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downbeat

The Contemporary Music Magazine

GROVER WASHINGTON JR.

A Man For All Sessions

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

Composer For The Nuclear Age

MARCUS MILLER

Super Bass

JAMES NEWTON

Portrait Of A Flutist



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Karlheinz Stockhausen

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down beat

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Grover Washington Jr.

The Midas Touch

BY A. JAMES LISKA

For more than a decade saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. has reigned as the most commercially successful recording artist in jazz. Gold status (sales of 500,000 or more) applies to five of his 14 albums, and his double-Grammy winning *Winelight* was certified platinum (a million-plus in sales). At any given time his recordings are topping the charts in the trades' various categories (pop, r&b, jazz). He has an arm's-length list of awards commending him for anything and everything from his image and professionalism to his service to his fellow man.

And he's done it all without having won a single poll for his instrumental or compositional abilities. Nor has he had the majority support of the jazz press, most of which has had a field day savaging his efforts—smoothly homogenous blends of pop and r&b with jazz—and who often perversely believe success as being everything antithetical to jazz. The culmination of his 29 years of playing was recently dismissed as potentially being a mere "footnote" to the history of the music.

"Yeah, that hurts," says Washington, shaking his head. "I shouldn't listen to that, but I do. Intellectually I know where that's at, but emotionally it hurts. You see, some people see a correlation between being successful and selling out. It's not like that at all. I just go on thinking that I'm going to make some good music and it's going to be different from the last album. Those are the only prerequisites that there are."

For a man of his stature and success, Washington, 39, is admirably modest and unassuming. Of medium height and slight build, he is friendly, though initially cautious. The trappings of his success are visible only to the extent that on a recent visit to Los

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"I'm the kind of person who wants to please everybody . . . I say, 'Give them what they want!' I don't care so long as the music is right."

.....

Angeles, where he was soloing with the New American Orchestra, he was staying in a comfortably appointed suite at a posh Beverly Hills hotel. Dressed in knee socks and sneakers, running shorts and a t-shirt—all utilitarian rather than designer—he was animated and forthright, anxious to establish a rapport, converse, and then maybe get on to a pickup game of basketball in some schoolyard.

"The last interview I gave, the guy really zeroed in on how much money I made, how many cars I have. I said, 'No more. That's it.'" With the ground rules set, Washington laughed easily at the suggestion that he's doing well, owns more than one car, and lives in a nice house. "Good. Now that that's out of the way let's talk about music."

The talk about music flowed easily, but it constantly was peppered with commercial references and business, audience, and critical response. If he isn't obsessed with the views others may have of him, he is at least painfully aware. He is decidedly thin-skinned, though good-humored, and poses a nagging question: "What's wrong with the artist making a living? There is a business side to music where you have to have business together or else it will be like all the Billie Holiday sessions or Bessie Smith sessions where they got paid 50 bucks for a tune that became a national hit. That will go on and on. Right now you have some people that have paid some dues because they didn't have their business together."

"The old misconceptions of musicians—they're being total drug addicts, sleeping all day, and being up with the ladies all night—are gone. It's a business like any other. You have to work at it, you have to have dedication, and you have to have a lot of discipline. And, you have to have a thick skin some-



TOM COPIE

times. I'm the kind of person who wants to please everybody. In the back of my mind, I know that is totally impossible, but I'm basically aesthetic. I say, 'Give them what they want!' I don't care as long as the music is right."

Helping to make Washington's music right—or, at least, helping provide the environment of artistic license—is his wife of 15 years, Christine. "She's my partner," he says, glancing toward her at the other end of the long sofa. "We're 50-50 partners. Basically, she makes up for my shortcomings on the business side. When I say we should give them what they want, she says, 'No. Wait a minute. The bottom line is this, this, and this. This is the deal, and you need that.'"

With a partnership like Grover and Christine's, it is easy to see that the music and the business go hand-in-hand. Both see their taking care of business as a way to facilitate Grover's sustaining his musical career "for more than five or 10 years."

"All the times I talked to Cannonball [Adlerley] when I was on the road, he would tell me what his whole organization was. He had it set up as a corporation. All the guys received a salary, and they'd do so many gigs a week, whether it be clubs or colleges

or whatever. They even had profit-sharing. Now, we have all of that, too. And Cannonball used to talk to all the record company heads himself and take care of business. He would advise me to do the same, how to approach and talk to record company heads and producers."

Cannonball wasn't the only advisor to Washington's burgeoning career. All along the way, he's taken advice and tried to sort through it, utilizing those pieces of it he thought best. "The reason I've been around as long as I have is all due to great fans and a great team around me. Originally, it was my mother and father, but folks have been giving me guidance all the way. Sometimes I'll be so blinded by the aesthetic quality of the music that I need direction. It has been a learning

process for me to take that direction, but now it feels very comfortable."

One source of direction which hasn't seemed to effect Washington is that of the critics. Typically, the jazz press has merely discounted his music with glib comments, rarely getting down to criticism Washington might find as particularly instructive or constructive.

"Valid criticism is hard to come by," Washington asserts, admitting that there are such things as "fair kinds of criticism—but I remember Coltrane's first reviews: 'John Coltrane and Jimmy Heath sound like they have cardboard on their mouthpieces instead of reeds.' That's going to prejudice a lot of people.

"We realize that there is a lot of musical territory to cover, and we try to do that to the best of our abilities: a little funk, a little bebop. But a lot of people just don't listen past the drummer. They hear he's doing a backbeat or something like that, and they say, 'Oh, it's just the same old stuff.' They don't listen to the chord changes, the tune, the messages that we are trying to relay through the tune, which, I dare say, are as positive as we can find.

"You see, all of this is just to make better music. It's not to make money. I never put an album out saying 'Wow! This one's gonna be a hit.' You never know about that anyway; you can't really do that, unless you have totally given up on doing anything different and subscribe to those things that you have found that have worked in the past. And that would probably only work once, anyway."

With that, Washington illustrates his point by suggesting that, following last year's hit single success of *Just The Two Of Us* with Bill Withers, they could have capitalized on the formula. "Oh yeah," he says, singing "Just the three of us . . . Just a bunch of us . . ."

Washington grows more relaxed. Finally, he is sitting back, deep into the sofa, sipping on a glass of Beaujolais, and laughing. He relates his musical past to the present and his vision of the future.

"I still listen to Sidney Bechet and all of the giants: Coleman Hawkins, Johnny Griffin, Illinois Jacquet, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Cannonball, Trane, Bird—the list goes on and on. I also listen to singers—like for phrasing, see? I realize that I have a few more hurdles to cross being an instrumentalist because I want to make them [the audience] feel what I'm talking about. Phrasing is very important, so I listen to Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Betty Carter. I try to memorize the words to a song and then play it like I'm singing it. That's the only way you can get inside of a tune, get inside of it and make it live."

His listing of the music's giants reflects his thoughts that they remain the "culmination of where the music has been and what kind of direction it's going" without being confining to today's players. "The thing about music today is that everybody can express themselves. Before, you had to sound like Lee Morgan or Freddie Hubbard or Miles or Trane or somebody just to be heard and to get people talking about you. Now you don't have to do that at all. You don't have to subscribe to

GROVER WASHINGTON JR.'S EQUIPMENT

Grover Washington Jr. plays gold-plated H. Couf saxophones—tenor, soprano, and alto. His flute is a solid-silver Gemeinhardt with a gold mouthpiece. His sax mouthpieces are: a Berg Larsen 130/0 (tenor), H. Couf #7 all hard rubber (soprano), and Meier #7 (alto). On tenor and alto, he uses Rico Royal #4 reeds; on soprano it's a Rico Royal #5.



TOM COPPI

GROVER WASHINGTON JR. SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader
THE BEST IS YET TO COME—Elektra/Asylum 60215-1
COME MORNING—Elektra/Asylum 5E-562
ANTHOLOGY—Motown M9-961AZ
BADDEST—Motown M9-940AZ
WINELIGHT—Elektra/Asylum 6E-305
SKYLARKIN—Motown M7-933R1
PARADISE—Elektra/Asylum 6E-182
REED SEED—Motown M7-910
LIVE AT THE BIJOU—Kudu 36/37
A SECRET PLACE—Kudu 32
FEELS SO GOOD—Kudu 24
MISTER MAGIC—Kudu 20
SOUL BOX—Kudu 12/13
ALL THE KING'S HORSES—Kudu 07
INNER CITY BLUES—Kudu 03
with Dexter Gordon
AMERICAN CLASSIC—Elektra Musician 60126
with Dave Grusin
ONE OF A KIND—Polydor 6118

with Bob James
HEADS—Columbia JC 34896
ONE—CTI 6043
THREE—CTI 6063
H—Columbia JC 36422
SIGN OF THE TIMES—Columbia FC 37495
with Dave Matthews
DUNE—CTI 7 5005
with Eric Gale
TOUCH OF SILK—Columbia JC 36570
with Alphonso Johnson
YESTERDAY'S DREAMS—Epic PE 34364
with Idris Muhammad
POWER OF SOUL—Kudu 17
with Lonnie Smith
MAMA WAILER—Kudu 02
with Randy Weston
BLUE MOSES—CTI 6016
with Charles Earland
LIVING BLACK!—Prestige 10009

a formula. Everybody has got a somewhat equal chance to be out there and be heard."

If Washington's legion of fans have anything to complain about, it is his infrequent performing schedule. His reluctance to be on the road is twofold, really. Firstly, he is not particularly fond of the road; secondly, his at-home schedule and his acclimation to it is preferred.

"I'm scared to fly," he says, reiterating, "really scared to fly." His fear is somewhat compounded by physical difficulties, also. For almost a year Washington had to wear an implanted tube from his eardrum to allow fluid to drain out. The condition is worsened by flying. "Yesterday, when we were landing, my left ear opened just fine, but my right ear felt like there was about three pounds of lead laying right on it. I took my pills, my nasal spray, all that stuff to make sure my passages were clear, but it's still stopped up. If I had to play today, I probably couldn't play in tune because I really couldn't hear."

Add to his fear of flying the grueling pressures of the road ("We exercise for weeks and weeks before we go on the road, but people out there don't want to hear that you're tired or dehydrated. They paid their money to hear you play, and it makes no difference whether I don't feel like it or whether my ear is clogged

up, I gotta go out there and play. No excuses.") and you've got a man content with staying home in Philadelphia.

"But it's not like we're just sitting at home or like we feel we don't have to travel anymore," Washington protests. "We are working our butts off, everyday. We have an office and we work in the office and we have a studio and we go from the office to the studio. We try to come home then and have a semblance of a family life in the evenings. Every now and then... well, more than every now and then, we try to catch a basketball game. Basketball is really our only social life. It's a real addiction for us."

The studio is also where Washington thinks he can do his best work. "When I was on the road, I would find that most of the enjoyment was getting the feedback from the audience and giving back to them all the things that you have tried to lay out through the music. Now, I think I can get almost that same kind of satisfaction from the procedures used in the studio."

That same environment is satisfying to Washington as a producer (he produces his own albums as well as those of Pieces Of A Dream) and as a sideman—a role he frequently assumes and one he enjoys. "I like doing my own albums, producing my own

albums, but I also like working with Dexter Gordon. I also like doing stuff with Sonny Rollins. It really helps keep my mind and ears open to the things I want to do, so I won't lose sight of them. With the company moving to New York [during Washington's Los Angeles visit, the Elektra/Asylum family announced a reorganization and corporate move out of L.A.], I think it will give me more playing time on other people's albums. If I know Bruce [Lundvall, E/A president], he's going to be recording most of his stuff at Rudy Van Gelder's back in Englewood Cliffs [NJ]—as most of the jazz giants do—and it's just a short run down there to play.

"I'd just love to work with as many different people as I can. The chance I had to work with Bobby McFerrin this time [the singer guests on one track from *The Best Is Yet To Come*, Washington's latest release] was really a treat. That's the fun of it all."

As a step away from the Grover Washington Jr. mainstream, he'd also like to record a straightforward bebop album. "Yeah, I think maybe it's time for another American classic," he laughs.

Washington's main ambition though is to continue writing, especially for the movies. A doctoral candidate at Temple University, Washington has taken this semester off but plans to resume his studies as soon as possible. "It'll be another 10 years before I'm Doctor Washington," he laughs, adding that the degree isn't the goal. "I'm usually working in the studio at the same time, and I have a family and stuff, so I usually only take two subjects at a time. I want to be more than just a saxophone player, and I would love to write a film score. But I've turned down a few just because the things that are offered are films about pimps, prostitutes, guys shooting guns in the street. I don't want to do that. I will not sacrifice any of our integrity, personal integrity, just to say that I wrote a film score. I did write the theme for *Cassie & Company*, that television show that was on for a minute last year."

With all of the success and ambition of Grover Washington Jr., it's difficult to accept his willingness to act as a bridge to others' music. "The basic thing about my music, even if you don't like everything I do, is that it can serve as a bridge to get to other places. If my music makes you want to listen to somebody else, like another new artist or another veteran or whatever, that's cool."

Christine emphasizes the point: "That's the thing we hear the most. Grover takes pride in that kind of thing. He feels that even though it may not be straightforward jazz or it may not be appreciated as such, if they listen to him and through him listen to other artists, that's a compliment. A lot of Grover's fan mail says 'Listening to you opened up a whole new world. We now listen to jazz.' That's wonderful."

"It doesn't matter if they never buy another Grover Washington album again," he says, "as long as they were turned on to something—they heard one thing on one of my albums somewhere that caught their ear, and they pursued it. That's cool." **db**

By Sam Freedman

Marcus Miller

The Thumbstringer: Bassist For Hire

One Saturday in 1974, when he was 15 years old, Marcus Miller went to Staten Island to visit a friend from high school, Kenny Washington. He arrived there already a musical mongrel, a clarinetist who first learned classics from his father's recordings of Brahms and a self-taught bassist who picked up the instrument after he heard the Jackson 5. But Miller's music education had its holes. At one point, he mentioned to Washington that he had a second cousin who played the piano, Wynton Kelly. "Wynton Kelly!" Washington exclaimed. "Why?" Miller asked innocently about Miles Davis' former sideman. "Was he good?" Later in the day, they talked

about electric bassists, and Miller remarked how much he liked Stanley Clarke.

"And Kenny said," Miller recalls, "'You should hear the music Stanley Clarke grows out of. You should see the music you have to learn.'"

For the next seven hours, Washington (now the drummer with Johnny Griffin) played Miller a sequential, if necessarily abridged, history of jazz. He went from Coleman Hawkins to the Mahavishnu Orchestra, supplying biographical footnotes and anecdotes about attire and attitude on the given date, and occasionally singing back a solo to Miller.

It was the decisive day of a young career.

"Man," Miller says now, "I had come to Staten Island on the ferry with all these funk rhythms going through my head. When I went back, I was hearing ride cymbals. It was amazing how much that one day turned me on to other music. I would've gotten to jazz later on—maybe two or three years later—but the way this happened was so complete. Without it, I would've been a totally different person."

What Miller brought to and from his day at Kenny Washington's house—some funk, some jazz, and some exemplary sight-read-

ing skills—continues to inform his musicianship. As a sideman he has performed and sometimes written for Grover Washington Jr., Lonnie Liston Smith, Lenny White, Tom Scott, David Sanborn, Donald Fagen, Luther Vandross, Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin, and Paul Simon. For nearly two years he has played bass with Miles Davis; the latter credit remains the ultimate anointment of a jazzman, even if this edition of the Davis ensemble has not won the critical favor of some of its forebears.

And now Miller has completed his first album, *Suddenly*, on which he wrote all the songs and played virtually all the instruments. He considers the disc an augury of his future, which he intends to spend running the recording sessions as a producer or leader more than playing in them as the hired hand—or in the case of his bass style, hired thumb.

As all this has happened, Miller is still only 23 years old. He moved out of his parents' home on Long Island only eight months ago. On Tuesday mornings, he says, "I still wake up and think, 'You mean, I don't have to go to school?'"

"I must have five things going at once," Miller says of his protean output. "I live for it. Music is my world, so it's like going into different countries. I'm not tired of doing sessions. It's just that I always have to feel I'm moving up until I hit the point where my ability won't take me any further. I don't feel like it's greedy. It's true that there are a lot of guys in New York who'd love to be studio bass players. But for it to happen to me so fast lets me know there must be something else, some place further for me to go. It was too easy. Not that it was easy, but . . . I think there's something else."

Miller grew so rapidly because, musically, he feasted so ravenously. His childhood tastes were standard for his neighborhood in the Jamaica section of Queens, NY: Larry Graham, Mandrill, Tower of Power, Kool And The Gang. But his prowess on clarinet won him admission to New York's prestigious Music and Art High School. The making of a sideman meant equal doses of technique and soul, and the high school provided each. Miller sharpened his reading—to the point few session assignments now challenge him—by performing lves and other modern composers, who sometimes changed time signatures with each bar.

"The music was a competitive, sports-like thing," he adds. "In those piano practice rooms there'd be three guys at three pianos, and they'd say, 'Okay, we're gonna start at C at the top of the piano and go down the blues scale and whoever gets to the bottom first, wins.'" As for the visceral side of music, all the aspiring bass players would stand on a stage in the cafeteria and parry thumb-pops, for themselves and for the girls walking past.

These also were years in which Miller subsumed influences. His choices are notable, in part for their range and in part for their contradiction of the criticism of fusion as a jazz form without a sense of history.

"The guy I first heard and locked into

immediately," Miller says, "was Paul Chambers. And he's still it for me. Man, he has the sound—strong and powerful. Yet he could get around and be lyrical, and when he soloed, you didn't have to make any excuses because he was a bass player. Also, Sam Jones—he was the funkiest guy. When I heard him on *Wes And Bags*, that was it. And just being 16, 17 and going to the Village to hear Clint Houston.

"Then," Miller adds, "Jaco hit. I thought, this is it, this is what I've been looking for. I was so totally impressed by him, I denied everything else. I started thinking about playing more than funk. I studied. Jaco helped me as more than just a bass player, because



ROLLIN A. HIGGS

MARCUS MILLER'S EQUIPMENT

Marcus Miller uses an Intersound IVP preamp, QSC power amp, Lexicon PCM digital delay, Masteroom reverb, Electro-Voice cabinet with two 15-inch speakers, Bag End cabinet with two 12-inch speakers, 1976 Fender Jazz Bass with Stars Guitars preamp, 1964 Fender fretless Jazz Bass, Aria Pro Custom Bass, Dean Markley Super Round strings, and Rotosound Swing Bass strings.

MARCUS MILLER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- as a leader
- SUDDENLY*—Warner Bros. 1-23806
- with Miles Davis
- WE WANT MILES*—Columbia C2 38005
- THE MAN WITH THE HORN*—Columbia FC 36790
- with David Sanborn
- AS WE SPEAK*—Warner Bros. 9 23650-1
- VOYEUR*—Warner Bros. BSK 3546
- HIDEAWAY*—Warner Bros. BSK 3379
- with Grover Washington Jr.
- COME MORNING*—Elektra SE-562
- WINE LIGHT*—Elektra 6E-305
- SKYLARKIN*—Motown M7-933R1
- with Luther Vandross
- NEVER TOO MUCH*—Epic 37451
- with Aretha Franklin
- JUMP TO IT*—Arista 9602
- with Tom Scott
- APPLE JUICE*—Columbia FC 37419
- with the Brecker Bros.
- STRAPHANGIN'*—Arista AL9550
- DETENTE*—Arista AB4272
- with Spyro Gyra
- INCOGNITO*—MCA 5368
- with Donald Fagen
- THE NIGHTFLY*—Warner Bros. 23696-1
- with the Crusaders
- STANDING TALL*—MCA 5254
- with David Liebman
- WHAT IT IS*—Columbia JC 36581
- with Michal Urbanik
- SERENADE FOR THE CITY*—Motown M7-944R1
- with Lenny White
- BIG CITY*—Nemperor/Atlantic 441
- with various artists
- CASINO LIGHTS*—Warner Bros. 9 23718-1

he wrote. When he played, you could hear the chords in his mind."

Miller now had an avenue for his diversity, and, in Pastorius, proof he could graft the invention and daring of his acoustic heroes onto his electric instrument. He was 17 when he first toured, with Lenny White, a fellow Jamaica resident who discovered Miller in the neighborhood. Studio work with Lonnie Liston Smith and Bobbi Humphrey followed. Miller's routine became calls from producers to his answering service, a stop at the studio in the evening to pick up charts or a chord progression, and the recording session the following day. He had entered Queens College on a clarinet scholarship, but was working so often—one call a week for a record, one a day for jingles, various touring opportunities—that when he withdrew after four academic years he had but two years' worth of credits.

The next two or three years of ceaseless studio work taught Miller the elements of good and awful sessions, and some truths about the mercenary side of being a sideman. "The one thing I feel bad about," Miller says, "is that there was a period in my studio musician career when I'd get called for great jazz musicians' records only to make them more commercially acceptable. The producer would say, 'We want you to do what you did on Grover's record' even if it didn't belong. You can't make a hit record just from the bass."

"I remember a Buddy Rich record. This producer called me and said, 'I want you to overdub.' And I thought, 'Good, I haven't played straight time, 4/4, for a while.' I walk into the studio, and the guy plays me the track—the big band with Buddy doing his thing—and the man says, 'Look, I want you to know we're not gonna sell any records this way, so we want you to just funk out—right over Buddy's drums. Don't worry about what he's playing.' I said, 'What?' I felt like I was violating someone. You just don't want anyone to think this was your idea, your conception."

But other sessions showed Miller the possibilities of the studio, and even with multiple overdubs, of making music with immediacy, virtue—and commercial appeal. It was something in the way Grover Washington Jr. could spiral to the peak of his range or plummet to a low that was half note, half air; it was the way Eric Gale could play the same riff all night and still captivate Miller. Defining that quicksilver quality, however, is not easy.

"I can't explain," Miller says, "when someone does the thing they do and there's just a feeling in my chest. It doesn't have anything to do with my mind; it's just about being yourself, not having those facades. It's the chemistry, the reactive thing."

Two particular alliances confirmed his words, and advanced his career. The first was with David Sanborn, whom Miller met in the *Saturday Night Live* band. Sanborn heard some of Miller's songs on the bassist's demo tape, asked if he could use them, and proceeded to integrate them, and Miller, into



ROLLIN A. RIGGS

“To go down in history isn’t as important as to bring people into the music.”

his *Voyeur* album and touring band. The second turning point for Miller was touring with Roberta Flack—an assignment, ironically, that he accepted with reluctance. “I didn’t know if I could enjoy playing with Roberta,” he says. “All those ballads. But, man, playing those ballads is sometimes as hard as playing with Miles. It’s so visible and so open. Anything you do, any wrong note, is right out there.”

He stayed 18 months with Flack, partially for the company in her show. Peabo Bryson opened the show. And one backup singer was an obscure vocalist named Luther Vandross. When Vandross left Flack to make his own record, he enlisted Miller to play bass and to write several arrangements. Miller recalls the sessions seeming unusually strong—recalls simply forgetting to play his instrument in the middle of several songs, he was so rapt. The sessions became *Never Too Much*, a gold record and a critical favorite. Vandross then brought Miller to his next project, producing a few songs for the singer’s idol, Aretha Franklin. One of the songs Vandross and Miller co-wrote and recorded with Franklin was called *Jump To It*. It emerged as the title selection on the best-received Franklin album in a decade.

“The thing is,” Miller says, “there wasn’t that much pressure. Aretha’s last few albums hadn’t been that successful. The original plan was to have Luther produce a couple of songs. Then we cut *Jump To It* and the company heard it and that’s when everybody said, ‘This is Aretha’s comeback album.’ The real pressure is now, for the next Aretha Franklin album.”

* * *

Pressure, however, should not ruffle Miller much, having survived the early stages with Miles Davis’ newest band. When Davis returned to disc and concert hall in 1981 with a band of largely unheralded scions, the initial critical reaction, to paraphrase Gary Giddins, was that so lofty an artist never had selected such pedestrian colleagues. It is a judgment Miller does not share. Yet, as his recollections indicate, the band did form a bit spontaneously—and, for Miller himself, with a bit of the mythological Miles mystery.

“I was on a country & western date,” Miller says, “and I got a note. It said, ‘Call Miles.’ I didn’t know who Miles was. Buddy Miles? Gil Evans’ son, Miles? So I called the number and The Rasp answered: ‘Hey man, what’s happenin’? Can you be at CBS in an hour?’ And I said, ‘Yeah, this thing ends in half an hour. You gonna be there?’ He said, ‘Yeah, if you’ll be there.’”

“I walked in the studio, said, ‘Hi, I’m Marcus Miller.’ He said, ‘I’m Miles.’ Then he walked out. When he came back in, I said, ‘I’m Wynton Kelly’s cousin.’ He didn’t say anything. So I thought, first wrong thing I said. We played for a while; at the first break, Miles came to me and said, ‘Did you ever play with your genius cousin?’ I said, ‘No, he died when I was still young.’ He said, ‘He was a genius. His touch, his touch.’ And after that, Miles asked me to be in his band.”

The inscrutability was far from over. Early in

the sessions for *The Man With The Horn*, the album to declare Davis’ return, he asked Miller to play an F and G vamp for the song *Aida*. Miller obliged. Davis stopped the band, walked up to him, and said, “Is that all you gonna play? I heard you was bad. You ain’t playin’ shit.” Miller played F, G, and several dozen other notes in between. Again, Davis stopped the band. “What are you playin’?” he asked Miller. “Just play F and G and shut up.”

And yet when the young band was under incoming rounds of criticism, Miller recalls Davis assuring them of his faith, saying, “Who you gonna believe, me or some guy who writes for a newspaper?” During one concert, Miller remembers Davis walking past him and saying, “Man, you swing better than them old motherf#ckers.”

“The Miles the band knows,” Miller says, “no one else has ever known. This person is closer, I think, to the real person behind all the stories. Once on the phone, I was telling Miles I was feeling uptight about my playing, feeling a little insecure. Miles said, ‘I felt the same way when I was your age.’ And I said, ‘But you were playing with Bird and those guys.’ He said, ‘Man, Bird and them would leave me up on the bandstand, go downstairs to do their thing [fix]. The tempo would be goin’ by, and I played one chorus, two choruses. By the third chorus, I didn’t care what I played. Wasn’t my band.’”

“It meant so much,” Miller says, “just to see everybody, even Miles, goes through those insecurities. And if Miles likes the way I play, I don’t need to hear anything else.”

It was an assured Miller who recorded *Suddenly*. He wrote it. He played all of the instruments with the exception of drums on three cuts, several saxophone solos by Sanborn, and the backing vocals. The lead vocals are Miller’s own. The entire album was recorded like a blood transfusion, Miller laying down tracks until he could hear the entire song, then re-doing each instrument a second or third time. For those who know Miller primarily through Davis or his other jazz associations, *Suddenly* will come as a surprise. It is funky, infectious, and made for dancing. The direction, for Miller, is both a return to some of his beginnings and an opportunity to lure listeners into things more complex, to be to them what Kenny Washington was to him.

“To go down in history,” Miller says, “isn’t as important as to bring people into the music. This album isn’t as experimental or improvisational as my later ones will be. But the main thing is to get people interested and listening.”

“A few years ago, you could afford to buy a couple of albums at a time, to get Earth, Wind And Fire and Grover, and get to jazz through that. But now people can only afford one. They’re gonna buy Rick James, and then they’re gonna go home. They don’t have the money to take a chance.”

“So what I want to do is give them something they’ll really like and introduce things slowly, let them grow with me. I’m the one who should do it.” db

THE KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

INTERVIEW

By John Diliberto

• This Stockhausen interview is part of a radio series on electronic music called *Totally Wired*, 26 half-hour radio programs that will be distributed to public, community, and non-commercial radio stations. The series is funded by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and Sequential Circuits Inc.



“The main experience of our time, not only in the field of music, is that you find while working, the incredible, the new, the stunning.”

The name Stockhausen immediately conjures impressions that traverse the furthest reaches of musical thought and process in the 20th century. More than any other composer, Stockhausen is representative of the nuclear age, where musical notes are splintered like atoms and the world may not exist tomorrow to hear a sound. Stockhausen's preeminence could be argued in favor of Edgar Varese, Arnold Schönberg, or John Cage. Yet, through close to a hundred recorded works and an aggressive ability for self-promotion, it is Stockhausen's name that any serious musician must confront, rising like a monolithic beacon illuminating the shoals of shattered boundaries and discarded conventions. Only Cage can rival Stockhausen's significance, but his gift for whimsy isolates him as an eccentric genius while Stockhausen makes important music with a capital I. He isn't throwing the *I Ching* to see what patterns arise, he is filtering the vibrations of the cosmos, making "music for the post-apocalypse."

Stockhausen is approaching his 55th year with all his mysticism intact. Born on August 22, 1928, he was the first of three children born to a school teacher and his wife near Cologne, Germany. Except for the last year of World War II when he was a stretcher-boy at the front, Stockhausen remained in school. Besides the natural traumatism of the war, Stockhausen's mother, who had been interred in a sanitarium since 1933, was either murdered or died in 1941, and his father was determined missing and presumed dead in 1945. This total break with the past is not an insignificant factor in appreciating Stockhausen's subsequent musical directions.

He continued his education and eventually went to the Cologne Academy of Music where he supported himself by playing jazz piano and improvisational music for a magician named Adrion. In 1952 he went to Paris and studied with classical composer Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatoire. It was during this period that he began associating with the first wave of electronic music composers at the Studio of Musique Concrete of French Radio. There he experimented alongside the studio's founder Pierre Schaefer, as well as Pierre Henri and Andre Mole. He composed his first electronic work, simply called *Etude*. In 1953 he became one of the earliest collaborators at West German Radio's Electronic Music Studios in Cologne, where he eventually became director and realized many of his works.

While Stockhausen was having a revolutionary effect on a classical

HAUSEN

The Electronics Of Eternity

world that still hadn't digested Schönberg, his use of intuitive improvisation and the search for new sounds and structures was impinging on the consciousness of the jazz avant garde such as the AACM, and in particular, Anthony Braxton, who has especially acknowledged the influence of Stockhausen's solo piano works in creating his solo saxophone stances. Though Stockhausen tends to downplay a reverse influence, it too is certainly there. The only instructions for his composition *Kommunion* (1968)—"Play the vibrations in the rhythms of the limbs of a fellow player"—are remarkably similar to Braxton's own liner quotes in his 1968 recording *Three Compositions Of New Jazz*—"We're working towards a feeling of one, the complete freedom of individuals in tune with each other, complementing each other."

In the late '60s, Stockhausen enjoyed an unprecedented popularity among the more adventurous youth of the time. His music combined new technology filtered through the Eastern mysticism of Zen, Buddhism, astrology, and journeys into the unknown collective psyche. It was perfect for the acid-blown excursions of psychedelia. His oft-articulated cosmology, intuitive approach, and manipulation of recorded sound was voraciously ingested by groups such as Pink Floyd and the Grateful Dead. Today, artists such as Brian Eno, Tangerine Dream, and Material must look to Stockhausen as their precursor in the use of shortwave radio broadcasts and "found" dialog as a tool of musical composition.

Stockhausen has written close to a hundred works in the last 32 years, most of which have been recorded. They range from the all-orchestral composition *Stop* to the all-electronic *Hymnen*, which interpolates national anthems from around the world with washes of electronically generated and processed sounds. One of his most beautiful and accessible pieces is *Stimmung*, a hypnotic work that suggests the minimalism of Steve Reich and Terry Riley with six vocalists chanting 11 Magic Names in a succession of phasing patterns. To the uninitiated, much of his music has the logic and coherency of metal in a blender, but there's no denying his crucial role in expanding the musical vocabulary of our century.

John Dillberto: What was your first involvement with electronic music? Was it at Radio Cologne or was it with Pierre Schaefer before that?

Karlheinz Stockhausen: In 1952 I listened for the first time to the first compositions which were realized at the Studio of Musique Concrete in Paris. I became very interested in the process of manipulating recorded sound. In the basement of the building was a big generator, and I was allowed to work with this sine-wave generator and tried to synthesize a spectrum. It was extremely primitive because I had no tape recorders. I had to cut a record with the first sine wave which then was naturally no longer a sine wave, and then cut a second record and play the two records simultaneously in order to record the results on a third record. I recorded a certain number of sine waves and listened to the result. So the principle of synthesizing spectrums was tried for the first time in this studio.

In May 1953 I began working in the Studio for Electronic Music in the West German Radio Station, Cologne. This was the month when the studio was founded. We had a few apparatus in the studio which were bought by the radio station such as the Trautonium, and a Melochord. We had an extraordinarily efficient octave filter which was built by an engineer at the radio station. Third mixers were available, and we had an extraordinarily good mixing table that had many channels, and we had the very first four-channel tape machine with 2-plus-2 channels on two machines which had to be mechanically synchronized. They were used in Berlin for cinema; so when I would start the machine, in order to synchronize on four channels, I had to wait a long time until the tapes were synchronized because the tapes were perforated, one-inch film tapes, and you couldn't wind them forward or backwards fast or you would destroy the perforations.

JD: Can we backtrack a second? When you were doing "musique concrete" in Paris, was this prior to magnetic tape?

KS: No, no, no! That was with tape. It happened simultaneously with the first American experiments of [Vladimir] Ussachevsky and [Otto] Luening at Columbia University. They tried to manipulate by simple acceleration or deceleration of recorded sound. They worked with instrumental and vocal sounds recorded and used the means that were available such as half-speed, double-speed, processes of filtering—distortion we say today—to change the sound.

JD: As a student you studied with Messiaen.

KS: Yes. I followed Messiaen's seminars in Paris. That was the reason I went to Paris, because I had heard a few compositions of his in 1951 in Darmstadt during the International Summer Courses and in

1950 in a concert in Cologne. I was very intrigued by his work. He never taught individuals but only analyzed his own works and lectured on Indian rhythms and Gregorian chants. He analyzed Mozart piano concertos in regard to their rhythmic construction.

JD: During and before that time Edgar Varese was talking about the "liberation of sound."

KS: Ja! He had been talking about several things. I met him several times in his home in New York before he died. I met him for the first time in late autumn of 1958. His head was full of ideas, but in fact he didn't have much knowledge of the nature of sound. He was more a man who, as far as I can judge from our talks, was a futuristic amateur. He was not educated in acoustics enough to be able to work well in the studio. I know that in his first attempt to work in the Philips studio, where he realized the tape of *Deserts*, the technicians had to do the work themselves. He was fooling around with a comb in front of a microphone in order to make some interesting sounds. The sounds are, in fact, strange, but he was not really trained. He belongs to another generation.

JD: He didn't have the electronic ability, but he did have very strong conceptions of sound.

KS: Ja! But how can you have conceptions of sound if you don't experiment? The main experience of our time, not only in the field of music, is that you find while working, the incredible, the new, the stunning. You cannot imagine sounds that you never heard so you must work in the studio and try many different ways of producing sound, and all of a sudden, during the work, like a hunter you discover something that catches your interest. Then you go in that direction and elaborate, so one by one you eliminate things that are banal, and you may find a new set of sound families that you can then organize. Conceptions may be abstract. We all want something new, but it's difficult to make it.

JD: Electronic music seems to have brought about a newer way of looking at sound, by making it possible to get inside a note.

KS: Ja! Like I said at the beginning, sound was synthesized for the first time in Paris with the help of an electronic generator which means that partials, as we say, were combined in order to blend into a unified spectrum or color of timbre. So we became increasingly aware that a sound is a whole world of vibratoric relationships of microtime. This is the main aspect. If the pulses that push the air molecules in a certain rhythm are organized in a different way, we get different timbres. It's as simple and as complicated as that because the microtime is something that is very difficult to control. Basically that's what it all comes to, and even the additional techniques of multi-channel mixing have boiled down to the digital work. In a way it makes it even more obscure to organize the inner structure of a sound, which means the micro-rhythms, because in digital information we have only one parameter, only one level on which we can think and form. Whereas we are built in a way in which we perceive in music pitches, and durations, and dynamics, and timbres, and chordal combinations, and shapes with the attack and decay of a sound, and the inner evolution of the dynamic curve. All these levels down to a single parameter of organization make it extraordinarily difficult to work on the sound. Once you have made a sound and want to change a certain aspect of it, like pitch, you have to start from scratch. In analog systems of producing sound, with all the different parameters of sense perception, it allows us to shape a sound like plastic material, like one would shape a sculpture. You'd add a little bit, take something away, make it bigger, smaller, but with many different devices. You had a feeling that the sound is in the air and you can shape it while it's in the air. Whereas with the very new devices of sound production, it becomes difficult again. The inner part of the sound becomes more obscure. So I prefer analog production.

JD: In some of your earlier lectures and writings, you talk in reference to *Gesang Der Jünglinge* and *Kontakte*, as using acoustic sounds in an alien electronic landscape. Do you still look at electronics as an alien landscape or alien sounds?

KS: Yes. In all my works I have established a scale between the known and the most unknown which I was able to discover during the course of the work. I think it's very interesting to compose the steps of knowledge and perception. Sometimes I have something that sounds familiar and then transform the familiar into the unfamiliar, using this process of transformation as a compositional parameter. Traditionally

one would choose harmony, as with the different function of the chords following each other between the more dissonant leading to the more consonant, or the more complicated leading towards the simpler ones, and vice versa. Harmony has been paralyzed for quite a while in this old tonal sense because it was used up. Now the new functional harmony is not only in the field of timbre, but in the field of the more or less familiar. In almost every work of mine you find this in a different solution. Either the familiar is a sound that is a percussion instrument which we can name, or a boy's voice, or a so-called orchestral sound in a group like *Mixtur For Orchestra*, where the sound is modulated more or less, or in *Mantra*, where a whole system of the transformation of piano sounds takes place with a ring



CLIVE BARDA

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN'S EQUIPMENT

Karlheinz Stockhausen has composed music for the entire range of orchestral instrumentation. In addition he has made several original instruments, as well as often altering the aural characteristics of already existent instruments.

One of Stockhausen's basic tools is the mixing board. During live and studio performances of his work, Stockhausen "conducts" by channeling all the instruments through his mixing board, fading them in or out, directing their spatial placement on his quadraphonic-plus sound systems, and treating them electronically through filters, octave dividers, and ring modulators. In his small-group performances such as *Sirius*, *Sternklang*, or *Prozession*, all the instruments are amplified, often with contact microphones, which are held and moved by a "microphonist." Of course, in the studio, the entire range of tape-manipulation techniques are available to him including editing, speed variation, filtering, etc.

Stockhausen has composed works using several different keyboards. Small synthesizers are used on *Sternklang*, Hammond and Lowry organs on *Momente*, Elektronium on *Prozession*, a harpsichord on *Der Jahreslauf*, and even acoustic pianos on *Mantra*. But even there, they were treated by Stockhausen and the performers with compression, ring-modulation, and amplifier volume control. On one of his most recent works, *Sirius*, Stockhausen uses an EMS Synthi-100 synthesizer.

Some of Stockhausen's more exotic instrumentation has been on *Ceylon* and *Bird Of Passage* where he used a Kandy Drum, chromatic rin, lotus flute, Indian bells, and bird-whistle. The amplified tam-tams of *Mikrophonie* and other works have become part of the Stockhausen iconography, joining sine-wave generators of *Mixtur* and of course, the shortwave receivers of *Hymnen*.

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

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|---|--|
| <i>KONTRA-PUNKTE/ZEITMASSE</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 443 | <i>KURZWELLEN</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2707 045 |
| <i>GRUPPEN/CARRÉ</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 137 002 | <i>MANTRA</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 208 |
| <i>GESANG DER JÜNGLINGE/KON-TAKTE</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 138 811 | <i>STOPFLEHM</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 442 |
| <i>MIXTUR/TELEMUSIK</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 137 012 | <i>AUS DEN SIEBEN TAGEN</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2720 073 |
| <i>DREI LEIDER/SONATINE/SPIEL/SCHLAGTRIO</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 827 | <i>STERNKLANG</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2707 123 |
| <i>CHORE FÜR DORIS/CHORAL/PUNKTE</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 641 | <i>SIRIUS</i> —Deutsche Gram. 2707 122 |
| <i>MOMENTE</i> —Nonesuch 71157 | <i>KOMMUNION/INTENSITÄT</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 256 |
| <i>MIKROPHONIE I & II</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 583 | <i>CEYLON/BIRD OF PASSAGE</i> —Chrysalis 1110 |
| <i>HYMNEN</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2707 039 | <i>ZYKLUS FÜR PERCUSSION/REFRAIN</i> —Mainstream 5003 |
| <i>PROZESSION</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 582 | <i>DER JAHRESLAUF</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2531 358 |
| <i>STIMMUNG</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2543 003 | <i>COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC</i> —CBS 32 21 0007 |
| | <i>KREUZSPIEL</i> —Deutsche Grammophone 2530 443 |

modulator. If you modulate a given pitch with the same pitch in the generator, then it sounds very tonal and harmonious, which means that overtones are very simple such as octaves or fifths. But the larger the interval is between the played piano note and the note which modulates the piano, the more dissonant the sound becomes, and the more strange it becomes. It doesn't sound like piano anymore. So in almost all my works there are scales of familiarity. In the context of *Gesang Der Jünglinge* I have called it scales of intelligibility.

JD: When you compose a piece or hear it performed, do you see it as having a beginning, a middle, and an end, or do you see it as only occurring as you hear it? Does your composition exist now, in the moment, or does it exist in the future and past moment?

KS: Well, as early as 1950 I said that a big change was necessary in the Western concept of musical form. I became involved in process composition in 1955 when I worked on *Gesang Der Jünglinge* [*The Song Of The Youth*] in the electronic music studio, because the way I realized certain textural shapes with two or three collaborators made it clear to me that the organization of individual notes within a shape of sound, filled with sometimes thousands of individual pulses with different pitches and timbres, that this tendency of composing a process became more interesting than only presenting fixed figures. When I applied this discovery to entire compositions, process compositions, I became aware that what one hears in music is only an excerpt, what I call a window, in an unlimited time. To be more precise, every one of us is only temporarily a certain person, in a certain body, with a certain name, but we are eternal. This basic feeling of existence is inherent in all important art works. Though sometimes a composer is pounding on the table like Beethoven at the beginning of the *Fifth Symphony* and gives the impression of "Now I start," or when they hit the last two chords five times or more to say, "Now I really stop. Are you aware of this?" Still this is a fake because he could have started before and he could've gone on if he had wanted to because the basic truth in every spirit is that there is nothing like limited time. To present a work of art with a particular beginning and end, and to reinforce the impression, is only an illusion. It is one proposition of an excerpt of time, the timeless time.

So I began to think about totally different forms of music that were not dramatic forms. Dramatic forms come from Greek drama. This means that you present the main protagonist, and they go through a lot of problems, and at the end they are all dead, and we know that we have to go home. We think about why they had to die, etc., so the dramatic conflict is the main argument. To start and finish it had something to do with the Greek concept that the protagonists were gods and that they had visited the earth and gone away. So there was, obviously, a very limited concept of drama, and this has gone into all our European concepts of developmental forms.

But we have also had the suite forms, the potpourri idea, in all folk music, and we still have it nowadays in musical compositions that have so-called movements where you compose a piece based on contrasts or changes. These two together combined in the development like an arch in time, and the proposition of moments that are loosely juxtaposed are two concepts that we can play with depending on what we want to show. Some composers have made early synthesis like Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, or Webern in certain works where he tried to combine the sonata form with the suite form. Bartok combined the fugue form and the rondo in *Concerto For Two Pianos And Percussion* in the third movement. The rondo is basically a song with many new beginnings and the same refrain, while the fugue suggests development with the presentation of the fugue theme and particular intervals responding, etc.

So my pieces in the beginning had processes, like *Kreuzspiel* and *Spiel For Orchestra* where you have a very defined beginning, but the beginning is always in the extremes, and one feels it could have begun somewhere else. For example, I start in the extreme piano octaves, and I feel that the notes come from outside of the piano and fall for the first time in the highest, then the lowest octave, or vice versa, then one by one occupy the piano until they reach the middle and go away again and go again towards the beyond and transcend the piano. So there's a process that starts somewhere else, comes into the reality of the physical world of music, and then goes away again.

So I had these concepts that were defined processes in time and



WERNER SCHOLZ

space, but suggested that they started somewhere else and went somewhere else. In *Kreuzspiel*, the very first composition that I consider typical Stockhausen, it starts in the center, then goes outside and comes back to the center. The third movement is a combination of both. When I heard performances of my piano pieces, I felt that there was no beginning. It started somewhere, so there was not such an extreme situation in the beginning. And it stopped somewhere, but it could've gone on. Then I started composing works that had a typical circular form, and finally spiral forms where one goes cyclically through certain musical moments several times, and every time one comes back to a moment, it is transformed. *Momente* became a big composition that took about 10 years of my life and lasts almost two hours. The juxtaposition of moments was based on the here and now with no connection between the moments of time. But then I started establishing, between zero connection and maximum connection between moments, influences of the present moment towards the past and towards the future and vice versa. So the present moment was charged with memory and hope. This has become a very precise method of composing, from zero connection to past and future of a musical event, to the other extreme of being loaded with memory and expectation so that the quality of the here and now is almost submerged in a conglomeration of influences from the whole work. So what I call the dramatic, the development, and the lyrical or vertical concept of time and space are combined now in all my works.

JD: Was your use of radio waves in several of your compositions as much a philosophical conception as just the musical conception of getting these sounds?

KS: No, no, no, no, no! It is for a very simple reason. I composed a piece called *Plus-Minus* that is an extraordinarily didactic piece. It's totally abstract in not defining the timbres, the means, the number of players. I just gave the notes and the laws of the generation of figures and transformation of figures. This includes extremes where the parts of an event may reach plus-13, and the event is completely renewed, or the other extreme where the parts of an event are reduced during the process of diminishing the components, and the musical event dies, literally. It is no longer used ever again. So the concept of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48



TOM COPI

JAMES

Newton

BY LEE JESKE

"I think that my writing and my playing is based on Ellington's compositions, Strayhorn's compositions, Mingus' compositions, Frank Wes's and Eric Dolphy's playing, James Moody's playing. But I'm not trying to regurgitate what they've done; I'm trying to have a great deal of respect and learn from the lessons that they've laid for the musicians of today, and I'm trying to do something different with it in my own way, and I'm trying to add my own personality into it. But I'm also interested in composing for string quartets and orchestras, and I'm also interested in playing Ellington and Mingus compositions, Monk compositions. That, to me, is all part of my way of life, my definition of music."

James Newton, as he approaches his 30th birthday, is the prototype of the kind of musician who is going to be responsible for the most creative music that the jazz realm is going to produce over the next decade or so. He is a virtuoso on his instrument—the flute; he is well-schooled and erudite; he can read through difficult charts with concision and alacrity; he can—and does—compose in a variety of idioms; he has his business matters firmly in hand; he has the respect

and admiration of both listeners and critics in a number of different fields; and he performs and records well.

"Perhaps some people might find it difficult to put a label on me," he says matter-of-factly.

Now, remember, James Newton is just turning 30. More impressively, he has only played the flute for about a dozen years. In those dozen years he has managed to appear on a startling number of albums and be involved in a dazzling array of projects. He has recorded solo, in duet with piano, in trio with piano and cello, with a woodwind quintet, with conventional jazz rhythm sections; he has worked with a flute quartet and is currently writing a string quartet; he has utilized a broad spectrum of jazz talent including Frank Wess, Red Callender, John Carter, Henry Threadgill, Slide Hampton, Bob Neloms, Lloyd McNeill, Jay Hoggard, and Billy Hart; he is working on a project that would feature the compositions of Billy Strayhorn. And if the music reminds you of classical music, or African folk music, or Japanese folk music, or rock & roll, or bebop . . . well, that's all part of the whole.

"If something touches me and moves me, why not use it?" asks Newton rhetorically on a trip east from his California home. "I find there are a lot of things that sort of come in front of my face, and I have to deal with them one way or another. Certain things just go over my back, and certain things just grab hold of me. I don't have a prejudice about culture, people, or whatever—if something touches me and moves me, I'll use it. I've always said that the Afro-American traditions will always be the foundation of what I do—that'll never change because I am who I am and I like who I am—but I can learn from a lot of different things.

"Folk music is so ignored in the world today. A lot of different drum traditions in Africa are light years ahead of how the percussion is used in the Western orchestra. You have 'classical' composers who try to learn things about African drumming, but they can't even get the skim off the top of the milk as far as that's concerned. So I figure that this kind of Western orientation is really a narrow and small part of the whole world; that's why I listen to a lot of African folk music and Japanese folk music—the shakuhachi is one of the greatest conceptions as far as the flute is concerned, and I've found that using some of those concepts on a Western flute has opened up a lot of new areas to me. I once heard a piece of Pygmy music where all of the harmony and all of the melody were in perfect force. Now perfect force wasn't used in classical music until the 20th century to where it became a basis. But this Pygmy piece of music, which is probably thousands of years old, used it. Those kinds of lessons show me that this Western orientation is a very narrow and insecure and fragile kind of thing. I just didn't think that it made a lot of sense to be caught up in just that."

That is a taste of the portrait of the artist as he approaches his third decade: an artist recognized as *the* flute player around today (as exemplified by his winning of both the established *and* talent deserving wider recognition categories for flute in last year's **db** Critics Poll). But a portrait of that same artist as a young man—say, a 15-year-young man—would be different: it would be a portrait of an electric bassist and vocalist belting out cover versions of Jimi Hendrix hits in Southern California.

"I saw Jimi Hendrix twice," recalls Newton, "and it had a very profound effect on me—it was so different from anything else that was sort of 'on the scene' at that time. Modern things would be going on and he'd be singing the *real* blues—and when I was growing up my parents played a lot of Big Joe Turner and Bobby Bland.

"So I started playing electric bass and doing some *serious* singing in a trio that used to do maybe 20 Hendrix pieces, as well as a lot of the r&b things of the day. That singing helped me a lot in doing vocal things with the flute later on—I had developed my falsetto trying to sing all the things that people like the Isley Brothers were doing.

"But, for me, that kind of music really sort of came to a dead end. I guess as my knowledge in life and my knowledge in music increased, I saw how shallow a lot of things were that I once thought were profound. I started to get a little bit of a literary background, and it really just became unfulfilling to me."

At this time Newton was beginning to attempt to play various reed instruments in high school; toward the end of his junior year, he started fooling around with the flute. "I was working at a YMCA camp

up in the mountains," he says, "and there was a guy who came up to me and said, 'You're starting to play the flute—I want you to hear this guy Eric Dolphy.' This guy turned me on to Dolphy, and I liked Dolphy, but there was so much going on that I couldn't grasp—it was like going too far too quick. But he loaned me a few Mingus records, and it *clicked*, everything started making a lot more sense. And from Mingus I got into Eric, I got into Ellington, I got into Louis Armstrong . . . because Mingus' music encompasses the whole history. That's how I think my conception about music really got started, because Mingus' music is all-encompassing, and as my knowledge increased, I started to feel comfortable with a lot of different forms of music—from modern to changes. I started working on chord changes right away—a guitarist and I in California would just work on tunes eight, nine hours a day.

"Then I just started listening to records. During that time, still coming out of the rock thing, Miles really started to come into the picture, and the Tony Williams Lifetime. Then I started getting into some of Miles' older things, and then a whole other door of music opened up."

Newton entered a junior college as a music major, and there began learning how to read music from his first flute teacher—a teacher who would begin to open the doors of classical music to the ex-Hendrix-styled vocalist. Soon Newton was playing in the college's classical ensembles, as well as working in a couple of jazz bands.

"I'll tell you, I had a very interesting education. I was playing in three or four classical orchestras, two or three different chamber groups, doing straight-ahead jazz gigs, and working in a group that Stanley Crouch led in Pomona, California with Arthur Blythe, David Murray, Bobby Bradford, Wilber Morris, and guys like that. The other thing I did was play saxophone and flute in a funk band to earn a living. After doing all this for about two years, I sort of took a year off and hibernated—just practicing eight hours a day, really studying scores and orchestration.

"After this intense period of study, which was in 1974, I went back to get my degree, which I did from Cal State, and I went back to what I



BRIAN McMILLEN

JAMES NEWTON'S EQUIPMENT

James Newton plays a Muramatsu gold-bonded flute.

JAMES NEWTON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

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|---|--|
| <p>as a leader
 <i>PORTRAITS</i>—India Navigation IN 1051
 <i>AXUM</i>—ECM 1214
 <i>THE MYSTERY SCHOOL</i>—India Navigation IN 1046
 <i>BINU</i>—Circle RK 21877/11
 <i>FROM INSIDE</i>—BvHaast 019
 <i>FLUTE MUSIC</i>—Flute Music Productions 001
 <i>PASEO DEL MAR</i>—India Navigation IN 1037</p> | <p>with Anthony Davis
 <i>HIDDEN VOICES</i>—India Navigation IN 1041
 <i>I'VE KNOWN RIVERS</i>—Gramavision GR8201
 <i>CRYSTAL TEXTS</i>—Moers Music 01048</p> |
| <p>with Sam Rivers
 <i>FLUTES!</i>—Circle RK 7677/7</p> | <p>with Arthur Blythe
 <i>LENOX AVENUE BREAKDOWN</i>—Columbia JC 35638</p> |
| <p>with David Murray
 <i>SOLOMON'S SONS</i>—Circle 16177-5</p> | <p>with Chico Freeman
 <i>GENTLE HEART, PEACEFUL SPIRIT</i>—Contemporary 14005</p> |
| | <p>with John Carter
 <i>VARIATIONS</i>—Moers Music 01056
 <i>NIGHT FIRE</i>—Black Saint BSR 0047</p> |

was doing—playing in all the orchestras, chamber groups, straight-ahead jazz groups—but this is when I also started playing a lot of modern music. I just had this strange existence—I remember coming to a lot of jazz gigs wearing a tuxedo 'cause I'd just got out of an orchestral gig. But that really helped me a lot in having this diversification of being flexible enough to be able to fit into a lot of different musical situations."

By this point Newton had decided that he would only play the flute—a rarity in the history of jazz—and by 1977 he felt that his playing was finally starting to come together. It was then that he followed the lead of many of his compatriots in Southern California and headed for New York. "They kept telling me, 'You've got to come to New York.' They'd write me letters; they'd call me. David Murray said, 'Come to New York, stay in my place, and get yourself established.' So that's what I did—I stayed with David for, maybe, two-and-a-half months."

"... it's very important for me to have the *heart* in music ... but also the craftsmanship and the knowledge."

His first major gig was a duet with David Murray, at the now defunct Axis In Soho, that received a review in the *New York Times* and, as the flutist puts it, "got the ball rolling. Then the next week we worked at Ali's Alley, and then the gigs sort of continued. I got my own place, my wife and baby son, little James, came out, and things just got better and better."

One of the things that made it better was his hooking up with another young musician of multifarious influences and interests, pianist Anthony Davis. The two men were natural musical soulmates, and their talents grew with their reputations. Not only is their musical conception similar, but so is their attitude—they are both no-nonsense cats.

"When I got to this city," explains Newton, "I was really shocked at a lot of people. I'll just come flat out and say it: some musicians in New York are real lazy. It's one of my pet peeves, because, as a composer, I can't use a lot of different musicians in the city, because some people just can't read very well. They develop a certain language, and their choices are kind of narrow as a result of that. And I'm not from that line of thought, because it's very important for me to have the *heart* in music most of all, but also the craftsmanship and the knowledge. Art, I think, is built on sensitivity and hard work. I think there's room in every player for both the very basic, guttural real thing for the tradition, and also the ability to really turn around and *deal*."

This combination of soulfulness and braininess—not to mention his ability to play strong and loud and clear and to employ a nifty vocal effect while he's playing—immediately caused the jazz press and listeners to sit up and take notice of James Newton. After all, the flute has always been a second cousin twice removed in the arsenal of reeds and brass that constitute most jazz ensembles. There have been great jazz flutists but, before Newton, every one of them doubled. Of these flutists, Newton reserves a special place in his heart for Frank Wess—whom he refers to as "a real master of the instrument and someone who can swing like day and night; he's really the guy I admire the most on the instrument in the world today"—and Buddy Collette—with whom he studied in California. But no flutist in

jazz history has garnered the amount of praise that Newton has in his relatively short career. He proudly says that he hasn't had to take a day job since beginning his career, and he feels that things have been going just the way he's wanted them to go.

He wanted a "woodwind quintet," so he formed one: with Red Callender on tuba, John Carter on clarinet, John Nunez on bassoon, and Charles Owens on oboe and english horn. He wanted a flute quartet, so he formed one: with Lloyd McNeill, Henry Threadgill, and Frank Wess. He wants to continue to work in a neo-classical context with Anthony Davis, and he does, with Abdul Wadud's cello rounding out the trio. He wanted to do a solo album with the chance for a lot of overdubbing, and he did: *Axum*. He wanted to record in a tougher, more swinging context, and he did: his septet album with Billy Hart, Slide Hampton, Cecil McBee, Jay Hoggard, Anthony Davis, and John Blake is due for release on Gramavision.

But, certainly, things can't be all that rosy, can they? "When I was preparing myself to come to New York," says Newton, "the two people that I really wanted to work with were Mingus and Taylor. I never got to work with Mingus, but I was part of Cecil Taylor's big band for three weeks."

Now, to these ears, Cecil Taylor's big band was far from a success, however the flutist seemed to find a way of pacing himself so he could take advantage of the few clearings that appeared in the din. "I had been studying his music for 10 years," he says in response to this, "so I didn't take the situation lightly. I spent a lot of time thinking about where the flute would fit in to everything to make sense." Otherwise Newton is reluctant to talk about the experience with Taylor, saying simply, "I learned a lot about music, I learned a lot about composition, and I learned a lot about life. I'll just leave it at that."

Besides, Newton admits to a desire to work with Jack DeJohnette, Ed Blackwell, and Max Roach—oddly, all drummers—but his one gnawing desire right now is for a symphony commission. "But I would still be writing from an Afro-American base. One of my real big idols is Hale Smith, and if you listen to a lot of the things that he writes, you hear a lot of the Afro-American tradition and the African influences, also, but you hear this mastery of the Western orchestra and this real concise, very clear orchestration. The largest group I've ever written for is about 12 or 13 pieces, in the past, but now composition is becoming more and more important to me."

Composition is so important that if you want to play a James Newton piece on your own flute, all you have to do is write to his publishing company, Janew, at P.O. Box 43A47, Los Angeles, CA 90043. The guy's got all the bases covered. "I believe that a musician's publishing company is like his social security. I take a lot of time to set that up well, so when I'm gone, my children can have money coming from what I do. Plus, I wrote a flute book on improvisational studies which I'm trying to get out. But most of the deals that musicians take are absurd, and I just refuse to give the book away. The first thing I think about when I'm in a business deal is my family—I think about my children and my wife—and then I think about my responsibility to the musicians of the future. So you really have to be astute in your business dealings and really take some time to do your homework. I also have a lot of tapes that I'm not going to release. They're for my family, so if something happens to me, they can release one a year."

His concern for his family caused him, in 1980, to move back to his native California. He has a house by the sea, and he feels it's a better atmosphere for both his young son and daughter, and for their father—he likes the privacy and the slight separation it gives him from "the scene."

James Newton could be displayed in Anaheim, California as part of Walt Disney's World Of Tomorrow—The Musician of Tomorrow. "When I think of the world," he says, "culture is something that is there for man and woman to be able to learn from, and there are so many interesting cultures in the world. I really get drugged when people start talking about these little categories or boxes that they want to put music in. Because when a person is put in the ground and they're dead, their soul doesn't stay in that box. Their body has been put in, but their soul has gone someplace else. And it's the same with music—when a person puts their music on an album, they're giving their guts and their soul to the people who are interested in listening to that music. And you can't take something so intangible and put it in a small category. It does not fit."

db

ANTHONY BRAXTON/ RICHARD TEITELBAUM

OPEN ASPECTS '82—hat Art 1995/96: #3; #1.2; #2; #4; #5; #6.1; #6.2; #6.3; #1.1.
Personnel: Braxton, alto, soprano saxophone; Teitelbaum, Moog synthesizer, micro-computer, Casio VL-Tone.

★★★★★

SIEGFRIED KESSLER/ DAUNIK LAZRO

AEROS—hat Musics 3502: *LOVE EXPRESS*; *LOOKING OUT*; *HORIZON VERTICAL*; *ENVOLEZ*.
Personnel: Kessler, piano, electric piano, clavinet; Lazro, alto saxophone.

★★ ½

ARCHIE SHEPP/ JASPAR VAN'T HOF

MAMA ROSE—SteepleChase SCS 1169: *CONTRACTS*; *MAMA ROSE*; *PIPO*; *KALIMBA*; *RECOVERED RESIDENCE*.
Personnel: Shepp, tenor, soprano saxophone, recitation; Van't Hof, prepared organ, electric piano, PPG synthesizer, PPG computer, piano, kalimba.

★★★★★

Outside of fusion, improvisatory jazz has shunned synthesizers. It's partially a rejection of all electronic instruments by acoustic purists, but it has also been due to the inability of synthesists to interact freely with improvisers. There are early experiments by George Russell and the Don Cherry album *Human Music* with synthesist Jon Appleton, but these are exceptions. However, with the increasing degree of control and nuance one can now extract from a synthesizer, much of this is changing, and electronics are no longer solely the province of academic, rock, and fusion musicians.

Richard Teitelbaum is a synthesist who began improvising in the early '60s with *Musica Elettronica Viva* and continued in the '70s with Leroy Jenkins, George Lewis, and others. He and Braxton have collaborated many times over the last decade, and *Open Aspects '82* is the definitive recording of their intimate relationship. It is often difficult to determine who is generating the ideas in these performances, especially when Teitelbaum is working multiple lines. He plays cat-and-mouse with Braxton on #1.1, following Braxton's scurrying alto with a hyperactive piano tone while simultaneously making side comments like a rattling flute. Braxton is forced to exploit all of his techniques in order to keep up, and it's often like watching a high-wire act between two daredevils. They impart a sense of seriousness and adventure, but are still able to laugh at themselves, as when Teitelbaum, with all his sophisticated computer technology, hits the automatic music button on his Casio VL-Tone for two measures of Casio's stock tune in the middle of the taut atmospheres of #4.

Siegfried Kessler and Daunik Lazro's *Aeros* is like a punk counterpart to Braxton



GILL SMITHERMAN

and Teitelbaum's intuitive work. They're out to shock, as Lazro squeezes his thin alto tone past breaking and Kessler counters with rude, harsh tonalities and bent chords. Kessler, a longtime avant garde keyboardist, doesn't use a synthesizer, but his electric keyboards sound like they're being tortured inside with a screwdriver and wrench, sputtering and distorting with sounds you've never heard from a clavinet or electric piano. Their music is stark and confrontational compared to the inviting warmth of Teitelbaum and Braxton. Even on the pretty music box cycles of Kessler's *Looking Out*, Lazro is harsh and pointed, wailing in frustration. Kessler is trying to stretch his range of expression with limited technical means, while Lazro has much to learn from Braxton about shaping notes and phrases.

Mama Rose isn't so much an interaction as electronic settings for improvised saxophone. Jaspas Van't Hof, well known in European fusion circles for his work with Association P.C., Pork Pie, Charlie Mariano, and Markus Stockhausen, uses multiple keyboards, digital synthesizer, and computer to create heroic soundscapes for the unusually introspective playing of Archie Shepp, who seems very comfortable in this new territory. A simple ostinato bass line and swelling synth-strings surround Shepp on *Contracts*, as he builds an epic narrative on tenor saxophone. He plays inside the notes, bending and milking them while simultaneously accelerating phrases into climaxes that leave one breathless only until he begins building his next statement.

The only Shepp tune, *Mama Rose*, gets a European treatment with Van't Hof's understated fugue lending a panoramic sweep to the lyricism of Shepp's wonderful, preaching recitation. When he takes up the soprano, he enacts the poem's triumphant theme, wrapping himself proudly around the counterpoint of Van't Hof's sequencers. Van't Hof makes

some uneven transitions in mixing his keyboards together, but seems more comfortable fabricating improvisatory structures than actually improvising. Most of the space is left to Shepp, who makes a refreshing departure from his recent, ongoing rediscovery of his roots. *Mama Rose* doesn't take the chances of *Aeros* or *Open Aspects '82*, but it connects on a more immediate level.

—John Diliberto

RICKY FORD

INTERPRETATIONS—Muse MR 5275: *INTERPRETATIONS OPUS 5*; *MOON MIST*; *SE ABBA* (*INTERPRETATIONS OPUS 3*); *FIX OR REPAIR DAILY* (*INTERPRETATIONS OPUS 6*); *LADY A* (*INTERPRETATIONS OPUS 1*); *BOSTONOVA* (*INTERPRETATIONS OPUS 2*); *DEXTER*.

Personnel: Ford, tenor saxophone; Wallace Roney (cuts 1, 3, 4), trumpet; Robert Watson (1, 3, 4), alto saxophone; John Hicks, piano; Walter Booker, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

★★★★★

DAVID MURRAY

HOME—Black Saint BSR 0055: *HOME*; *SANTA BARBARA AND CRENSHAW FOLLIES*; *BLUES CHOCTAW*; *LAST OF THE HIPMEN*; *3-D FAMILY*.

Personnel: Murray, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Olu Dara, trumpet; Butch Morris, cornet; George Lewis, trombone; Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone, bass flute; Anthony Davis, piano; Wilber Morris, bass; Steve McCall, drums.

★★★★★

Fairly or unfairly, Ricky Ford and David Murray might be characterized as "Mr. Inside" and "Mr. Outside" of the still-under-30 generation of tenor saxists. That they share such positive critical response to their creative work is less hype than hard work; despite their youthful chronological age, both find

RECORD REVIEWS

inspiration in the full spectrum of jazz traditions and admirably adopt elements of the past to their own personal ends.

Ford's tenor prowess has been documented on three previous Muse LPs, and the four quartet cuts included on *Interpretations* further his development as a stylist in the Dexter Gordon/Johnny Griffin axis. Mercer Ellington's *Moon Mist* is the most impressive—with Ford's tone, time, and temperament stamped with intimations of Ben Webster—but he also finds engaging play on the sprightly *Bostonova* and the self-explanatory *Dexter*. If anything, however, it is his writing which sells this set—especially on the sextet numbers, which update the muscular Jazz Messengers stance through charts designed to challenge the soloist and listener alike.

Interpretations Opus 5 borrows a harmonic modulation from Clifford Brown's *Joy Spring* and is likewise a joyful swing through a pair of puckish themes. Here as elsewhere Wallace Roney contributes a hard trumpet clarity, and Robert Watson's alto adds spice to a stew which combines Sonny Stitt-doubletuning and Jackie McLean-held tones. Se Abba's latin phrasing and *Giant Steps*-bridge is eventually put through crunchy stutter-step paces, while the easy gait of *Fix Or Repair Daily* echoes Basie-ish riffs as bedrock for a round-robin of solos.

If, as Ford's annotator James Isaacs suggests, these charts recall the influence of Tadd Dameron's Royal Roost writing, then David Murray's Home octet might be considered an '80s alternative to the Savoy Sultans—in terms of rhythmic surety, tight swing, and expansive sound from a small source. Murray submerges his own powerful tenor voice into the ensemble for the good of the group, and his role as one-quarter of the World Saxophone Quartet has placed novel voicings in his ear. The result is an ensemble sound and sensibility of variety and depth.

The colorful combination of bass flute, bass clarinet, trombone, trumpet, and cornet lends a plush upholstery to the Strayhornish sentiment of the title tune, and the wide-open harmonies on display in *Last Of The Hipmen* wouldn't be out of place in a Gil Evans ballad—though the latter accelerates to incorporate a gummy Threadgill alto pronouncement, fed by Anthony Davis' hardcore comping, and a too-brief two-part invention of contrapuntal choirs to close. Exoticism rears its head in *Santa Barbara And Crenshaw Follies'* slippery horn polyphony and throughout the aptly titled *Blues Choctaw*, where the vocal qualities of Wilber Morris' arco bass introduction reinforces the chant-like backing—McCall heavy on the toms, eventually echoing Bo Diddley's beat—while the horns bleat and berate the spirits (African and American Indian) that haunt them.

It's a pleasure to report that these two men—and they're not alone in this regard—are as concerned with expanding the compositional and arranging frontiers of the music as they are in honing an individual instrumental voice. Both LPs stand as energetic and exciting examples of the potential still to be explored in middle-sized ensembles.

—art lange

COUNT BASIE

PARADISE SQUAT—Verve VE 2-2542: *THE NEW BASIE BLUES; SURE THING; WHY NOT; FAWNCY MEETING YOU; JIVE AT FIVE; NO NAME; RED HEAD; EVERY TUB; JACK AND JILL; BREAD; THERE'S A SMALL HOTEL; HOB NAIL BOOGIE; BASIE TALKS; PARADISE SQUAT; U.F.O.; LIKE A SHIP AT SEA; TIPPIN' AT THE Q.T.; BLEE BLOP BLUES; CASH BOX; BOOTSIE; TOM WHALEY; BE MY GUEST; YOU'RE NOT THE KIND; BLUES FOR THE COUNT AND OSCAR; EXTENDED BLUES; LET ME DREAM; SENT FOR YOU YESTERDAY; GOIN' TO CHICAGO.*

Personnel: Basie, piano; Paul Campbell, Joe Newman, Wendell Culley, Charlie Shavers, Reunald Jones, trumpet; Henry Coker, Benny Powell, Jim Wilkins, trombone; Marshall Royal, Ernie Wilkins, Floyd Johnson, Paul Quinichette, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Charlie Fowlkes, saxophones; Oscar Peterson, piano; Fred Green, guitar; Jim Lewis, Ray Brown, bass; Gus Johnson, drums; Al Hibler, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ½

FARMER'S MARKET BARBECUE—Pablo 2310-874: *WAY OUT BASIE; ST. LOUIS BLUES; BEAVER JUNCTION; LESTER LEAPS IN; BLUES FOR THE BARBECUE; I DON'T KNOW YET; AIN'T THAT SOMETHING; JUMPIN' AT THE WOODSIDE.*

Personnel: Basie, piano; Bob Summers, Sonny Cohn, Dale Carley, Chris Albert, trumpet; Bill Hughes, Dennis Wilson, Grover Mitchell, Booty Wood, trombone; Bobby Plater, Danny Turner, Kenny Hing, Eric Dixon, John Williams, saxophones; Fred Green, guitar; Jim Leary, bass; Gregg Field, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

KANSAS CITY 3: FOR THE SECOND TIME—Pablo 2310-878: *SANDMAN; IF I COULD BE WITH YOU; DRAW; SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET; THE ONE I LOVE; BLUES FOR ERIC; I SURRENDER DEAR; RACEHORSE.*

Personnel: Basie, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Louie Bellson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Ever since the original Basie band of the '30s began breaking up on the rocks of its own self-contained and fragile individualism, its history has been one of structure progressively replacing personality. As Basie turned from his soloists to his arrangers, they became the architects and designers of what by 1952 had turned into the Great Basie Machine—a kind of mechanized extension of original idea that could be depended upon to function invulnerable to the impact of changing personnel.

This process was well along by the time Basie folded his tent early in 1950 and went into small band exile. When he returned with a completely new band in 1952, however, its two most dominant figures were not soloists but arrangers—Ernie Wilkins and Neal Hefti. More than any two people, they drew upon the band's past and condensed it down to a series of ensemble trademarks through which a legion of players and soloists have since passed without changing them in the least. The music collected on Verve's *Paradise Squat* two-fer represents the first work of this band and its principal draftsmen, Wilkins and Hefti.

In building his new band, however, Basie hardly swept aside his past. In fact, judging from the program on these LPs, he was fairly dependent on it. There are strands here connecting the band to its prewar beginnings (*Every Tub, Jive At Five*) as well as writing by such '40s figures as Buck Clayton (Q.T., *Tom Whaley*), Andy Gibson (*Cash Box*), and Buster Harding (*Hob Nail Boogie*). But we can also hear how Wilkins and Hefti are proposing to build on these traditions. We hear the mechanized wit of Basie's laconic plink-plink-plink endings, sudden shifts in dynamics between brass and reeds (*Bootsie*), and cutting brass stings that sometimes seem planted for effect. Usually the best, most rhythmically alert writing is found in the reed section. The brass tends to huff, puff, punch, and plod, although there are lively exceptions, such as the loose drive of Hefti's *Sure Thing*. The rhythm section helps every inch of the way, and Gus Johnson is the best possible drummer Basie could have selected to fill Jo Jones' stool. The most visible soloists are Paul Quinichette—who conjures disconnected bits and pieces of Lester Young—and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis—who tears it up on showpieces like *Paradise Squat* and *Bread*.

If the Basie band of these sessions (and many to follow) worked with a machine-like precision, it was at least a swinging machine. It had slickness, built-in flash, and occasional touches of self-parody. But it also had enough open space to attract good players and retain its credibility as a force to be reckoned with in jazz. And of course it had Basie himself, who said it all in shorthand and who stood at the core of the Great Machine and gave it legitimacy.

He still does, and his most recent releases on Pablo bring us unusually close to that core. *Farmer's Market Barbecue* is a welcome mix of old and new, big band and not-so-big band. *Way Out Basie* is a nice '50s Wilkins chart that lets Basie whisper while the band roars. *Beaver Junction* harks back to the '40s without showing its age, and Bobby Plater's *Ain't That Something* has sax scoring that beams. Those are the full band cuts. Most of the rest is by a mini-band of six horns and full rhythm. They have a very savory openness and ease about them, and soloists Carley, Hing, and Dixon keep the ball in the air all the time. Familiar riffs are everywhere tying the solo sequences together in the kind of head arrangements that are home to Basie—and to which he was perhaps trying to return in this above-average Basie outing from 1982.

An album of Basie piano solos may not be to everyone's taste, but there's no better way to understand the essential simplicity and sheer ingenuity of the original idea than to hear it at its source. For the Basie band is in many ways a full-screen projection of the Basie piano with its abrupt percussive accents and contrasting dynamics. In *Kansas City 3*, the Machine lays out, leaving Basie to his own sly devices with a rhythm section of Ray Brown and Louie Bellson. The result is an album which, I suspect, might be listened to a good deal longer and with more concentrated attention than either of the other two

considered here.

Anyone with the audacity to play a chorus with so few notes as Basie does and still call it a solo must come equipped with two things: first, an extremely fine-tuned sense of form and melodic manipulation; and second, sufficient courage to risk total exposure of any lapses in judgment or logic. In Basie's case, however, he probably has enough of the first so as not to require much of the second. Musicians who play lots of notes—and I don't mean to put down such players—have the advantage of hiding behind their own built-in camouflage. But Basie hides behind nothing. Every note he plays stands unprotected and in the open. Its rhythmic and melodic relationship to its companions is clear, unequivocal, and never in dispute. He surprises us with subtle twists we can grasp and savour fully the instant they happen—his logic is *that* clear. There are many such gems on this album (though not quite as many as there were on its predecessor, *For the First Time*, recorded a year earlier in 1974), every one remarkable and disarming in its combination of precision and spontaneity. Its intrigue is not in its virtuosity, but its clarity and insight, something that continues to be Basie's special preserve. This and other Pablo LPs he has made with various small groups may well constitute his most enduring recorded work since the prewar years.

—john mcdonough

IRAKERÉ

EL COCO—Milestone M-9111: *LAS HIJAS DE ANACO; ZANAITH; EL COCO; ESE ATRIVIMIENTO; MOLINARIA.*

Personnel: Chucho Valdés, keyboards; Arturo Sandoval, Jorge Varona, trumpet; Carlos Averhoff, tenor saxophone; Germán Velazco Urdeliz, alto saxophone; Carlos Emilio Morales, guitar; Carlos Puerto, bass; Enrique Plá, drums; Oscar Valdés, Jorge Alfonso, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

When Irakeré made its U.S. debut at Newport in 1978, critics hailed the virtuosic 11-man ensemble from Cuba as yet another Great Latin Hope, destined to succeed, where so many others had failed, in establishing a mass crossover market for latin-jazz. Alas, Cuban-American relations, then at their warmest point since Castro's revolution, have since gone sour again, and the eagerly anticipated musical cross-fertilization between the two countries was never quite consummated. After two albums for Columbia, Irakeré was no longer able to record in the United States. The band was then taped by Japanese Victor engineers at Havana's EGREM Studio, and the resulting LP, *Chekeré Son*, was issued in the U.S. on the Milestone label, with little of the promotional fanfare that accompanied the previous Columbia releases. Shortly afterward, reedman Paquito D'Rivera, one of the group's founding members and most acclaimed soloists, defected from Cuba to pursue his own career in the capitalist world.

El Coco was recorded in Tokyo in 1980, with Germán Velazco Urdeliz, on alto saxo-

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RECORD REVIEWS

phone, replacing D'Rivera. The title track is itself a reflection of Irakeré's stagnation: the same arrangement of the same hot rumba was recorded as *Por Romper El Coco* on Columbia's *Irakeré II*. Although bandmembers can still flaunt their once-startling versatility and technical prowess, the promise of their initial *Irakeré* LP, with its brilliant pastiches of Afro-Cuban, jazz, and classical motifs, has not been realized. Instead, Irakeré has retreated from its bold fusion experiments; rather than progressing toward a more complete integration of modern jazz and traditional latin music, the band, under the leadership of keyboardist Chucho Valdés, seems content merely to alternate between the two idioms.

Replete with flashy big band effects, *Las Hijas De Anaco* sports a familiar calypso melody set to a lively samba beat; Valdés adds gospel-blues flavorings on electric piano, but Arturo Sandoval steals the limelight with his superb trumpet work, matching Chucho's trickiest synthesizer runs note for note. *Zanaith* is a leaden jazz ballad for soprano saxophone; D'Rivera's sparkling tones are sorely missed here as the unidentified soloist plods woodenly through an undistinguished arrangement in a style midway between Grover Washington Jr.'s and Hank Crawford's. The group improves on its earlier, comparatively anemic rendition of *El Coco*, but the interpolated Afro-chanting has become almost clichéd in the interim, having been thoroughly assimilated by salsa musicians in the U.S.

A classic *guaguanco*, *Ese Atravimiento* builds steadily to a rhythmic climax that marks the album's emotive peak, with Sandoval's trumpet again supplying the instrumental highlights. Saxophonist Carlos Averhoff is featured on the closer, *Molinaria*, transforming a theme by Beethoven into a quavering Texas-tenor anthem a la Fathead Newman. For all its derivative facility, however, Irakeré has not achieved genuine originality in either the Cuban or American genre; the future of latin-jazz, it would appear, still rests in the melting-pot of Nueva York, where latin players and jazzmen rub shoulders and share bandstands on a regular, day-to-day basis.

—Larry Birnbaum

RED NORVO

THE RED NORVO TRIOS—Prestige P-24108:

CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS; BLUES FOR TINY; SOMEBODY LOVES ME; 'DEED I DO; OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY; SIGNAL; YOU ARE TOO BEAUTIFUL; THE BEST THING FOR YOU; BERNIE'S TUNE; J9 HATE K9; OUT OF NOWHERE; CRAZY RHYTHM; PRELUDE TO A KISS; PUBY LA KEG; EVERYTHING I'VE GOT; JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS; FAREWELL TO ALMS; TEA FOR TWO; LULLABY OF THE LEAVES; SWEET GEORGIA BROWN.

Personnel: Norvo, vibes; Red Mitchell, bass; Jimmy Raney (cuts 1-16), Tal Farlow (17-20), guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★

This music is easy to enjoy but difficult to appreciate. Red Norvo is, of course, sufficiently venerated as one who, along with Lionel Hampton, legitimated the vibes as a

jazz instrument, and is recognized as a major transitional figure between the Swing of the '40s and the soft cool side of '50s bebop.

Nevertheless, the music in this Prestige package from 1953-55, like the better-known Savoy sessions (Savoy 2212) that feature Norvo/Farlow/Mingus trio sides from 1950-51, escapes easy classification. The rhythms are more akin to Swing than to bebop, yet in the slow tunes the music walks by with a serene dignity quite alien to Swing. In faster numbers, however, there is a lightness of touch that certainly suggests the cool bop of Gerry Mulligan, the early Chet Baker, or Art Pepper. But, slow or fast, Norvo's music is in aesthetic spirit most closely allied to a world and time quite alien to jazz: the classical and courtly realm of the 18th century.

And in this alliance lies the problem of appreciation. For, like the music of that earlier period, the Norvo trios are above all *pleasant* productions, avoiding undue emotion. This means that they are also dangerously susceptible of slipping into the background. It is true that musicians more centrally associated with the cool school—musicians nowhere near the 18th century spirit—also carefully avoided the engagement of emotion. But Norvo goes their aesthetic one better, even as he manages to escape certain cool school aridities of intellect. His art eschews not only emotional expression as its end, it deliberately aspires to the effacement of expression in ends that are almost purely decorative. Rather than write novels, Norvo issues epigrams; instead of making confessions, he cuts diamonds.

The range Norvo has set for himself is purposely narrow. His trio—vibes, guitar, bass—consists of percussive instruments without drums. With such a band there can be no wailing, nor even prolonged meditation, but rather a shimmering, faceted and terse. Our pleasure in this is narrow, too, but nonetheless real. What we appreciate is the craft of three musicians who work together, it would seem effortlessly, to produce something one cannot precisely call moving, or profound, or even beautiful—but delicate and pretty and crystalline.

That Norvo's artistic personality dominates his trios is evident when we compare this Prestige collection with the earlier sides from Savoy. The albums have only two tunes in common, *Prelude To A Kiss* and *'Deed I Do*, and there are differences between the earlier and later versions of each. The bowed bass of Charles Mingus in the Savoy *Prelude* weighs a ton and bites like a nasty bulldog. Red Mitchell, in the version on Prestige, uses his bow, too, but the effect is reticent and lyrical. The Savoy *'Deed I Do* comes as close to hard-driving as the Norvo Trio ever gets, with Mingus especially acerbic and Tal Farlow sharp with the counterpoint. On Prestige the approach is faster, lighter, more elliptical and sparkling, Mitchell running his bass strictly as a percussion instrument and Jimmy Raney avoiding the heavier accents in which Farlow revels.

But these differences are finally minor. With Mingus or Mitchell, Farlow or Raney, the group is the Red Norvo Trio, and Norvo always thinks in the gemlike terms of his

instrument: pretty but utterly unyielding. He's cutting diamonds here, never a ruby or a sapphire, and his supply is inexhaustible, his work impeccable, delightful, but always to the same standard. It is true enough that diamonds, no matter how well-cut, leave some people cold; and if you like it hot—or even warm—the Red Norvo Trio is not for you, especially as it is represented on these sides. But this caveat notwithstanding, and holding at bay the more insistent aesthetic demands of our emotions, who will deny that diamonds are good things to have? —alan axelrod

BRÖTZMANN/MILLER/MOHOLO

OPENED, BUT HARDLY TOUCHED—FMP

0840/50: *EINE KLEINE NACHTMARIE; TROTZDEM UND DENNOCH; SPECIAL REQUEST FOR MALIBU; OPENED, BUT HARDLY TOUCHED; DOUBLE MEANING.*

Personnel: Peter Brötzmann, Eb clarinet, tarogato, alto, tenor, baritone saxophone; Harry Miller, bass; Louis Moholo, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

SCHLIPPENBACH/PARKER/LOVENS

DETTO FRA DI NOI—Po Torch 10/11: *CICLONE; FRA DI NOI; ABBONDANZA.*

Personnel: Alexander von Schlippenbach, piano; Evan Parker, soprano, tenor saxophone; Paul Lovens, drums, cymbals, saw.

★ ★ ★ ★

GANELIN TRIO

ANCORA DA CAPO—Leo LR 108: *PART I LIVE IN LENINGRAD.*

Personnel: Vladimir Tarasov, drums, percussion, small instruments, talking drum; Vyacheslav Ganelin, piano, basset, electric guitar, percussion; Vladimir Chekasin, alto, tenor saxophone, wooden flute, clarinet, basset horn, violin, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

ANCORA DA CAPO PART 2—Leo LR 109: *PART 2 LIVE IN LENINGRAD.*

Personnel: Same as above.

★ ★ ★ ★

Arnold Schönberg compared atonality's equality of tones to a dodecaphonic hat. For those with a continental sway to their brims, the above trios are household names in the European Bimhauses where "free music" is played. Most stateside listeners, alas, will find themselves hard pressed—not to mention hatless—naming, humming, taming, or plumbing the untuneful tune that passes for new European.

As near as I can discover, Euro-music burgeoned following the U.S. jazz avant garde of the 1960s. The movement would appear to have been equally influenced by developments in "serious music," such as musical democrat John Cage's use of chance operations (aleatory scores), theater, and silence. By the 1980s, however, free

music still has about as much in common with jazz as not. Its emphases on improvisation, group interplay, and an often powerful rhythmic impetus, are familiar features. Today's players tend to be preoccupied with the "science" of sound, expressing themselves through textural invention, high energy, and spontaneous creation rather than chart arrangements, chord changes, and song form. The formulae that most jazzmen accept over the tradition transom go by the wayside as melody, tempo, harmony, tone color, and rhythm alike pass beneath the microscope. But have no fear: the listening experience that results can be highly enjoyable, challenging, and manifold of mood. This, after all, is not merely *screech music*: at their most intriguing, Europe's sounds quiver and sigh as often as they screech.

On *Opened, But Hardly Touched*, the Brötzmann/Miller/Moholo combination displays the most accessible approach of the live trio recordings surveyed. An extemporaneous master who puts the *spur* in the spur of the moment, reedman Peter Brötzmann is surely one of Albert Ayler's most vital sons for his blowing stamina and savage sense of humor. Bassist Harry Miller and drummer Louis Moholo lend the muscle needed to anchor and counterpoint the saxophonist's wildest flights. Elsewhere associated with projects having a decidedly ethnic flavor, the two South Africans show off an earthiness that swings hard, in meter and out. The clarity of FMP's November 1980 recording beautifully underlines their contributions.

The boundaries between composition and improvisation are intentionally blurred. Yet the trio's explorations manage an in-built tension and variety that scarcely lapses into boredom. During the appropriately titled *Double Meaning*, Brötzmann's furious tenor seems to paraphrase *I Want To Be Happy*. After Moholo's witty opening solo of sharp, dicing cymbals and snare, *Trotzdem Und Dennoch* goes the opposite route: the tenorist's gentle essaying sweetly reminds one of *Every Time We Say Goodbye*, among other ballads. The music's design suggests a certain inevitability as it effects pendular swings between quietness and intensity, solos and duets, microtones and staunch collective blowing. On the attractive opener, *Eine Kleine Nachtmare*, Miller and Moholo pull rhythmically in and out of sync, juggling time against free sections, against the beat of Brötzmann's soprano stand-in, the tarogato. *Special Request For Malibu* perhaps best reveals the sonic extremes. The spasmodic throes of Brötzmann on clarinet and tenor contrast with his big soft "flaps" of breath in duet with arco bass—as Miller plays sinuous near-electronic sonorities, between notes and white noise. Through all of the performances Moholo pushes, restless and jabbing, but with flexible touch.

As stated on a printed enclosure, the principals of the Schlippenbach Trio rank as "the only group in free music working since 10 years continuously [and] alive!" What else they have in common is membership in Globe Unity, that mad, subtle, ingenious, bombastic Euro-orchestra of changing personnel (see **db**, September 1980). Alexander

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von Schlippenbach, in fact, is the crazy glue that binds together Globe Unity. Evan Parker has a following as solo saxophonist, is co-founder of Incus Records, and appears often in various Company ensembles. A co-mover and shaker behind Po Torch Records, Paul Lovens has constructed several uniquely subtle recordings blending percussion with electronics.

Recorded live at Pisa in June 1981, *Detto Fra Di Noi* leaves no guessing about its origins: "all tracks," the liner informs, "are free improvisations." The richly textured *Fra Di Noi*, which spans two complete sides, is the set's most developed and exciting performance. I counted no fewer than one dozen segments of instrumental pairings, entrances, exits, shifting dynamics, and varying intensities over *Fra*'s 32 minutes. Lovens' "junk percussion" is a nonstop joy, a Fibber McGee closet ever-spilling plinks and thwaps. Almost an orchestra unto himself, Parker spins meshlike lines of steel wool, loud or soft. A strong unifying factor in this music, Schlippenbach's keyboard drops a percussive curtain over the proceedings, interweaving especially well with Lovens, in a style that "edits" Cecil Taylor's. Opening with airy figures on piano and saw, *Fra* naturally evolves as Parker's soprano lazily intones a la Lacy a spontaneous "theme." The idyll is prodded into motion by skittering piano and Lovens' hydra-headed sallies until, at one point, the saxophonist's split octaves and flutter tonguing are perfectly complemented by Lovens' delicate tapping. (There are eight more episodes.) The balance of the album, though not quite so fresh in execution and feeling, has its recommendations.

Ancora Da Capo affords a peephole through the Iron Curtain. The Ganelin Trio live in Leningrad (November 1980) performs on our turntables thanks to England's Leo Records. I have not heard the Soviet Lithuanian group's previous discs, *Live In East Germany* (Leo 102) and *Con Fuoco* (Leo 106), which won plaudits in the jazz press. But on *Ancora*'s basis alone, the unit parades a host of Western influences leavened by Slavic wit, from rhapsody to electronic fuzz to parting tango; one hopes for even more Eastern content next time.

Documented over two consecutive evenings, the trio plays a desultory series of episodes, all seemingly improvised. The participants' knack for evocative combinations when doubling produces striking effects and the high points are many. Vladimir Chekasin is in his element whether growling through two saxophones played simultaneously, blowing raspy Shepp-like tenor over a two-chord vamp, or whooping harmonics. Vyacheslav Ganelin activates whacko guitar distortions whirring like a dentist's drill (especially the first side of *Part 1*), and plays fluid piano with humorous "walking basset" (bass keyboard) for self-accompaniment. Vladimir Tarasov on talking drum chatters alongside feedback obligato.

There is no denying that the episodes have appeal. Unfortunately, *Ancora* overall never quite resolves into anything like *Fra*'s emotional whole. After many listenings I felt that the Ganelin Trio, irrespective of its members' virtues, was playing bits and pieces with

mixed success. That such free artistic expression should exist in an authoritarian society is, of course, a miracle. I can't wait to hear more.

The foregoing imports occasionally are available in specialty stores or through domestic mail order. For direct order, the labels' addresses follow: Free Music Production, Behaimstrasse 4, 1000 Berlin 10 (West); Po Torch Records, P.O. Box 1005, D-5100 Aachen 1, Federal Republic of Germany; and Leo Records Ltd., 130 Twyford Road, West Harrow, Middlesex, England.

—peter kostakis

PAQUITO D'RIVERA

MARIEL—Columbia FC 38177: *MARIEL*; *MIAMI*; *CLAUDIA*; *NEW YORK IS YOU*; *WAPANGO*; *MONK-TUNO*; *MOMENTS NOTICE*.

Personnel: D'Rivera, alto, baritone, soprano saxophone, piano, clarinet; Jorge Dalto, electric piano (cuts 1, 4); Hilton Ruiz, piano, electric piano (2, 3, 5, 6); Daniel Ponce, percussion, congas (1-3, 5-7); Ignacio Berroa, drums; Jeff Fuller, electric, acoustic bass (1, 2, 4-6); Eddie Gomez, bass (3, 7); Randy Brecker, flugelhorn, trumpet (1, 7); George Wadenius, guitar (1, 4); Louis Buchillon, Prophet 5 synthesizer (1); Brenda Feliciano, vocal (4).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FANIA ALL-STARS

SOCIAL CHANGE—Fania JM 594: *BACK TO MY ROOTS*; *SALSALITO*; *SAMBA PARTI*; *SHINING/BEAUTIFUL MORNING*; *12 BAR*; *GATO'S TUNE*.

Personal: Johnny Pacheco, leader, vocals (1); Papo Lucca, piano; Roberto Roena, Sal Cuevas, electric bass; Eddie Montalvo, Nicky Marrero, timbales, percussion; Gato Barbieri, tenor saxophone; Steel Pulse, Adalberto Santiago, Nestor Sanchez, vocals (1); Idris Muhammed, drums; David Spinozza (1-3, 6), Eric Gale (4, 5), guitar; Juancito Torres, trumpet, flugelhorn; Hector "Bomberito" Zarzuela, Tony Borrera, trumpet, Reinaldo Jorge, Lewis Kahn, Leopoldo Pineda, trombone; Jay Chattaway, arrangements.

★ ★

MACHITO

AND HIS SALSA BIG BAND 1982—Timeless SJP 161: *EL AS DE LA RUMBA*; *QUIMBOMBO*; *PINIERO TENIA RAZON*; *YERBERO*; *CASO PERDIDO*; *MANICERO*; *SAMBIA*.

Personnel: Machito, leader, vocals, percussion; Paula Grillo, vocals; Tony Cofresi, Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros, Shunzu Ono, Jeff Davis, trumpet; Mark Friedman, Ed Covi, alto saxophone; Ken Hitchcock, tenor saxophone; Pete Miranda, baritone saxophone; William Rodriguez, piano; Nelson Gonzales, bass; Ray Romero, bongos; T. C. Ramos, congas; Mario Grillo, timbales, musical director.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Paquito D'Rivera's the newly favored, recently adopted son—accomplished, acclaimed, a soloist bringing substantial technique and personal ambition to his smart blend of Cuban music and jazz; he writes well and knows top-notch players. The Fania All-Stars,

slick guys but maybe lazy, now submerge their tough Latin/New York souls in whatever commercial alliance rears its possibility. Of course, father of it all is Machito—Frank Raul Grillo—who after 40 years on the road from Latin America to jazz still leads a hot dance band through arrangements as well-tooled as Count Basie's, and frees his young section players to blow at least once a show. Together, their albums represent Latin American music in the U.S. context, and suggest that few cultures have quite so much to offer us, musically, as the Hispanic Caribbean.

Best news first: without condescension, overt flagwaving, or compromising his own sophistication, Paquito in his second Columbia album (away from Irakere) has fashioned seven attractive and related tracks, brimming with melody, swept with rhythm. From the hip backbeat his fellow expatriate Ignacio Berroa slaps starting *Marief* to his own takes on Trane, Monk, and (perhaps unknowingly) Anthony Braxton, Paquito is capable and individualistic on all reeds, and draws complementary work from his collaborators. Taste and variety are the production hallmarks (Mike Berniker and Bert deCoteaux are the producers). The title tune is dramatic as a rumor, alternating sax statement and Randy Brecker's brass call over Jorge Dalto's piano and a deep-rolling pitch of synth. Paquito breaks from the powerful but restraining beat with percussionist Daniel Ponce's help in his second solo spot. For him, *Miami* is a carnival—pianist Hilton Ruiz stays close to Paquito's swirling until the saxist stands alone, squealy and birdy. On *Claudia*, a darker ballad by Chucho Valdes. Ruiz provides soft Rhodes chords to Paquito's soulful ending. Brenda Feliciano sings strongly, without cloying, and Paquito answers through his soprano on *New York*. Via overdubbing, Paquito becomes his own sax quartet on *Wapango*, limning the tune then loosening it like a de-constructivist. His treatments of *Blue Monk* and *Moments Notice* are refreshing; special credit to congaro Ponce and adaptive bassist Fuller, besides guests Brecker, Gomez, Dalto, and Wadenius—all are fine. Paquito's coming on like the early Cannonball Adderley—a vigorous contender if not a revolutionary. Keep on growing!

The plentiful talent assembled to *front* for the Fania gang includes a South American jazz star of the recent past, Gato Barbieri, now recycling his own clichés rather than improvising. Then there's Spinozza, Gale, and Muhammed from the studios, reggae singers Steel Pulse . . . and they barely engage each other on *Social Change*. Fania's interest in tipico latin elements flags after the Spanish chant of *Back To My Roots*; though pianist Papo Lucca and timbales spark Nicky Marrero occasionally bleed through the heavily sweetened mix, there's about as much salsa here as in pea soup. Mangione-ish trumpet on *Salsalito*, an inane rendition of the Rascal's *Beautiful Morning*, and the guitarists, professional but not provocative, obscure the ethnicity upon which Fania built its reputation. Maybe this is aimed at mid-day radio play, depending on Gato's big tone and romantic Argentine image.

Such nonsense aside, there's one healthy,

happening source for latin jazz in the North—as Machito's 1982 set from Holland proves. His charts differ little from those used behind Bird and Diz in the late '40s: brass and reeds riff in counterpoint, while light, brightly syncopated percussion drives the band. The vocals are noble, if sometimes stiff. Every facet of the sound prompts a danceable gesture, including Chocolate Armenteros' brilliant trumpet spire, fully as spirited as the late Clifford Brown's.

Machito is assuring himself a legacy (daughter Paula sings, while Mario Grillo plays timbales and is musical director), but his heirs will retain his wisdom—knowing how to vary a program by adding and subtracting familiar musical features, realizing classics like *Manicero* might be most memorable when kept short, but allowing the bop flame to glow and the players to flash their energy, too, as they do on *Sambia* (kudos particularly to Covi, Miranda, and Hitchcock). Happily, through the efforts of Machito, his old friend Mario Bouza, and now Paquito, jazz and latin musics have learned to love each other; their changes and rhythmic complexities are still full of possibility.

—howard mandel

EVERYMAN BAND

EVERYMAN BAND—ECM-1-1234: *MORALS IN THE MUD; JAPAN SMILES; LONELY STREETS; ON THE SPOT; THE MUMMY CLUB; NUCLEAR SUITE; FATT BLATT.*

Personnel: Martin Fogel, saxophones; David Torn, guitar; Bruce Yaw, bass; Michael Suchorsky, drums.

★ ★ ★

Everyman Band—odd name that. Sounds like Atari-age English majors (minors: Music) gone off the existential edge, playing electric lutes on whipped-up soundtracks for morality plays. Or self-deprecating ordinary (you know, everyman) types taking a crack at the rock sweepstakes, hoping for the faceless notoriety of Toto and ilk.

Truth be told, Everyman Band was formed a decade ago as a rock-oriented group (aha!). Founding members Fogel, Suchorsky, and Yaw have kept the entity going, though they've often been busy with other endeavors, such as recording and touring with ex-Velvet Underground iconoclast Lou Reed and gigging with Don Cherry, with whom they vented jazz urges. ECM eventually expressed an interest in the quartet—Torn having joined in 1979—and off they went to a Nordic recording bungalow. It's hardly been an ordinary career odyssey.

Judging from their debut record, the band has duly noted the assorted developments in rock, jazz, and related hyphenated hybrids these past 10 years. They appear to have absorbed half the ECM catalog, the musics of Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Carla Bley, Soft Machine, and more, yet their sound isn't meretriciously derivative—most of the time the mixture has been properly stirred.

Everyman Band's primary strength lies in their music's texture, the result of the four instrumental voices intermingling, either by chance or design. The collective whirlpool of *Morals In The Mud*, like a breakneck retreat of

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RECORD REVIEWS

lancers from the Crimean valley of death, with hellish drums as cannons, is electrifying. Whenever Fogel's saxophone and Torn's electric guitar lucidly mesh, or metallic-timbre guitar reverberations cavort around the edges of the horn's sound—notably in *Japan Smiles* and *Nuclear Suite*—the music takes on an enigmatic splendor. Crucial to the mood of suspense are bassist Yaw's melodic snippets and capable counterpoint, plus the tone colors Suchorsky draws from his drums and cymbals.

As soloists, Fogel and Torn reveal little dramatic tension. Solos are presented as if nothing but demonstration of facility matters; any semblance of identification with emotive essentials is missing. *Lonely Streets* is 10 minutes of arid shilly-shally, a thinking man's recreation of psychedelia. Fogel's frolicsome post-bop work on *Fatt Blatt* may be attention grabbing, but it smacks of histrionics. Only *Nuclear Suite* has saxophone and guitar, in respective solos, deigning to tell an involving story.

—frank-john hadley

PIERRE DØRGE

BALLAD ROUND THE LEFT CORNER—

SteepleChase SCS 1132: *BALLAD ROUND THE LEFT CORNER*; *XONGLY*; *HAPPY AS A COW*; *SUNSETRISE AT PLUTO*; *ANOTHER RAINY SUMMER*; *CHASING THE COW*.

Personnel: Dørge, guitar; John Tchicai, alto, soprano saxophone; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

COPENHAGEN BOOGIE—CBS (Holland)

88576: *AFROGHANA*; *PEACOCK SONG*; *JUMPIN' AT HURLEY*; *DIZZY MISS DRAGON*; *PASHA BAKLAVA*; *254 BOWERY*; *PAINTED BLACK IN EGYPT*; *MORTENS NEW AUTOCAR*; *SPRINGTIME*; *ODA EUGENIA*; *UDSIGT OVER VESTERHAVET*; *HAPPINESS PART TWO*; *COPENHAGEN BOOGIE*; *RHINOCEROS IN SUNSHINE*; *CHILDRENS BLUE SONG*; *JUNGLE SONG*; *ALBORG BOOGIE*.

Personnel: Dørge, guitar; Morten Carlsen, baritone, tenor saxophone, taragot, ney flute; Irene Becker, keyboards, darbouka, caxixi; H. C. Mogensen, drums, percussion.

★ ★

NEW JUNGLE ORCHESTRA—SteepleChase

SCS 1162: *WOBRA ZEBRA*; *JUNGLE RITUALS*; *MISTER SUSO*; *254 BOWERY*; *FULLMOON IN BRIKAMA (AFRICA)*; *BO BO SANNEH*; *NEW TIGER RAG*; *ROUND AS A PANCAKE*.

Personnel: Dørge, guitar, ballophon, voice; John Tchicai, Simon Spang-Hanssen, Morten Carlsen, Uffe Markusen, Jesper Zeuthen, reeds; Niels Neergaard, Kenneth Agerholm, trombone; Irene Becker, organ, piano, caxixi, voice; Bent Clausen, vibes, percussion, ballophon; Peter Danstrup, bass; Marilynn Mazur, Ole Rømer, drums, percussion, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

Pierre Dørge is a Danish guitarist who tries to be a musical chameleon. Though his color changes don't always merge with his surroundings, watching the permutations can be fascinating. He has been recording actively since the late '60s, often on the fringes of the avant garde with artists such as vibraphonist Walt Dickerson and American ex-

patriate reedman John Tchicai. The three records here were recorded between 1979 and 1982, and Tchicai's appearance on two of them lends a sense of immediacy and urgency that is lacking in the third.

There is a haunting intimacy among the quartet of *Ballad Round The Left Corner*. Dørge and Tchicai are equally attuned whether they're probing through the free improvisation of *Sunsetrise At Pluto* or the blues-based blowing of *Xongly*. Dørge exhales a smoky tone around his odd intervals, breathing with Tchicai. Even his high-speed runs have a translucent and warm sound. Tchicai seems to enter each solo as if he just remembered some raucous occasion in his past. And he can tell a good story, punctuated with laughs and chortles, give and take. Billy Hart's fluid drumming provides a poly-rhythmic counterpoint to the Tchicai/Dørge dialog, and Pedersen has never provided an earthier ambience with his bass.

The presence of Hart alone would've changed the complexion of Dørge's electric group Thermaenius. On *Copenhagen Boogie* they play with loose structures based in modal rhythms, but drummer H. C. Mogensen is imbedded in stone, depriving the music of flexibility or dynamism. Keyboardist Irene Becker doesn't help with her monotonous walking bass lines and kitsch-psychedelic organ swells. It's a barren soil for the solos of Dørge and saxophonist Morten Carlsen. They invoke exotic scales and effects-laden guitar to little avail. Dørge's use of distortion on *Painted Black In Egypt* (a.k.a. the Rolling Stones' *Paint It Black*) is undisciplined, and the Middle-Eastern motifs of *Pasha Baklava* sound like parodies. Thermaenius could be an interesting fusion laboratory, but they haven't learned to filter out the cliches from the chemicals, yet.

Dørge is apparently a musician who is inspired rather than inspiring. He turned it on with Tchicai, Hart, and Pedersen, and he does it again with the 13-piece New Jungle Orchestra, also featuring Tchicai. The haphazard arrangements of Thermaenius contrast sharply with the razor-edged charts Dørge has written and arranged for the New Jungle Orchestra. The influence of George Russell's work in vertical forms is evident with instrumental lines stacked on top of each other, creating a cross fire of rhythm and melody that transmutes through the interlocking layers. This multi-faceted terrain gives the soloists a wide area to explore. Tchicai's alto energizes the Afro-beat-inspired *Bo Bo Sanneh*, and soprano saxophonist Uffe Markusen rollicks through the angular funk of *Wobra Zebra*. *Round As A Pancake* features a darting trombone duel between Neergaard and Agerholm. It recalls the interplay of Grachan Moncur III and Roswell Rudd in Archie Shepp's '60s group, with one horn in dixieland and the other in the outer reaches of the avant garde.

Dørge loves the fray. He comps as masterfully with the big band as he did with the quartet, challenging the horns and feeding the soloists chopping chords and single-note exclamations. His own solos range from linear dashes to pointillistic scurries. He often borders on the manic, but never lets an

errant note slip out. As with George Russell's concept, the solos support the overall structure and the structure here makes this one of the finest large ensemble albums of the year.

—john diliberto

VARIOUS ARTISTS

BASIE REUNIONS—Prestige P-24109: *ROCK-A-BYE BASIE*; *TEXAS SHUFFLE*; *OUT THE WINDOW*; *JIVE AT FIVE*; *DIGGIN' FOR DEX*; *BLUES I LIKE TO HEAR*; *LOVE JUMPED OUT*; *JOHN'S IDEA*; *BABY DON'T TELL ON ME*; *ROSELAND SHUFFLE*.

Personnel: Shad Collins, Buck Clayton (cuts 6-10), trumpet; Paul Quinichette, tenor saxophone; Jack Washington, baritone saxophone (6-10); Freddie Green, guitar; Nat Pierce, piano; Walter Page (1-5), Eddie Jones (6-10), bass; Jo Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CURTIS PEAGLER

FOR BASIE & DUKE—Sea Pea 5001: *A SIMPLE SOUL SONG*; *RED BANK MARCH*; *DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE*; *WILLIAM AND EDWARD'S BLUES*; *BASIE BOSSA*; *I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU*.

Personnel: Peagler, alto saxophone; Buster Cooper, trombone; Roy Brewster, flugelbone; Art Hillary, piano; Louie Spears, bass; Terry Evans, guitar; Washington Rucker, drums; Darryl Jackson, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

TEE CARSON & THE BASIE BANDSMEN

BASICALLY COUNT—Palo Alto PA 8005:

BASICALLY COUNT; *LAVENDAR LADY*; *E'NAJ*; *THEME*; *PRANCIN'*; *YA' GOTTA TRY*; *UNTIL I MET YOU (CORNER POCKET)*; *BAD DUES BLUES*; *IT'S NEVER BEEN LIKE THIS BEFORE*; *AW SHOOSH*.

Personnel: Carson, piano; Willie Cook, Dale Carley, trumpet, flugelhorn; Grover Mitchell, trombone; Bill Hughes, bass trombone; Eric Dixon, tenor saxophone, flute; Bobby Plater, alto saxophone, flute; Freddie Green, guitar; Cleveland Eaton, bass; Gregg Field, drums; Mary Stallings (7), Acapella Gold (3), vocals.

★ ★

That the approaches of these three Basie celebrations (which in Curtis Peagler's case extends to Ellington as well) vary widely is not surprising as, among other reasons, Basie's nearly half-century reign includes periods where different soloists or arrangers exerted a dominant influence over the music. While each album forwards such Basie essentials as a toe-tapping groove and joyful, riff-faced melodies, each session conveys a markedly different historical perspective of an American cultural institution.

Basie Reunions (two sessions recorded in 1957 and '58) is about as close as you can get to a primary source on Basie without actually having him perform on the recording. Half of this two-fer documents the last session of Basie's classic rhythm section and the other features two-thirds of his 1939 trumpet section. Add "Vice-Prez" Paul Quinichette (an important figure in the recon-

stituted orchestra of the early '50s) and Jack Washington (a Bennie Moten veteran who anchored Basie's reed section until the 1950 break-up) and the line-up takes on the semblance of a griot convention. The selections are of 1937-'41 vintages and the performances stand practically shoulder-to-shoulder to Basie's original Deccas and Okeh's.

Curtis Peagler's hard-edged, soul-drenched alto owes little, if anything, to his 1971-77 tenure in Basie's reed section. And, except for a blues dedication and titling a latinized *Confirmation* as *Basie's Bossa*, there is no overt connection to the great bandleader on Peagler's *For Basie And Duke*, one of the year's sleepers in mainstream jazz. With a fine supporting cast headed by the blistering trombone of Buster Cooper, Peagler (whose sound is particularly close to Cannonball Adderley's on *A Simple Soul Song*) presents a program of no-frills, honest, emphatically communicative jazz. After hearing this energetic album, one wonders how Peagler remained in the third chair for his entire stint with Basie.

A capable pianist who has filled in for Basie during the past few years, Tee Carson's *Basically Count* forwards the sunny hues arrangers have recently supplied the orchestra with. When the soloists have the floor—especially Willie Cook, Eric Dixon, Bobby Plater, Cleveland Eaton, and the leader—the proceedings are rewarding; yet, when the empty-calorie orchestrations of *E'Naj*, *Lavender Lady*, and other selections hold forth, the effect is anaesthetizing. *Basically Count* represents not so much what made the Basie orchestra great as it does the commercial considerations that keep it running. —bill shoemaker

LONNIE JOHNSON

TEARS DON'T FALL NO MORE—Folkways 3577: *RAISE YOUR WINDOW HIGH; TEARS DON'T FALL NO MORE; LONG ROAD TO TRAVEL; PRISONER OF LOVE; CARELESS LOVE; JUICE-HEADED BABY; OLD ROCKING CHAIR; WHEN YOU ALWAYS BY YOURSELF; LAZY MOOD; MY MOTHER'S EYES; SUMMERTIME; SEE SEE RIDER.*
Personnel: Johnson, vocal, guitar.

★ ★ ★

MR. TROUBLE—Folkways 3578: *MR. TROUBLE; YOU HAVE MY LIFE IN YOUR HANDS; HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN; POURING DOWN RAIN; THE ENTIRE FAMILY WAS MUSICIANS; FALLING RAIN BLUES; TEAR DROPS IN MY EYES; LOOKING FOR A SWEETIE; I'VE BEEN A FOOL MYSELF; WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES; THAT LONESOME ROAD; I CAN'T BELIEVE.*
Personnel: Johnson, vocal, guitar.

★ ★ ★

SWINGIN' WITH LONNIE—Storyville 4042: *TOMORROW NIGHT; CLEMENTINE BLUES; SEE SEE RIDER; RAINING ON THE COLD GROUND; JELLY, JELLY; TOO LATE TO CRY; CALL ME DARLING; WHY DID YOU GO; SWINGIN' WITH LONNIE; PLEASE HELP ME.*
Personnel: Johnson, vocal, guitar; Otis Spann, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Lonnie Johnson was one of the blues per-

formers of the late 1920s and '30s, along with Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, Blind Boy Fuller, Tampa Red, and a handful of others—one of the most influential singer/guitarists of the music's early period. His stunning technique and harmonic savvy were greatly admired from the outset of his recording career in 1925 and had a tremendous impact on other players of the time, who responded to Johnson's advanced ideas. His duets with Eddie Lang (recording under the pseudonym Blind Willie Dunn) are among the watershed guitar recordings of the late 1920s, and through the '30s Johnson recorded with such noted jazz musicians as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Creath, Johnny Dodds, the Chocolate Dandies, Clarence Williams, and Jimmie Noone, demonstrating great fluency and inventiveness in these settings. While not numerous, Johnson's jazz recordings are important and excellent.

These occasional jazz efforts notwithstanding, Johnson worked as a blues performer for most of his long career and was in fact one of the music's standard bearers, his solo and duet recordings of the '20s and '30s giving way to small group recordings made through the '40s. He was active in the post-war period as well and even enjoyed some sales success in the '50s while recording for King Records (*Tomorrow Night* and *My Mother's Eyes* stem from this period) in

addition to his own many recordings, he accompanied any number of other blues performers, particularly in the '20s and '30s. He participated in the blues revival of the late '50s and '60s, making a sizable number of albums, primarily for Prestige's Bluesville series, and performing to blues and folk music audiences both here and abroad until his death in 1970.

The key question in dealing with albums like these three posthumous releases is just how much they add to our knowledge of the performer and his music. The recordings comprising the two Folkways releases, unfortunately, do not add much at all. Made in 1967, towards the end of his active recording career and never released prior to their appearance here, they find Johnson in relatively good voice with self-accompaniments, on a lightly amplified guitar, generally pleasing, although the entire group of performances misses by more than a hair's breadth the excitement and striking ideational play that marked his best work, even from this late period. Johnson here sounds, if not perfunctory, at least somewhat distanced from the material. He performs these blues and sentimental ballads capably enough, but with none of the easy fluidity of invention, particularly in soloing, that characterized his most gripping work. Johnson was always a low-keyed performer, the intensity of whose music resulted from its finely controlled bal-

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ance of elements; here, however, he sounds as though he couldn't quite bring that balance to the proper levels. His craft and his undoubted sincerity provide what saving grace the performances possess; Lonnie Johnson, even on a bad day, was still Lonnie Johnson, and that's reason enough to investigate these pleasing performances by one of the blues' truly great figures. But only, it must be emphasized, after you've checked out his best work and decided you'd like to add to that experience.

The recordings collected in the Storyville set are a different matter entirely, full of the very excitement, creativity, and engagement with his song materials missing from the Folkways performances. One has simply to compare the two versions of *See See Rider* to discern the greater conviction, imaginative resourcefulness, and emotional power of the Storyville material. Of course, the guitarist has the benefit of the late Otis Spann's bracing piano accompaniment on these 1963 recordings, which provides plenty of additional musical interest and sonic variety. But the chief reason they succeed so handsomely is due to Johnson's more committed singing and playing, close to the top of his game. He swings with easy confidence, draws one striking phrase after another from his guitar, sings with utter, sincere authority (the insinuating *Jelly, Jelly* is a fine example of his understated mastery), and in general gives his very best. In sum, a very attractive, enjoyable album that well illustrates his special gifts and serves his memory well.

—pete welding

MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS

BLUES FOREVER—Black Saint BSR 0061:

ANCIENT AND FUTURE REFLECTIONS; DU KING (DEDICATED TO DUKE ELLINGTON); CHAMBEA; DUET FOR ONE WORLD; BLUES FOREVER; CLUSTER FOR MANY WORLDS; QUARTET TO QUARTET.

Personnel: Abrams, piano; Baikida Carroll, trumpet, flugelhorn; Craig Harris, trombone; Wallace Leroy McMillan, baritone saxophone, flute; Jimmy Vass, alto saxophone, flute; Eugene Ghee, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Howard Johnson, tuba, baritone saxophone; Jean-Paul Bourelly, guitar; Michael Logan, bass; Andrew Cyrille, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

AFRISONG—India Navigation IN 105B:

AFRISONG; THE INFINITIVE FLOW; PEACE ON YOU; HYMN TO THE EAST; ROOTS; BLUES FOR M.; THE NEW PEOPLE.

Personnel: Abrams, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Abrams teased us with his last big band LP, *Mama And Daddy*. After nearly a whole album of tedious noodling, he came right to the point with the exciting title track. It touched on classic big band forms and textures while upgrading the harmonies with skillful use of virtuoso soloists. *Blues Forever* lives up to the promise of *Mama And Daddy* for the most part. However, while the new

album enhances Abrams' already estimable status as composer and orchestrator, it eschews the vociferous ensemble work for exotic voicings and surfaces.

Abrams seems as intent on reordering the form of orchestral composition as he is with paying homage to Ellington, Mingus, et al. He will condense many instruments in a measure or two (*Du King*) or protract a few voices over a long, slow course (*Ancient And Future*) or juxtapose the two maneuvers (*Cluster*). Formal considerations aside, this band has so much voltage that on a simple 12-bar blues (*Blues Forever*), the players prove that form is nothing without content.

Abrams' polemics/poetry gets a little heavy-handed when recited over the tide-pool improvising in *Cluster*, a piece that seems to chase its own tail all the way through. Similarly, *Quartet* ambles on in a chamber manner until a hard-bopping groove is struck that lifts it out of the doldrums. Abrams' charts demand short solo space, so the players have to keep it pithy. Carroll's flugelhorn ballet is concise and enigmatic on *Chambea*. Craig Harris' roughneck trombone is particularly stimulating on *Blues*. Some of the more static passages could use some of Harris' gut-bucket panacea.

One doesn't gain a good deal of insight into Abrams' current orchestral motivations through his solo piano work on *Afrisong*. Originally recorded in (I believe) November of 1976 for the Japanese Why Not label, the overall tone is bright compared with the oblique and economical jottings he's often known for. The title tune is so sprightly and optimistic that it brings to mind Keith Jarrett, although *Infinite* contains some of the push/pull heard in the big band pieces from Abrams' left hand figures. *Hymn* is sunny treble improvisations over an earthen bass ostinato vamp.

Those who despair of Abrams' more detached piano exercises that seem to court (gasp) Europeanisms should investigate this album to be reminded of his feet-on-the-ground rectitude. Even *The New People*, which is the most abstruse cut and appears to be totally improvised, touches on boogie woogie patterns and reworks them a number of times. There is a Tristano-like independence of rolling bass chords to the pointillistic right-handed stiletto jabs that are architectural and mercurial at the same time. *Afrisong* shares with *Blues Forever* the quality to fulfill a listener and simultaneously whet his appetite for more.

—kirk silsbee

ANTHONY DAVIS/ JAMES NEWTON/ ABDUL WADUD

I'VE KNOWN RIVERS—Gramavision GR8201:

JUNETEENTH; STILL WATERS; AFTER YOU SAID YES; TAWAFA.

Personnel: Davis, piano; Newton, flute; Wadud, cello.

★ ★ ★

"The idea of using heads and open-ended improvisations has reached a dead end. It

seems that the only way to get a real sense of freedom anymore is to work within very strict structures and extended forms." Such are the remarks of composer Anthony Davis, and such is the aesthetic that pervades *I've Known Rivers*, a set of ambitious new chamber works by Davis and fellow visionaries James Newton and Abdul Wadud.

Though this creative precept becomes obvious to the listener—an extensive commentary on the form of each work is given by the composers—it is rather the improvisatory wit of the three that carries the torch through this effort, as well as the many exotic timbral colors exposed via special instrumental techniques.

Wadud's *Tawaafa* is one example. It unfolds with a furious, brilliantly syncopated ostinato from the piano (modified with bells on its soundboard, producing an eerie, ringing effect), followed by the cello answering in rhythmic counterpoint. The drama of the section is intensified as Newton asserts strident, long-lined phrases (suggesting much more to come), but soon aborted as all three voices evaporate into a disappointing airiness: two sparse and meandering final sections which establish little connection to the opening material. A better end may have been served had the composer exploited his initial material more extensively, rather than develop the work with the unassimilated content he chose.

Nevertheless, the refined and highly personal instrumental approaches of Davis, Newton, and Wadud are well in evidence throughout this set. Newton's performance is most telling, utilizing a myriad of special flute fingerings and embouchures to produce harmonics, microtonal slides, bends, and even chords (accomplished by singing one note into the instrument while fingering another). Moreover his improvisatory lines are lyrical, clearly directed, and brilliant in their invention, though his tone does not yet boast the depth and richness of a Galway or Rampal. Davis and Wadud play more calculated roles in these works, deriving strength from collective interplay and ensemble.

The Davis composition *Still Waters* is the longest and most intricate on the album. Comprising 10 short movements of greatly varying textures and rhythms, the work attempts to create a sense of tonality and "harmonic direction" within a pan-tonal (atonal) framework. As in the preceding *Tawaafa*, a wealth of strict thematic content is unveiled in the opening section, but not reasonably spun out during the body of the piece. *Still Waters* develops with a sequence of remarkable improvisatory solos and duets, culminating with the trio blowing angular, spasmodic lines in brilliant counterpoint. Though impressive, this activity is clearly disjunct, compositionally, leaving the listener in a sort of confused, aural limbo.

The idea of seeking personal "freedom" within strict and extensive forms is an understandable goal for any composer. Frequently, however, personal freedom must be sacrificed for fluid creative logic—a quality that could have rendered *I've Known Rivers* a much more convincing endeavor.

—stephen mamula

ELLA FITZGERALD

THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONGBOOK: VOLUME TWO/THE SMALL GROUP SESSIONS—Verve

VE2-2540: *SOPHISTICATED LADY; IT DON'T MEAN A THING; DO NOTHING TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME; COTTONTAIL; AZURE; SOLITUDE; SATIN DOLL; I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART; DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE; ROCKS IN MY BED; PRELUDE TO A KISS; JUST A SITTIN' AND A ROCKIN'; JUST SQUEEZE ME; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; LUSH LIFE; SQUATTY ROO; MOOD INDIGO; IN A MELLOW TONE; LOVE YOU MADLY.*

Personnel: Fitzgerald, vocals; Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Stuff Smith, violin; Oscar Peterson, Paul Smith, piano; Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, guitar; Joe Mondragon, Ray Brown, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ELLA IN HOLLYWOOD—Verve UMV 2636:

THIS COULD BE THE START OF SOMETHING BIG; I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING; YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY; JUST IN TIME; IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING; TAKE THE A TRAIN; STAIRWAY TO THE STARS; MR. PAGANINI; SATIN DOLL; BLUE MOON; BABY, WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME; AIR MAIL SPECIAL.

Personnel: Fitzgerald, vocals; Lou Levy, piano; Jim Hall, guitar; Wilfred Middlebrooks, bass; Gus Johnson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE BEST IS YET TO COME—Pablo Today

2312-138: *I WONDER WHERE OUR LOVE HAS GONE; DON'T BE THAT WAY; GOD BLESS THE CHILD; YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY; GOOD-BYE; ANY OLD TIME; AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; THE BEST IS YET TO COME; DEEP PURPLE; SOMEWHERE IN THE NIGHT.*

Personnel: Fitzgerald, vocals; Nelson Riddle, conductor, arranger; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Joe Pass, Tommy Tedesco, guitar; Art Hillery, organ; Jim Hughart, bass; Shelly Manne, drums; Al Aarons, trumpet; Bill Watrous, trombone; Bob Cooper, tenor saxophone; Marshall Royal, alto saxophone; Hubert Laws, Wilbur Schwartz, Bill Green, Ronald Langiner, flute; David Allen Duke, Gale H. Robinson, Joe Meyer, Richard G. Klein, french horn; Jerome Kessler, Dennis Karmazyn, Christine Ermacoff, Barbara Jane Hunter, Robert L. Martin, Nancy Stein, Frederick Seykora, Judy Perett, cello.

★ ★ ★

There has probably been no more consistently flawless a singer in jazz history than Ella Fitzgerald. Of course, there have been, over the years, many who have reached more profound depths of expression and, as a consequence, have left an imprint on our lives as unforgettable as jazz itself. But irrespective of personal taste in female vocalists, it should not compromise one's integrity to re-examine, for a moment, this venerable lady of American song.

The earliest and best of this batch of recent releases was recorded in two sessions, in September and October of 1957. On three of the titles, *Azure*, *Solitude*, and *In A Sentimental Mood*, the vocalist was accompanied by Barney Kessel alone, but rest assured that on the balance she received the full treatment of which this assemblage was capable. Web-

ster and Smith were both in fine form during the late '50s, and these dates rank high among their contemporaneous output. Of course, the tenorman, because of his superior talents and long-lasting reputation, received greater benefits from the then-ongoing mainstream renaissance; yet discerning ears were equally grateful for the exposure granted Swing violin pioneer Smith. Fitzgerald herself had never before sounded better, and her sensitive readings of these Ellington standards more than justifies her being dubbed "beyond category." Highly recommended to all, but if you can get a Japanese pressing, so much the better.

Ella In Hollywood is just that, a superbly Japanese-pressed and packaged reproduction of selected highlights from a 1961 engagement at Hollywood's Crescendo Club. And truly, were it not for her unmistakable sonority and clarity of diction, it would be hard to reconcile this energetic show-biz personality with the more self-effacing lass of the Ducal project. Here, Ella is all gung-ho swing, with the keen-edged rhythm team of Levy et al. all following her closely to the end of the trail. This is the type of music to play for people who still think that Betty Hutton was the hottest of the Swing band "chirps."

Too slick and polite for my taste, the final and most recently recorded of this month's entries, though it does do service to some

great old standards, seems to suffer largely from the static arrangements of Nelson Riddle. Ella appears very reserved, and, even though her voice is still the finely tuned instrument of yore, there is yet a nagging gap between perceived intention and final product. All of the tempos range from slow to medium swing, but even the occasional soloists (Royal, Pass, Rowles, Laws, Watrous, Hillery, Aarons, and Cooper), though they all acquit themselves admirably, fail to raise the temperature of this session beyond the merely comfortable. Recommended for gentler souls than mine. —jack sohmer

PHAROAH SANDERS

LIVE—Theresa TR 116: *YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE FREEDOM; EASY TO REMEMBER; BLUES FOR SANTA CRUZ; PHAROMBA.*

Personnel: Sanders, tenor saxophone; John Hicks, piano; Walter Booker, bass; Idris Muhammad, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Pharoah Sanders' modest place in the valued annals of jazz still rests on his involvement with John Coltrane. When we think of saxophonist Sanders, it's for his distinctive sound—caterwauled multiphonics in the employ of rage—which proved to be a skyrocketing stimulus for Coltrane's eloquently

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toned discourses

With Coltrane gone, Sanders failed to maintain the dynamism; his Impulse output is generally solemn, lifeless homage to Eastern holiness—even the screeky solo flights seem half tired. In the '70s he cultivated quieter, mellifluous tonal qualities and worked at rekindling emotions. The recent Theresa double records *Journey To The One* and *Rejoice* are happy meeting places for restraint and abandon, ballads and modern jazz sprints; Sanders holds his own alongside good soloists (Bobby Hutcherson, Eddie Henderson) and quality rhythm sections.

Live, recorded early last year in Los Angeles and Santa Cruz, further evidences Sanders' resurgence. The split-tone barrage at the start of *You've Got To Have Freedom* acts as an announcement that he is here, in this place tonight, to wrench verities from his instrument. Listeners may embrace or reject the music, as they choose, but no one will leave the performance unaffected by his powerful feelings.

Sanders makes *Freedom* and *Blues For Santa Cruz* burn with alternating tenor blaze and smolder, orderly squalls equaled in the register below by rational lines. Dense groupings of notes dance in *Pharomba*, a 13-minute pan-cultural number invested with good-humor. A fair amount of his playing on the record displays full-fledged melodic strengths, most tellingly revealed in Rogers and Hart's *Easy To Remember*, where he proceeds cautiously then adventurously, balancing tensions in the resolute coda *Stunning*.

Sanders uses the cloying word "great" to acknowledge his fellow musicians to the audience. They're not, but criminally underrated pianist John Hicks has moments when he almost looms larger than life. He races along in *Freedom*, making the momentum surge like McCoy Tyner did with Coltrane, and his right hand sparkles in *Blues For*

Santa Cruz. Drummer Idris Muhammed, free from the confines of fusion, performs spiritedly, and bassist Walter Booker never lags. They enhance Sanders' wonderwork.

—frank-john hadley

CECIL McBEE

FLYING OUT—Indio Navigation IN 1053:

FIRST IMPRESSION; TRUTH—A PATH TO PEACE; INTO A FANTASY; FLYING OUT; BLUES ON THE BOTTOM.

Personnel: McBee, bass, piano; John Blake, violin; Olu Dara, cornet; David Eyges, cello; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

COMPASSION—Enja 3041: *PEPI'S SAMBA;*

UNDERCURRENT; COMPASSION.

Personnel: McBee, bass; Chico Freeman, soprano, tenor saxophone; Joe Gardner, trumpet; Dennis Moorman, piano; Steve McCall, drums; Famoudou Don Moye, percussion.

★ ★ ★

What a difference between this stunning new Cecil McBee album, *Flying Out*, and *Compassion*, the 1977 Enja date recorded live at Sweet Basil. Not that the re-released import, formerly licensed to Inner City and now distributed by Polygram, is dull. It features McBee's first-rate circle—Chico Freeman, Dennis Moorman, Joe Gardner, Don Moye, plus rhythm ace Steve McCall—playing in their usual first-rate, sophisticated grooves. Familiar are Cecil's bulging vamps, the tropical percussion softening and detailing the landscape, the pulsing intimations of spirituality, advanced harmonies, and occasional "outside" blowing. But familiar and first-rate is also tried and true. In a sense, as contemporary as this kind of material is, it really only updates the same churchy, standing-tail swagger Lee Morgan initiated 20 years ago.

Down to cases: Chico puts in an uncharacteristically driving (but overlong) tenor saxo-

phone solo on *Pepi's Samba*, taking off nicely from the tune's rhythmic latticework, then tumbling into an overtone catfight. McBee booms a couple of unbelievably long sustains on his aptly-titled *Undercurrent*, an attractive tune featuring a bass counterpoint line. Moorman, miked too low, solos once, briefly, and Gardner not at all.

From the first four blasts of string harmony on *Flying Out*, you know you're in a keener-edged, less complacent world than the one documented at Sweet Basil. Joining string-jazz explorers Leroy Jenkins and Billy Bang, McBee has written some passionate, Bartok-ish arrangements for bass, David Eyges' cello, and John Blake's violin, with the cornet of Olu Dara at times taking a fourth voice. Using the sudden turns and intentional spacing of modern classical music, the group's intense arco ensembles, even on the drumless *Into A Fantasy*, never lose touch with jazz. On *Truth—A Path To Peace*, McBee plays stark piano chords (another departure) to Blake's violin, in a searching, dramatic piece that suddenly melts to romance, then, just as suddenly, stops. Dara and McBee hop with the melody of the complex *First Impressions*, tracing a *Renard*-ish path over Billy Hart's nimble drums.

Soloing, Eyges is a bit stiff and abstract; Dara makes you feel good immediately. Throughout, John Blake's uncommonly crisp, horn-like attack, lean lines, and light-hearted zip make this record shine. McBee, too, solos in a looser, less knotted style than usual. This fluidity, indeed this entire record, suggests that Cecil McBee has broken through to a new creative period. Cecil's soaring.

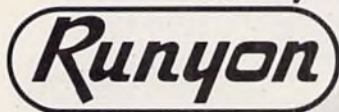
—paul de Barros

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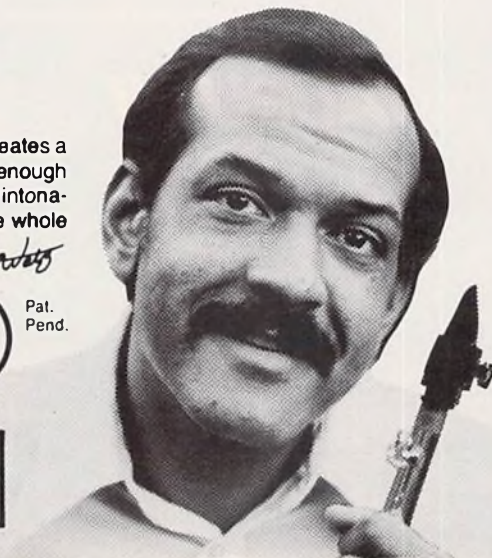
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Erney Watts



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BIG BLACK: *ETHNIC FUSION* (1750 Arch 1790)

★ ★ ★

ANDREA CENTAZZO: *INDIAN TAPES* (Ictus 0013/14/15) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ALEX CLINE: *NOT ALONE* (Nine Winds NW 0107) ★ ½

JEROME COOPER: *ROOT ASSUMPTIONS* (Anima 2J11C) ★ ★ ★

ANDREW CYRILLE: *WHAT ABOUT?* (Affinity AFF 75) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

YAYA DIALLO: *NANGAPE* (Onzou OZ-001) ★ ★ ½

GERRY HEMINGWAY: *SOLO WORKS* (Auricle AUR-3) ★ ★ ★ ★

TOM JOHNSON: *NINE BELLS* (Indio Navigation IN-3023) ★ ★ ★ ★

MICHAEL JÜLLICH: *DAS BEFREITE SCHLAGZEUG* (Moers Music 0 10 68) ★ ★ ★

DARY JOHN MIZELLE: *NEW PERCUSSION MUSIC* (Lumina L-002) ★ ★ ★

What do you listen for on solo percussion records? Do they have to swing? Do you

"Music is supposed to wash away the dust of everyday life."

ART BLAKEY

regard them *sui generis* and apply different yardsticks than group or, say, solo piano records? Or would you rather avoid them altogether and leave them for drum students and skin heads?

This reviewer was alternately dazzled, bored, and bewildered by these frequently awesome displays of percussive virtuosity, and was occasionally touched by passages of intrinsic musicality. Attempting to absorb this broad-ranging baker's dozen of (nearly all) solo percussion LPs, I made the following observations: percussionists tend to be headstrong individualists even in group contexts, and on their own, egos really come to the fore. Almost all play original material exclusively (Jüllich and Hemingway excepted). Personalized elements of sounds, unlike saxophonists' for example, are all external, except of course for touch, so no other group of instrumentalists command as broad an array of hardware and dynamic range. They can get a *ffff* mindshattering 36-inch tam-tam crash that can decay three minutes at 20 cycles-per-second, or barely touch finger-long chimes tinkling in bird-hearing range that are wiped out by the disc's surface noise. Some players tend toward steady rhythms (Cooper, Big Black, Diallo) and full dynamics (Cyrille) while keeping kits small and tight, whereas others (Cline, Jüllich) dabble at length with tiny sounds and display enough hardware to stuff a Snap-On Tool van. These musicians are as self-sufficient as pianists, regarding themselves as one-man orchestras; all 10 hours were solo except for Black's conga (full-fledged duos with guitar). Diallo's balafon (with flute), Centazzo's battery (with bowed doublebass), and occasional effective overdubs by the latter two.

I was rather disappointed overall in the lack of narrative and dramatic enterprise on these albums (some Cyrille, Centazzo, and Hemingway excepted). After all, you don't have to go to Africa to find drums that "talk," as Messers. Roach, Blakey, Taylor, Manne, Haynes, Moses, Altschul, et al. bear eloquent witness. Maybe I don't speak enough percussion, but I felt myself tuning out when I thought I was getting an overload of gratuitous, even sanctimonious, bashing. I agree that drum solos should be fun, but for the listener as much as the player. To that end, I tried to describe a Favorite Sound heard on each record.

Big Black (Danny Ray) has the first of two duo albums here where percussion is the major voice. Anthony Wheaton's playfully feathery, unamplified classical guitar—frequently reminiscent of Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell—plays dry foil to Black's fat, fruity tumbas, and resounding bongos. This pair really covers the ethnic fusion that the title suggests: medieval courtly pavane, romping samba, pulsing Afro-Cuban chant, Amazonian 2/4. Black, best known as a conga specialist in Afro-Caribbean music since the '50s and sideman with Randy Weston, plays off Wheaton's lean, wiry, open lines with comfortable abandon. The loose set makes enjoyable re-listening, a genial concept kept in control, as Black reins his power on hand drums. Favorite Sound: the galloping congas with simmering guitar on



DAVID AMRAM'S LATIN-JAZZ CELEBRATION

60195

David Amram, a pioneer of the French Horn in the 40's and 50's, displays his talents on the instrument (and many others) as he strolls, struts and strides across Latin and Jazz frontiers throughout this infectious recording. David "Fathead" Newman, Pepper Adams, Jimmy Knepper, Taquito d'Rivera and others join the celebration.



THE YOUNG LIONS 2 RECORD SET

60196 R

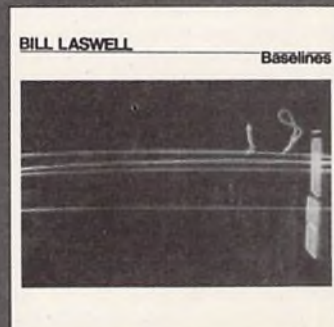
The roar of the future—17 brilliant young players recorded at a spell-binding Carnegie Hall concert event last summer. This double album features all-new music including Kevin Eubanks' "Breakin'," "B'n'W" from Bobby McFerrin and Wynton Marsalis, and Chico Freeman's "Whatever Happened To The Dream Deferred".



BILLY COBHAM'S GLASS MENAGERIE SMOKIN'

60233

Billy took his new high-energy, electric band to Montreux last summer and came out SMOKIN'! Hear GLASS MENAGERIE at full throttle on "Chiquita Linda," "Some Other Kind" & "Red Baron".



BILL LASWELL

Baselines

60221

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STEPS AHEAD

60168

Virtuosity and musical synergy abound on the debut American release of a true superband, STEPS AHEAD, featuring Michael Brecker, Mike Mainieri, Eddie Gomez, Peter Erskine and stunning Brazilian pianist, Eliane Elias. "Pools," "Islands" & "Skyward Bound" lead the way.

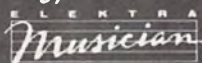


MOSE ALLISON LESSONS IN LIVING

60237

Another epochal Montreux Festival recording—this time Mose Allison's first European concert in 20 years and he celebrated the occasion in grand style with Jack Bruce, Billy Cobham, Lou Donaldson and Eric Gale.

"CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO...
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Musically, Bruce Lundvall



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RECORD REVIEWS

the triple-time *Jigs*.

Baroque imagination, boundless invention, brilliant musicianship, and a mad wit come in the deluxe three-disc boxed set by Italy's master contemporary percussionist, **Andrea Centazzo**. This music contains astonishingly little filler, boiling down eight years of intense studio work. Centazzo's aural trip spans as a circle, primitive to futuristic and back, and it nearly always sounds cogent and fun. All but three of the 19 tracks are under eight minutes, and Centazzo unfolds his panoply like an onion, a layer at a time so you can get a healthy whiff. He's a true nut for pure sounds, an impassioned *amatore* filled with reverence and delight for what he hears when stick hits object, as well as a perfectionistic *professionale*, bent on playing his best, exhaustively annotating, fussing lovingly over production. Dandy hooks pepper several compositions (xylophone themes on *Dances*, recurring figures on *Cowbells*) that make Centazzo seem like the Nino Rota of Roto-toms; he imbues short forms with whimsical melody, though occasionally the music gets too cute and sounds like hip Italian tv spots. Judicious use of tapes and overdubs never gets in the way of his sharp playing and whirring ideas. He also invents instruments (tubophone) and wails on unusual soundmakers (baby rattles as beaters). Superb packaging and production on this one-man percussion party. Favorite Sound: too many to count! Xylophones over frog and bird chirps will do.

Four somber sides of **Alex Cline** get into schticks (like the long tom-tom vamps on the opener) but give no real sense of composition beyond simple pyramid shapes. Basic high-low decibel contrasts go from barely audible chimes and murky timpani to blind hammering that seems interminable because it's directionless. It's like spacing out on incense waiting for the Moment of Truth that never arrives. This set seems overall

somewhat precious and self-indulgent; those characteristics must be the bane of something as fragile as a solo percussionist's credibility. Favorite Sound: the crisp wind chimes of *Tree Grace*.

Jerome Cooper does a lot with a little. Bass drum, sock cymbal, and balafons are it on his 35-minute tour through a brisk 5/4 shifting about two-thirds through into an easy, loping 6/8 with scatty balafon (wooden African vibes) licks on top, climaxing every few minutes by accelerating into an abrupt ritard. It's as hypnotic as the minimalists (Reich, Glass), but it's not into phase shifting; it's funky instead of squeaky, and the cultural ties with African antecedents come just as natural as rolling off a hollow log. *Root Assumptions* is even simpler and looser than *Bert The Cat*, a 4/4 study in concentration on Cooper's 1980 release on About Time. These earthy essays bring him closer to the source of Black Classical Music than anything he's done with the Revolutionary Ensemble and other modernists. Resilient relistening. Favorite Sound: the thick clump of sound Cooper gets to underpin the 5/4 rhythm.

Andrew Cyrille, not surprisingly, manages to achieve a great variety and listenability with a straight kit. These are real "drum solos" in the customary jazz sense, except the primal *From Whence I Came*—musical, dramatic, complete. The title track I found hard to get next to: my untrained ear did not groove on 13 seamless minutes of unrelieved rolls and criss-crossing paradiddles, however a solid reassessment of rudiments it may be. Yet side two contains flashing displays of cymbal celebration, and an alert etude for whistles and snare. This 1969 reissue originally on BYG shows Cyrille the master of fiery subtlety on skins as much as anything he's done with Cecil Taylor or JCOA. The tart and tingly treble end heightens the excitement. Favorite Sound: *Whence*—a discovery as startling as cave paintings—offsets man's

breathing with his work and makes it one, indivisible whole.

The only representative of Mother Africa in this set is **Yaya Diallo**, who hails from Mali, and whose congas, balafon, tama, and tonouba capture West African 4/4 and 6/8 in so lively and listenable a manner it is hard to resist them. The primitive, bubbling quality of Diallo's music is underlined on *Outeme* (his *quartier* in hometown Fienso) by a rippling-brook background, and his sense of roots in a variegated tour of rhythms named for his teacher, Nangapé. Producer Sylvain Leroux's flat, sad classical flute obbligato, however, sounds obligatory and gratuitous, and dilutes the African essence to some sort of palatable pap. Favorite Sound: a wonderfully galloping *Ivoirien* (a triple-time Ivory Coast variant in 6/8)—without flute.

Gerry Hemingway—like other fellows of the Creative Musicians Improvisors Forum which he co-founded (with Leo Smith and Bobby Naughton)—has such a light hand that I had to crank up the volume to pick up the featherweight nuances of wire on cymbal and finger on skin, but his hothouse introspection and hesitant thoughtfulness had me hanging on every well-spaced rest. Earl Howard's composition *D.R.* stayed quiet, tidy, varied; Mark Helias' *Heming Way* mixed tuned tom phrases with little effects and room to stretch; *Dawntreader* transmogrified drum sounds into electronic ones (hoarse organ pipes, thunder on the plains) for a good composition but not my cuppa. Low-key, direct, wears well. Favorite Sound: the swirling cymbal and rim-shot chatter that Hemingway conjures up on *Black Wind* freshens to a dizzying skitter that is my favorite piece on all these albums.

Nine Bells is a piece which you might think you had to be there to enjoy. But with the composer's feet walking in steady brisk patterns counterpointing his striking nine burglar alarm bells suspended from the ceiling, **Tom Johnson** turns a turkey into a peacock. Patterns of sound emerge with each "bell" (movement) simultaneously with patterns of geometry: star, circle, triangle, square superimposed on the tic-tac-toe grid of bells. The bells bring consonance and resonance to imbue the soul. The geometry recalls symmetrical visual art: Vasarely, Albers. The foot-falls swing, and each bong is a surprise. It's just as much fun to listen to as to write about: restful on one level, challenging on another, a musical Rubik's Cube without the frustration. Favorite Sound: the creak of sneakered feet over certain yielding floorboards.

Michael Jüllich tackles two written works of new music and one extended solo jam. Stockhausen's classic *Zyklus* (1959) gets a tight, springy workout, which I found more zesty and alive than Cristoph Caskel's versions, with or without Max Neuhaus. Ton de Leeuw's *Midare* (1972) for marimba solo packs a wonderland of wood into Chinese boxes. Very impressive technically, and superb sound recording. Jüllich's own sidelong stretcher is as heavy as the pyramids, and nearly as bombastic as Wagner. Favorite Sound: low marimba tremolos confronting crackling runs with the handles, recalling the two Jews in *Pictures At An Exhibition*.

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The Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester provides equal opportunity.

Though composer **Dary John Mizelle** writes it all out, his complex structures, mathematically arranged and scientifically realized, sound rhythmically alive and musically playful. *Soundscape's* partial game-plan: metal crescendo in modal rhythm, skins decrescendo in metrical rhythm, wood both in free rhythm. *Soundscape* is performed by the Oberlin Percussion Group, Michael Rosen director, and *Polytempus II* by marimbist Charles Wood and a computer using Mizelle's own Timbre I software, a well-fought match. Sound lacks real definition. Favorite Sound: rattles and ratchets over rim-shots, wood blocks, and marimba.

Here's where you can write for these albums: 1750 Arch Records, 1750 Arch St., Berkeley, CA 94709; Ictus Records, P.O. Box 6, Succ. 11, 40100 Bologna, Italy; Nine Winds Records, 11609 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064; Anima Productions, 231 E. 5th St., New York, NY 10003; Affinity Records, 156 Ilderton Road, London SE 15 England; Les Disques Onzou, 1244 St. Thimothee, Montreal, Quebec H2L 3N6 Canada; Auricle Records, P.O. Box 1114, New Haven, CT 06505; India Navigation Company, 60 Hudson St., New York, NY 10013; Moers Music, P.O. Box 1612, 4130 Moers 1, West Germany; Lumina Records Ltd., 236 Lafayette Street #4, New York, NY 10012. Nearly all of the above are also available through New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. —fred bouchard

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.)

SOUL NOTE

World Saxophone Quartet, reeds and deeds on their fourth outing, done in '78, *REVUE*. **Mingus Dynasty**, Jimmy Knepper-led version of the repertoire ensemble, *REIN-CARNATION*. **Walt Dickerson**, perennially underrated vibist brings unique malletwork to an '82 trio, *LIFE RAYS*. **Steve Lacy**, soprano sax/piano (Bobby Few)/drums (Dennis Charles) trio, *THE FLAME*. **Billy Bang**, '82 quintet from fiddler offers quirky originals and two standards, *INVITATION*. **Jemeel Moondoc**, Ornette-inspired altoist with Fred Hopkins, Ed Blackwell, *JUDY'S BOUNCE*. **Peter Kuhn**, new music clarinetist waxes rhapsodic and angular, *THE KILL*. **Lillian Terry/Tommy Flanagan**, jazz standards from European singer and Ella's longtime keyboarder, *A DREAM COMES TRUE*.

PABLO

Ella Fitzgerald, '71 concert featuring

Tommy Flanagan's impeccable accompaniment, *ELLA A NICE*. **Oscar Peterson**, pianist and his Big 4 recorded live in Japan in '82, *FREEDOM SONG*. **Zoot Sims/Joe Pass**, tenor/guitar duets, sensitive and swinging, *BLUES FOR 2*. **Count Basie**, '75 trio (Ray Brown, Louie Bellson) lets the pianist stretch out, sort of, *FOR THE SECOND TIME*.

MUSE

Red Rodney, '79 hard-bop date finds trumpet tornado alongside Richie Cole, Ricky Ford, Turk Mauro, *THE 3 R's*. **Vic Juris**, acoustic & electric guitarist fronts Eric Kloss' sax and Mike Nock's keyboards plus rhythm, *BLEECKER STREET*. **Mark Murphy**, hardcore jazz vocalist with arrangements by Dave Matthews, *THE ARTISTRY OF...*

INDEPENDENTS

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

Anthony Braxton/John Lindberg, reed/bass collaboration on six Braxton comps, from Cecma Records, *SIX DUETS* (1982).

John Lindberg/Marty Ehrlich, brass/reeds duets of a different nature, from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

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WORLDWIDE INQUIRIES INVITED

1 MARY OSBORNE. *HOW HIGH THE MOON* (from *NOW AND THEN*, Stash). Osborne, guitar.

I liked the way that sounded a lot. It sounded like the guitar players from a certain period, an older period. I could tell a lot by his tone and phrasing—he would do these little pull-offs at the end of a phrase he'd play, and he'd do a lot of sliding, which is something I associate with an older player. It's definitely not a more bebop-oriented player; it's someone right in that in-between place, where he sort of plays bebop, but he's got more of a Swing Era feel.

I don't know who it is, but I associate the tune, of course, with Les Paul. I've never really heard Les Paul play too much, so it could be him. I'd definitely give it a three-star rating, if I had to rate it in stars.

2 MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON. *THIS LIFE, A ROAD* (from *COWBOYS, CARTOONS & ASSORTED CANDY*, Enja). Jackson, multi-tracked guitars.

Obviously it's a more modern player. It sounded to me like one person overdubbing, because of the concept. I liked it; it was very bluesy—it sounded like the player's definitely steeped in a blues tradition, but he played some very outside notes on the vamp. It didn't kill me, but it was really good; the concept was nice. The player's phrasing sounded kind of modern, as did the use of the echoplex or digital delay of some kind, and he didn't just play even eighth notes; he sort of let things fall across the bar line, reminiscent of something John McLaughlin might have played. Very abstract, kind of bluesy playing.

I don't know who it is; it's somebody I probably haven't heard too much. I'd give it three stars.

3 JOE PASS. *PAINT IT BLACK* (from *STONES JAZZ*, World Pacific). Pass, guitar; Bill Perkins, tenor saxophone; Bob Florence, arranger; Mick Jagger, Keith Richard, composers.

Okay, it's a big band, I can get that much. The writing style and saxophone solo sounded like it was a West Coast type of thing. The music has kind of a dated sound; it's not my favorite kind of sound—that kind of harmony is not my cup of tea.

The guitar player sounded very good—very dry, percussive kind of tone. He played a couple of things that I thought for a minute sounded like it could be a real old recording of somebody like Joe Pass, but it doesn't really sound like Joe Pass—there were a few lines that were reminiscent of something Joe Pass might play. Very good technique, very fluid—those few fast passages he played I thought were real exciting. Maybe it could be somebody like Howard Roberts.

4 LEE RITENOUR. *A FANTASY* (from *Rit/2*, Elektra). Ritenour, guitar, composer, arranger.

I find that with guitar players who get that kind of tone, it's hard for me to differentiate certain

John Abercrombie

By LEE JESKE

John Abercrombie emerged from the bands of Chico Hamilton, Jeremy Steig, Gato Barbieri, Billy Cobham, and Jack DeJohnette to become one of the most popular guitarists of the past decade.

Through his association with ECM Records, Abercrombie has been heard in a number of different contexts—solo (*Characters*, ECM 1-1117), in duet with fellow guitarist Ralph Towner (*Sargasso Sea*, ECM 1-1080 and *Five Years Later*, ECM 1-1207), as guest on LPs by Collin Walcott and Jack DeJohnette's Directions, in his Gateway trio with bassist Dave Holland and DeJohnette, another trio with Jan Hammer and DeJohnette, his quartet (including Richard Beirach, George Mraz, and Peter Donald)—and on a number of different stringed instruments, including the electric mandolin.



VERYL OAKLAND

He has recently divided his time between New York City and San Francisco and, during the week of his second Blindfold Test (his first appeared 9/6/79), he was performing in a NYC club along with guitarists John Scofield, Chuck Loeb, and Vic Juris.

He was given no information about the records played.

people. It's obviously a more rock-influenced player. The tone sounded very much like the kind of tone Al DiMeola might get, sort of that distant, screaming, overloaded guitar tone. But I don't think it was him because the playing sounded like it was somebody who just takes their time and plays a very simple statement, and Al would've been playing more notes. It also sounded a little bit like something I've heard a friend of mine, Steve Khan, do. It was pretty—a nice sort of song. I'll give it a couple of stars.

5 DEREK BAILEY/ANTHONY BRAXTON. *THE FIRST SET/AREA 4* (from *LIVE AT WIGMORE*, Inner City). Bailey, guitar; Braxton, reeds.

The first thing that came to mind was Derek Bailey, or someone of that real avant garde, very pointillistic, almost modern classical school. The only other people I know that play stuff like that are a guy whose playing I've never heard, called Eugene Chadbourne, and a fellow in San Francisco whom I've heard a little bit, Henry Kaiser, but this sounded more like it could've been Derek Bailey, maybe from a duet album with Anthony Braxton.

I like that style of playing. I like to play that way myself sometimes—I feel it's more fun to play than actually listen to. If you're playing it, you can get right inside of it, and you become involved in interacting with the other musicians or with yourself, and it becomes really meaningful, but sometimes when you listen to it, it can be difficult. I found myself enjoying this, though; it didn't bore me. It's well-played, thoughtful, and very intelligent, and I liked it. I'd give it three-and-a-half stars.

6 CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH" BROWN. *GATE WALKS TO BOARD* (from *ALRIGHT AGAIN!*, Rounder). Brown, guitar.

Wow, that's wild. I have no idea who it is, but I love the spirit of that kind of thing. It was burning. The guitar player was swinging, but he really didn't play a lot of lines. It sounded like, maybe, he wasn't that strong a jazz player; maybe he is more of a blues player. It was also a very dry sound, like it was a solid body guitar, which would lead me to believe that it's more of a blues or a rock player. But what he played sounded good. I'll give it three stars because it burned from beginning to end and never let up.

7 JAY McSHANN. *DRINK MUDDY WATER* (from *BIG APPLE BASH*, Atlantic). John Scofield, guitar; McShann, piano, vocal.

It must be John Scofield playing blues, and I know that John did an album with Jay McShann, so that would be my guess. I never heard Jay McShann sing much, but it sounds like what I would picture he sings like.

The giveaway was a couple of those phrases—if it's not John Scofield, it's definitely somebody who listened to him. The great thing about Scofield is he's got all this blues feeling in his playing that sets him apart from a lot of other jazz players; he's got this edge, this sort of bite which gives his playing—even when he's playing more abstract—a real foundation which I've always loved. I've heard Sco play better than this, playing some of his own music, but I think he did a great job playing in this situation. I'll give it five stars—it's great, I love it. db

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PROFILE

Craig Harris

After an apprenticeship with Sun Ra and Abdullah Ibrahim, Harris brings an athletic new voice to the trombone.

BY LEE JESKE

When Craig Harris was in high school, he already had his destiny mapped out. He was going to be a defensive halfback for the Kansas City Chiefs football team.

Born on September 10, 1953 (a date that he commemorates with an original ballad by the same name) in Hempstead, on New York's Long Island, Harris was "a big sports person. I played football, I played lacrosse, and the band was on the side."

This was in junior high school, when he was playing the trombone because the band "needed more trombone players." He didn't realize, at that time, that he was going to turn out to be too small for the Kansas City Chiefs. In high school he concentrated his athletics on lacrosse and his trombone playing on weekend gigs with a soul band, playing cover versions of James Brown hits.

After high school he went to the State University Of New York at Farmingdale, on a lacrosse scholarship, with plans to become a social worker and keep up the music on the side. A friend of Craig's, guitarist Alonzo Gardner, went to a different State University Of New York, the one in Old Westbury, and came back with tales of a music department that featured multi-reedist Ken McIntyre and percussionist Warren Smith and others, where you could really study music. Alonzo played Craig some records—by the likes of Miles Davis and John Coltrane—and that was it. They spent a summer jamming—just trombone and guitar—from "10 in the morning till 10 at night," and the next fall they were together in Old Westbury.

"This was my first exposure to this whole music, the whole thing," says Harris. "I studied with Ken McIntyre—I studied trombone with him, I studied orchestration, I studied arranging, I studied theory, I studied everything about the music with him. Him and Warren Smith. When I was in school, it was study, study, study, study this music. There was a whole crew of musicians who studied together and played together and exchanged ideas and played each other's stuff. And it was an experimental school for traditionally bypassed people—convicts and things. The average age of the school



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was 27, while I was 19. So a lot of people would see me with the horn and say, 'Man, you should listen to this.'"

Craig beefed up his in-school education with out-of-school playing in a club called the Jellybean, and out-of-school listening, both to records and to the name talent brought out to a local club, Sonny's Place.

Finally, "It was time to graduate. So, alright, I've lived on campus and had everything—three hots and a cot—and didn't have nothing else to worry about except going to classes. School was over—what am I gonna do now? I still had no connections in New York. I remember sitting in the band room one day, and Pat Patrick, who was on the faculty, came over to me and said, 'What are you gonna do after you leave?' I said, 'I don't know, man. I'll just keep on practicing and doing what I'm doing.'

"Pat played [baritone sax] with Sun Ra, and he said, 'Well, we're playing at the Bottom Line. Why don't you come on down and bring your horn? We don't have a trombone player.' So I went down to the Bottom Line, Pat introduced me to Sun Ra; Sun Ra gave me one of those costumes and said, 'Get on the bandstand.' And that was it."

Three weeks later Craig Harris was in Europe at the start of a three-month tour with Ra and the Arkestra. "I had never been nowhere," he says, "and there I was for three months. I was very excited."

Harris spent two years—from '76 to '78—with Sun Ra, and can be heard on *Cosmos* (Inner City 1020), *Live At Montreux* (Inner City 1039), and *Unity* (Horo 19/20). He was still living at home during that time and commuting down to Philadelphia for rehearsals. After leaving Sun Ra, Craig spent a year gigging around New York City with the likes of Hamiet Bluiett and Olu Dara before he heard that Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) was looking for a trombonist.

"I went to a rehearsal and he said, 'What

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are you doing next week?' I said, 'Nothing.' He said, 'Have you got a passport?'" A week later, Craig Harris found himself in Senegal.

That gig, too, lasted for two years—two years of recording (*African Marketplace*, Elektra 6E-252 and *At Montreux*, Inner City 3045), and constant touring, including a four-week stint in Australia where Craig was to pick up a didjeridu—an Aborigine instrument that he has been using recently in his club appearances. It's a long, hollowed-out pole that depends on circular breathing and has a deep, resonant tone. While in Australia Craig also met the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and after his tenure with Brand, he played and recorded with Joseph Jarman and Don Moye (*Earth Passage-Density*, Black Saint 0052). He also started getting called by various leaders—including Henry Threadgill, who utilizes Harris in his sextet; David Murray, who has been using Harris in his octet; Jaki Byard, who used him in the Apollo Stompers; Muhal Richard Abrams, who uses him in his rare big band appearances; and others. He was also called to join the orchestra of Lena Horne's limited engagement on Broadway. The limited engagement, however, turned into a yearlong gig, lasting until the summer of 1982.

Only then did Craig Harris begin to think of himself as a leader. He has been writing all the time, he says, and was finally ready to hear his music heard on a regular basis. He organized a quintet and an unusual nine-piece band—french horn, tuba, trombone, violin, cello, bass, two reeds, and drums—called the Aquastra.

"Right now," he says, "everybody's saying, 'Craig Harris, who is he?' But I'm one who takes it as it comes, wake up day by day, take it, and move on."

This should be the year when people are made aware of who Craig Harris is. His *Nigerian Sunset* is a large part of Elektra/Musician's *Young Lions Of Jazz* LP, and he's finally about to release his first two albums as a leader—one on India Navigation and one on Soul Note. His big, majestic trombone sound (from a Bach model 42), as well as his work on the didjeridu, should gain him well-deserved recognition.

"A big influence on my work," he says, "has been Africa and Australia. In Africa, at a festival, I heard a couple of representatives from every country that is part of the African diaspora. I'd go into one room and I'd see an Algerian orchestra playing violins, cellos, and basses, and I'd go into another room and see a ceremony with chicken heads being cut off, and drums and stuff. So you really get to see how broad this thing is—it's broad, it's broad, it's an endless reservoir to draw from.

"Right now I just want to keep developing my writing, and I want to keep practicing the basics of the trombone. I just wish I could work a lot more, because I have lots of music to be played."

db

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