon on trumpet? Or Red Rodney? All good solos. Zoot on tenor? Davey's Yiddishe soul has always appealed to my Yiddish heritage; he's always been a very special guy to a lot of us who knew him. It's a shame he couldn't withstand the ups and downs of being a professional musician so we could enjoy more of him—4 stars.

7 STEVE LACY. *Evidence (from Evidence, Prestige). Lacy, soprano saxophone; Don Cherry, trumpet; Carl Brown, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.*

I heard this a long time ago. Steve Lacy and Don Cherry with a nice rhythm section. And this eccentric Monk tune—he's special! I don't like when Cherry plays weird: he can play musically, straightahead. I feel that he's avoiding the point. I don't like when Steve plays weird, either. He sounds like a full-time soprano player, a rare thing, with his personal investment in that embouchure and voice. Nice rhythm section. Ed Blackwell or Billy Higgins? Anton Webern would have enjoyed this line—3 stars.

8 MASUO. *Like Someone In Love (from 111 Sullivan St., East/Wind). Masuo, guitars; Bob Mover, alto saxophone.*

I enjoyed that [snore]. Nice exposition. mighta gone on a bit too long. I think I'm partial to the duets so far. They're easier to take, the tone levels are more realistic than the cranking up of hot rhythm. The alto player has had very good influences [laughs] so I'd better say something nice about him. It reminded me of Bob Mover, but from a while back. The overdubbed guitar sounds like he was having trouble playing with himself—4 stars. Bob's getting better all the time and [referring to their upcoming dual concert at Harvard University] don't cut me again!

9 KARIN KROG/WARNE MARSH. *I Remember You (from I Remember You . . . , Spotlite). Krog, vocal; Marsh, tenor saxophone; Red Mitchell, bass.*

Karin Krog has very excellent taste in sidemen: Warney sounds animated, musical, and imaginative as ever, Red's a very singing player, and they're all singing nicely together. I could have heard some real scat there (with the right syllables) instead of the words again. Definitely 5.

Later: Well, I listened to the whole album, and it's beautiful from beginning to end. They obviously loved one another, because it's very relaxed. That's the first time I've heard Karin do straightahead songs; she has great feeling for the time and notes. db

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Steve Tibbetts

One guitarist, two guitars, and all the studio technology currently available combine for a probing, personal musical expression.

BY JOHN DILIBERTO

NED AHRENS

Steve Tibbetts is a multi-instrumentalist whose heady, atmospheric sound sculptures explore areas of global synthesis similar to Don Cherry's and Oregon's. The major difference is that Tibbetts' music is processed through the electric energies of rock guitar and the sonic maleability of post-Hendrix production techniques and philosophy.

Tibbetts' musical existence is predicated upon the development of studio technology in the '60s and '70s, which allows artists, for relatively little money, to make their own record, package and distribute it without the external pressures of trying to make a hit or tailoring the sound so that some record company executive will be impressed enough to sign them.

As a child of the '60s, the influence of that musically explosive era on Tibbetts is understandable. He was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1954 and was first drawn to the guitar by his father. "He played folk and union songs because he was a union organizer," said Tibbetts. "Young Steve wanted to be like his father and join in, so I played ukelele and baritone ukelele." But the '60s were not the time for a teenager to be playing an ukelele, so when Tibbetts was 13 he got his first electric guitar.

While Tibbetts' music depends heavily on studio manipulation, his pure guitar playing on both acoustic and electric stands up next to that of a Leo Kottke or John McLaughlin. Yet he is mostly self-taught, and again, his development is due to recent technology, the record player. "I had lessons in third grade, but even that young I realized that they were starting to make me dislike music. So I stopped, and after that the only teachers I had were 33½ rpm records played at 16 rpm so I could steal licks."

After playing in the usual assemblage of high school bands, unheard of beyond Madison, he went to school at Macalaster College in St. Paul. It was there that Tibbetts discovered the joys of multi-track recording when the college, built a four-track recording studio. In his senior year Tibbetts dropped all his courses and immersed himself in the production of his first album, *Steve Tibbetts*, on his own Frammis Records label (BZZ-77).

Tibbetts' approach to recording was shaped with this first LP, in which the studio was used as another instrument, with tape manipulation and overdubbing an integral part of his sound. "Being able to lay a guitar part down and double it is the most exciting thing, and then laying more on top of it . . . it's mostly just blowing your ego up to terrific proportions."

Steve Tibbetts is, with the exception of some sparse percussion, completely self-produced, right down to the cover art. Tibbetts played synthesizer, acoustic, and electric guitar to orchestrate two almost polarized sidelong suites. Side one moves through pastoral acoustic landscapes with subliminal electronic and tape effects in the background while side two is dominated by two electro-shock rave-ups on electric guitar and synthesizer. He pressed 200 copies of his debut, expecting little to happen with it. "I hoped I could unload those on my relatives and friends." But before the album could slip into obscurity, radio stations KTIM in Marin County, California and WXPN in Philadelphia, began playing it and getting response. "The most exciting call I've ever received was when KTIM called to say they were playing my album and people liked it."

He shopped the LP around to record labels and while he collected rejection slips he recorded his second album, *YR* (Frammis 1522-25). With the aid of four percussionists and a newly acquired eight-track tape machine, he integrated the electric and acoustic sounds, and the energized and contemplative feelings that were separated on the first record. On *YR* guitar choirs soar above plaintive acoustics while tablas and clay pots gurgle against a backdrop of synthesizers. It earned five stars in **down beat** as one of the most enveloping musical journeys since Hendrix' *1983/Moon Turn The Tides*. In fact, all of Tibbetts' records indicate an expanded sense of time with their tendency towards sidelong excursions. "Drugs, Jimi Hendrix, and *Revolver* [by the Beatles] shaped the way I put an album together. I took a lot of acid and you hear things differently."

Yet there's also a sense of meditation and openness in Tibbetts' work, amidst all the multi-tracking and electronic imagery. Tibbetts, especially on his new LP, *Northern Song* (ECM-1-1218), is not so enamored with digital dexterity and studio techniques that he won't allow the pure sound of his instruments to speak for him. "It's all resonance," said Tibbetts. "The acoustic resonates up against my chest and rib cage. The electric resonates through an amp and fills the room whenever it's turned up loud enough, and comes back through the guitar. It's feedback either way. Tai-chi taught me that good resonance happens through the body. Meditation teaches me not to be afraid of space. So does Brian Eno—*Music For Airports*—as well as just sitting on a cushion and watching my breath keeps me from talking all the time. Everyone's always dialoging with themselves or playing records in their brain. If I can allow that stream to stop for a minute it helps me creatively. It teaches me not to be afraid of repeating a riff. I look at Steve Reich and he's not afraid of repetition. I'm not afraid of boredom anymore."

Upon hearing *YR*, Manfred Eicher signed Tibbetts to his ECM label. His production techniques brought these contemplative elements in Tibbetts' music to the fore by dragging him out of the seclusion of his studios and into the structured recording atmosphere of Oslo. "It was a tense session," recalled Tibbetts. "It was hard for me because I'm used to having a thousand guitars. Why use one when you can use a thousand? Why do one take when you can do 500? That was always my philosophy in recording. Manfred is completely the opposite. If there's one take and you do it right with no glaring mistakes, why not keep it? So our gears grated and it was hard. His way of working is different and it did open up my head." The results are an album that lacks the dynamics and electricity of Tibbetts' previous records. Instead it explores the overtones of Tibbetts' acoustic guitars with some subtle tape loops and the supple percussion of Marc Anderson.

Tibbetts has been reluctant thus far to take his music before a live audience, so he still works two jobs, one at KSJN-FM of Minnesota Public Radio as a technician, and the other as a record store clerk. While he feels that the audience feedback would be valu-

able, he is reticent about having his creative energies sapped from the rigors of the road. "I'll play as long as the feel of a guitar in my hand makes me feel spiritual or something, and I will be able to reflect that into a microphone and speakers. But when it becomes work, when it becomes a gig, when it becomes pushing plastic, it's going to be a bummer all around. There's nothing worse than music that has a higher aim to it being toured and falling flat. It's worse than music that's just about f***ing and taking dope."

So Tibbetts remains in St. Paul, communicating his music through the technological medium of records, and occasionally radio, to the outside world. Both *Steve Tibbetts* and *YR* are still available on Frammis Records through New Music Distribution Service, still selling at 5,000 and 12,000 copies respectively, almost unheard of for a single artist, independent label. With no hype, no touring, and no support system like jazz and rock artists enjoy, Tibbetts has struck a resonating chord with thousands who seek a probing, personal expression in music. db

Alvin Batiste

A modern master of the clarinet, his music stretches from the roots of New Orleans tradition to the cutting edge of contemporary sound.

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

Alvin Batiste, clarinetist extraordinaire, is one of the best kept secrets in jazz. Arguably the finest modern exponent of the ebony horn, he combines remarkable mobility, range, and power with a fluent command of swing, blues, r&b, bebop, free jazz, fusion, and avant garde idioms. His musical associations have included Ray Charles, Ornette Coleman, and the Ellington band, and he has recorded with Cannonball Adderley and Billy Cobham, but as yet his name is little-known beyond musicians' circles. In his 50-odd years he has seldom strayed far from his native New Orleans; today he lives in nearby Baton Rouge, where he has directed the jazz program at Southern University for over a decade.

Although the clarinet is associated with traditional New Orleans music, Batiste heard Benny Goodman before he ever heard of George Lewis or Jimmy Noone. "Our group boycotted the whole French Quarter scene," he explains. "We were the rebels. You see, I really got serious about playing music when I heard Charlie Parker." His admiration for saxophonists like Parker and, later, John Coltrane did not deter him from the clarinet. "That's what I started on, and it never occurred to me that you had to play anything else. I was just going to play music, and I wanted to be a clarinet player. I've played saxophone, too, but I don't play it anymore. I've played all the single-reed instruments, and I've played flute, but now I just play clarinet. There was one very fine period of my life when I played saxophone, and it revealed some very esoteric aspects of music to me, in terms of my relationship to what I was trying to do. After I discovered that I put it right back in the case—haven't touched it since."

Born and raised in New Orleans' historic Garden District, Batiste numbered Ed Blackwell, Nat Perrilliat, and his cousin Harold Battiste among his childhood companions. His father had grown up with famed clarinetist Edmond Hall and was an amateur musician himself, but Alvin traces his fascination with music to an Easter parade he witnessed as a toddler. "When the guys passed by playing that slow parade beat," he recounts, "I got a ripple in my blood. I followed the band all the way uptown and didn't get back home until nine o'clock in the morning. My momma was waiting for me when I got back, and me in my little white Easter suit, I had fallen right into the canal. Man, I really caught it."

When he was 14, his father bought him an old-fashioned clarinet, and he enrolled at Washington High School, where he studied such typical concert band literature as the *Poet And Peasant Overture* and *Under The Double Eagle*. "Some of the baddest cats in New Orleans went to that high school: Wallace Davenport, Emery Thompson, Johnny Fernandez, Edward Blackwell, Dalton Russo, even Idris Muhammad's father—it was heavy. In fact, I met my wife Edith in that band; she's a clarinet player too. I started playing on an Albert-system clarinet, and thank God for the music supervisor; he called up my daddy and made him get me another clarinet."

After school young Batiste would stand outside the Dew Drop Inn in his neighborhood, drinking in the sounds of Crescent City blues, r&b, and jazz. On weekends he would journey downtown to the Palace Theater to hear the big bands of Lionel Hampton, Jay McShann, and Billy Eckstine. He also delivered newspapers on a route that took him through the French Quarter past Bourbon Street clubs like the Showboat. There, he recalls, "I would keep my clarinet and a clean shirt under the steps; I'd put my paper sack under there and change my shirt and take my clarinet and sneak in and jam with Earl Palmer and Edward Frank. They found out how old I was when somebody went to buy me a drink for a good solo. I asked for a

MARC POKEMPNER

Scotch and Seven-Up and everybody broke out laughing. But Roy Haynes sat in there one time, and Junior Mance. Smiley Lewis, Fats Domino, and Professor Longhair used to play around the corner.

"I played my first gig with Guitar Slim and a cat named Ukulele Lemon, and me on clarinet. That's how I got ready for the present day, because those cats played everything in E natural." When Slim cut a hit blues record in 1954, the pianist and arranger for the session was Ray Charles, soon to hit the road with his own legendary combo. Some years later, the bandleader called on Batiste to replace the departing Hank Crawford. "I flew to St. Louis to join the band, but by the time I got there the gig had already begun. They were playing *Confirmation* and people were dancing up a storm. It was great. I played with Ray Charles when he had the small band, with Marcus Belgrave, John Hunt, Edgar Willis. I played baritone, and I played piano when Ray wasn't on the stand."

In 1955 drummer Ed Blackwell, pianist Ellis Marsalis, and tenorman Harold Battiste traveled to Los Angeles to play with Ornette Coleman. The following year they called the clarinetist to join them, and Alvin headed west in his Oldsmobile. "I had never seen a freeway before," he says, "and evidently I was going too slow, because people were honking their horns. So I got off at the next exit and just drove up that first street for about 15 minutes, and there were Marsalis and Harold and Ornette and Blackwell all standing outside on the corner looking at a map saying, 'I think maybe he ought to be here by now.' I couldn't believe it." Although he never became a Coleman disciple, the sojourn had a lasting impact on Batiste's music. "You've got to play everything you hear, and it's just a part of the experience. It's a valid expression, and that's the way it is now. Time has proved him right."

Back in New Orleans Batiste helped form

the American Jazz Quintet, which at various times included Blackwell, Marsalis, Harold Battiste, and tenorist Perrilliat. For many years the group played in neighborhood clubs like Foster's, Hayes' Chicken Shack, and the Chatterbox. One night the entire John Coltrane Quartet dropped in to hear them, and later that week Alvin reciprocated. "I took my mother-in-law to check out Trane. She had never been to a night club before, and the next Sunday morning at breakfast she said, 'Old Wagontrain sure could play that horn.'"

Between jazz dates Batiste played frequently with New Orleans rhythm & blues greats like Smiley Lewis, Benny Spellman, and Joe Jones. He also worked with traditional pianist Joseph Robichaux. "That was quite an experience. I had to learn a lot of old tunes, but I really enjoyed it. I really started hearing things in the continuum with him."

Batiste continued to play locally through 1969, when Southern University initiated its jazz program. In his new vocation he discovered an old clarinet tradition. "When I got ready to start the program, I got these tapes, and that's when I heard Omer Simeon, Albert Nicholas, Johnny Dodds, and all those cats. Then I realized that the riffs I had heard Benny Goodman play really came from Big Eye Louis [Delisle Nelson]. It was like a revelation."

Meanwhile, his reputation had spread among musicians nationwide. When Rahsaan Roland Kirk came through New Orleans, Batiste would sit in at his gigs to play clarinet duets. Then Cannonball Adderley heard him and flew him out to the West Coast to record. "That was when the fusion thing was just about to take place. They had Ernie Watts on that record, Airto, and George Duke. Batiste also played "electric clarinet" on Adderley's last recording, *Lovers*, which featured two of Alvin's compositions. "Cannon was my fan club," he avers. "I wrote two orchestral pieces for Cannon, and I was able to bring him down to New Orleans to perform one of those pieces with the New Orleans Symphony. Then he brought me out to California again—he was still trying to help me—and that was the summer he died. In fact, I'm still playing his clarinet. It's a Buffet, and I use a regular clarinet mouthpiece with it."

Batiste's mastery was not lost on his students, three of whom went on to join the Ellington band. On their recommendation Mercer Ellington came to hear Alvin's combo, the Jazzstronauts, and promptly hired him. "I was having ecstatic experiences every night with that band," he says. "I went out and spent a whole lot of bread getting every Ellington record I could. Jimmy Hamilton is my main man; I heard him on one of Duke's records, and he was playing some of the exact same things that I play. I guess that's why they say there's nothing new under the sun."

Another student connection brought him to the attention of Billy Cobham, with whom he played the Montreux festival and recorded the *Magic* LP (Columbia JC-34939). "I had a prejudice before I decided to go with Billy's band, because I hadn't experienced his music, but I had a lot of fun playing with Billy, and I grew quite a bit. When we did the record, they had a guy who said he had recorded Horowitz, and he recorded my natural tone without a pickup." The result is the best available example of Batiste's striking modal technique, highlighting his sumptuous tone as he weaves through the fusion matrix in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Wayne Shorter on soprano.

The straight saxophone might seem a likely alternative for Batiste, but he will have none of it. "To me, the soprano is very limited compared to the clarinet, the same as the other saxophones. Like, when Trane heard me play, he said I had an incredible range. Well, that's just natural for the clarinet. I've come to understand what everybody is saying, that it's a difficult instrument, but I really wasn't aware of that until recently. To me, the saxophone was difficult. I played bass clarinet for a little while, and I want to do that some more. I play Eb now—I like that one—but I have a psychological problem with the bass clarinet; every time I put the bass clarinet in my mouth, I think saxophone."

Among the clarinetists he admires, Batiste lists Edmond Hall, Artie Shaw, Barney Bigard, Irving Fazola, Pete Fountain, Eddie Daniels, Buddy DeFranco, Stan Hasselgard, Jimmy Giuffre, and Russell Procope. "And Benny Goodman's record still stands; he's a master. But I'd like to see more interest in the clarinet; there are a whole lot of people in the clarinet club. Ron Carter is a clarinet player. Martin Williams is a clarinet player."

Since 1969 Batiste has recorded locally with various ensembles for South Louisiana Music and Royal Shield Records. With the current renewal of interest in New Orleans musicians sparked by the emergence of Wynton Marsalis, he has received feelers from nationally distributed labels as well. A recent televised performance on the PBS network brought him telephone calls from around the country, and his future has never looked brighter.

"Right now I'm into composition, playing, and teaching," he says, "and I'm really enjoying it. I've probably had a lot of opportunities and opted to go in other directions, but I really feel good about the decisions I've made. So far, it has really been in my own best interests as a person and as a developing artist. I'm very happy at this particular time, and have never really been extremely unhappy. It's just a beautiful thing to have that type of blessing and I really appreciate it. What I'd like to do now is share more. I've had a lot of incubation time and I have a lot to share." db

CAUGHT

LAURIE ANDERSON

PARK WEST

CHICAGO—In the '60s Marshall McLuhan differentiated between "cold" and "hot" media. A cold medium such as television invites participation or completion by an audience while a hot medium such as print tends to be already finished and thus discourages involvement. Thirty-three-year-old Laurie Anderson's decidedly cool performance art puts several kinds of media to work in a fascinating amalgam of screen-projected images, spoken texts, and minimalist music. "I want," Anderson says, "to make it as dense an experience as I can."

On the heels of her first mass-market album, *Big Science* (Warner Bros. 3674), Anderson presented excerpts from *United States, I-IV* over two consecutive nights here sponsored by the Museum of Contemporary Art. Just as *Big Science* mixes and matches selections from the larger *United States* cycle, so her performances shuttled freely between parts, choosing from themes of transportation, politics, money, and love. Anderson went at it like a pan-stylistic, multimedia kid set loose in technology's toy store. Even if the fragile interdependence of elements in an Anderson performance discourages blow by blow description, the individual parts can still be limned.

Tape-activated music and sounds created live by Anderson (electric violin, Farfisa, vocoder, and miscellaneous electronics) were periodically supported by David Van Tieghem's drums and the horns of Bill Obrecht and Perry Hoberman. *United States*' music owes much to the minimalist ("trance") compositions of Philip Glass and Steve Reich, with looping repetitious structures and open intervals. Its cumulative effect is direct and simple, but winning. The mostly instrumental *Born, Never Asked*, "long" by Anderson standards, epitomized useful simplicity, as a handclap/marimba rhythm was punctuated by slower keyboard over which Anderson's violin played wistful variations. In another part of the cycle, *Example #22*, Anderson's vision stretched to encompass parody of a pop song joyously off kilter (shades of Kurt Weill), its hairbrain lyrics underpinned by bouncy rhythms and horns. These quite different forays worked in the context of her total presentation, even though they made for marginal music *qua* pure music.

The vocoder easily counted as the most astonishing gadget of her music arsenal. The synthesizer lent Anderson's voice a protean breadth of disguises, or masks, to use in delivering her satirical texts' payload of quirky, bizarre situations: the airline pilot announcing a crash landing, for instance; or a lost (alienated) motorist adrift in the "burbs" asking directions (the latter even tossed in a Kafkaesque quotation from the *Secret Agent* theme: "Here's a man who leads a life of

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

danger/Everywhere he goes he stays—a stranger"!).

The effect of her speeches was one of a punk, surreal Rodney Dangerfield turned linguist and social commentator. Recited more than sung, Anderson's deadpan texts made frequent use of colloquial speech ("Thanks for putting on the feedbag/Thanks for going all out"). In chunks and pieces, these highly ambiguous messages evoked moods or struck tones that compelled but seldom led anywhere, like comics' monologs or little poems that abruptly dead-end ("You know, I think we should put some mountains here/Otherwise what are the characters going to fall off of?"): ample leeway for interpretation was left to the audience. Along the way, however, Anderson examined limitations native to everyday language and contradictions inherent in the American sociopolitical order.

Anderson employed a battery of techno-props including neon violin and a sound-producing whip, on whose arc of movement images were ghostily projected. She drew a bow fitted with magnetic tape over a playback head mounted near the bridge of the violin, then literally *played* a pre-recorded scrap of conversation ("Say what you mean and mean what you say") at speeds ranging from croaky slowness to the approximation of normal speaking voice.

Hoberman's slide and film backdrops went far throughout to enrich *United States*. Symbols of alien yet familiar beauty dominated, the natural imagery of horizon lines and open spaces alongside of contrapuntal suggestive details: a light ring forming a fluorescent halo; a wall electrical socket that resembled an Aztec head or extraterrestrial visitor. Especially forceful was the simple animation of new wave flavor that accompanied *Example #22*: an adult cartoon figure which, as it beat a baby repeatedly over the head with a hammer a la John Henry, caused hairs on the infant's head to rise just as repeatedly! Here as elsewhere, the material coolly projected multiple meanings that were delectably open to audience interpretation.

After the dust had settled, one might conceivably agree with *Soho News*' assessment that *United States* is the modern-day equivalent of Wagner's Ring cycle. At worst, one exited suffering the numbing aftereffects of post-video arcade depression, that empty feeling after too much Pac Man or Donkey Kong. For certain, the likes of Laurie Anderson's cool, unfinished entertainments are new to the global village, and I, for one, hope to watch them get better. —*peter kostakis*

WEATHER REPORT

STARLIGHT BOWL

SAN DIEGO—Working from a brace of previously unheard compositions and others from the recent *Weather Report* album, co-leaders Zawinul and Wayne Shorter debuted the latest version of the band with a moving, nearly three-hour concert as part of the weeklong Kool Jazz Festival. The aggregation spotlights a new rhythm section—drummer Omar Hakim, percussionist Jose Rossy, and bassist Victor Bailey in for Peter Erskine, Robert Thomas Jr., and Jaco Pastorius respectively—and it's a splendid band.

Hakim and Rossy are a most fervant duo, playing with energy and yet with subtlety. They delight in their efforts, smiling openly as they toss rhythms back and forth, constantly kicking the music but managing never to overwhelm. The two are low-end players, emphasizing the bottom tones of their sets and giving the music a wooden, rather than metallic, underpining. Their rhythmic exchanges set up the leaders exquisitely, whether in a solo or ensemble context. Bailey is a solid craftsman, not particularly flashy but a reliable bassman who offers a dark, buoyant sound and interesting, functional lines behind the soloists.

Both Zawinul and Shorter seemed very relaxed among their new cohorts. Standing behind his bank of electronic keyboards, Zawinul played with his usual cerebral severity, laying out intricate patterns of sounds and notes with an often ferocious rhythmic intensity. Shorter's tenor sound was robust, his soprano as lithe as ever, and the ideas tumbled out in great bunches. At times he returned to the hard-edged swing that characterized his playing in the early-to-mid-'60s with Art Blakey.

The evening's program was typical Weather Report, a luxurious array of sound paintings of the musics and peoples of the world, tantalizingly orchestrated and arranged. One heard everything from latin to African, funk to free form, and the surprises kept the audience keenly aware and expectant. Though very electronic, the music also evidenced a warmth and earthiness that was quite appealing.

Bad City was a hot-headed, freely formed piece, with both leaders showering clean,

abstract, yet somehow swinging ideas over a fast, straightahead beat. On *Untitled Event*, Zawinul unleashed bass clarinet-like sounds which matched with Shorter's soprano at an oozing tempo, while on *Tree*, Rossy played concertina, Hakim percussion, and Zawinul a plucked electronic stringed-instrument with a very Eastern flavor, for a provocative combination. *Speechless* found Bailey's ringing tones and Shorter's tenor trading off on the pretty melody, while on *Easy Living*, a Zawinul/Shorter duet, the keyboardist offered one unique sound after another—he resembled a harmonica, an organ, a lovely string section—as the tenorist blew a stunning, cooking solo. The show closed with a medley of old favorites, ending with, of course, *Birdland*.

It was a most auspicious first night.

—zan stewart

BILL DIXON TRIO

THIRD STREET MUSIC SCHOOL

NEW YORK—Restless energy beneath a cool veneer. The quiet defiance and insanity of city rubble. Nebulous art clouds shrouding notes and rhythm in opaque gauze. Screams of near white sound; elephant shrieks—threatening yet familiar. Blinding rays of sunlight slowly moving down dark alley walls. The introspective autumn afternoon with its poignant hints of summer joy and winter winds.

Metaphors in sound. This cat's allusive. But hip! That wide brim hat and dark glasses, the navy pullover, grey flannel slacks, Italian shoes—a friendly Miles? Yeah, he really gets to me. It's not the notes. God, if he plays that same ascending harmonic minor motif again . . . no, that really doesn't bother me, but it should, damn it. If you transcribed his trumpet lines, you'd see how repetitive and minimal they really are. So why's his music so transfixing?

STEVE KAPOVICH

I guess it has something to do with Mario Pavone's lunging manic bass lines, Lawrence Cook's haunting stick figure drum creations, and the sly phrasing and subtly disjointed rhythmic dances being blown through Dixon's trumpet. But really Bill, those are some perverse things you're spitting out of that horn. Any rational listener would see you for the charlatan you really are. Any artist would hear you for the mysterious, tantalizing abstractionist you really are.

"I sometimes feel like Rip Van Winkle, like I've fallen asleep and woken 20 years later," Dixon comments to a rather large and diverse audience at the Third Street Music School. "Everybody looks strange now. Everyone's roller-skating; *everyone*'s sensitive. There's an incredible amount of vitality in New York, but I just couldn't take it and I haven't been back here for many years. But I've always had a tender place in my heart for New York. I only wish those guys who want to take my horn away from me in the middle of the night knew I have a tender place in my heart for this city and that they shouldn't do those things to me. But seriously. . . . "

Seriously, Dixon does have some of the most distinctive trumpet effects in all of trumpetdom. He knows how to use sonorities and colorations to paint sophisticated tonescapes. And he possesses the same kind of clearly intellectual yet mysterious approach to music that Miles has: sassy, racy, impressionistic creations from the right side of the brain. Like Miles, it's not so much what's being played as how it's being executed that buoys the music on an ocean of wisdom and feeling. Simple multiphonic grunts, stark fragments and flurries of melody speak in many different tongues about very personal impressions we all somehow share.

The artist/educator/composer/trumpeter comes home to New York City, if only for one engagement. Minor milestones are sometimes more interesting than major ones.

—cliff tinder

EUGENE CHADBOURNE'S SHOCKABILLY

MISFITS

CHICAGO—Just like LSD, Eugene Chadbourne's psychedelic "Shockabilly" music is surreal, free-flowing, intense, and completely unpredictable. Chadbourne's uniquely personal style combines rock guitar expertise with wild atonal improvisation and fractured, demented vocals. He's also a witty and engaging, if frantic, entertainer with the exquisite timing of such master musical comics as Spike Jones and Frank Zappa.

Shockabilly's Chicago appearance was an unpublicized last-minute booking on a slow weeknight. Accordingly, Chadbourne was faced with the grim prospect of playing mainly for tables and chairs.

KIRK WEST/PHOTOWEST

He opened the set with the Beatles' *Day Tripper*, played at a fast, staccato, new wave tempo. Organist Mark Kramer and drummer David Licht provided a solid, intuitive background, adapting instinctively to whatever tangent Chadbourne chose to explore. After rendering the first two verses more or less straightforwardly, he veered suddenly into an atonal barrage of feedback, fuzz tone, and bizarre sound effects. Though completely outside structurally, this off-the-wall interlude remained melodic and, in it's own way, cohesive. The continuity was largely due to the fact that, unlike much avant garde free-form material, Chadbourne's diverting experiments do not burden the listener with pompous, cerebral pretension. Although he's a serious artist with a broad, variec background, Chadbourne's crazed interpretation of acid rock, pop, and country remains faithful both to the musics' basic spirit and his own garage band roots.

Day Tripper was followed by the r&b classic *Train Kept A Rollin'*, with raunchy falsetto vocals, then a squealing feedback segment eventually segued into Roger Miller's country hit *Dang Me*. Chadbourne embellished Miller's offbeat humor with rhythmic fits-and-starts and hilarious cartoon-like singing. From there the set charged rapid-fire through variations on *A Hard Day's Night*, *People Are Strange*, *Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad*, *96 Tears*, *These Boots Are Made For Walkin'*, and a lightning verson of Jimi Hendrix' *Third Stone From The Sun*. A flat-picking sequence showed Chadbourne's country chops equal to his rock dexterity, while his workout on the electric garden rake—not to mention his mastery of the balloon as a guitar slide—provided further evidence of his fertile/fried imagination. To say the least, it was a memorable evening; don't miss Chadbourne if he comes to your town. *—ben sandmel*

PROSESSION

A Primer On Frequency Response

BY LARRY BLAKELY

***Larry Blakely**, as an on-location and studio recording engineer for over 20 years, is President of CAMEO (Creative Audio & Music Electronics Organization) and a consultant in developing and marketing.*

When many people purchase audio equipment, they look at the specifications. These will usually indicate the amount of noise and distortion that is present in the equipment or system. As it turns out, audio equipment is often purchased more on the basis of its specifications than for any other reason. However, audio equipment manufacturers do not have a standardization for specifications. This means that when you compare specifications of equipment made by different manufacturers, you are likely not comparing apples with apples because the same method of measurement was probably not used for both pieces of equipment. It is important that the potential purchasers understand what specifications mean to them as a user and also to discern legitimate and misleading specifications.

One of the more common specifications is *frequency response*. For years high fidelity equipment manufacturers have specified a frequency response of 20Hz to 20kHz, and these have become the magic numbers for so called "good" frequency response. However, there is more to this than meets the eye; let's look at what is important to the ear.

How are frequencies measured?

The frequency of sound is measured in *cycles-per-second*. The standard unit of measure for cycles-per-second is called the hertz (Hz). One hertz (1 cycle-per-second) would be written 1Hz; one thousand hertz (1,000 cycles-per-second) would be written 1kHz.

What is the frequency range of human hearing?

A person with exceptional hearing will be able to hear frequencies from 20Hz to 20kHz. Above average hearing ability will range typically from 20Hz to 15kHz. People with average hearing ability (and no hearing impairments) will typically hear from 30Hz to around 12kHz. The hearing limitations of most people appear in the high frequency range.

What are the audible characteristics of frequencies?

High frequencies are directional. When someone whistles, you can almost immediately turn in the direction from which the whistle (sound) came. A whistle would be considered a high frequency sound. If you were to hear an explosion (typically a very low frequency sound), you may have difficulty determining the direction from which the explosion came. High frequencies (5kHz to 20kHz) are very directional in nature, while mid-frequencies (800Hz to 5kHz) are fairly directional, and low frequencies (80Hz to 800Hz) are much less directional. Frequencies from 20Hz to 80Hz have little perceptible direction whatsoever, and all sound below 30 Hz is sub-audible and is felt more than heard.

How can this knowledge assist me in the placement of my loudspeakers?

As high frequencies are directional you would want to aim your speakers toward the prime listening area. This will direct the high frequencies where you want them in much the same manner that a spotlight will be directional. Many speaker systems have both high and low frequency speakers inside the cabinet. The high frequency speakers are often found at one end of the cabinet with the low frequency speaker or speakers at the opposite end. All too often people will place their speakers on a carpeted floor with the high frequency speaker end of the cabinet on the floor, and most of the high frequencies are absorbed by the carpet. Bookshelf-type speakers should always be placed at least one to two feet off the floor with the high frequency speakers at the top.

What do I need to know to understand frequency response specifications?

Quality audio equipment should have the capability of either recording or reproducing audio frequencies from 20Hz to 20kHz, while 30Hz to 15kHz will often be entirely acceptable. This indicates the total frequency range within which the equipment will work; however, this is not the entire story. There is one piece of vital information missing: how *accurate* is the equipment within this indicated range?

When musicians and record producers make phonograph records, they spend a great deal of time and effort to provide the most desirable sound and musical balance that is representative of the recorded music. For a piece of audio equipment to accurately reproduce an audio signal or signals (such as phonograph records or radio broadcasts) with no alteration in frequency response, it must ideally be plus (+) or minus (−) 0dB (decibels) over the entire indicated frequency range. Specifications for such a piece of equipment would be written: ±0dB 20Hz-20kHz. This means that the music will be reproduced exactly as the musicians and record producers intended, without altera-

tions in the frequency content.

The use of a bass, treble, or mid-range tone control on your amplifier or receiver will dramatically change the musical balance of a record. Tone controls are typically used when it is felt that something is lacking in the record or in the system. One common use of tone controls is to add more overall bass. A treble control will alter the high frequency response of a system. When adding treble boost (by turning the treble control clockwise), you increase the level of high frequencies. When you use treble cut (by turning the treble control counter-clockwise), you decrease the level of high frequencies. If the receiver or amplifier has a step-type treble control (with click stops), this boost or cut will typically be done in 2dB increments. The same procedure follows for the bass and mid-range tone controls. However, if you have all tone controls flat on an amplifier or receiver, it should faithfully reproduce audio signals with *no* alteration in frequency response.

An acceptable specification for frequency response of quality audio equipment would typically be ±1dB within the specified frequency range. A specification of ±0.5dB would be better while ±2dB would not be as accurate. The entire specification written out would look like this: ±1dB 20Hz-20kHz. I would like to point out that typical specifications for professional tape recorders is ±2dB 30Hz-15kHz. If this specification is acceptable for the people who record your records, it should be adequate for those who play them back.

One of the fallacies in the specifications of audio equipment is when a piece of equipment is advertised as "frequency response from 20Hz to 20kHz"—this is a meaningless specification. The most important piece of information is missing: it didn't tell you how accurate it was within the frequency range. Much of the equipment with this type of specifications is frightening when you measure it, as it could be ±20dB, within the indicated frequency range—maybe even worse or maybe better, but who knows, as they didn't tell you. Any quality piece of audio equipment will indicate the true frequency range and its accuracy within that range, + or − how many decibels.

Accuracy of frequency response is especially important throughout the entire music system. This will assure that there are no unwanted increases or decreases in level throughout the audible frequency spectrum and that the equipment is indeed accurate with regard to frequency response. Accurate frequency response must be observed in all stages of the system, as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Thus you should be concerned with the frequency response accuracy of your phonograph cartridge, tape recorder, amplifier or receiver, loudspeakers, and outboard equipment such as dynamic range enhancers, imagers, and equalizers (in the flat position). I would like to mention that some types of outboard equipment may indeed alter the frequency response to achieve some desired effect. For example, some types of noise reduction systems will purposely reduce the high frequency content. **db**

PROSESSION

HOW TO pin down pentatonic scales

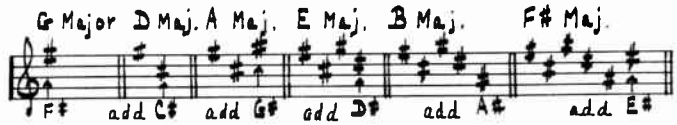
Part II

BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

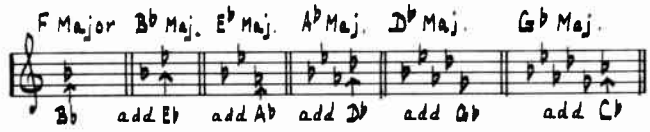
***William Fowler**, professor/composer/clinician, holds a PhD in Music Composition and is **down beat's** Education Editor.*

Part I of this article dealt exclusively with the diatonic forms of the pentatonic scale—those whose five notes coincide with five notes in some Major scale, and consequently always conform to some key signature. Part II now deals with the altered forms of the pentatonic scale—those whose notes include one or more chromatic alterations of Major scale notes, and consequently never conform to any key signature.

The order of sharps in key signatures is F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, and E#.

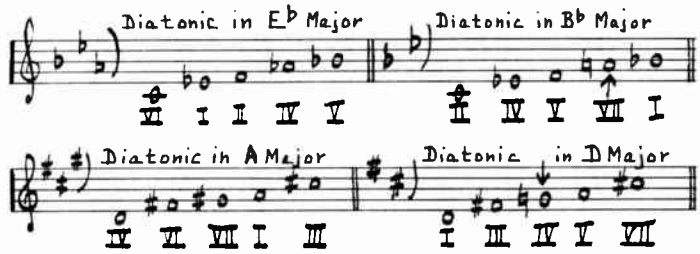


The order of flats in key signatures is Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, and Cb.

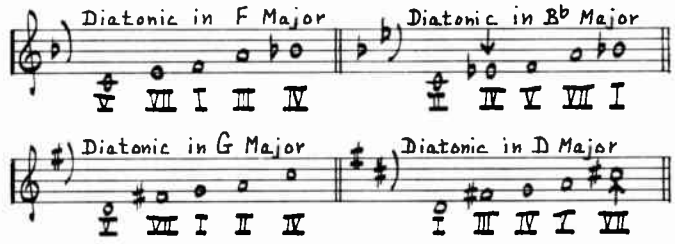


With two exceptions, altering one or more notes specified by a key signature will alter a pentatonic scale containing them. Both exceptions merely transpose the parent Major key, thereby keeping its derived pentatonic scales diatonic.

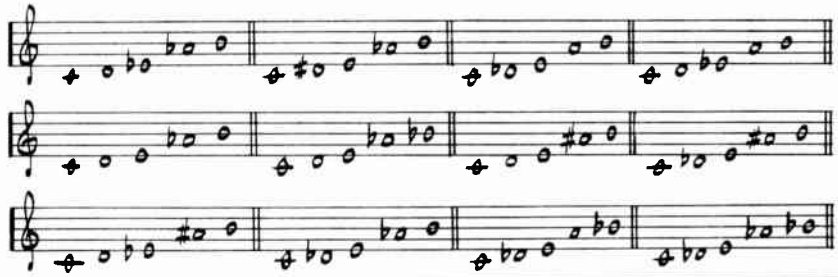
Exception 1—Canceling the last accidental in the signature:

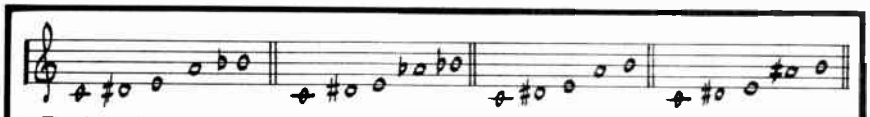


Exception 2—Adding the next accidental along the order of sharps or flats:



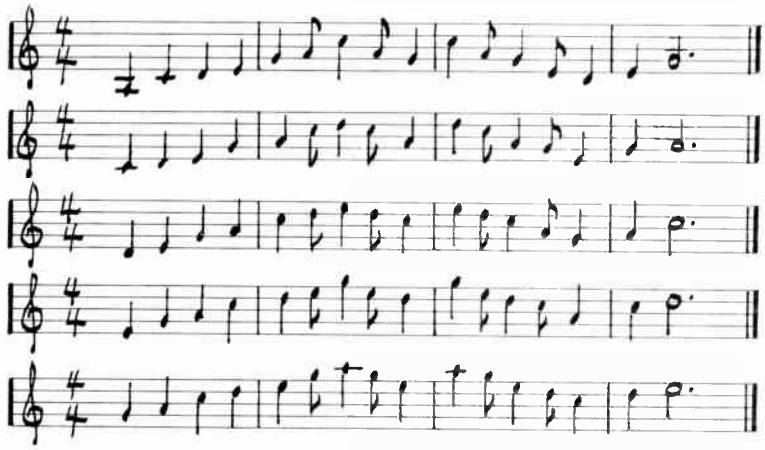
The following altered pentatonic scales, all starting on C, can be viewed either as alterations of the all-natural scale of C Major or as alterations of notes specified by various sharp or flat key signatures. The first, for example, is either a one-note alteration in Eb or a two-note alteration in C; the second is either a two-note alteration in B or a two-note alteration in C; and so on:





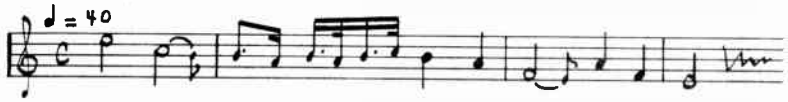
The following melodic lines are all made from the same diatonic set of five notes—A, C, D, E, and G. Flatting or sharping notes within these lines will demonstrate the variety of tonal effects gained through altering pentatonic scales. To guarantee that these scales will be altered forms rather than transposed diatonic forms, the following requirements must be met:

1) An Eb requires some other note sharped.
2) An Ab requires an E natural or some other note sharped.
3) A Db requires an E natural, an A natural, or some other note sharped.
4) A C# requires some other note flatted.
5) A G# requires a C natural or some other note flatted.
6) A D# requires a G natural, a C natural, or some other note flatted.
7) Unless enharmonic unisons —such as C# and Db, or G# and Ab—are avoided, the scale will sound as if it contains fewer than five notes.



It should be noted that either an Eb or an A# alteration contributes a blues effect to the melodic line and that any two notes forming an augmented fourth or diminished fifth—such as G and C#, or Gb and C—contribute an exotic effect.

The same process of investigation can be applied to any melody based on any diatonic pentatonic scale. Here, for example, is *Koromogae*, a sample of Japanese court music, based on the E-F-A-B-C scale. Its exoticism will lessen if the B is flatted to remove the augmented fourth between F and B, but its exoticism will increase if either the E is flatted or the A is sharped to add another augmented fourth. Again, sharping the F or flatting the B will transpose the scale to another diatonic form:



Any of the tunes listed in Part I of this article will furnish additional diatonic pentatonic lines for practicing alterations, but the most useful would probably be those which remain pentatonic farthest into the melody—*Aura Lee*, *Buttons And Bows*, *Louise*, *Story Of A Starry Night* (Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony* theme).

Part III of this article will discuss how to harmonize pentatonic melodies. db

CHORDS *continued from page 11*

The medium is the message

I would like to start off by saying that your latest issue of **down beat** (Aug. '82) has made my week. The critics have given their recognition to many of the greatest artists on the contemporary music scene today. There's so much great music not being played on the radio because nobody wants to take a chance. The music is great and a vital reflection of our times, and your critics' message is *Wake Up America*.

I enjoyed Arthur Blythe's Blindfold Test, and your Caught In The Acts were the best of all. These artists are playing great music and starving, and it just doesn't seem right. So please keep up the good work.

Barry Bernstein — Lawrence, KS

A tip o' the hat

I want to thank you very much for honoring me as the winning "deebee" High School jazz instrumentalist (**db**, June '82). With the assistance of our band director, Mr. Bruce Schmottlach, your award was given much public recognition locally in the newspaper, at our concerts and Senior Awards Night (where I performed as soloist and student conductor), and at the Annual Band Banquet (where the beautiful "deebee" Award Plaque and Shure Gold Microphone Award were presented).

It's a great feeling to be recognized at home and even nationally for something that is filling my whole life and that I enjoy so much. You've really helped. I want to be the best performer possible and your encouragement is adding more power to my goal.

Tom Tucciarone — Durham, CT

KOOL/NEW YORK '82 continued from page 25

a lush *'Round Midnight*; Wynton Marsalis blistering on top of the monster rhythm team of Hancock, Tony Williams, and virtuoso Hungarian bassist Aladar Pege on a firecracker *Impressions* (which also featured a violin-ablaze Didier Lockwood); Barry Harris and Charlie Rouse making sure Monk's memory was done musical justice; and an unusually laidback Oscar Peterson engaging in a pair of warm and witty blues conversations with Milt Jackson.

Friday night featured boogie and blues pianist Jay McShann leading off—playing his gems with typical aplomb, singing in a 100-proof twang and, as always, making it sound as if he was doing it all for the first time. The main event Friday, however, was Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie at Carnegie Hall. What can I say? Ella's voice is not what it used to be, but she still can sing and still can swing, and with the Basie band roaring behind her, well . . . there is still a touch of magic there. It was a short concert and there were no surprises—except for John Hammond presenting a visibly moved George Wein with a **down beat** Lifetime Achievement Award.

Saturday morning was spent steaming past the Statue of Liberty on a Staten Island ferry with a Carling Black Label in hand and Jay McShann and band (Buddy Tate, Al Grey, etc,) and Wild Bill Davison and band (George Masso, Johnny Mince, etc,) aboard. It ain't the Mississippi, but it's an enjoyable way to dig the music. Then it was uptown to the Guggenheim Museum for Bob Wilber's Bechet Legacy. Sidney Bechet was the first great saxophonist jazz produced; Wilber was his protege, and Wilber's band is a fitting tribute to Bechet's genius. With the leader on a curved soprano most of the way (and getting some of Bechet's sound, but not attempting to recreate that steamship vibrato), the band played one set of tunes that Bechet recorded (recreating instrumentation where possible) and one set of tunes that he wrote (good, bluesy tunes with a wide sentimental streak). A loving tribute and an important band; in its quiet way this was one of the best concerts of the entire festival.

The evening affair, at Avery Fisher, was called *This Time: The Ladies*, and set out to prove that women were responsible for the words and/or music to some of our enduring popular compositions. The point was well taken as we heard *Shine On Harvest Moon, Fine And Dandy, Just In Time, America The Beautiful, Willow Weep For Me* . . . well, you get the idea. The singers were a good and varied lot, including the rabble-rousing, deep-throated Carrie Smith; the mellow, purring Chris Connor; the velvet and silken-voiced Bill Henderson; Sylvia Sims' modified little-girl manner (with a trace of wetness around the edges); and the jazzier stylings of Carmen McRae. Throw in Dizzy Gillespie (playing something called a "strumpet"—a small horn with a sound between a trumpet and a flugelhorn) and Zoot Sims along with the resourceful rhythm section of Mike Renzi, Jay Leonhart, and Shelly Manne, and you've got a very good program that, if it never knocked one's socks off, was always entertaining.

On Sunday afternoon—the last day—I found myself at the experimental theater La Mama, for "fragments" of *Money*—a jazz opera by George Gruntz and Amiri Baraka—with Sheila Jordan and Chico Freeman in playing and singing roles. It's a story of the coming of age of a young jazz singer through the '50s, '60s, and '70s and, in its complete form, it is some four hours long. These snippets didn't make much sense to me, but it was billed as "fragments" after all. Gruntz' music was expressive and interesting and seemed to straddle the jazz and show music worlds very well, but I'll reserve final comments for a full-blown production, if there ever is one.

That night at Carnegie Hall the festival ended like it began, with a Lionel Hampton-led jam session including Stan Getz and Freddie Hubbard. It was a typical Hampton evening: ebullient, loose to the point of sloppy, and swinging with unbridled enthusiasm. As usual, Hamp forgot people's names and song titles, but none of it mattered. Al Grey, Phil Woods, Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Stitt and, especially, Arnett Cobb, were in front, the Hampton orchestra was in back, and the whole festival came flying home in high spirits.

If there was an innovative note blown at this year's festival, I didn't hear it. But there was a lot of good music played, and if George Wein and company took the easy way out again, well, we'll just have to chastise them again and hope for a more varied festival next year. db

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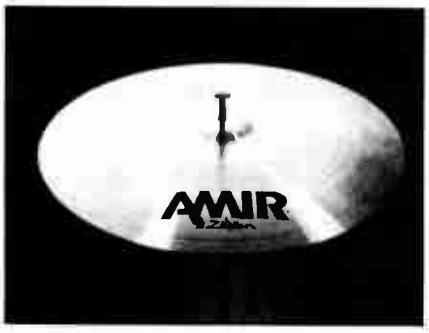

Zildjian's Amir

New from the AVEDIS ZILDJIAN CO. (Norwell, MA) is the Amir (in Arabic, literally "prince") series of non-cast cymbals. Made from a high-grade alloy, they exhibit a crisp, controlled sound at a price lower than legendary Zildjians while retaining the famous Zildjian quality. Amir's are offered in ride, crash, and hi-hat models to drummers looking for a serious choice and superb value. Also, a new addition to Zildjian's regular line of special effects cymbals are the China Boys, two models (high-pitched and low-pitched) of traditional Chinese cymbals with a thin weight, swooping edge, and unique cup shape (to prevent the cymbal from hitting the stand post). China Boys produce the original Chinese crash sound in addition to providing good ride definition.

Rhythm Tech Shakers

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Tama Strongman Mic Stands

TAMA (Bensalem, PA), well known for their heavy-duty drum hardware, has branched into the mic stand market with its new Strongman stand line including: the all-purpose two-section, upright two-section boom MS155; the two-section, upright two-section boom MS355 for overhead applications; and the one-section, upright two-section boom MS455 for difficult floor positions. All Strongman stands feature a new boom tilter (derived from the Tama Titan snare stand) that operates on the brake drum principle, metal height adjusting grips, and heavy metal boom counter weights.

Yamaha's Compact JX2 Amps

YAMAHA (Buena Park, CA) has introduced a completely new line of affordable, compact instrument amplifiers—the JX2 Series—featuring enclosures made deeper than normal to avoid the mid- and low-frequency deterioration that is common in more conventional amps. Bass amps feature specially designed speakers with plenty of power, and a wide range of equalization. Pull-gain and pull-fat switches are included on some models, and all feature master volume controls and headphone jacks.

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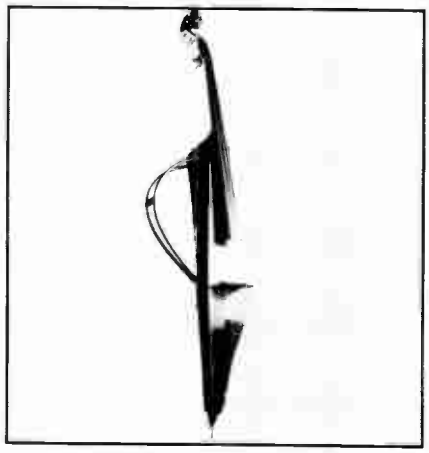

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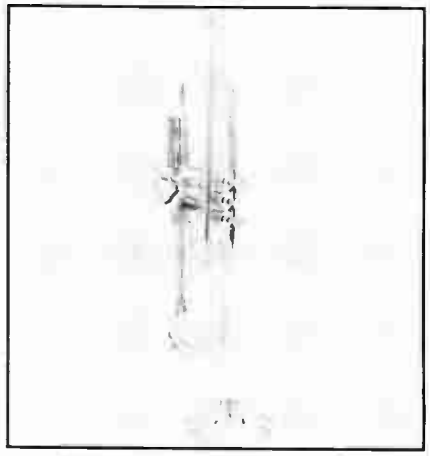

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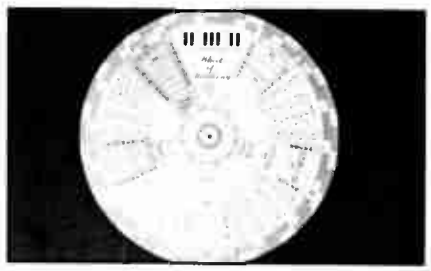

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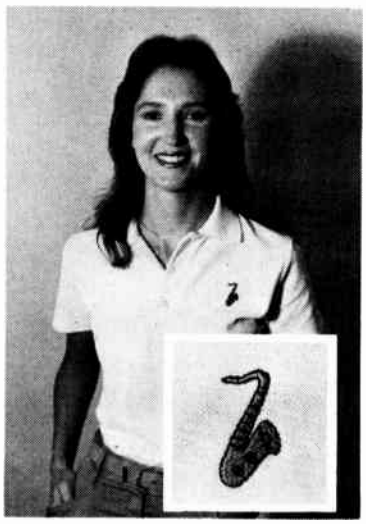

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ON THE ROAD cont. from page 23

ues. "I could be in the navy right now, but the doctors failed me because of asthma. That same day, I got home and a letter was waiting for me saying that I was accepted at Berklee." Bailey lets out a little cheer of excitement before continuing. "When I got to Berklee I was listening just to fusion and funk. I was always listening to Weather Report; it was my favorite band. At Berklee I got into bebop and stopped listening just to bassists; I got into that Afro-American instrumental improvisation tradition: Coltrane, Miles, Bird."

Bailey worked steadily during his time in Boston, and in August of 1980 answered a call to join Hugh Masekela. "I figured that even if I didn't work with Hugh for long, I would make enough money to stay in New York, where I had moved in the meantime." His plan worked, and Bailey began working steadily in New York, making session dates and working with various bands around the city. His call to join Weather Report was a surprise and, like it was for Hakim, a "dream come true."

• • •

The last strains of *Birdland* are still echoing as Zawinul and company make their way to a downstairs telephone hookup with Joe's house in Pasadena. The Cooney/Holmes fight is in the first round, and Zawinul relays a blow-by-blow description of the action to the band and crew. Cooney, Zawinul's pick for the title, loses and the band, energetic after the Philly concert and anxious for tomorrow's New York bow, bounds for the idling Ego Trips.

• • •

NEW YORK CITY HOLDS ALL THE MAGIC and promise. It is a silver-lined cloud, and the bus, crowded with both band and crew, is radically different in atmosphere. Spirits are elevated and the beer flows. A Richard Pryor movie attracts only passing comments of "Genius!" as the next night's concert is anticipated by all with a promising "Wait until tomorrow!"

• • •

The growing sight of the Manhattan skyline from New Jersey only serves to raise the level of excitement. At 4 a.m. the 20 hours of work and travel has had its effect, but sleep seems far from anybody's mind. The arrival at the fashionable East Side hotel is witnessed by few; garbage-lined streets offer a stark contrast to the luxury of the pastel hotel lobby as the band makes its way to its various rooms. Rossy orders room service, and as the sun comes up over the East River, he speaks not of the past, but of the future.

At 28 he is the oldest member of the rhythm section. A colorful showman who is most at ease behind his battery of instruments, he is a serious musician whose thoughtful playing reveals his classical training.

Born in Humacao, Puerto Rico, Rossy began his musical training on the clarinet at the age of eight. He started playing other reed instruments and began "messing around with a snare drum" a few years later. His switch to percussion was because, simply, he "liked it." After three years of study at the conservatory in Puerto Rico, Rossy moved to New York to continue his percussion studies with Fred Hinger.

A year later he joined LaBelle, where he auditioned and hired Omar Hakim for the drum position. After that, Rossy pursued session work and traveled for five months with the musical, *Your Arms Too Short To Box With God*. He later joined singer/songwriter Peter Allen.

Excited about the future with Weather Report, Rossy is anxious to make greater contributions to the band's cause as both a player and writer. Willing to accept any challenge, Rossy learned to play the concertina for a segment of the band's show. "Zawinul handed me that thing one day at rehearsal and told me to play it like I had been playing it all my life."

• • •

The creative spark of Weather Report came to its highest level at East 14th Street's Palladium this night. The day had been tense, and the soundcheck a long, arduous exercise wanting for perfection. The subbasement dinner was quiet, unusually so, and the band was its most private before the evening's show.

But the celebration following this performance was the greatest. Old friends pushed their way to the dressing rooms, and Zawinul, finally relaxed, his arms posed only for hugging, smiled incessantly.

It was, after all, New York, and Weather Report was back. db

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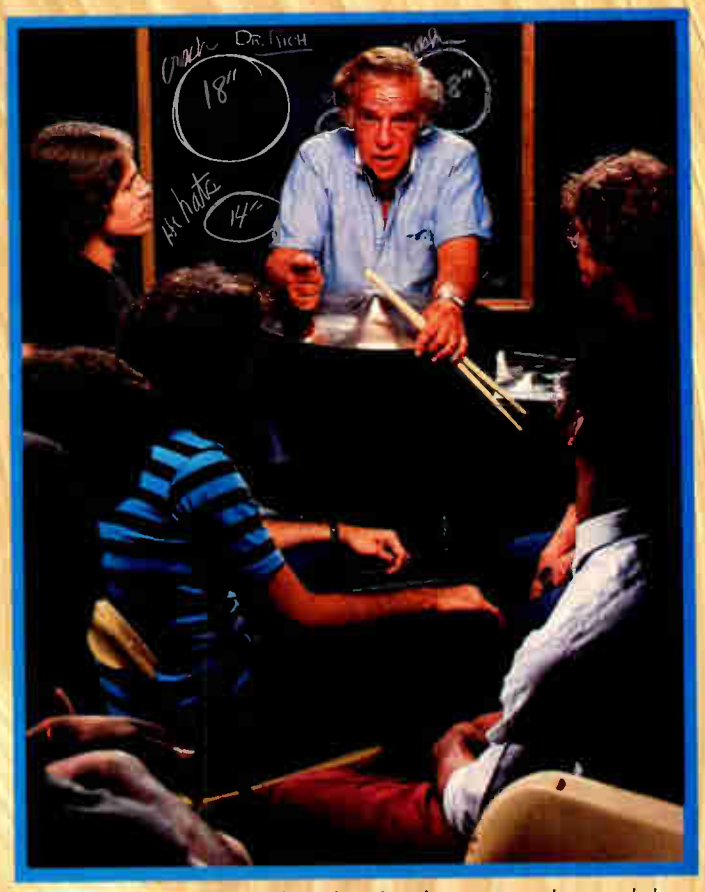
BUDDY RICH IN A CLASS ALL HIS OWN.

Buddy has been described as a "Blindingly gifted performer – his talent begins where other drummers' ends." No, Buddy didn't say that – he would have, but he didn't. Recently we sat in with Buddy and a group of students during a classroom session in New York. Here's what Buddy did have to say:

On The Drummer's Role. "When I get on the bandstand, I have to play for my band. Listen, if I don't play good for them, they can't play good for me. So all I am, for the first hour and twenty minutes that I'm up there is the drummer in the band. When I play my solo, that's different, but up until that time, I have to approximate my band's sound. And that's what a drummer is for. The drummer is a timekeeper."



Buddy's no stranger to higher education; he was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music.

On Practicing. "Practice as long as you feel you want to practice. As long as it's a kick. If it's only 15 minutes and you feel like you don't want to play anymore, put the sticks down and go out. Play stickball, go out and do whatever you want. But then go back when you feel the urge to play, and really play! Remember, there's no substitute for practice."

On Technique. "What you do with one hand you should be able to do with the other. It will help you to get around the set better and make you more versatile as a drummer."

On The Crash Cymbal. "It's got to be fast. When the brass plays a figure, the crash has to accompany it. It isn't something that you hit after the brass; it has to be right there. It can't be obtrusive, and it can't be more cymbal than brass. The cymbal has to sound like the brass sounds, so that's why I use a higher pitched 18" Medium Thin Crash on the right side and a lower pitched 18" Thin Crash on the left."

On Zildjians. "Why do I play Zildjian cymbals? Because they're the only cymbals that are playable. You just have to listen to them to know what I mean. I started playing Zildjian cymbals when I was ten years old – I've never used another cymbal in my entire life."

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