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For Contemporary Musicians

**LARRY
CORYELL**
Goin' Back



RANDY BRECKER
Studio Brass

STEWART COPELAND
Police Beat

JOHN GILMORE
Saturn's Saxman

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MITCHELL SEIDEL



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BY BILL MILKOWSKI

A Texas-born, West Coast-bred lad of 24 came to New York City in 1965, toting a Gibson Super 400. He dug Kenny Burrell. He loved Barney Kessel. His favorite album was *The Incredible Jazz Guitar Of Wes Montgomery*. The kid had great taste and unlimited potential, plus chops to burn.

But something happened. Cultural shock set in, and the would-be Wes disciple took off on the fusion trail (or "con-fusion," as many straightahead players of the day referred to it). "Everybody was dropping acid, and the prevailing attitude was 'Let's do something different,'" recalls Larry Coryell of those tumultuous times. "We were saying, 'We love Wes, but we also love Bob Dylan. We love Coltrane, but we also love the Beatles. We love Miles, but we also love the Rolling Stones.' We wanted people to know that we were very much a part of the contemporary scene, but at the same time, we had worked our butts off to learn all this other music too. It was

a very sincere thing. And what came out of it ultimately became a very big, lucrative movement."

Coryell's contributions to that movement have been well documented by now. He trailblazed the scene with Free Spirits, a group of young jazz-trained musicians whose experiments with rock pre-dated such crossover pioneers as Blood, Sweat & Tears, England's Soft Machine, Dreams (with Billy Cobham and the Brecker brothers), or Jeremy Steig & The Satyrs.

Drummer Bob Moses, a member of that seminal outfit (along with saxophonist Jim Pepper, bassist Chris Hills, and rhythm guitarist Chip Baker) says of his colleague: "I have to give Coryell credit. He was the first musician that I met who was equally dextrous in both the jazz bag and the rock bag.

He understood both worlds really well, and I think it took somebody like that to make the rest of us all appreciate rock & roll. I have to admit that I was a terrible bebop snob before I met Larry.

I used to think that if you couldn't swing and make the changes and play bebop, you were bullshitting. The very first

LARRY CORYELL

Back To The Roots

time I heard Larry, he was playing bebop like Wes Montgomery, and I thought, 'Wow, this guy's a great player.' Next time I heard him, he was playing a Chuck Berry thing, and really playing it well. I think that because of the fact that I saw his jazz chops first and had the respect, it made me take the rock thing seriously. So I started to listen to rock after that and found that there were things I liked."

Free Spirits released its debut album in 1966—one year before Jimi Hendrix would make his big splash with *Are You Experienced*, three years before John McLaughlin would come to America with Tony Williams' Lifetime, four years before Miles Davis would release his landmark *Bitches Brew*.

In 1973 Coryell formed Eleventh House with drummer Alphonse Mouzon, following in the wake of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. It was at this point that Coryell put his Super 400 hollow-body on the shelf and picked up a solid-body guitar. He began cranking out distortion-laden, lightning-fast rock riffs and quickly became one of the preeminent spokesmen for the burgeoning electric era. Together with McLaughlin, he influenced a generation of chops-conscious players. Included in the ranks of Coryell disciples was a 19-year-old speedster named Al Di Meola, who burst onto the scene in 1974 with *Return To Forever*. And the race was on.

"What happened, in my opinion, was that guitar playing just got too fast," Coryell says in retrospect, "and it also got highly competitive. For years I thought, 'All I want to do is become the number one-rated guitarist in *down beat* by the time I'm 30.' It was that whole adolescent attitude, placing more importance on the arriving than on the striving. Everything just got so intense."

When the fusion movement fizzled in 1976, Coryell turned to acoustic guitar as an antidote to those loud, electrified sounds that had prevailed for so long. For the next three years he would devote himself solely to acoustic work, performing duets with French guitarist Philip Catherine and with American guitarist Steve Khan. In 1979 he toured Europe in an acoustic trio setting with McLaughlin and Paco De Lucia, and later began collaborating with Polish violinist Michal Urbaniak and his wife, vocalist Ursula Dudziak.

A self-destructive period of self-imposed exile saw him slip into booze-soaked oblivion in 1981. But he courageously bounced back the following year to tackle what stands as the most challenging project of his diverse career—transcribing and recording three Stravinsky ballets for the Japanese label Nippon/Phonogram (Philips). He considers *The Rite Of Spring* from those sessions as his crowning achievement to date.

This year sees Coryell coming full circle. He has dusted the cobwebs off his Super 400 and is playing Wes-inspired guitar once again, backed by a straightahead rhythm section for the first time since 1968. An album is forthcoming on Muse, featuring such stellar support as Billy Hart on drums, George Mraz on bass (that's upright, folks), and Albert Dailey on piano (as in Steinway grand, not Rhodes electric). "I'm going back," he happily declares. "And through the inspiration of George and Billy and Albert, I'm bringing out the roots that I had brought with me to New York back in 1965, which had gotten buried beneath an avalanche of cultural shock and political turmoil and everything else happening at the time. That stuff was buried, but it was never killed off, and now it's coming to the surface again."

This is not to suggest that Coryell will suddenly abandon his electric inclinations entirely. There's an Eleventh House reunion tour in the offing, with an album forthcoming on the Pausa label (featuring Terumasa Hino on trumpet, John Lee on electric bass, Mike Mandel on electric keyboards and synthesizers, and Mouzon on drums). It's either coincidental or curious that Coryell and Mouzon are getting back together at about the same time that Cobham and McLaughlin are preparing for a little get-together of their own. (Just when you thought it was safe to get back into the music . . . *Fusion, Part II*, coming to a concert hall or night club near you.)

And there's more. Coryell will also tour this year in a power

trio setting with Mouzon and boy wonder bassist Bunny Brunel. Meanwhile, he will continue his acoustic work with Urbaniak and with his new guitar duet partner Vic Juris. It may prove to be the busiest, most productive year since his self-searching Vanguard period of the late '60s.

Larry Coryell's fall from grace in 1981 and his subsequent struggle with Stravinsky taught him some invaluable lessons, about humility and about music. And he's emerged all the stronger for it. "By the late '70s, I had gotten successful," he muses. "I did some big tours, did some television . . . *People* magazine stories, and all that horseshit. I got arrogant. The grandiosity set in. I forgot how I had gotten there. I had forgotten about the hard work, that struggle. I got lazy. But I would later come to realize that what I had to do was go back and do all that work again—practice constantly, listen to other people's music, study other people's phrasing, work on learning new tunes and old standards, work on horn lines and piano lines, practice scales. My slogan became G.O.Y.A. (Get Your Ass). I had to work like a madman, especially when I didn't want to work. And it took a lot of humility. It was the beginning of the end of arrogance."

The following interview took place in Greenwich Village the day after Coryell's recording session for Muse at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in Englewood, New Jersey.

Bill Milkowski: How did this straightahead album come about?

Larry Coryell: Ricky Ford had asked me to be on his record for Muse [*Future's Gold*] last year, and during that session Joe Fields of Muse approached me about doing something of my own, straightahead. I hadn't done anything straightahead for years . . . not since I played with Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison on my first Vanguard record back in 1968 [*Lady Coryell*]. So we went into the studio after a week of gigs at the Village Vanguard, and we just did it.

BM: And you're pleased with the results?

LC: Yes. It's as if everything that I've done all these years—with electric, with acoustic, with blues, with classical—was a lead-in to that session I did yesterday. It's remarkably reminiscent of *The Incredible Jazz Guitar Of Wes Montgomery*. I got a similar sound and had a similar sounding rhythm section. Wes had Albert and Tootie Heath and Tommy Flanagan for that album—just guitar and a rhythm section playing blues-oriented jazz. We do an up version of *Confirmation*. I do a minor blues that I call *No More Booze*, just the way Wes would sound on a minor blues. The only other time I came this close to sounding like Wes was on a cut called *Treat Style* from the *Lady Coryell* album. But the difference between that and yesterday's recording session is that almost 20 years later I can play changes much better.

BM: What inspired you to pick up the hollow-body again after not touching it for 11 years?

LC: I have to credit that to Philip Catherine. I was heading in a rock direction when he turned me around to acoustic guitar. He came up to me in 1976 in Berlin and said, "Do you know *Nuages*?" And I had to say no. So he showed it to me. Now here was a nice simple tune with changes. And just going over that tune with him then was the beginning of my reexamination of the guitar. I tell you, for the three years that I worked on and off with him in acoustic duets, that tune went through my head constantly. So I have to credit any good things happening to me musically in the last few years to Philip's influence.

So what happened was . . . Philip and I had been playing Ovation acoustic guitars together since 1976. Suddenly, on a spring tour in 1983, he brought along his old Gibson ES-175, the original jazz guitar that he had owned for years. And it threw me off. He had a nice sound; it was smoother, and he didn't have to hit the strings so hard anymore. But I was so uncomfortable during that whole tour. I was intimidated. But I didn't have the desire to ask him not to play it. When you respect someone so much, you don't tell them what to do. It was rough.



DARRYL PITT

LARRY CORYELL'S EQUIPMENT

Larry Coryell uses different guitars for the various contexts in which he performs. In his straightahead, Wes-inspired setting he plays his old reliable Gibson Super 400 hollow-body jazz guitar, with a touch of stereo chorus from a TC Electronic (Denmark) effects pedal. For his electrified gigs with the Eleventh House, he plays a solid-body Robin guitar, designed by Rockin' Robin Music of Houston, Texas; he uses an Ibanez flanger, an Ibanez analog delay, a Boss volume pedal, and the same stereo chorus from TC Electronic, which also has a built-in pitch modulator and flanger (n.b., he uses no distortion at all these days). Another electric that he uses on occasion is an Aria guitar, which he played recently on Ricky Ford's *Future's Gold*. For strings, he prefers GHS Boomers on the electrics. For all of his acoustic work, he plays an Ovation Adamas with Ovation steel strings. On his upcoming Eleventh House tour he plans to use two Mesa Boogie amps.

LARRY CORYELL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader		with Eleventh House	
PETROUCHKA/FIREBIRD SUITE—Philips	INTRODUCING—Vanguard 79342	AT MONTREUX—Vanguard 79410	
28JPI (Japan)			
SCHEHERAZADE—Philips 30PJ-6	with Philip Catherine		
PLANET END—Vanguard 79367	TWIN HOUSE—Atlantic 50342		
RESTFUL MIND—Vanguard 79359	SPLENDID—Elektra 52068		
RETURN—Vanguard 79426	with John Scofield & Joe Beck		
SPACES—Vanguard 79345	TRIBUTARIES—Arista/Novus 3017		
LADY CORYELL—Vanguard 6509	with Gary Burton		
AT VILLAGE GATE—Vanguard 6573	LITURGY—French RCA FXL1-7101		
CORYELL—Vanguard 6547	DUSTER—RCA 3835		
THE ESSENTIAL—Vanguard 75/76	IN CONCERT—RCA 3985		
BAREFOOT BOY—RCA AYL1-3961	LOFTY FAKE ANAGRAM—RCA 3901		
EUROPEAN IMPRESSIONS—Arista/Novus 3005	A GENUINE TONG FUNERAL—French RCA 42766		
FAIRYLAND—Mega 607	with Sonny Rollins		
OFFERING—Vanguard 79319	DON'T ASK—Milestone 9090		
REAL GREAT ESCAPE—Vanguard 79329	with Ricky Ford		
with Steve Khan	FUTURE'S GOLD—Muse 5296		
TWO FOR THE ROAD—Arista 4156			

But now I see why it was such a very painful tour for me. I had started buying graphic equalizers and sound boosters and things to try and get over, but what it really was all along was that my soul wanted to play my Super 400 again. So when I finally picked it up in July of that tour, I experienced what Philip must've experienced when he went back to his ES-175. It was as if all that time on the acoustic had just been a preparation to go back to the jazz guitar. It's funny how blind we can be sometimes.

BM: Did you find that the style of your playing changed when you switched from electric solid-body to acoustic to electric hollow-body guitars?

LC: Yes. The first thing I discovered was that I had to develop a totally different touch. With the Ovation and with my Hagstrom solid-body or Les Paul Junior I used with Eleventh House, I could really whack away at it. There was a lot of power-picking involved. But with the Super 400 I had to develop a very light, very sensitive touch. So now I have another important bit of information in my creative arsenal—

I've learned that I cannot just play the same way on different kinds of guitars. I've got to really go with the way the instrument is to be played properly. The rules change.

The other thing that I learned when I picked up my Super 400 again was that you don't need to play that fast to improvise over changes. What you need is an organized mind. So what you need to learn are not so much the rapidity of scales or the combination of rapid scales, but you have to learn melody fragments. And that's what I set out to do in the spring of '83 when Philip first went back to his jazz guitar. I started isolating on melody fragments, on ways of playing the chords melodically but still with a lot of technical demands. This is what Philip was doing, so I began emulating the things he played that were attractive to me. Not necessarily on-stage, but afterwards when I would go over the tapes of all our duet performances.

So through him I learned how important it is to pay attention to details, because what this music is about is balance. You gotta be in tune; you gotta have a clear head; you gotta know the music. You can't shuck. I can't, not anymore. What I remember about the late '60s and early '70s is that people were shucking, just playing over vamps. You'd find one scale and . . . fine, no problem. Just shuck your way through a whole gig. Just play as fast as you can on one scale. That's how a lot of the tunes from that time were constructed. "We'll play a C scale for eight bars, then a C# scale for four bars." Easy! No problem. But it's a whole different story to play with intelligence, as Philip does. What I need to do now is continue going in the direction of intelligent playing. That's the struggle. And by intelligent, I mean soulful.

There's something that Andrew White said that contributes to this idea of balance in my philosophy: "If it gets too good, it ain't jazz." This idea of perfection is something else that I discovered within myself that was going to kill me artistically. Until I was willing to take risks and make mistakes, I wasn't going to make any progress. And it was hard to shed my perfectionist tendencies. So now I believe that while it's good to get it as tight as you can, you don't have to make it perfect. This was a real breakthrough for me. And now I find, in listening back to tapes we made at the Village Vanguard before going into the studio to record, that the stuff where I'm struggling is really where my best improvisation comes out. I've learned that the struggle is really where it happens—the striving, not the arriving.

BM: How did the Stravinsky project come about?

LC: Nippon/Phonogram had approached me to do Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in February of 1982. That was relatively easy, and it came out nice. The president of the company just figured, why not take it to the next logical step and do Stravinsky?

BM: How did you get started on such a massive project?

LC: The plan was to do *The Firebird Suite*, *Petrouchka*, and *The Rite Of Spring*. *Firebird* is more accessible, but *The Rite Of Spring* is out there. So how it began was Michal Urbaniak brought me a score to *The Rite Of Spring* and a tape of an orchestra playing it. And he said to me in that beautiful Polish accent: "Good luck!" Of course, I had interpreted this to mean: "You're never gonna play this!" That was in June of 1982, and I was so intimidated that I didn't make any progress on the Stravinsky project until Christmas Day of 1982. So for those six months or so, I would sit there and listen to it and say, "This is impossible," while Urbaniak's words would ring in my ear. And what made it appear impossible was that Nippon/Phonogram wanted me to record all three ballets in two days, digitally with no overdubs or editing. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life.

BM: What was the most challenging aspect of this project?

LC: The technical demands. The shit was so hard to play. All of it was incredibly hard. The original plan was to go through the Stravinsky pieces, find a couple of chord changes and a couple of patterns and blow on 'em . . . forget it! As I started getting

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By Jeff Levenson

BRECKER ON BRASS

"I've never felt that being in the studio has stifled my creativity or made my playing sterile," Randy Brecker confides. "On the contrary, it's given me a first-hand knowledge of different kinds of music."

Brecker's explanation is fairly straightforward. The ubiquitous trumpeter is basically a quiet person, not given to verbal analyses about his place in contemporary music or his influence as a role model among young, aspiring musicians. Brecker's casual, off-the-cuff countenance somehow belies the romanticized image of the hip, versatile, gunslinging studio cat.

Yet Brecker has played on more records than one can imagine, working alongside artists as disparate as James Brown, Paul Simon, Yoko Ono, and Bette Midler to name a few. When called for an assignment, he adapts to any number of styles that may await him. His job is to size up the particular situation, and then deliver his part relying on masterful chops and a tacit awareness of how his trumpet will color the music in question. After 15 years of countless sessions, Brecker has worked with different artistic temperaments, and encountered work methods as varied as the personalities of the leaders who hire him. He enters the studio with the understanding that the goal is to make someone else's record sound good. Fundamentally, he has enjoyed great success making other people successful.

"I've never minded playing other people's music," he explains, "but at the same time I've always strived, on my own time in my own way, to play my music too. We [studio musicians] are trying to maintain a career but make a living at the same

time, and sometimes you have to play various kinds of music to do both; you have to be relatively well-rounded to have a career as a musician. We go in and do it as good as we can. We're not personally involved with the artist; we're personally involved with the music. We're good at being on the spot and putting the right kind of feeling into a certain piece of music. I don't feel any mystique around it. I just feel like a working musician."

Brecker's latest project, a group recording with his wife Eliane Elias on piano, bassist Mark Egan, and drummer Dan Gottlieb, has afforded him the opportunity to shift gears and wax new music he has only recently come to appreciate. "When I first met Eliane and I started listening to the music she brought with her from Brazil," he offers, "it opened my ears. The huge sensibilities of Brazilian music . . . you don't find it anywhere else. It completely turned my life around. I'm really lucky that I can work with her. I'd been at a dead end, and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. It's interesting—if you had heard her music before this project, and had heard my music, you'd know that stylistically we were coming from totally different places. Somehow we've found a lot of common ground to make music together. We've had a huge influence on each other."

Is Eliane's music on this group recording similar to the work she did with Steps Ahead? "Steps was not representative of what she can do as a musician," Brecker says. "She was presented as a piano player in that group, but she didn't get a chance to expose any of her compositional talents, or her vocal abilities, or her ethnic roots. She joined the group when



JAMMIN' IN MANHATTAN: Eliane Elias and Randy Brecker at home.



MITCHELL SEIDEL

it was already formed and had a sound, so she had to meld into what was already there. She replaced Don Grolnick, and since the group had already been together two or three years, she really came in as a sideman. Now she's got the chance to stretch out. We've been exploring the possibilities of voice and trumpet. Our musics really seem to meld together, extracting some elements of Brazilian and American pop, along with jazz."

* * *

Brecker's artistry reflects his exposure to varied idioms. Having spent his childhood in the suburbs of Philadelphia, his first introduction to bebop came from his dad, a jazz buff with a fondness for trumpeters Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, and Dizzy Gillespie. While still in high school, Brecker began working locally, tackling r&b gigs and developing a serious interest in music. When asked about the importance of Philadelphia to his career, and the regional sound that helped shape the styles of numerous jazz musicians, Brecker says, "It definitely had an impact on me, because when I was growing up, there was a great tradition of music that had come out of Philly. I was brought up in that tradition, and the kind of music I heard included Art Blakey, who, at the time I was in high school, had formed the Messengers around Lee Morgan, Jymmie Merritt, and Bobby Timmons. I felt a rich history, although I didn't stay long enough in Philly to really form a clique—maybe I was too young to be accepted as a real musician. But I left right after high school and went to college. There, I established myself."

After arriving at the University of Indiana, Brecker studied with David Baker and played with the big band that won the competition at the Notre Dame Jazz Festival. The winners were sent on a tour of Europe and the Near East, and by then Brecker opted not to return to

school. He remained overseas, then, after a few months came to New York. Shortly thereafter he joined the seminal jazz-rock group Blood, Sweat & Tears, an association that represents an intriguing chapter in his career.

"At the time I had no idea what to expect," he remembers. "I was in New York less than a year. BS&T had an opening for a horn player, and I got it. The group had three or four guys who were the nucleus—former members of the Blues Project—all of whom I knew absolutely nothing about when I joined the band. I was more into soul music and James Brown funk. I had no idea who Al Kooper was, although I became a fan of his later on; he wasn't a great musician at the time, but he had his own concept, and he knew what he wanted. The group was a real structured kind of situation,

and I didn't get to play that much. I didn't particularly like the band, but it opened my ears to a lot of music I wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise. In retrospect I like the album I did with them [*Child Is Father To The Man*]. I think it really did break some new ground, although at the time I was appalled that we didn't record the whole thing live. Just the thought of not doing everything live, spontaneous, really bugged me.

"There's something else. Kooper was heavily involved in the music business, which I looked down on. I was totally idealistic then, and I didn't know from record companies, or how to plan a show, or how to present the music so that people enjoy what you're doing. BS&T was my first exposure to that kind of thing. Ultimately I was more interested in playing jazz, and that's why I left the band to join Horace Silver's group. I remember my last words to them: 'You'll never make it!' Six months later they came out with their second record, and it sold something like 20 million."

* * *

Within a few years Brecker was working with his brother, tenor saxist Michael, and together they helped create the fusion band Dreams. The trumpeter subsequently joined Larry Coryell's Eleventh House, a move especially rewarding since he was the group's only horn player. Membership in Billy Cobham's band followed until Randy and Michael formed their own band, the Brecker Brothers.

During that time Randy entered New York's studio scene and became an in-demand session player, a proficient reader/arranger who understood the demands of playing pop, rock, jazz, funk, r&b, and most, if not all, new fusions that were then taking shape. His experiences led him to conclude that "In making records there's no precise way of doing

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RANDY BRECKER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a co-leader

THE BRECKER BROTHERS—Arista 4037
BACK TO BACK—Arista 4061
DON'T STOP THE MUSIC—Arista 4122
HEAVY METAL BE-BOP—Arista 4185
DETENTE—Arista 4272
STRAPHANGIN'—Arista 9550

with Dreams

DREAMS—Columbia 30225
IMAGINE MY SURPRISE—Columbia 30960

with Larry Coryell

ASPECTS—Arista 4077
with Larry Coryell, Mike Manieri, Warren Bernhardt
BLUE MONTREUX—Arista 4224

with Horace Silver

PURSUIT OF THE 27th MAN—Blue Note LA054-F

with Blood, Sweat & Tears

CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN—Columbia 49619

Randy Brecker has also appeared as a session man on innumerable albums by James Brown, Paul Simon, Yoko Ono, Bette Midler, James Taylor, Barry Gibb, and others.

RANDY BRECKER'S EQUIPMENT

Randy Brecker's trumpet is a gold, lightweight Bach Stradivarius with a medium-large #43 bell. He says, "I've been experimenting with custom mouthpieces made by John Stork of Giardinelli and Joe Shepley."

Stewart Copeland

POLICEMAN ON THE BEAT

By Charles Doherty

If not for Michael Jackson, the Police would've dominated the pop music news this past year. The weeks when *Thriller* wasn't number one, the rock trio's platinum-plus *Synchronicity* topped the charts—an LP that spawned the Grammy-winning smash *Every Breath You Take* and several other chart-busters; their videos were hits as well. Police mugshots graced the covers of dozens of periodicals; they won "best group" honors in readers' polls from *Playboy* to *Rolling Stone* to **down beat**. And the Police have given Jackson some standards to shoot at: their 10-month coast-to-coast-and-then-some tour (which ended in March) has established all-time attendance and gross sales records. An earlier world tour set international marks in such rock meccas as Hong Kong, Cairo, and Bombay. Sorry Mick, but the Police are undeniably the most popular rock group in the world today.

The key to their popularity is self-evident; catchy melodic hooks combined with matinee idol good looks make the teenies scream. Their early hits were hybrids of English pop and reggae beats (heavy on the "3" if you please), a refreshing sound in a moribund pop scene that perked up ears on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet the Police are also darlings of the critics, who call the band simply complex, citing counter-melodies, multi-rhythms, minimalism, ECMish jazz, and sophisticated lyrics dwelling underneath the pop hooks. The *sophisto musos* even have ascribed inapropos gobbledygook like "postalienationist rock" and "polyrhythmic arpeggios" to Police work. But hey, it's only rock & roll, and a lot of people like it.

In late 1976 drummer Stewart Copeland invited Sting (née Gordon Sumner, the charismatic singer/songwriter/bassist he had met earlier in the year) down to London to form a band with him and punk guitarist Henry Padovani. With a self-produced single in-hand, they hit this scene as described by Copeland: "In the beginning of '77, clubs were opening all over the place, packed with kids who wanted to hear the new sound, get into the [punk] scene. There weren't enough bands to go around. It was like, 'You got a bass? Good, we got five gigs.' You scraggled from gig to gig to gig. At first it was just crazy, but then it began to burn out as there were hundreds and hundreds of groups—most of them terrible—so we took the plunge to go to the states."

By that time guitarist Andy Summers had checked the band and muscled Padovani out of the picture. Though they had several modest hits in England, the Police had no product domestically available in the states, and their debut tour was a gamble on a shoestring—opening fresh off the plane at CBGB's in NYC, and club-hopping around the country, just the trio and Kim Turner (then road manager, now co-manager with Copeland's brother Miles) in one truck with two amps and a small drum kit. In the midst of the tour, A&M released *Outlandos D'Amour*, the single *Roxanne* hit, and their rise was

meteoric (cf Detroit: nine people at their 1978 gig, 17,000 in 1983).

Founding father Copeland has been the driving force behind the Police since the beginning. Born in Alexandria, VA July 16, 1952, the youngest of four, at age six months he hit the road with his parents Miles Jr. (head of the CIA operations in the Middle East) and Lorraine (an archeologist), growing up in urban and rural areas of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon ("a great place when the CIA was operating there"). He picked up his first drum kit at age 13 in Beirut, and played in rock bands at the British boarding schools he attended through college, not returning to the states until he was 19. "When I was there [overseas], I always thought I was from here [America]. Then when I got here, I realized that I wasn't from here at all; I'm from a Samsonite suitcase."

He took his suitcase to UC-Berkeley for his final year of college, and was four units away from graduating before he returned to England, becoming a "peripheral musician—road manager, radio dj, journalist," and then joining his first professional band, Curved Air, a folky art-rock outfit with which he recorded a few albums. It was during a Curved Air tour that Copeland met Sting, catching his act at a club: "The group was terrible, but Sting was great."

And a former Curved Air vocalist is now Mrs. Copeland. Sonja Christina and Stewart make their home in England with their children Sven and Jordan. I tracked the Policeman down near the end of their tour at his suite in the Ritz. Polo gear (one of his passions) cluttered the entryway; his "suitcase studio" and Strat sat on the sill of a wide window offering a panoramic view of Lake Michigan and Chicago's Gold Coast; the tall, trim, green-eyed, bleached blond was on the phone.

Stewart Copeland: I have to ring off now and explain the universe to **down beat**.

Charles Doherty: What's the earliest musical memory from your universe?

SC: Wishing I could participate in the *da'ebki*, kind of a dance of Greek descent that is still performed in the Bakaa valley of Lebanon. Arabic music is very much on the downbeat, it's sort of like reggae in many ways; much of our Police rhythm has been described as West Indian inspired when, in fact, it has been more Middle East inspired; but the West Indian influence is there too, picked up from when I was in England—lots of it there on the radio when I was in school. I'm an ethnomusic buff, listen to a lot of it. I like Indian music and Balinese music, but it's more intellectual stuff. It's very difficult to assimilate those and apply the inspiration to Western music. If you try to establish too direct a link, it sounds corny. I don't practice them; I just appreciate them.

CD: Who were your early drum influences?

SC: Mitch Mitchell. Joe Morello. I suppose I'd have to mention Hussim Akbar, the local [Beirut] hotshot. My father brought me up on Buddy Rich; musically, my background at



KIRK WEST/PHOTO WEST

SWING SHIFT: The world's most popular rock band, the Police, on-duty (from left) Sting, Stewart Copeland, Andy Summers.

home was big band jazz from my father and Stravinsky from my mother. In England my father played trumpet with the prewar Tommy Dorsey Band and the wartime Glenn Miller Orchestra. I would like to think that I swing rather than rock.

CD: Any current influences? Favorite drummers?

SC: No, as a matter of fact, there isn't that much inspiring out there. There are some people who are quite good, but no real groundbreakers like Billy Cobham was in his day. I *do* listen to a lot of popular music and jazz.

CD: Who was your first drum teacher?

SC: An Armenian guy, who was a house drummer in Beirut. Later Max Abrams in England. I had lots of teachers in school who taught me rudiments and all that stuff, which is all well-learned and has really done me a lot of good. Although I am basically an instinctive player and not impressed by technique, at least I have the technique to back myself up; I'm not limited by my chops.

CD: So you know how to read music and would recommend that upcoming drummers learn how too?

SC: Yes. Reading is useful for earning a living, but is not really directly related to the talent.

CD: In your school-day bands, what sort of music did you play? What tunes did you cover?

SC: Heavy metal. Hendrix, Hendrix, and Hendrix. I hated the Bee Gees and the Grateful Dead; Jefferson Airplane made me nauseous. I hated just about everything except Hendrix, Cream, and the Doors. I quite liked the Monkees; I liked the Beatles. The Stones? I liked about one tune out of five, but that one tune was always great. They're sort of institutionalized now; I mean, whenever I hear a Stones tune on the radio, I may be bored by them, but it's still kind of a welcome home.

CD: How did you develop your individual sound?

SC: The sound developed itself through the drums. With the Tama drums I'm using, I'm able to tune them very tight and get response, so I can do clever stuff, but they still have a thick sound. It's a matter of getting the sound to cut through. The snare drum is really quite tight, and bright, and quite thin until you get it in a big hall and put it through a big p.a.; the sound of the drums is pretty much like tin cans until you put them through a p.a.

CD: Over the various Police albums, your drumming has lightened up, become less busy, more spacious. Was this a conscious decision?

SC: I think I'm becoming more of a musician as opposed to a drummer, more interested in the gestalt than I am in my own personal chops.

CD: Despite *One World (Not Three)* [a Copeland chops showcase]?

SC: [laughing] Well, that was a jam.

CD: What other instruments do you play?

SC: Piano, guitar, bass, I can fake them all. I mean, I couldn't

sit down and play you a song on any of them, but in the studio I can do the part.

CD: You've said that you want the Police to be entertaining, not introspective. Do you still feel that way?

SC: Well, this word entertaining . . . I want it to be moving; I want the kinetic ritual to be intense.

CD: Do you agree with Sting's statement: "At our best we're a group that says something quite sophisticated in a very simple way"?

SC: Yes. There's many different angles on this group, and the main one, I suppose, is that with all our cleverness, we can state something simple, simply [pause] and movingly; that's the most important thing, the emotion. A lot of bands with a lot of technique overshoot the mark, and it's very difficult not to.

CD: Sting has also said that your most creative material—*Roxanne*, *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic*, *Don't Stand So Close To Me*—are often your biggest hits because the commerciality is accidental, not planned. And you've said that you have two types of ears—professional and emotional. Couldn't your professional ears hear the commerciality in these songs when you were working on them?

SC: It's too subjective for that. I suppose you'd have to say there's a third set of ears for our own material. We've been very fortunate. We can thank the stars above that we've been able to follow our instincts, make music that turns ourselves on, and not even think about the world outside—the world of radio airplay and record sales—and we've been blessed with the right instincts, I guess.

CD: Do Sting and Andy perceive of you as a timekeeper?

SC: Heh, well, somebody's got to keep the time.

CD: You've said that you think in rhythm, conceptualize in rhythm, form word patterns in rhythm. How does this work?

SC: It's actually a game, this whole concept of rhythm and how you can break everything down into rhythm—the passing of time, the movements you make, your verbalizations, and so on. In speech it's not a regular rhythm, rather an interrupted rhythm, but it's still there—like in a typist, if they can type in rhythm, they type more accurately and faster. Rhythm comes into our life in many ways. It's a lighthearted, fanciful theory, but actually, the more I think about it, the more seriously I take it. It's an extrapolation on Dr. Copeland's theories of kinetic ritual. I don't recommend it for other drummers; it's just an interesting thought, much like synchronicity will not actually improve your life, but it's an interesting idea.

CD: You're a very rhythmic drummer; many modern drummers are trying to balance a melodic element with the rhythmic. Will you be adding a more melodic component to your drumming gestalt?

SC: I'm not sure; I mean it's impossible for a drummer to play melodically. On tuned percussion, there is melody, strictly speaking, but on drums there is no melody. If you try to tune your first tom-tom to an E^b, and your second to A, you know, those tonal qualities will never come through the rest of the band. Like if you play your E^b tom-tom against an E Major chord, there won't be any kind of problem, so all this stuff about playing melodically gets me very confused.

CD: You're a very physical player, much more intense, even violent on-stage than is hinted at on your records . . .

SC: As a matter of fact, there's a horrible truth I've come to realize, and it's quite frustrating to me, which is the last three albums—the last two anyway—we've gone into the studio after a time when I haven't been playing for six months. Playing on tour. I just get a lot better, so my playing on-stage is always a lot better than what is captured on record.

CD: So what happened to the live album? Couldn't that catch some of your best playing? Or do you think videos have replaced the live LP?

SC: We're working on it. Everytime we think we're gonna release a live album, we record a new album of original material, and we gotta include some of that, so we wait for the next tour, but *this* time we mean it. I believe you should see the live album out by this summer. We'll use different material for the

album than what is on the videos [*Police Around The World*, the *Showtime* concert]; we'll select from a much broader range of shows rather than just one concert. Bands can still make it without video; it's not a threat, just another tool.

CD: So your best drumming is live?

SC: Yes . . . well, actually my best drumming is on my home demo tapes. Whenever I get home from touring and hit my studio, that's where all the best drumming is.

CD: What do you practice at home? On the road? To warm up with?

SC: For real practice, just to keep my muscles happening the way they should, I practice monotonous grooves, just get into it and stay there. Good for the muscles and a great meditation technique. On the road I practice music theory, just writing notes, scribbling notes, practicing using the musical language with greater facility. Playing gigs keeps my drums happening. Before a show I'll do some calisthenics, shake my hands around.

CD: Andy has said that the Police has hoped to do an album of '50s tunes, things you do at soundchecks, tunes from his teens, stuff like *Summertime Blues*, *Peggy Sue*, Elvis songs. How do you feel about that; they're not songs from *your* teens?

SC: This is an idea that we've passed around; one day we might get to it. We'd just pick some good tunes, like *Wake Up Little Susie*. That's one of my favorites; it's the first tune I ever remembered.

CD: The first three tunes on *Outlandos D'Amour* pretty clearly show the development of the Police sound, from energetic punk rock to the pop-reggae hybrid that was a key to your early success . . .

SC: Sure, from *Next To You*, through *So Lonely*, to *Roxanne* . . .

CD: Did the reggae influence in the band come from you?

SC: It takes two to tango, and three to reggae.

CD: But didn't you teach Sting the bass pattern on *Roxanne*?

SC: Well, not to put too fine a point on it, but this is a story that goes way back, and Sting and I have argued over this, but the actually historical facts are that I lent him some Bob Marley records for a Christmas party, and that was the point when suddenly he started playing reggae bass lines to go with my reggae drum beats. See, if you play reggae drums without the bass lines or the guitar, it sounds like a bossa nova; it just doesn't work; it isn't a rhythm. That's the great thing about reggae—it's an interactive form; no one instrument by itself can play it.

CD: What's the genesis of a Police song?

SC: We each come in with a demo tape, and then we listen to them, and the ones that kind of make our ears prick up—make us think, "Yeah, that could be a Police song"—we work on and try things with, as far as inspiration takes us. The main thing which holds it together, and makes us persevere with it, is the song itself. So as soon as that's together, it's the arrangement around it where all the work comes in.

CD: Do the lyrics only represent the thoughts of the original composer?

SC: To a certain extent, but they also have to represent the feelings of the other two. For instance, *Invisible Sun*—Sting wrote that about Belfast, but to me it's about Beirut. If I disagree with a point that Sting is trying to make [in the lyric], I'll argue with him about it. But we haven't established an ideological stance which Sting then goes away with and composes songs about.

CD: How about some of the collaborative compositions, other than the jams, like *Rehumanize Yourself*, where you wrote the music and Sting the lyrics?

SC: Well, I wrote a song that wasn't about anything in particular; I try to apply myself to lyrics occasionally, but it's not an art form that I really have a lot to say with. You see, Sting has to sing it, so he gets a lot of latitude as far as what he sings.

CD: On the second Police LP you composed three tunes, another in collaboration with Sting, and two were credited to the group. On the latest record it's eight Sting compositions, with one each by you and Andy. You've compared this latter

development to the token Noel Redding tune on a Jimi Hendrix LP . . .

SC: I never should have opened my mouth . . .

CD: Are the Police becoming the Sting Experience?

SC: Not creatively, no. As far as composing materials, Sting writes his lyrics with a song to go around it, and those are good tunes to do. As far as my own composition, I've got my [soundtrack] scores, and I prefer that writing because I don't have to think of a lyric for all the music I write. I don't have to organize it into a song; I have to organize it to a picture. Actually, compositionally I find that more inspiring. And in fact, it's taken a weight off me, trying to write Police songs.

CD: The Police was originally your band. Do you resent Sting becoming the focal point?

SC: It still is my band.

CD: *People* magazine quoted you as saying, "I've gone just about as far as I want as a rock drummer." Is that true?

SC: Did I say that in *People*? When did I ever talk to *People*? As a rock drummer, yes; as a rhythmist, there is still much to explore. Rhythmism is the science of rhythm, the art form of rhythm. There are many rhythmic devices; the drum set is only one. There are drum boxes, electronic devices, there are other ways of using tapes, multi-tracking, to build up rhythms. For most Western musical purposes—that is, jazz, rock, blues, all the forms that use the drum set—you can break rhythm down into three voices, much like in harmony where you have a chord made up of three tones. In rhythm there's a parallel: you have the faster rhythm, the 16th notes—generally coming from a hi-hat or ride cymbal—against a dialog between the bass and the snare. Now you can replace the hi-hat or ride cymbal with any number of rhythmic or percussive things that can play 16th notes; you can exchange roles of the backbeat and the downbeat—you know, the snare drum and the bass drum—switch them back and forth; you can replace the snare drum backbeat with a lot of different devices that can fulfill that function. In other words, constructing the same rhythms with different instruments, either through lots of people doing it at once, or through multi-tracking in the studio, which I prefer 'cause I can be a one-man band.

You need a pulse to drive a song along, or a riff, or whatever the piece of music is; you need rhythm to give it momentum, so it moves forward rather than hanging still. A melody with no rhythm can stay still, which for certain emotional messages is appropriate, but where you have movement, you have rhythm. And there's many, many, many ways of creating that rhythm.

CD: Last month in *down beat* Billy Cobham said he likes his Model T, likes the acoustical physics of position within the drum set. Rather than investing in electronic drums, he likes learning more about the development of drum heads, how the shell reacts to certain kinds of stick sounds . . .

SC: He's speaking aesthetically. Basically, I think he likes the wooden sound and feels alienated by the electronic sound. I don't feel alienated. Many of the electronic drum sounds are overused, but the possibilities are limitless. In fact, you can take acoustic sound, sounds that would not alienate Billy Cobham with his purist ear, and record them digitally and trigger that sound with electronic systems such as the Synclavier, the Emulator, the Kurzweil—which can also learn dynamics, different sound levels. What I'm trying to say is that there are far greater possibilities within the electronic world than there is in just a stick hitting a drum head, [*dreamily*] a whole new world . . .

CD: How did your soundtrack for director Francis Ford Coppola's film *Rumble Fish* come about?

SC: A phone call from Hollywood.

CD: From Coppola?

SC: No, actually his lawyer called my lawyer. I guess he [Coppola] heard something in my music that he liked. He wanted advice on rhythm. I worked very closely with him at first, to develop the concept, then he went off and did the movie and I went off and did the recording, and then we met

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PAUL NAIKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

STEWART COPELAND'S EQUIPMENT

Stewart Copeland's basic gear is Tama and Paiste. "I use Tama because they make the best stuff and also the widest variety of stuff; I like to fiddle around with different shapes and sizes," says Stewart. "And anything that you can smash and hang on a stand, I'll give a try, and Paiste makes the widest variety of targets." His Midnight Blue Tama Imperialstar setup includes a five-inch snare, 22-inch bass drum ("I use the Synare, triggered by the kick drum, to electronically enhance the bass end of the bass drum."), 10-, 12-, and 13-inch rack toms, and a 16-inch floor tom-tom, plus a four-piece set of Octobans. Hardware is all Tama, mainly Titan, with a King Beat pedal. Cymbally speaking, on-stage it's Formula 602 13-inch medium hi-hats (sans Sound Edge) and a 16-inch thin crash, two eight-inch 2002 bell cymbals, two eight- and an 11-inch 2002 splashes, and RUDE 14-, 16-, and 22-inch crash-rides; in the studio Formula 2002 16- and 18-inch mediums, and a 22-inch 602 heavy ride replace the RUDES.

The Tamas are mostly outfitted with Remo Weather King coated Ambassadors, with Emperors on the tom batters, and a black dot on the bass batter. He says, "My studio kit has black dots [Remo CS heads], and they're actually quite cool; I may go back to them on the road." Keeping Copeland cool on-stage is a Zirkon AT90 5,000 BTU air conditioning unit. Sticks? "I can't honestly tell you. I just noticed that they have 'Stewart Copeland' printed on them, so I guess I use the Stewart Copeland model [from Regal]. My mallets have white handles and a clear plastic head, and I break about two a night." Before the first gig on the current tour last summer, informed sources at Drums Ltd. said Copeland's drum roadie, Jeff Seitz ("He's my man from Juilliard, quite a scientist.") picked up a couple of crates of Regal Rock wood-tipped sticks and Mike Baller Lexan #92F mallets.

"I use a little duct [gaffer's] tape for muffling because, I suppose as everyone must know by now, the muffling that is built into the drums is totally useless and should be dismantled completely. I used to wrap my hands in duct tape too, but just last week I found some gloves [Drum Gloves, from Rug Caddy], and they're pretty neat, but they haven't got it quite right [for me] yet; at least someone is trying. This, unfortunately, is what happens after two or three gigs [holds up a pair with a worn-out thumb web on the left hand].

"I have DeltaLab, AMS, and Roland 2000 digital delays, triggered by on/off pedals next to my hi-hat for certain effects, that are attached to the different drums; the soundman has a list of what drums to put through at what times. I tried double-bass drumming when I was with Curved Air, but I found it

messed up my playing, and I can now get the same effect with delay. So I've been using the delays for years and years, but I keep checking out the new ones. See, with longer delay times, you lose the high ends; but now the chips are getting smarter, so you can maintain the high end over longer delays.

"I also have a whole percussion rack with a Tama Gong bass, timbales, bongos, xylophone, tuned percussion, bells, gongs, cup chimes—the whole Paiste array. For three or four numbers—*King Of Pain*, *Wrapped Around Your Finger*, the best is *Walking In Your Footsteps*—Mr. Oberheim takes over [the Oberheim DMX programmable digital drum machine] while I'm on the rack. It's a starring role for him, really, and quite complex—not just rhythm, he plays fills and all. It's my programs, with Mr. Oberheim's sounds running through a custom-built signal-boost device that triggers the Simmons electronics, so it's a combination of the Oberheim and Simmons drum sounds that comes out of the speakers. And I'm looking for new sounds to be triggered—everyone's using the Simmons programs now. At home I have an Electro-Harmonix device [an Instant Replay] that can record sounds, sort of like a one-note Fairlight. You make a noise into a mic, hit a pad, and the noise comes back. I just haven't had a chance to figure it out yet."

On the road Copeland figures out his new charts on his "suitcase studio"—a Yamaha HandySound HS-501 polyphonic mini-synth, a Casio PT20 monophonic mini-synth (that also plays chords), a BOSS Dr. Rhythm, the Scholz Rockman (for studio effects), a Fostex X-15 Multi-tracker cassette recorder, Sanyo C mini-monitor speakers, and Sony headphones, plus a Fender Stratocaster for that dose of heavy metal.

STEWART COPELAND SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader
RUMBLE FISH SOUNDTRACK—A&M
 6-4983
*KLARK KENT: MUSIC MADNESS FROM
 THE KINETIC KID*—IRS 70600
with Curved Air
LIVE—BTM 5001

with the Police
OUTLANDOS D'AMOUR—A&M 4753
REGGATA DE BLANC—A&M 4792
*ZENYATTA MONDATT*A—A&M 4831
GHOST IN THE MACHINE—A&M 3730
SYNCHRONICITY—A&M 3735

Stewart Copeland also appeared with Curved Air on *Air Borne* (BTM) and *Midnight Wire* (RCA), neither of which are still in print.

JOHN GILMORE

Three Decades In The Sun's Shadow

BY JOHN DILIBERTO



At first it's easy to miss John Gilmore amidst the spectacle of Sun Ra and his Arkestra. He sits anonymously in the five-man reed section, at least as anonymously as one can be while wearing a space tunic and pyramid hat. Gilmore's rich, dark skin is pulled taut across high cheekbones, and his eyes bear the look of a timid dog. There's nothing to attract one's attention as he runs through the ensemble passages with a nonchalant ease or riffs impassively while the other members solo. In recent years he simply waits until Sun Ra leads the Arkestra into one of their Fletcher Henderson or Jelly Roll Morton swing numbers. Then his demeanor instantly changes. He stands up, hunched over his tenor saxophone, and appears to grow larger as charred blues scales cut sideways through the full swing of the 18-piece Spaceage Jetset Solar Arkestra.

Later in the night, as the rhythms become freer and Ra's orchestrated chaos grows wilder, Gilmore is screaming through his horn. His playing becomes more anguished and impassioned. As the solo accelerates, you realize how the great saxophonists use their entire body and being just to make a single tone. Notes are stretched beyond tolerance. When you think he has no place left to go and has bottomed out in the pit of his stomach, he slices it open to the bare bones and still plunges onward, probing the inner reaches of his psyche.

John Gilmore is a mystery to many. Except for a one-year hiatus, he has remained with Sun Ra for 29 years. His musical growth and outlook on life are inextricably entwined with the carnival of Sun Ra's Arkestra. But there was life before Sun Ra for Gilmore, at least life on this planet. "I arrived on the planet in

Mississippi in a place called Summit," deadpans Gilmore. "I stayed there for about two years or so. That was about 1931, they say. I left there when I was a little boy and moved to Chicago. I was raised in Chicago from the age of two on up."

Gilmore is in his 53rd year now and was having problems with his teeth when we talked, but he doesn't seem to be losing any of his ability. Off-stage, he's friendly and animated. He speaks in a deep, articulate voice and peppers his speech with Ra jargon like "arrived on the planet." Sun Ra's hold over his musicians borders on cultish, but Gilmore spoke freely, even as the sounds of Ra's organ drifted through the window of the shabby rowhouse that Gilmore and several band members share with Sun Ra in Philadelphia's Germantown section.

Chicago, in addition to being the home of Sun Ra, was also a hot-spot for the sounds of bebop. The disciples of Charlie Parker inspired Gilmore's own saxophone playing. "Every other Sunday at the Persian Ballroom, he [Parker] would come," he recalls gleefully. "There'd be Lester Young, Dex, Fats Navarro, Leo Parker. Johnny Griffin was leading a group at that time, the baby band. He must've been 18, but he looked so little and so young, and he had a baby band. They were bad! Eugene Wright had the Dukes of Swing; they would be cookin'—George Freeman, Von Freeman, Alec Johnson. That's the environment that I came up in."

Even in high school Gilmore was trading sounds with the innovators and shapers of jazz in the '60s and '70s. "Well, I went to DuSable High School," recalls Gilmore, "and I played clarinet in the high school band along with Pat Patrick,

Andrew Hill, Paul Gusman, and a bunch of cats who were graduating when I got there, like Von Freeman. Johnny Griffin had just gotten out when I got there. It was a nice scene. Leroy Jenkins was playin' flute and alto—he didn't play violin at that time. And Andrew Hill played mellophone; he didn't play piano then. Richard Davis was there. Those were the kinds of people that I came up with." One can only imagine what changes John Philip Sousa marches endured in this Chicago school.

* * *

Gilmore's incendiary style developed early and has often been cited as an influence on John Coltrane and an entire generation of saxophone free-blowers in the '60s. Gilmore traces his own genesis and his meeting with Coltrane to the same concert. "He heard me play against this group, Willie Bobo's group, one night in Birdland," Gilmore reflects. "What really happened was that I couldn't play with them so I had to play against them. They were swingin' a different way, and I was from Chicago, and I was swingin' another way. They were swingin' the New York way, and neither one of us was gettin' together. I had been comin' down to Birdland for four months to play, and this was the first time they'd let me on, 20 minutes before four o'clock. I was gettin' ready to sound like an ass, and I had to think real fast about what I could do to make myself better with what they were doin'. So I played some stuff that was *counter* to what they were doin', and it worked out perfectly."

It worked out so perfectly that, according to Gilmore, Coltrane, who was in the audience, had what might be called a revelatory experience. "It shook Trane up," laughs Gilmore. "He came running

from the back of Birdland screaming through the whole joint. All the musicians were lookin' at me, too, because they had never heard anyone play like that either. He [Coltrane] thought about what that dude was doin'. Was it valid? They didn't know or not. He came from the back screamin', and they all softened up and said 'Hey, that sounds good.' So I took Trane in the back—he made me take him back, in fact—and I played for him to show him what I was doin'. I played for about five or six minutes, and he just looked at my fingers and said, 'Hey, I like that.' I saw him years later, and he said of all the cats whose ideas he borrowed from, he never got tired of mine. He told me that at the Village."

Who came first probably isn't that important. Certainly John Coltrane's style was an embodiment of several influences, all of which he transcended, but the influences of Gilmore are evident in the soaring scalar runs, deft rhythmic shifts, and the hell-bent, heaven-sent, eyeballs-in-the-back-of-the-socket passion that inform both of their best works. "I listened to John Gilmore kind of closely before I made *Chasin' The Trane*, too," Coltrane readily admitted to Frank Kofsky in his book *Black Nationalism And The Revolution In Music*. "So some of the things on there are really direct influences of listening to this cat, you see."

Gilmore also shares with Coltrane some playing time with Miles Davis. "In fact," Gilmore remembers, "I was actually rehearsing with Miles before Coltrane ever got with him. Me, Andrew Hill, Phil Thomas, and Wilbur Ware were in Miles' group years before he even knew Coltrane. That's why, when Miles came to Chicago and I sat in with him, I knew the numbers as well as Trane. I just kind of went up and played. In fact, it kind of messed Miles up because I did so good, and Trane just moved to the back-ground and listened. But after I came off, he said, 'Man you sure played nice; you play nice horn.' We never opened up on a gig. We performed one day down at the Flame Lounge, just a bunch of cats up jammin'. Miles came in and hollered 'Alright, all of you get off the stage. Get down!'"

Gilmore laughs fondly at the recollection. "It was terrible. Miles made everyone get off the stand. It was mean! That would've been a bad group, Andrew, Phil, and me. Those cats were mean, but it never happened."

Gilmore has few regrets about his missed opportunities with the likes of the volatile Miles Davis. "He couldn't even get out of his hotel room," laughs Gilmore. "He didn't have the money to pay his hotel bill. That was one of the reasons why we never opened on a gig." It was with Sun Ra that Gilmore was destined to find his style and a circumscribed sort of renown.



CIRCA LATE '50s: The Herman "Sonny" Blount Octet, a.k.a., *Le Sun Ra & His Epic Cosmic Stellar Swing Myth Science Blue Universe Interplanetary Transgalactic Astro Infinity Solar Research Spaceage Jetset Arkestra*; (from left) Pat Patrick, Julian Priestler, Sun Ra, John Gilmore, Dave Young, Bob Barry, Richard Evans, Jim Hearndon.

When Gilmore first joined Sun Ra, he didn't discern any difference between what he had been playing, "Charlie Parker bebop," and what Sun Ra was doing. "We were playin' a whole lot of his arrangements. It was mostly standards, and every now and then he'd throw in one of his, but it was mostly standards, and I knew most of those anyway."

Sun Ra had only recently emerged from Fletcher Henderson's group, in which he played during the last years of the big band leader's life. Gilmore joined him in the early '50s when Ra was still backing other artists at the Club D'Lisa. "We played for people who came to see Dakota Staton and Sarah Vaughan and people like that with a band behind them. We worked at Budland, which was Chicago's Birdland. We had a good band. Our band was tight, and we could read anybody's music. They'd bring in their music, and we'd play it right down and never had any dissatisfied acts, because we always played their music better than anybody else could play it. We played for Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, Jo Jo Adams. We backed up any act, and we were a show in ourselves. Everybody that came to town would be lookin' for us, from Ornette Coleman, Sarah Vaughan, Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins. One day Ray Charles came in and said 'I can't see those cats, but they sure are cookin'.' And a lot of them brought our ideas back to New York with them. I heard a lot of ideas that Sun Ra played turn up on records. But they would do that to Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, too.

Nobody could hope to steal the sound of the Sun Ra Arkestra as it developed towards the late '50s. Sun Ra took bebop and swing and bent and twisted them into a hyper-elliptical continuum. It was

simultaneously a music of total discipline and nearly anarchic freedom. Ra demanded then, as he does now, almost 30 years later, total commitment by his musicians to his concept, a combination of Egyptian mythology, science fiction, voodoo, and black culture in a circus of sound and movement.

The Arkestra has grown from a handful of musicians to its current 18 pieces plus dancers. The Arkestra is Sun Ra's pulpit from which he preaches his sermons of global doom, spacetime continuums, racial injustices, and life on his home planet, Saturn. Ra's pulpit is also a formidable sound machine whose musicians are scouting the outer reaches of sound. Ra has managed to attract some of the finest musicians to his cause, including Pharoah Sanders, Clifford Thornton, Julian Priestler, Marshall Allen, Ronnie Boykins, and Pat Patrick. But it is Gilmore who has remained with Sun Ra the longest.

It wasn't until six months after joining Ra that Gilmore realized he was into something different. "We were playing this number, *Saturn*," he recalls in awe, "and I really heard it for the first time. I heard it, and that's when I knew—I knew I wasn't just up there playing. I said, this cat is somewhere else. I could hear those intervals. But at first I was just reading them, doing my job, playing the notes, and playing them properly. But I really didn't have a concept of hearing what he was doing, how stretched out it was, until six months later, and then I really heard it."

Just what "it" was that Gilmore heard is difficult for him to describe. "The intervals and rhythmical figures were different from those of anybody else I had ever played with," he explains. "It was just different." It only got more different as



BILL SMITH

JOHN GILMORE'S EQUIPMENT

John Gilmore's equipment is all vintage jazz material, tempered in the rings of Saturn. On Earth he's usually seen in the company of a Selmer tenor sax with a Berg-Larsen metal mouthpiece. On occasion he plays Buffet clarinet and bass clarinet and Gemeinhardt flute. He's sometimes sighted behind Slingerland drums and Zildjian cymbals (as pictured above, center). His reeds are out of this world.

JOHN GILMORE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

with Sun Ra

FEATURING PHAROAH SANDERS AND BLACK HAROLD—Saturn 165
 UNIVERSE IN BLUE—Saturn 200
 FATE IN A PLEASANT MOOD—Saturn 202 (Impulse 9270)
 INTERSTELLAR LOW WAYS—Saturn 203
 SUPER-SONIC JAZZ (SOUNDS)—Saturn 204 (Impulse 9271)
 JAZZ IN SILHOUETTE—Saturn 205 (Impulse 9265)
 OTHER PLANES OF THERE—Saturn 206 (Impulse 9293)
 VISIT PLANET EARTH—Saturn 207
 SECRETS OF THE SUN—Saturn 208
 THE MAGIC CITY—Saturn 402 (Impulse 9243)
 ART FORMS OF DIMENSIONS TOMORROW—Saturn 404 (Impulse 9294)
 WHEN ANGELS SPEAK OF LOVE—Saturn 405
 THE NUBIANS OF PLUTONIA—Saturn 406 (Impulse 9245)
 ANGELS AND DEMONS AT PLAY—Saturn 407 (Impulse 9242)
 COSMIC TONES FOR MENTAL THERAPY—Saturn 408 (Impulse 9291)
 WE TRAVEL THE SPACEWAYS—Saturn 409 (Impulse 9292)
 DEEP PURPLE—Saturn 485
 STRANGE STRINGS—Saturn 502
 ATLANTIS—Saturn 507 (Impulse 9239)
 HOLIDAY FOR SOUL DANCE—Saturn 508
 SUN SOUND PLEASURE—Saturn 512
 CONTINUATION—Saturn 520
 MY BROTHER THE WIND (VOL. I)—Saturn 521 (Impulse 9289)
 THE NIGHT OF THE PURPLE MOON—Saturn 522 (Impulse 9287)
 MY BROTHER THE WIND (VOL. II)—Saturn 523
 BAD AND BEAUTIFUL—Saturn 532 (Impulse 9276)
 DISCIPLINE 27—Saturn 538
 SOME BLUES BUT NOT THE KIND THAT'S BLUE—Saturn 747
 DISCO 3000—Saturn CMI78
 SOUL VIBRATION OF MAN—Saturn 771
 TAKING A CHANCE ON CHANCES—Saturn 772
 DARK MYTH EQUATION VISITATION—Saturn 1272
 AND HIS ARKESTRA—Saturn 1981
 I, PHAROAH—Saturn 6680
 SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW—Saturn 7877
 AND HIS COSMIC SWING ARKESTRA—Saturn 7976
 SECRETS OF THE SUN—Saturn 9954
 AURORA BOREALIS—Saturn 10480
 SLEEPING BEAUTY—Saturn 11179

SPACE PROBE—Saturn 14200
 AND HIS OUTER SPACE ARKESTRA—Saturn 18144
 SOUND MIRROR—Saturn 19782
 MEDIA DREAM—Saturn 19783
 WHAT'S NEW—Saturn 52375
 DISCIPLINE 99—Saturn 61674
 GOD IS MORE THAN LOVE CAN EVER BE—Saturn 72579
 SUB-UNDERGROUND—Saturn 92074
 NIDHAMU—Saturn 77771
 HORIZON—Saturn 1217718
 THE ANTIQUE BLACKS—Saturn 81774
 OMNIVERSE—Saturn 91379
 ON JUPITER—Saturn 101679
 THE INVISIBLE SHIELD—Saturn 144000
 MY FAVORITE THINGS—Saturn 1014077
 A FIRESIDE CHAT WITH LUCIFER—Saturn Gemini 19841
 CELESTIAL LOVE—Saturn Gemini 19842
 PATHWAYS TO UNKNOWN WORLDS—Impulse 9298
 ASTRO BLACK—Impulse 9255
 IT'S AFTER THE END OF THE WORLD—MPS 20748
 SPACE IS THE PLACE—Blue Thumb 41
 SOMEWHERE THERE—Polydor 2460106
 LANQUIDITY—Philly Jazz 666
 OF MYTHIC WORLDS—Philly Jazz 1007
 UNITY—Horo 12/20
 OTHER VOICES, OTHER BLUES—Horo 23/24
 NEW STEPS—Horo 25/26
 SUN SONGS—Delmark 411
 SOUND OF JOY—Delmark 414
 THE FUTURISTIC SOUNDS OF . . .—Savoy 12169
 HELIOCENTRIC WORLDS OF . . . (VOL. I)—ESP 1014
 HELIOCENTRIC WORLDS OF . . . (VOL. II)—ESP 1017
 NOTHING IS . . .—ESP 1045
 NUITS DE LA FONDATION MAEGHT (VOL. I)—Shandar 10.001
 NUITS DE LA FONDATION MAEGHT (VOL. II)—Shandar 10.003
 THE SOLAR MYTH APPROACH (VOL. I)—Affinity 10
 THE SOLAR MYTH APPROACH (VOL. II)—Affinity 76
 COSMOS—Inner City 1020
 LIVE AT MONTREUX—Inner City 1039
 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUN—Sweet Earth 1003
 PICTURES OF INFINITY—Black Lion 30103
 STRANGE CELESTIAL ROADS—Rounder 3035
 SUNRISE IN DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS—hat Hut 17
 NUCLEAR WAR—Y RA 1

with Andrew Hill
 ANDREW!—Blue Note 84203
 COMPULSION—Blue Note 84217

with Pete LaRoca
 BLISS—Muse 5011

with Dizzy Reece
 DIZZY REECE/JOHN GILMORE—Futura 16

with McCoy Tyner
 TODAY & TOMORROW—Impulse 63

with Clifford Jordan
 BLOWING SESSIONS—Blue Note LA521-H2

with Paul Bley
 TURNING POINT—IAI 373841

with Art Blakey
 'S MAKE IT—Limelight EXPR '022

with Elmo Hope
 HOPE AT RIKERS ISLAND—Chiaroscuro 2009

with Freddie Hubbard
 THE ARTISTRY OF . . .—Impulse 27

This is as complete a Gilmore discography as we could assemble. We are interested in any corrections or additions. Please send them to Charles Doherty, Managing Editor, **down beat**, 222 W. Adams, Chicago, IL 60606.

the Arkestra progressed.

Joining any large ensemble requires a sublimation of ego to the will of the orchestra leader, be it Sun Ra, Duke Ellington, or Count Basie. But being in the Arkestra is an entire lifestyle, centered on Ra's music, his cosmology, and a chronic lack of money. Many creative artists rankle at even the most collective groups, let alone one in which a leader has such an overwhelming persona. That's why so few jazz or rock groups stay together for long. But Sun Ra exerts a pull upon certain personalities of whom Gilmore is one. "That's the only way," Gilmore suggests. "Everybody can't be a leader. A lot of times you might want to do something, and the leader tells you not to, and you do it anyway; you don't need him. Sun Ra will tell you, 'You don't need me. If you want to lead yourself, then I'm not your leader.' That makes sense, right? If you're not gonna do what he says, you might as well not be in his orchestra. Go somewhere else, and do whatever you want to do."

That's just what Gilmore did for a brief stretch in 1963-64. The Arkestra, which had been in New York for a few years by then, was still laboring in a twilight obscurity, applauded by musicians, critics, and those on the inside of the avant-jazz scene, but unknown outside this small circle. "It was gettin' kind of frustrating," Gilmore remembers ruefully. "I'd been walkin' around New York, and I wasn't working anywhere, and half the cats were out there playin' my ideas. I said, what is this? Here I am not workin', and they're workin', and they're stealin' my ideas. So Lee Morgan knew me and recommended me to Art Blakey. I was just frustrated at the time, and I had to make some kind of move. I couldn't see myself gettin' anything, anywhere. All I could see was these cats imitating me, and I didn't have a quarter in my pocket."

Gilmore didn't exactly burn a hole in that pocket with all the money he made that year, but he did most of the recordings he would wax outside of the Arkestra. There were sessions with Andrew Hill, Paul Bley, McCoy Tyner, Philly Joe Jones and Elmo Hope, Lee Morgan, Curtis Fuller, Pete LaRoca, and Freddie Hubbard. He proved that he could play straight-ahead bop, tight arrangements, and free improvisation. Of course, Gilmore doesn't think he had anything to prove. "I don't think about things like that," he claims. "I don't have time to worry about what they think. All I can do is try and advance on my instrument, and they can think whatever they want. That's on them."

In Sun Ra's Arkestra all music is possible. After charting the limits of collective improvisation in the '50s and '60s, Ra has turned around and gone back to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

DINAH WASHINGTON

A SLICK CHICK (ON THE MELLOW SIDE): THE RHYTHM & BLUES YEARS—Emarcy 814 1841: *EVIL GAL BLUES*; *I KNOW HOW TO DO IT*; *SALTY PAPA BLUES*; *HOMeward BOUND*; *OO-WEE-WALKIE-TALKIE*; *THAT'S WHEN A WOMAN LOVES A HEEL*; *A SLICK CHICK (ON THE MELLOW SIDE)*; *POSTMAN BLUES*; *WALKIN' AND TALKIN'*; *RESOLUTION BLUES*; *RECORD BAN BLUES*; *LONG JOHN BLUES*; *GOOD DADDY BLUES*; *BABY GET LOST*; *I ONLY KNOW*; *IT ISN'T FAIR*; *I'LL NEVER BE FREE*; *I WANNA BE LOVED*; *I WON'T CRY ANYMORE*; *WHEEL OF FORTUNE*; *TRouble IN MIND*; *NEW BLOWTOP BLUES*; *FAT DADDY*; *TV IS THE THING THIS YEAR*; *I DON'T HURT ANYMORE*; *DREAM*; *TEACH ME TONIGHT*.

Personnel: Washington, vocals; (on cuts 1-4)—Lionel Hampton, vibes, drums, piano; Joe Morris, trumpet; Rudy Rutherford, clarinet; Arnett Cobb, tenor saxophone; Milt Buckner, piano; Vernon King, bass; Fred Radcliffe, drums; (on cut 5)—Gerald Wilson, Snooky Young, trumpet; Melba Liston, James Robinson, trombone; Clyde Dunn, Vernon Slater, tenor saxophone; Jimmy Bunn, piano; Red Callender, bass; Henry Green, drums; (on cuts 6-8)—Tab Smith, alto saxophone; Frank Galbraith, Russell Royster, trumpet; Johnny Hicks, tenor saxophone; Larry Belton, baritone sax; Red Richards, piano; Johnny Williams, bass; Walter Johnson, drums; (on cut 9)—Rudy Martin, piano; unknown guitar, bass; (on cuts 10, 11)—Cootie Williams, Bob Merrill, trumpet; Rupert Cole, alto saxophone; William Parker, tenor saxophone; Mundell Lowe, guitar; Arnold Jarvis, piano; Leonard Swain, bass; Sonny Payne, drums; (on cut 12)—unknown clarinet, guitar, bass, drums; (on cuts 13-18)—Teddy Stewart, drums; George Hudson, trumpet; Rupert Cole, Ernie Wilkins, alto saxophone; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; James Foreman, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; (on cut 19)—Jimmy Carroll Orchestra; (on cuts 20-21)—Jimmy Cobb, drums; Keter Betts, bass; Wynton Kelly, piano; Ben Webster, Wardell Gray, tenor saxophone; unknown alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, trumpet, trombone; (on cuts 22-24)—Cobb, drums; Betts, bass; Kelly, piano; Jackie Davis, organ; Paul Quinichette, tenor saxophone; Candido Camero, bongos; (on cuts 25, 26)—Hal Mooney Orchestra; (on cut 27)—unknown big band.

★★★★★

Dinah Washington was the greatest of Billie Holiday's disciples, an imperiously brilliant chanteuse whose smoky, bittersweet voice was as universally appealing as Edith Piaf's. Yet, for the better part of her too-short career, her popularity was restricted to the black community by narrow-minded radio and record company policies. Although she was a fixture on the rhythm & blues charts from their inception in 1949 (when *Billboard* discarded its "race" rubric), it was not until 1959 that she crossed over into the pop listings with *What A Difference A Day Makes*.

A Slick Chick (On The Mellow Side) is a definitive compilation of Dinah's early singles, from her first solo sessions in 1943—originally produced for the Keynote label by Leonard Feather—through her postwar Mercury hits.



omitting only the Apollo sides she cut in the mid-'40s. Initially cast as a blues singer, she quickly blossomed into a vocal jack-of-all-trades, often assigned to cover pop and even country & western material for the r&b market. She returned to the blues frequently and with consistent success, but found her forte in soaring ballads that best displayed her magnificently shaded gospel vibrato.

Born in Alabama, raised in Chicago, Dinah toured as a church singer before winning an amateur contest at the Regal Theater at the age of 15. She interrupted her budding secular career for a stint with gospel pioneer Sallie Martin, then returned to night club work in Chicago. Discovered at Garrick's Stage Bar, she joined Lionel Hampton's band in 1943 and stayed for two years, but was featured on only one of Hampton's records, *Blowtop Blues*. Meanwhile, she cut the two Keynote discs—four sides in all, of which three were blues—with a Hampton-led septet that included Milt Buckner and Arnett Cobb.

The Keynote material, all written by Feather, was in the proto-r&b mold of Lil Green's slightly earlier recordings, but the arrangements were more swingingly urbane, with tenorman Cobb and clarinetist Rudy Rutherford supplying several superb solo interludes. The 19-year-old Washington, not yet in her prime, was already a convincing blues shouter with a distinctively dusky lilt, a gift for artless phrasing, and a luminous high register. Of the dozen tunes she subsequently waxed for Apollo, nearly all were blues, with such novel exceptions as *Me Voot Is Really Voot* and *Me Voot Is Boot*.

Having signed with Mercury, she continued to sing blues and jive songs, but with a velvety eminence that set them apart from the typical jump fare of the day. Three tracks from the same 1946 session with the Tab Smith Orchestra illustrate her range: *That's When A Woman Loves A Heel* is an affecting lament in Billie Holiday style; *A Slick Chick (On The Mellow Side)* is a romping novelty that features a marvelous alto solo by Smith; and *Postman Blues* is an unexceptional 12-bar vehicle that

Dinah enlivens with her now-assured command of the idiom. She cut a string of blues numbers through the late '40s with such ensembles as the Cootie Williams Orchestra, culminating in the number-one-selling *Baby Get Lost* in 1949, after which two previously recorded items, *Good Daddy Blues* and the boldly risqué *Long John Blues*, were released and also climbed the charts.

From then until the rock & roll explosion of the mid-'50s, Dinah's records dominated the r&b Top 10. A pair of torchy ballads with the Teddy Stewart Orchestra, *I Only Know* and *It Isn't Fair*, showcase her artistry at its peak, but she had equal commercial success with pop fluff like *Wheel Of Fortune*, the blue chestnut *Trouble In Mind*, and the topical *TV Is The Thing*. Her version of Hank Snow's *I Don't Hurt Anymore*, blandly accompanied by the Hal Mooney Orchestra, anticipated the c&w stylings of Ray Charles, but it was to be another five years before she attained mass acceptance.

Too mature for rock audiences, Dinah turned to the cabaret circuit and the LP market with more sophisticated material, a sample of which is on another Emarcy two-fer, *Dinah Washington: The Jazz Sides*. By the early '60s she had regained her prominence on both r&b and pop charts with lushly orchestrated hits like *This Bitter Earth* and *Unforgettable*, but her renaissance was brief: on December 14, 1963 she died of a combination of pills and alcohol, at the age of 39. —Larry Birnbaum

SPHERE

FLIGHT PATH—Elektra Musician 60313-1: *IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU*; *PUMPKINS' DELIGHT*; *PLAYED TWICE*; *EL SUENO*; *CHRISTINA*; *FLIGHT PATH*.

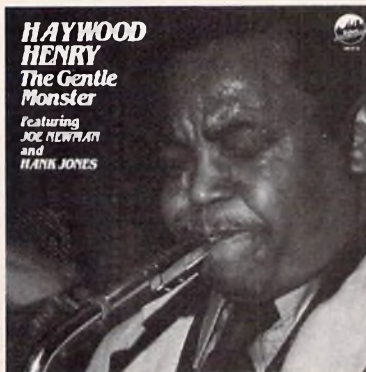
Personnel: Charlie Rouse, tenor saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Buster Williams, bass; Ben Riley, drums.

★★★★★

This band has grown since its first album, *Four In One*, a tribute to Thelonious Sphere Monk.



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RECORD REVIEWS

Its ensemble sound is beautifully proportioned, the quality of writing remains high, and the soloists display mature personalities. Furthermore, the group swings heartily without bashing.

The ensemble sound is a balance among Rouse's hoarse yet mellow tenor, Barron's measured touch and careful shadings, Williams' thick, elastic pulse-across-a-pulse, and Riley's busy, fluid drums. Besides memorable compositions (Monk's *Played Twice*, the Leo Robin/Ralph Rainger standard *If I Should Lose You*, and tunes by three of the quartet's members), the arrangements present a group identity (e.g., the piano/tenor unison on *El Sueno*, the tenor wrapped in a caress of piano chords on *Christina*, and the recurring rhythmic figure that trips through *Lose You*). Everywhere, there is a feeling of textural integrity with buoyancy.

Sphere's originals include Rouse's minor blues *Pumpkins' Delight* (tenor melody in half-time to the rhythm section's faster pace), Barron's title cut (a fast, circling, modal melody) and *El Sueno* (a Bill Evans-like dream-dance from the early '60s), and Williams' *Christina* (a moody ballad, also with a '60s flavor). Rouse's warm tone suits the latter pair of tunes perfectly as well as capturing the angularity of Monk's tune and the tiptoe walk of *Lose You*.

Fine solos abound (dig Barron's clean precision and boppish drive) and assume greater meaning because of the strong writing and group interplay. Riley's beat flies wing-to-wing with Williams' springy lime. This band has a personality and is a welcome acoustic addition to the '80s.

—owen cordle

imitated, but never really duplicated. His smooth comping can sound like an organ—you hardly ever hear the attack on his strings. And his slightly awry soloing, which has graced records by Tony Williams, Jean-Luc Ponty, and Bill Bruford among others, can be totally disarming.

The mini-LP *Road Games* is similar to his independently released full-length album *I.O.U.*, in that the songs showcase the guitarist, with ensemble flourishes and occasional forgettable vocals (here mostly by Jack Bruce). The title track, with Paul Williams in the album's strongest vocal effort, is as close to a rock anthem as Holdsworth has gotten. It's a tight shuffle propelled by the pumping bass of Berlin and some of the guitarist's seemingly effortless solo work. Berlin's chops have never been a question, and on this album he shows off a very supportive side as well. The interplay between Holdsworth and drummer Wackerman on *Was There?* is first rate. Wackerman is exciting and exacting on the traps, but for Holdsworth's group the looser and somewhat frantic kit work of Gary Husband (*I.O.U.*) seemed to work better.

I'm a little surprised that Warner Brothers would release a mini-LP from Holdsworth. It's not as if he's flooded the market with albums, so his fans would surely pay the extra money for a full record. Perhaps most importantly, a full-length LP might have had more direction, more of a solid personality, which *Road Games* lacks. The musicianship is very high quality, but you already knew it was going to be. The compositions themselves suffer from a lack of a central musical idea. *Tokyo Dream*, for example, utilizes sounds that we might associate with the orient, but really goes nowhere. And the solo, even though it's Alan Holdsworth, drags on. His solo on *Three Sheets To The Wind* is achingly etched, and as interesting as it is cannot save that tune from predictability. Holdsworth predictable? *Road Games* has its moments, but try to find *I.O.U.* or *Velvet Darkness*, an Inner City release by Holdsworth and Narada Michael Walden, Alphonso Johnson, and Alan Pasqua.

Wayne Johnson's *Grasshopper* is a spry electric jazz effort with enough catchy melodies to make a splash on progressive radio. The guitarist uses the same band as on his 1979 Inner City debut, *Arrowhead*, and the material is similar too—pop-jazz played with heart, and more than a few musical risks taken.

Johnson will not escape comparison to Pat Metheny, in both guitar style and compositional bent. There are folk inflections in much of his guitar work, as on the upbeat title song. *Three Man Junta* displays the keen sense of musical interaction between these players. Transitions are played smoothly, yet there are some almost reckless turns taken too. Drummer Berg displays a light touch on the cymbals, and can heat up in an instant for a song's final kick. He's a very emotional player, somewhat akin to Bob Moses. On *Ramble Scamplin* Johnson paints a chordal wash, then settles back into a nice Beatle-esque break. He plays chorded solos quite a bit of the time, and uses guitar synthesizer to get some interesting sounds—at one point he does an excellent impersonation of a steel drum. *Ojai* is a sort of

ALAN HOLDSWORTH

ROAD GAMES—Warner Brothers 23959-1B:
THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND; ROAD GAMES; WATER ON THE BRAIN-Pt. II; TOKYO DREAM; WAS THERE?; MATERIAL REAL.

Personnel: Holdsworth, guitar; Jeff Berlin, bass; Chad Wackerman, drums; Jack Bruce, Paul Williams, Joe Turano, Paul Korda, vocals.

★ ★ ★

WAYNE JOHNSON

GRASSHOPPER—ITI Records 005:
GRASSHOPPER; THREE MAN JUNTA; RAMBLE SCAMPLIN; MARINA; OJAI; PILGRIMAGE OF A THOUSAND DAYS.

Personnel: Johnson, guitar; Jim Johnson, bass; Bill Berg, drums.

★ ★ ★

STEVE KHAN

EYEWITNESS—Island Records 1018: *WHERE'S MUMPHREY?; DR. SLUMP; AUXILIARY POLICE; GUY LAFEUR; EYEWITNESS (FOR FOLON).*

Personnel: Khan, guitar; Anthony Jackson, bass; Steve Jordan, drums; Manolo Badrena, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Alan Holdsworth is one of today's most respected young guitarists, at least among young guitarists. His tone is one of a kind—

marathon Metheny/Dregs rip-off, and by a trio. It's actually pretty much fun to hear them cover all that ground. Jimmy Johnson, one of L.A.'s hottest new bassists, runs off a very melodic, tasteful, and darting solo that shows why he's in demand. Johnson and his band are not breaking new musical ground, but they've made good use of the vinyl here.

The instrumentation on Steve Khan's *Eyewitness* is similar to that on the other albums reviewed here, except Khan adds a percussionist for flavoring. *Eyewitness* is the most musically open of these records, a straightforward, simple yet challenging LP. The guitarist has changed his compositional approach from his earlier albums like *Arrows* and *Tightrope*. No more playing the head, soloing over the changes, repeating the head, and out. Khan allows much of the music here to happen as it will.

Where's Mumphrey? is a very simple, bare-bones groove. Drummer Steve Jordan pounds out an energetic cowbell beat and some crackling flourishes on the toms. The mix is nice here. The percussion work by Badrena doesn't cover the drummer at all, but works with him and accents his playing. Khan works his way in and out of the action deftly, and Badrena lets out an occasional tribal scream. *Dr. Slump* is a ballad with some interesting interplay in the middle—the song almost does a complete unraveling. Where there is very little afterbeat on *Slump*, the next song sounds almost like it could be the rhythm track for a hit tune by the Police (indeed, its name is *Auxiliary Police*). Anthony Jackson wanders around his fretboard, occasionally leaning into the groove, then backing off. The work Jackson does on his six-string bass on *Eyewitness* cements the action and spurs it.

There's really very little flaunting of chops here. Khan leaves a lot of space for his bandmates, and uses his guitar to suggest ideas and textures for the band to explore, and to create unusual washes. His soloing is somewhere between John Abercrombie and Earl Klugh, a bold sound that knows how to wait. *Guy LaFleur* showcases not only Khan's fluid delay sound, but the togetherness of this rhythm section. Jackson sets some rich tones ringing, Badrena steadies it with shakers, and Jordan gets in his whacks grooving. Khan may be playing, or sitting there enjoying it. This band was caught just as it was opening up, starting to breathe.

—robin tolleson

ARCO IRIS

BLUE PHEASANT—Arco Iris (unnumbered): *ACONCAGUA (AMENECER)*; *CHACARERA DANCE*; *DANAIS*; *BLUE PHEASANT*; *GOB*; *ACONCAGUA (ATARDECER)*.

Personnel: Ara Tokatlian, tenor, soprano saxophone, flute, woodwinds, vocals; Milcho Leviev, electric piano, melodica; John Chiodini, guitar; Julio Ledezma, drums, percussion; Hart Stearns, percussion; Danais Wynnycka, vocals, ocarina.

★ ★ ½

Yma Sumac meets Weather Report seems a not inappropriate way of describing Arco Iris'

“...recognizable in one listen as a classic.”

Village Voice

Charlie Haden *The Ballad Of The Fallen*

“Haden and (arranger Carla) Bley have reunited with the core of the Liberation Music Orchestra to make one of the year's unquestionably great jazz albums. . . . (The) mixture of folk music and jazz storms of sound is the essence of *The Ballad of the Fallen*, a record that is as esthetically sophisticated and fanciful as the original Liberation Music Orchestra was gropingly naive. Suddenly, out of a march or a tango or a cafe waltz or an anthem played like a streetcorner Salvation Army hymn, Don Cherry's trumpet or Dewey Redman's saxophone will wail in vehement freedom or the trombone of Gary Valente will inject raucous, vital comedy.”

Buffalo Evening News

“There isn't space to detail the brilliant orchestrations and solos, but 'La Santa Espina' (The Holy Thorn) is representative of the way folk music and vigorous jazz improvisations are combined. Cherry enters this Catalan fighting song like a bugler calling troupes to battle, then shifts to his characteristically convoluted, gently sputtering abstractions. And underneath it all, Haden plucks tough, bold and tender. Everything fits. There is not cultural shock here. Rooted in a specific context, the music-as-politics transcends geographic and historical boundaries. The integration is complete.”

San Jose Mercury News

“For avid listeners and audio buffs, this new anthology offers a unique musical experience that has been properly reproduced using the digital recording process. . . . The results are uplifting, penetrating and always purposeful. Bley's arranging and the intonations of the individual players create a range of mood swings befitting the solemn nature of the album title and theme.”

Modern Recording and Music

CHARLIE HADEN
THE BALLAD OF THE FALLEN
CARLA BLEY

DON CHERRY
SHARON FREEMAN
MICK GOODRICK
JACK JEFFERS
MICHAEL MANTLER
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RECORD REVIEWS

synthesis of Latin American music and standard jazz and pop approaches. And if there's a note of condescension in this description, it's deserved. The group's music suffers from two deficiencies, neither of them major but which taken together have the result of working against its best impulses. The first, and more serious, is that the song materials—particularly those on the album's first side (the first three listed above)—are often much too slight or simplistic in character to warrant the kind of extended treatment and overblown production they've been given. It's almost as though the group, in unconscious recognition of this, has sought to compensate for the material's inherent weakness by beefing it up through an over-reliance on production techniques. However, as is well known, this rarely if ever works.

Then, there's the related problem of what we might describe as effects overkill. These folks just don't know when to leave well enough alone; virtually all the performances are marred by various kinds of extraneous effects—loud breathing, simulated birdcalls, and other exotic sounds and textures, both vocal and instrumental. If used judiciously, effects can heighten the dramatic impact of a musical work and its performance dynamic, but the heavy-handedness with which Arco Iris goes about it has quite the opposite result. It dilutes or, worse, trivializes their music, compromising whatever integrity it possesses and often turning it into something on the order of, say, the score for a *Ramar Of The Jungle* tv episode. This is less true of *Blue Pheasant* and *Gob*, the most effective performances in the

album, primarily because they are the best synthesis and suffer less from the overuse of effects that mar the other selections.

These two performances boast the most consistently rewarding music in the album, illustrating that when there's something of substance to work with, the group can deliver the goods. Especially impressive are Tokatlian's muscular saxophone work, Chiodini's fluent and inventive guitar pyrotechnics and, of course, Leviev's solid, well-conceived electric piano solos. If all were as gripping as these two extended performances, we'd be dealing with a much stronger and more satisfying album than the flawed one we are. Maybe next time.

—pete welding

ALBERT COLLINS

LIVE IN JAPAN—Alligator 4733: *LISTEN HERE!*; *Tired Man*; *If Trouble Was Money*; *Jealous Man*; *Stormy Monday*; *Skatin'*; *All About My Girl*.

Personnel: Collins, guitar, vocals; A. C. Reed, tenor saxophone, vocal (cut 4); Larry Burton, guitar; Johnny B. Gayden, bass; Casey Jones, drums, background vocal.

★ ★ ★ ½

Bluesman Albert Collins' note-bending Telecaster guitar hovers and attacks, its sound that of a frenzied wasp delivering the sting. A technically restricted player, he makes hoary riffs and runs buzz with new life through that single-stringed pause-prick approach, har-

rowing reverb and, above all, personal reservoirs of unfeigned gusto. When he and the Icebreakers perform their brow-mopping Texas shuffles, there are few groups in contemporary music capable of matching the palpable excitement. At such times one can accept Collins' boast that there "ain't nothin' but the blues."

Collins' sixth Alligator album, part of a Tokyo performance taped a few days before Christmas 1982, gets past introductory on-stage hype and blasts off with an appropriately electrifying version of Eddie Harris' *Listen Here!* The stratospheric high notes and buzzsaw figures Collins hurls at the audience warms them for what follows. *Tired Man*, a shuffling Collins original, has guitar pyrotechnics, riffing saxophone courtesy of old-hand A. C. Reed, and a molten groove poured by the bang-up rhythm team; unfortunately, the bandleader's singing and what he sings aren't especially interesting. The slow blues *If Trouble Was Money* finds him in more engaging voice, his from-the-gut pained feeling equaling the lamentation of guitar. Still, the song's a lyrically hackneyed blues complaint, not a wry and delightful Collins saga.

After Reed shouts out *Jealous Man*, which has the stock "crazy about my baby" vocal exchange, Collins pays homage to one-time Texas comrade T-Bone Walker with *Stormy Monday*, a classic done to death by nearly every traveler down the blues road. Happily, there's plenty of spirit evidenced by Collins' pithy guitar and soulful vocals; guitarist Larry Burton and Reed contribute workmanlike solos. The drop-your-jaw awe finally arrives when Collins dramatically winds down *Stormy Monday* and starts up *Skatin'* with funky honky tonk exuberance—the stuff of electric blues fans' dreams. Set closer *All About My Girl*, borrowed from Jimmy McGriff, burns with bassist Johnny B. Gayden nipping at the heels of Collins and Reed. Again, when Albert Collins spins out of control, he mesmerizes the Japanese crowd as he's done countless times before to countless listeners. And will continue to do.

—frank-john hadley

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Personnel: Armstrong, Mutt Carey, trumpet; Kid Ory, trombone; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Lucky Thompson, tenor saxophone; Charlie Beal, piano; Bud Scott, guitar; Red Callender, bass; Zutty Singleton, drums; Holiday, vocals; plus various studio musicians.

★ ★ ★ ★

Sometime in the '30s Louis Armstrong's need to perform suffocated his urge to explore. That would explain the meagerness of interesting new recordings that have surfaced since his

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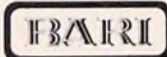
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death in 1971 (compared to the oceanic tides of Ellingtonia still washing ashore). This LP is something of an exception. Once again Louis pays homage to his own past, but he accomplishes it in a fresh context and with such zest that he produces music of more than routine interest.

New Orleans was one of the few motion pictures ever to treat the subject of jazz outside the movie biography genre. It was a disaster, and became one of the first films dumped to television in the early '50, though it was made in only 1947. I recall seeing it on tv once around 1956. I was 13, and most impressed with what I saw, which is more a clue to my extreme ignorance than the film's dramatic or historic qualities. A good deal more music was planned for the film than ultimately made it into the final print. Fortunately though, it got recorded, and the material on this LP brings virtually all of it into circulation directly off the original acetate discs.

Armstrong is heard with an ad hoc group assembled for the picture that includes Kid Ory, Zutty Singleton, Bud Scott, and other veterans. Most of the film's basic numbers heard here (*Endie, Blues Are Brewin', Where The Blues Were Born, Mahogany Hall, Do You Know What It Means*) were recorded for Victor with substantially the same players and are still available. This collection provides alternates to these and adds a number of fresh titles: a pair of sparkling *Dippermouth Blues* (with Lucky Thompson), *King Porter Stomp, Shimme-Sha-Wabble, Milenberg Joys, Tiger Rag*, and a *West End Blues* that sounds drab and mechanical compared to the 1955 *Ambassador Satch* version. For the most part, though, Armstrong plays with splendor and majesty (there's a biting *Basin Street Blues*) and is recorded with excellent fidelity.

There is also the treat of hearing the Armstrong/Billie Holiday duets which separate record affiliations at the time made impossible as commercial releasable performances. Still in good voice, she is heard on *Brewin'* preceding a mountainous trumpet aria from Louis and *Farewell To Storyville* in which Armstrong accompanies her. This is his album more than hers, however, and a significant addition to the Armstrong discography. —john mcdonough

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD.

THIS IS NOT A LOVE SONG—Virgin 529-12:
THIS IS NOT A LOVE SONG; BLUE WATER; THIS IS NOT A LOVE SONG (RE-MIXED VERSION); PUBLIC IMAGE.

Personnel: John Lydon, vocals; Keith Levene, guitars; Martin Atkins, drums.

★★★★★

LIVE IN TOKYO—Virgin 3508: *ANNALISA; RELIGION; LOW LIFE; SOLITAIRE; FLOWERS OF ROMANCE; THIS IS NOT A LOVE SONG; DEATH DISCO; BAD LIFE; BANGING THE DOOR; UNDER THE HOUSE.*

Personnel: Lydon, vocals; Atkins, drums; Louie Bernardi, electric bass; Tom Zvoncheck, keyboards; Joseph Guida, guitar.

★★½

After three years of virtual inactivity while esconced communally in a huge loft in NYC,

RECORD REVIEWS

Public Image offers these two records, one a 12-inch 45 rpm, the other a superbly recorded live concert in Tokyo. Both are full of puzzling twists in the characteristic musical direction of P.i.L., and the focus and intent seem to be the results of an aesthetic cabin fever and an attempt to get their careers back on track more than sheerly musical inspiration.

No doubt that they were haunted by their own earlier successes, placing them at the helm of the trans-avant garde bands of the '80s, with a rhythm section that hit upon the power of funk to give the music an earthy rock bottom—the perfect foundation for John Lydon's non-stop lyrics and Keith Levene's layers of synthesized guitar treatments. Levene's uncanny manipulations of the guitar's sonic possibilities forced listeners to cease waiting for anything approaching a conventional rock guitar—instead one experienced a wash of anguished electricity slithering in and out of P.i.L.'s heterodoxical stance. In a sense, Lydon's inability to edit himself was the locus of Levene's most significant contribution; his solos, in effect, stretched the entire length of the songs, and the resolution of their tension was often in the last few seconds of each piece.

Shortly after they released their studio double LP *Second Edition* (reviewed **db**, 7/80) Jah Wobble and his rubbery bass lines were given

walking papers, David Crowe, never acknowledged as a full-fledged member, was replaced by Martin Atkins' pan-African drumming, and Lydon and Levene began composing pseudo-Arabic melodies with inter-modal harmonies. The result, *Flowers Of Romance*, was a musical and critical success but its intellectualism and umber colorations left P.i.L.'s audience examining their own musical inclinations. Today a plethora of bands white and black fuse funk and rock, plying a vein that P.i.L. first mined. This approach continues to be the conceptual motherlode of the decade.

After leaving England for the United States, the band found themselves in a financial squeeze, unable to afford studio costs without an advance from their record company. For their part, Virgin/Warner Bros. were hesitant to release any loot unless P.i.L. had finished tapes ready. Without a manager, a secure record contract, and armed with a distrust of the record business, Lydon & Co. began pointing suspicious fingers at one another for the situation they were in. Which brings us to the music at hand.

In early 1983 the band finally entered a N.Y. studio to cut a 12-inch disc centered around a single tune, *This Is Not A Love Song*—perhaps the closest thing to straight rock P.i.L. has recorded. Lydon sings a verse, then Levene plays a short chorus, back and forth trading

leads, each time testing the emotional edges of their parts. The band is in top form, at ease in turning the simplest format into a series of searing climaxes that grow to an aching intensity. Also recorded was *Blue Water*—for P.i.L. the usual unusual, a cryptic dirge of vague suicidal inclinations. It was during the remixing that Lydon was offered a 10-stop tour of Japan—sans Levene. Lydon met the promoter of the tour in L.A., who then introduced him to a group of session musicians who had the Sex Pistols and P.i.L. repertoire down pat. Following rehearsals, Lydon, Atkins, and the newcomers became the newly reconstructed Public Image and began appearing in L.A. venues. Lydon, returning to the persona of carrot-topped Johnny Rotten, baited his audiences with taunts and snarls. The band, with their blow-dried hair and matching outfits, hardly epitomized anything other than a lounge outfit from New Jersey—which in an earlier time they were.

Off to Japan went this unseemly aggregation. To say that the vinyl spawn of this visit is sad is an understatement. The material on these concert recordings covers the gamut of P.i.L.'s history, focusing upon the earliest recordings. Lydon goes through the set in the most perfunctory manner. Atkins plays as though he's unfamiliar with his own tempos and cues, and the band—what the hey—they

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thin yet assertive, and trumpeter Bobby Shew is easily the equal of any of the "stars" of his instrument. The young (22-year-old) trombonist, Sertl, has potential, but as yet doesn't stir up any fires. One of the compositional highlights is pianist Frank Strazzeri's *Relaxin'*.

Although at first I was impressed with James Marentic's saxophone work, as I listened further, it became apparent that he hasn't yet completely broken away from his obvious influence, John Coltrane. What he does in that vein is well performed, but becomes rather monotonous after a short while. The date, like the others, consists of mostly originals—a couple of which are dedicated to and reflect two of Marentic's idols, Chick Corea and Horace Silver.

In the final analysis, none of these albums moved me too much. For the most part all three follow the basic format of stating the theme, each man taking his solo, then returning to the theme. As mentioned earlier, the inclusion of such illustrious sidemen definitely makes for more interesting listening, but overall one's attention is not solidly held. —frankie nemko

EARL HINES

THE LEGENDARY LITTLE THEATER CONCERT—Muse 2001/2: *STEALIN' APPLES*; *AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'*; *TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE*; *KEEPIN OUT OF MISCHIEF*; *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE*; *LULU'S BACK IN TOWN*; *SWEET LORRAINE*; *MANDY MAKE UP YOUR MIND*; *TANGERINE*; *SPEAK LOW*; *THE CONTINENTAL*; *BRUSSELL'S HUSTLE*; *ROSETTA*; *CANADIAN SUNSET*; *LULLABY OF BIRDLAND*; *LESTER LEAPS IN*; *BIRTH OF THE BLUES*; *BLACK COFFEE*; *BLUES JAM*; *OUT OF NOWHERE*; *BLUES FOR JAZZ QUARTET*.

Personnel: Hines, piano; Budd Johnson, tenor saxophone; Ahmed Abdul-Malik, bass; Oliver Jackson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

QUINTESSENTIAL RECORDING SESSION—Halcyon 101: *MY MONDAY DATE*; *OFF TIME BLUES*; *JUST TOO SOON*; *CHIMES IN BLUES*; *CHICAGO HIGH LIFE*; *BLUES IN THIRDS*; *STOW AWAY*; *PANTHER RAG*.

Personnel: Hines, piano.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The *Little Theater Concert* consists of two LPs of previously unissued performances from the series of concerts in 1964 that put Earl Hines back in the public eye—thus the "legendary" claim in the title. Somehow though, after 20 years of at least a couple of Hines solo or small group albums a year, the circumstances that made these concerts so important in their time have changed. The result is that we see this present collection in a quite different perspective.

In 1964 it had been 36 years since Hines performed as a solo pianist. He was remembered and honored for his work with Louis Armstrong and his own big band, but he was regarded as a symbol of jazz' past and not looked to any longer for great things. The Little Theater concert changed all that. It was as if Jack Dempsey had walked back into the ring in 1964 and reclaimed from Muhammad Ali the title he had lost in 1927 to Gene Tunney. The Hines renaissance was especially exciting be-

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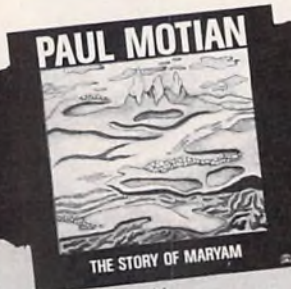
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RECORD REVIEWS

cause it returned him to the roots of his greatness—not another band, but the piano keyboard. One of the greatest pianists in jazz history was playing more piano in 1964 than ever before.

That was why this concert seemed like such a revelation, and why the records he made in the middle and late '60s received so much attention. The fact that they were consistently good gave credibility to the phoenix parable. But this is 1984, and 40-odd LPs later in the Hines second coming. It's very good Earl

Hines heard on this two-fer, mind you, but much of the material has been heard on subsequent records played just as well. The impact of the Little Theater concert was surprise. There are no surprises here.

It is also clear that something had crept into his playing since the QRS solo sides in 1928. You hear it most conspicuously in the medleys on sides one and two. There is a concert-like contrivance in the occasionally showy shifts in tempo and dynamics. Uncharacteristically gentle passages are pushed alongside over-

blown rhapsodic sequences of percussive chords. On *Blues Jam* a tedious tremolo drones on for nearly four minutes, creating a cheap tension predictably climaxed. These are the kind of devices one finds in pseudo-serious Broadway overtures. It's production piano that reminds us that Hines spent 12 years playing for Ed Fox floor shows at the Grand Terrace.

The best work here—and it's considerable indeed—is *Brussell's Hustle*, a long, medium-fast blues that swings with a relaxed, consistent beat that carries some of Hines' cleanest, most uncluttered playing. The numbers with Budd Johnson are outstanding as well (especially *Blues For Jazz Quartet*), although Hines takes no solos. And of course the medleys, for all their flashiness, are a patchwork of marvelous Hines gems and trademarks folded within the effects and affectations.

Audiences sometimes brought out Hines' crowd pleasing instincts, which weren't bad, just less than his best. Away from the crowd, however, he had only himself to please. And it was under such circumstances that the *Quintessential Recording Session* was made in 1970. The idea was to have Hines revisit the original solo piano repertoire he had played on the 1928 QRS sides—the ones that changed the direction of jazz piano development forever (and are available on Milestone 2012). The result was among the crown jewels of Hines' later career, and this reissue on Halcyon restores one of the major solo piano LPs of the last 20 years to circulation.

Perhaps one of the stimulants was a program that was so remote in time to him, it was practically new. Yet, he approaches each of these pieces with all the confidence, daring, and bravado one would normally risk only on familiar vehicles. Regardless of tempo, Hines is on a fast track here, taking consistently unexpected turns. And through it all his right hand plays a lively game of tag with his left, which he uses not so much as a rhythm section, but a snare drum popping percussive rim-shot-like accents into the cracks left by his right hand. It's a remarkably intricate relationship that always seems on the brink of falling out of register. But it never really does. *Quintessential Recording Session* allows us to hear Hines at the height of his powers during the renaissance years.

—john mcdonough

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★ ★ ★ ★

Klaus Schulze is a German synthesist who's been entrancing European audiences for over 14 years. He's recorded 18 solo LPs, put in numerous guest stints with people like Al

RECORD REVIEWS

DiMeola and Stevie Winwood, and was an original member of those Teutonic synthesizer denizens, Tangerine Dream.

Schulze played free-style drums with T. Dream, which not only accounts for his rhythmic vitality, but why his music brings the turbulent vortex of John Coltrane to mind. They both share modal forms as well as a relentless, overpowering rhythmic drive. Instead of the power plant percussives of an Elvin Jones or Rashied Ali, Schulze has intricately programmed drum machines and sequencers. Of

course, Schulze's classically inclined compositions are more structured and detailed than Coltrane's windstorms, but they have the same spiritual intensity and far-reaching, often Eastern concepts of time and tonality. Schulze's music is additionally shaped by the electronic and computer technology available.

Schulze isn't a technical virtuoso like Coltrane. That's why Bloss takes all the (Yamaha electric) grand piano spots. But he has the same gift for sound-shaping as Coltrane. He constantly interacts with his instruments, alter-

critics' choice

Art Lange

NEW RELEASE: Kenny Wheeler, *Double, Double You* (ECM). An engaging album alternating characteristically mellow and surprisingly explosive statements from the trumpeter and quintet; drummer Jack DeJohnette and tenorist Mike Brecker provide the most fireworks.

OLD FAVORITE: Manu Dibango, *Makossa Man* (Atlantic). Despite the wave of ink recently given King Sunny and his minions, the African Invasion actually began in the early '70s; this LP sounds steady-in-the-groove today, as Manu's saxes speak soul and his 10-piece band riffs on rockish High Life changes.

RARA AVIS: Japan, *Tin Drum* (Virgin). Once you get past David Sylvian's coy crooning, you'll hear an English synth-band (circa 1981) that creates remarkably subtle and haunting colors and textures, often imitating oriental folk instruments and percussion.

SCENE: *Everybody* got on the good foot when Godfather of Soul James Brown took control of Chicago's Park West for two SRO shows. *Have mercy!*

Charles Doherty

NEW RELEASE: Gato Barbieri, *Para Los Amigos* (Doctor Jazz). The Cat is back—at least he was on this 6/81 live two-fer that features nine tunes with plenty of room for smokin' sax driven by sympathetic latin perc. and Bernard Purdie's pretty traps. How about a tour soon?

OLD FAVORITE: Mahavishnu Orchestra, *Inner Mounting Flame* (Columbia). For my money the definitive fusion disc against which all the products of the '80s reformation bands will be measured.

RARA AVIS: Dub Syndicate, *One Way System* (Roi Cassettes). Killer, hypnotic reggae grooves from the studio wizardry of Michael "Dub" Shore.

SCENE: Valerie Wellington belting out the blues, backed by Magic Slim & The Teardrops, living up to the title of her Rooster debut LP, *Million Dollar Secret*. At release party for same in the B.L.U.E.S. club of Chitown.

Bill Shoemaker

NEW RELEASE: Abdullah Ibrahim, *Autobiography* (Plainisphere). An album that lives up to its name, this two-disc solo concert thoroughly covers the many phases of this unique pianist's career.

OLD FAVORITE: David Holland, *Conference Of The Birds* (ECM). This date from the early '70s includes stellar improvisers Sam Rivers, Anthony Braxton, and Barry Altschul, with memorable Holland compositions. A must for a desert island.

RARA AVIS: Duke Ellington, *And His Mother Called Him Bill* (RCA). Duke's '67 farewell to Billy Strayhorn packs a lifetime of pain, pleasure, achievement, and loss into 45 minutes. Johnny Hodges' wistful turn on *Daydream* and the poignant *Lotus Blossom*, Duke's unaccompanied postscript, highlight the onliest homage.

SCENE: Koko Taylor earthshaking Adam's (Washington, DC) with high voltage Chicago blues.

Jim Brinsfield

NEW RELEASE: Milton Nascimento, *Ponta De Areia* (EMI-Brazil). Milton's most languorous and compelling ballads create a mood of dark tranquility that rise above the fact that this is really a greatest hits repackaging.

OLD FAVORITE: Iggy Pop, *Lust For Life* (RCA). Iggy, David Bowie, and Soupy's sons Tony and Hunt Sales on one of Iggy's greatest albums. Gets my vote for the most slavering primeval brontosaurus grrrtarist I've ever heard: Ricky Gardiner. *Neighborhood Threat* still gives me the heebie-jeebies.

RARA AVIS: Albert Ayler, *Vol. 1* (Shandar). A live performance in front of an adoring French audience, this record is underrated though, for me, it is Ayler confronting self-understanding and personal acceptance. Supremely beautiful and sad.

SCENE: The Art Institute of Chicago's most recent 20th century acquisitions: *Two Seeds* by Francesco Clemente and *Eyes* by Maro Merz. Clemente's painterly images and thick lugubrious textures are at least as exciting as anything in the music world.

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RECORD REVIEWS

ing their sonic character, making solos vibrantly alive that would be monotonous if he were simply playing the notes on another instrument. That's why, with all his digital synthesizers, Schulze still uses the more spontaneous and intimate Mini-moog when he wants to cut loose. This music is not on automatic pilot.

Dziekuje Poland documents the carnival of sound that Schulze presented to stadiums full of Poles in 1983. In concert Schulze plays freely with classically precise structures that are full

of sonic corners and trap doors. One of those doors is a massive orchestral chord that sounds like it's been digitally sampled from Stravinsky's *Rite Of Spring* and synthetically magnified and altered. It's first heard as a rupture in space and time during a romantic piano prelude on *Katowice*, crashing in and sending the music off on a roller-coaster of syncopated rhythms, jabbering synthesizers, and Schulze's careening solo.

Schulze provides a pathway into other worlds and environments. Russian classical

motifs, concocted for Schulze's Polish audience, transmute into cycles of bell-tones spiraling through an impossible counterpoint, only to yield in turn to electronically transplanted Peruvian pan-pipes. To step into *Dziekuje Poland* is to leave this world behind, and enter another, transcending time and space.

—john diliberto

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- WILLIAM ACKERMAN:** *PAST LIGHT* (Windham Hill 1028) ★ ★ ★
- OXYMORA:** *THUNDERING SILENCE* (Fretless 164) ★ ★ ★
- C'EST WHAT?!**: *KYTING* (Lissenclose 82001) ★ ★ ½
- JORGE STRUNZ/ARDESHIR FARAH:** *MOZAICO* (Ganesh 4004) ★ ★ ★ ½
- DAKOTA DAVE HULL:** *HULL'S VICTORY* (Flying Fish 294) ★ ★ ★ ½
- GERALD TRIMBLE:** *FIRST FLIGHT* (Green Linnet 1043) ★ ★ ★ ½
- DAVID GRISMAN/ANDY STATMAN:** *MANDOLIN ABSTRACTIONS* (Rounder 0178) ★ ★ ★
- MARK O'CONNOR:** *FALSE DAWN* (Rounder 0165) ★
- RANDY SABIEN:** *IN A FOG* (Flying Fish 297) ★ ★ ★ ½
- PAT CLOUD:** *HIGHER POWER* (Flying Fish 284) ★ ★ ★
- MARTY CUTLER:** *CHARGED PARTICLES* (Green Linnet 1046) ★ ★ ★
- BILLY NOVICK:** *PENNYWHISTLES FROM HEAVEN* (Green Linnet 1049) ★ ★ ★ ½

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Many of the Windham Hill recording artists, a more arty than rustic bunch, seem to put crafted musical prettiness and technical polish before emotional involvement with the material. Label founder/producer **William Ackerman's** past four albums have proven him to be a skilled, idiosyncratic guitarist who's able to conjure wonderment when not entangled in rarefied classical/folk/jazz guitar dialogs with himself. His latest release, *Past Light*, finds him

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RECORD REVIEWS

in the company of surprisingly involved, communicatory labelmates, and the results are often satisfactory. Songs suggestive of in-studio camaraderie and shared feeling include *Synopsis II*, with sing-song vitality from oboist Russel Walder, and *Ventana*, a wistful soundscape sculpted by Ackerman, violinist Darol Anger, and electric bassist Michael Manning. The guitarist still courts stolidity—most of side one, notably the pieces with Lyricon and/or synthesizer—but he's become less self-absorbed, now combining brilliant effect with half-revealed emotionalism.

Oxymora, a quartet formed at Virginia's Shenandoah Conservatory, makes airy, honest music showcasing the players' classical music tidiness and their slightly unkempt enthusiasm for folk and jazz. Acoustic guitar and oboe, whose purity of sound largely frustrates jazz-speaking, are *Thundering Silence's* most prominent musical voices; mandolin, bass, piano, and flute have less say. The romantic classical-jazz selections *Nathan* and *Ayre For A Dancer* are pleasant aural daydreams, but it's the Balkan guitars-with-oboe impishness of *Gypsy Bicycle* and *Siguriya* that impresses this listener.

Another striking-in-part album belongs to New York quintet **C'est What?! Matt Balitsaris** and John Wunsch, on 12-string and six-string acoustic guitars respectively, construct elegant textures to which a vibraphone's brightness, some light percussion, and reasonable electric bass rumbles are added. Still, the group sound has a disagreeable pop-jazz sheen. The songs *Lifeline*, a latin divergence, and the bubbly *Another Day* are mere entertainments; jazzy guitar, vibes, and bass solos are well-intentioned but consistently ordinary. Yet *Kyting* dazzles when the guitarists shun the other musicians and honor their folk and classical roots; the perfectly titled *Gentle Flight* and luminous *Homelinks* are worth the price of the

record.

Costa Rican **Jorge Strunz** and Iranian **Ar-deshtir Farah** are proficient acoustic guitarists of a decidedly more exotic nature than Balitsaris and Wunsch. Each is indebted to the folk musics of his native land, and the collaborative effort, *Mosaico*, is a contemporary essay in musical internationalism. To give the proceedings an even greater global reach, the guitarists enlisted the services of the superb Indian violinist L. Subramaniam for two songs. Both Strunz, the principal songwriter here, and Farah are self-assured, spirited players, and they parade their talents well in trade-off solos throughout the album. Although the songs are needlessly long and technique sometimes subverts feeling, there's a warmth and richness to their playing worth savoring. Also, the smart latin-fusion electric bass work of Gregg Lee merits notice.

Guitarist **Dave Hull** isn't concerned with artiness or music serving universal brotherhood. He's known as *Dakota Dave*, and his chosen medium of expression is unpretentious red-white-and-blue country/bluegrass. A broad-minded musician, he breathes fresh air by acknowledging jazz and blues in his down-home guitar style. Tapping the happy well-springs of swing and hoedown, he smiles while blue-ribbon artists such as flat-picking guitarist Doc Watson and mandolin player Peter Ostroushko respond in kind. The album, *Hull's Victory*, is a cornucopia of revitalized folk-composed songs and fey Hull originals. The hirsute guitarist's instrumental music often evokes the exhilaration country titans Bob Wills and Hank Williams captured in their own special ways. A marvelous record.

An American who looks to other countries' folk music heritages for his muse is **Gerald Trimble**. A frequent visitor to the British Isles, he's embraced Celtic and Gaelic musics. Playing the cittern, a 10-string instrument related to



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the mandolin, Trimble sends his debut album *First Flight* sailing with fittingly spry solo and group renditions of traditional and newly composed airs, jigs, reels, and strathspeys. He is reverent of tradition though he boldly (and deftly) uses cittern for melodic chores in addition to its expected rhythmic responsibilities. His inclusion of piano, flute, synthesizer, and saxophones in various arrangements is adventurous and intelligently handled. Trimble's musicianship lacks the nearly mystical properties of front-rank folk artists like Alan Stivell and the members of Planxty, but he too seems blessed with abundant imagination and emotional honesty.

Mandolin-toting **David Grisman** and **Andy Statman** entered a West Coast recording studio two summers ago and played what came spontaneously to their fertile minds. The pair's improvisations are found on *Mandolin Abstractions*, an album free of overdubs or any control board shenanigans. The music is as eclectic as their influences, as wild as their thoughts. Grisman maintains ties to melodicism, and Statman goes "outside" more eagerly and confidently; both prove harmonically valiant. Tributes to bluegrass mandolin great Jesse McReynolds and *Love Is Strange*-duo Mickey and Sylvia are rooted to this planet. The two-part *March Of The Mandolins*, timed at 17 minutes, is self-indulgently of another world. The album, a noble experiment, fascinates and bores.

Mark O'Connor, now aged 22, has already won numerous prestigious country fiddle and guitar contests and had tenures with the acoustic Grisman Quintet and electric group the Dregs. *False Dawn*, his eighth solo record, is a heavily arranged "acoustic rock" work performed by him on 18 different string instruments, an array of percussion, and pipe organ. Its trite urgency is reminiscent of the most fatuous art-rock, the grandiose dross punk rock tried to kill off. Lord knows O'Connor has tremendous playing facility, but his bombastic melodies, contrived emotions, and showiness are as goofy as song titles like *An Empty Hall Into The Walls Of Mandoness*. Nadir: the gong. Tell me he's joking.

A much more sensible album and one that hews close to the jazz tradition throughout is **Randy Sabien's** *In A Fog*. Showing technical dexterity and sentient depth, the Wisconsin-based violinist evokes pleasing tone and keen phrasing in courteous respect to Stephane Grappelli. Sabien's quintet, plus Chicago fiddler John Frigo on two cuts, displays élan for the five Sabien songs and two traditional tunes. Album highlights include the lovingly bowed melody of *Sunday Song* and the group's wonderful swing in the could-have-been-musty *Greensleeves*. Sabien doesn't have imposing ideas, but his music matches the smile he flashes in record jacket photographs.

The banjo is forever linked with the bluegrass and old timey strains of country music. As bluegrass has evolved, so has the use of the oddball fretted string instrument. Standout player Don Reno once forged a jazzy harmonic style, and recent specialists Bill Keith, Bela Fleck, and Tony Trischka have further expanded the banjo's range. Californian **Pat Cloud**, a veteran of bluegrass campaigns,

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RECORD REVIEWS

now fancies himself a jazz banjoist—and he is. *Higher Power* has him fired up by bebop, taking speedy, improvised excursions within self-penned songs. Some of his lines seem disjointed, and it's a losing battle to impose jazz articulation on the banjo, but he brings an earnestness to the weird venture that eventually ingratiated itself with this reviewer. Overall he does quite well, as do guitarist Harry Orlove and pianist Jim Cox, two jazzmen allotted ample space for soloing.

Cloud has Miles and Bud Powell on his mind. Banjoist **Marty Cutler**, in contrast, has a headful of influences and styles vying for release through his fingers. The New Yorker mixes blues, bluegrass, jazz, rock, and straight country seamlessly, sometimes all in one solo. His record's varied program includes traditional songs transformed by Cutler's mysterious Stratocaster banjo and/or Jeff Ganz' futuristic electric bass; modernizations of Jesse McReynolds classics with more Stratobanjos and fractured city-meets-country spirit; a healthy pure banjo workout with David

Grisman and cohorts; and a bluesy exhibition of his prowess. Although too eclectically mad-cap for my taste, the record shows Cutler to be a major innovator on the instrument.

Finally, there's **Billy Novick**, an able traditional jazz clarinetist with strong roots in classical and folk musics. He holds a fascination for the toy-like pennywhistle, and his second vinyl enterprise on the instrument, *Pennywhistles From Heaven*, is a lovely celebration of tunefulness, featuring an unpretentious set of folk tunes, rapturous originals, and a reworking of Charlie Parker's *Yardbird Suite*. His proficiency on the whistle shouldn't be confused with simplicity, and the sincerity behind the playing shouldn't be denigrated by the instrument's giddy sound. His elegance is adorned by contributions from guitarist Guy Van Duser, a fiddler, an accordionist, and a rhythm section.

All of these LPs, except for the Windham Hill and Lissenclose albums, are available from Roundup Records, POB 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140. —frank-john hadley

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.)

CONCORD JAZZ

Scott Hamilton, live quintet date from the Swing-inspired tenorist, IN CONCERT. **Mark Levine**, ex-Tjader keyboarder trades in his piano for a valve trombone and fronts quintet, CONCEPTS. **Monty Alexander/John Clayton/Jeff Hamilton**, '83 club gig from the comfortable piano trio, REUNION IN EUROPE. **Tania Maria**, another hot set from the Brazilian vocalist/pianist, LOVE EXPLOSION. **Ed Bickert**, north-of-the-border guitarist and quartet cohorts, BYE BYE BABY.

HAT HUT

Steve Lacy/Mal Waldron, second volume of soprano sax/piano duets from compatible improvisers, HERBE DE L'OUBLI. **David Murray**, re-release of first part of a powerful '78 live trio date from the tenorman, 3D FAMILY, VOL. 1. **Donald Knaack/Peggy Knaack**, percussion, synthesizers, and voices from another place, INSIDE THE PLASTIC LOTUS.

INDEPENDENTS

(Usually available from NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC, 10012; Daybreak Express Records, POB 250 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215; or Roundup Records, POB 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140.)

Various Artists, like Von Freeman, Clifford Jordan, Wilbur Campbell, Cy Touff, and others, from Bee Hive Records, illuminate HYDE PARK AFTER DARK. **New York Jazz Quartet**, Roland Hanna, Frank Wess, George Mraz, Ben Riley—'nuff said—from Bee Hive, IN CHICAGO. **Art Blakey**, reissue of '57 Messen-

gers session orig. on Bethlehem, from Affinity Records, BUHAINA-THE CONTINUING MESSAGE. **Frank Rosolino**, '56 Bethlehem reissue from the virtuoso trombonist, from Affinity, THE ROSOLINO CONNECTION. **Bud Freeman**, two '55 dates (one w/ Ruby Braff) from the ageless tenor giant, from Bethlehem via Affinity, STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN. **Haywood Henry**, new recording from the big band bari vet, from Uptown Records, THE GENTLE MONSTER. **Bill Prince**, vinyl debut as leader for the Miami multi-instrumentalist, from Revelation Records, BEST KEPT SECRET IN JAZZ.

Abdullah Ibrahim, live '78 solo piano excursions from the South African musician, from Plainisphere Records, AUTOBIOGRAPHY. **Randy Weston**, Brooklyn pianist transplanted to Morocco recalls African rhythms in solo, from 1750 Arch Records, BLUE. **Conlon Nancarrow**, solo piano music of a different sort: unearthly combinations of notes and speeds, from 1750 Arch Records, COMPLETE STUDIES FOR PLAYER PIANO, VOL. 4. **Kirk Lightsey/Harold Danko**, twin pianists play 10 Wayne Shorter tunes in tandem, from Sunnyside Records, SHORTER BY TWO. **Kirk Lightsey**, Dexter's ex-pianist alone again, naturally, from Sunnyside, LIGHTSEY 2.

Sons Of Blues, some of Chicago's finest blue blowers do the deed, from Red Beans Records, WHERE'S MY MONEY? **Various Artists**, Erwin Helfer, Angela Brown, Clark Dean, Odie Payne Jr., swing thru some blues, from Red Beans, LIVE AT THE PIANO MAN. **Valerie Wellington**, Windy City blues & soul chanteuse backed by Magic Slim & The Tear-drops, from Rooster Records, MILLION DOLLAR SECRET. **Big Youth**, intoxicating rasta-rock, backed by the Archangels, from Sunsplash Records, LIVE AT REGGAE SUNSPASH. **Macaw**, vocal and keyboard/percussion duo rap and hop, from Sunsplash,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

1 WILLIAM ACKERMAN. VISITING (from *PAST LIGHT*, Windham Hill). Ackerman, guitar; Chuck Greenberg, Lyricon; Michael Manring, fretless bass.

Well, it's a really pretty piece, sounds almost like contemporary folk music—based on some folk themes. When I first heard it, I thought it was Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays' group, with perhaps Charlie Haden on bass, but I'm not sure at all that it was them. It's very lovely, very, very well played. I loved the tone of the guitar player. I believe that was a keyboard synthesizer programmed to sound like a recorder, and that was also very well done. I'd have to give it three-and-a-half stars.

[Later] It was a Lyricon? Well, I'm fascinated! Chuck Greenberg, that's the guy from Chicago, right?

2 JOHN COLTRANE. MINOR MISHAP (from *THE CATS*, New Jazz/OJC). Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Idrees Sulieman, trumpet; Tommy Flanagan, piano, composer.

I'd know that tenor *anywhere*. Definitely John Coltrane from his Prestige period, and I think it's Lee Morgan or Kenny Dorham on trumpet, and I believe it's Kenny Burrell on guitar; beyond that I'm not sure. This is the kind of stuff that I grew up with and played practically daily, something out of the Coltrane collection of this vintage. He was so influential to me and dozens and dozens of other saxophone players. This is like listening to the Bible for me. He played phrases in there that became standard jazz phrases, much as Charlie Parker's phrases did. For his playing alone I'd have to give it five stars, because I was so enamored of this man and his music.

3 ROB MCCONNELL. ECAROH (from *ALL IN GOOD TIME*, Dark Orchid). McConnell, arranger; Horace Silver, composer; John MacLeod, flugelhorn; Rick Wilkins, tenor saxophone.

Well, I must admit, it's very well written, very well played. It's reminiscent of the old Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band. I get the feeling it's a West Coast band; I don't know what basis I have for saying that: it's just a sound—a little like Bill Holman; could be Bill Holman's band for all I know. It's difficult for me—I haven't kept up with the big band scene much—but all I can say is, it's well performed, good solos, the sax solo was excellent. A four star big band record, as far as I'm concerned.

It was one of those old bebop tunes.

Tom Scott

By LEONARD FEATHER

When Tom Scott dropped by for his first Blindfold Test, over a decade ago, he was 21 years old but already had several years of major professional experience behind him. (The test appeared in *db*, 4/2/70; a second one was published 2/8/79.)

While in his teens, Scott mastered all the saxes and flutes, played with Don Ellis and Oliver Nelson, and at 19 made his first album as a leader, *The Honeysuckle Breeze*, for Impulse. He was barely out of his teens when he followed his father, Nathan Scott, a noted tv and movie composer, into the studios as a writer.

Scott since then has lived a quadruple life: as composer for tv, films, and records; as sideman on countless record dates; as associate of numerous well-known singers (in 1982 he toured as Olivia Newton-John's musical director, and before that, with Joni Mitchell); and as leader in a series of



A. JAMES LISKA

increasingly pop-oriented albums, the latest of which is *Target* (Atlantic 80106-1). He is heard to good advantage as a sideman with Victor Feldman on the latter's *Soft Shoulder* (Palo Alto 8054-N).

He was given no information about the records played.

I'm not familiar with it. Rings a bell from the past somewhere.

4 GRANT GEISSMAN. TURN IT OUT (from *PUT AWAY CHILDISH TOYS*, Pausa). Geissman, guitars; Gordon Goodwin, alto saxophone, composer.

Well, that's a piece of well-played, what we call jazz-rock, I think? [laughs] The saxophone player is obviously very much in the Cannonball Adderley mode like myself. I appreciate his technique, his influences. It's very much like a tune that I might have played with the Victor Feldman group. I think it's L.A. players, but I can't say for sure. But very well played; I'd give it three stars. It sounds a little like Robben Ford, but I'm afraid to say that it is. Sounds a lot like him.

5 ADAM MAKOWICZ. PEARL GREY (from *THE NAME IS MAKOWICZ*, Sheffield Lab). Makowicz, piano; Phil Woods, alto saxophone; Marc Johnson, acoustic bass.

Well, that's a most interesting tune. A few moments from *Giant Steps* thrown in there. I thought it was Phil Woods at first, in fact it may be the "Alto Madness" guy—Richie Cole. It's an unusual kind of solo, hard to be certain of the style. If it is Phil Woods, he's not going for his usual stylistic phrases. The tune is a little *strange* to me—I can't quite get a handle on it! But all the playing is excellent—piano and bass work, excellent. I'd give it

three-and-a-half stars just for interest, unusual melody, interesting chords, good playing.

Phil Woods is a killer. Phil Woods has kept the great bebop tradition alive more than anyone I know, and I admire him greatly for that. It was Phil? Good!

6 GERRY MULLIGAN. WALK ON THE WATER (from *WALK ON THE WATER*, DRG). Mulligan, composer, soprano saxophone.

[Laughs] I know this style, but not on this instrument! I'm going to put my career on the line for this one. This is *unmistakably* Gerry Mulligan playing soprano saxophone, and having written that tune. I listened to the solo for a while and thought, gee, I know the style, but the instrument isn't right! I thought a while more and figured it must be Gerry Mulligan's Miami band that I've heard about.

I did an album with him, and he was a big, big hero of mine when I was growing up. One of the first guys to point out to me the possibilities for counterpoint with horns, without piano accompaniment, and the way the lines can work together—in his famous groups with him and Bob Brookmeyer, Chet Baker. To work with him was a thrill, and I think he's a melodic master.

My hat's off. Four stars. I love you, Gerry. In an era when lyricism isn't one of the most revered musical qualities, he's got tons of it. **db**

things. You can plan all you want ahead of time, but there's no way to know what's going to happen."

What about situations where the artist knows exactly what he or she wants? "Sometimes it works out," Brecker explains, "but the real challenge is to work with someone who is unusually talented but doesn't know how to write music or how to express himself. You have to figure out a way to translate what he's saying. As an example, Mike and I were just working with one of the Bee Gees; Barry Gibb was doing a solo album. He

doesn't write music, but he comes up with great horn parts. So we went in there with no knowledge of how it was going to work. I'm wondering, 'Will he make up the horn parts or should we make them up?' Then we started. We tried a few methods, and the best we came up with is that he'll sing the horn parts on tape, and we'll transcribe them as fast as we can. So here we had a situation where he made them up, but he wasn't going to write them out.

"Another time we did a date for James Taylor. He knew what he wanted, and he tried to map out all the horn parts on graph paper—each square was a musical half-step. So at the end of the day, we had

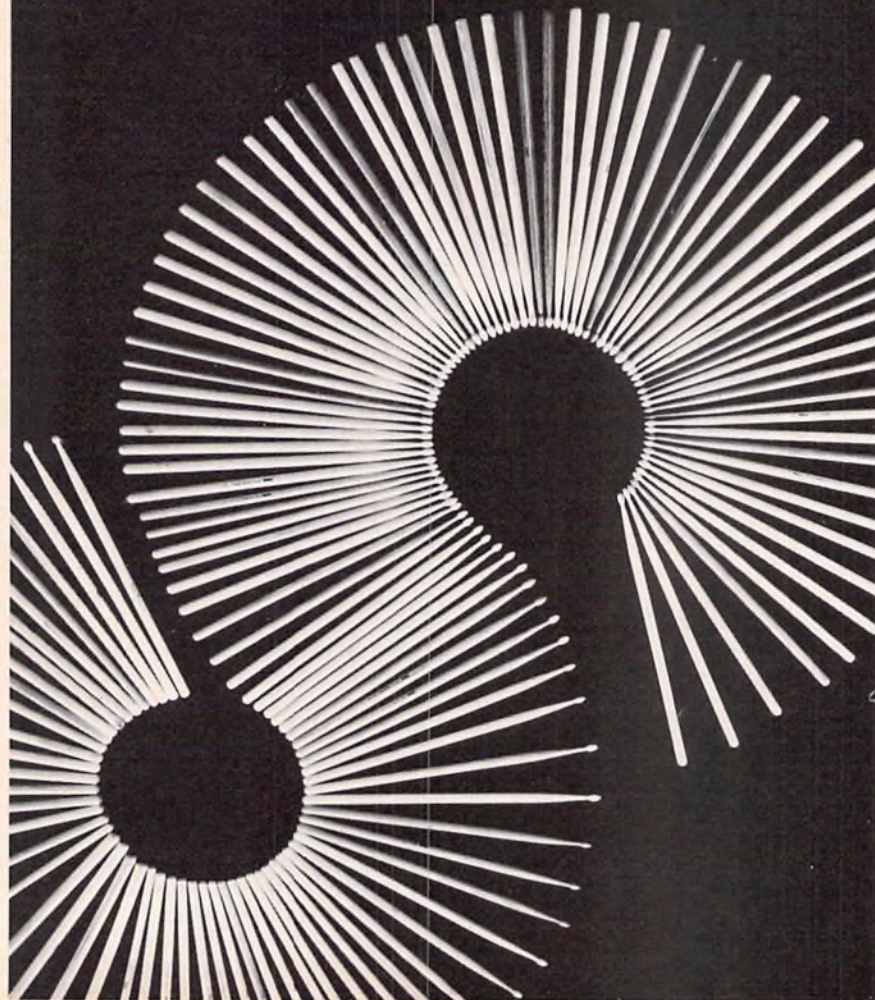


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these amazing, elaborately drawn graphs. They were really neat. All the harmonies were laid out, but ultimately we couldn't use it, and we had to write out charts. The bottom line was we figured out what he wanted and got the job done."

Brecker's collaborative efforts have certainly influenced the way he approaches his own music. Ironically, having relied on sophisticated studio technology for so long, he finds himself shying away from electronics and moving in more traditional directions. He has adopted a basic, somewhat simplified orientation to his craft. "I've been composing in the old-fashioned way, lately," he says, "just using a piano. I've been enjoying composing my music at the piano and writing it out then and there instead of using a tape recorder. I've been trying to write more songs—with a beginning, middle, and end—rather than working with vamps. I think it has to do with listening to Eliane's music and the songs from Brazil.

"If you listen to what she and I just recorded, you'll hear that the tracks were all done live, as opposed to using machines. Although it's not exclusively acoustic, there's an acoustic kind of feeling. The music doesn't sound electric.

"Today, so much is computerized," he continues. "The whole idea of drum machines and computerized rhythm sections just takes the fun out of listening. I realize that in producing a record you strive to get a perfect beat and, theoretically, if you can get machines to do it, why waste your time with people? But the fun for me is having humans trying to get a groove, whether it's funk or rock & roll. The fun is that musicians are trying to lay down some time and trying to get as close to metronomic as possible. I tell you, it's a lot harder playing horn parts over programmed drums than it is working with a real drummer."

It seems an odd irony, but Brecker succinctly explains it: "It's really simple. We breathe, and machines don't. And," he adds with a laugh, "who wants a perfect beat, anyway?" **db**

Charles Tyler

Though stereotyped for years as an Ayler acolyte, the multi-reedist's depth and range have never been more apparent.

BY JOHN LITWEILER

Waves of fashion have always beset the jazz business, and it used to be the remarkable saxophonist Charles Tyler's ill fortune to be just a little ahead of his time, just a bit in advance of what was going to become commercially viable. Thus in the early 1960s he was already part of the jazz revolution when it was yet underground, arriving at controversy in 1965 as altoist in Albert Ayler's notorious, incredible shock troops. By the time Ayler was becoming a little popularly acceptable, Tyler had gone West, first leading a jazzy folk-rock band (this was before the fusion music vogue), then spending five years in California's secret avant garde jazz scene.

He's been back in New York for nearly a decade now, yet somehow the recent spotlight on "tradition" has missed out on him. Or maybe the rich vein of blues in his music runs too deeply and securely to be appropriated by fashion. Maybe, too, as Tyler notes, "I've been identified with Albert Ayler or the new music or the new thing for the past 20 years, even though I'll be antique in a minute." What's important about his art is that he's summoned all of his creative musical experiences—bebop, blues, free jazz—into a personal, unified art that over those years has expanded in breadth of material and emotional depth, instrumental range and lyric power, until today he is among the most rewarding musicians in jazz.

So it's been a real pleasure of late to find Charles Tyler beginning to receive some of his due, or overdue, recognition. Last year saw his rousing performance at the New York Kool Jazz Festival and the widespread American distribution of possibly his best LP, *Definite—Volume 1* (Storyville 4098), recorded at a Stockholm night club. By the time you read this article, *Volume 2* will be released, and he'll again be leading a small group on tour in Europe. He plays his big, rich-sounding baritone sax as much as his



FRANS SCHELLEKENS

rapturous alto these days, and has played clarinet and harmonica on recent records, too; the jazz world is getting to hear his multi-instrument versatility as well as his wide scope of ideas.

Ahem. Saxophones and clarinets, yes, but harmonica? "For a saxophone player, it's a natural," says Tyler. "Playing the harmonica helps you get your circular breathing timing down, because you're breathing a note in and breathing a note out. I played a little harmonica in high school. I was into Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson; most of the people my age told me that barrelhouse blues was too old and dreary—it was kind of country, and people in Indianapolis considered themselves more sophisticated."

By that time, the '50s, Tyler was playing clarinet and alto sax at Crispus Attuck High School in Indianapolis, where altoist James Spaulding was a classmate and where Freddie Hubbard, J. J. Johnson, Slide Hampton, David Baker, and basketballer Oscar Robertson (who was not a musician) were among his illustrious predecessors. He experimented with bebop in those days, and was particularly fond of Gene Ammons' music. But he did not consider making a career for himself in music. In 1957-59 he played in an army band, lugging a baritone in parades and marches until he simply lost interest in performing. Upon discharge, he returned to Indianapolis and sold his bari, but he did woodshed on alto for eight months.

He was going to jazz clubs and listening to records, and, "Gene Ammons, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, guys like that pushed me over the edge into playing." It's significant that the musicians

who motivated him most were Sonny Rollins and Thelonious Monk, who brought high organizational qualities to vividly expressive, dramatic material. "Monk's my strongest influence by far, more than any saxophone player," says Tyler. "He's got that physical approach and that sound in the piano—there's something about that kind of power that fascinates me." Tyler first became a professional musician in Indianapolis, and soon moved to Cleveland, where he played alto in blues bands and organ trios, and after hours in jam sessions.

Free jazz was in the air at the beginning of the '60s, and Tyler met other forward-looking young players like trumpeter Norman Howard and saxman Otis Harris, who rehearsed with him in Cleveland, and the New York pioneers, whom he met while living in uptown Manhattan. "Ornette Coleman was the one who announced to me personally that you could play music without a piano or without specific chord changes," Tyler says, introducing the basic theory of the new music: "You can play things that fit with whatever instrumentation you have, instead of waiting for one instrument to lay down a certain note so you can have a bridge to over there. Basically, you listen to the other instruments, and they're listening to you, and you form bridges for one another, not necessarily the chord one is expecting out of the composition. Of course, I do hang into the melody pretty tough; even when I'm outside, you hear bits and pieces of the tune. I'm my own biggest influence as far as not getting hung up in chord changes."

It was at a 125th Street loft that Tyler met fellow Cleveland Ayler. "We had similar backgrounds and a lot of similarities—and a lot of differences. Al didn't swing. There's a certain melancholy in his music that I don't have. I don't know if it was that great for me and Al to sound so similar, because he was out there, he was known before me. When I came along, everybody said I was just influenced by Albert Ayler; which wasn't true; we had some exchanges, and by him being older, I probably got more from him than he got from me, but the exchanges just about balance."

Back in Cleveland in 1964, while Ayler was touring Europe, Tyler was rehearsing with Donald Ayler, who had given up the alto sax himself and was rapidly learning how to play trumpet. The next year the Albert Ayler band, featuring the Ayler brothers and Tyler, exploded in New York, arousing both fanatic enthusiasm and furious dislike wherever they played. Tyler speaks fondly of the Ayler rhythm

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PROFILE

sections, including at various times bassists Lewis Worrell, Gary Peacock, and Henry Grimes ("A roar behind the music; when you'd think he's playing the bottom of the bass, he'd go down even further.") and drummers Sunny Murray ("He flows; you created sound, and he'd react, just playing drums and overall sound.") and Ronald Shannon Jackson ("Al heard him at my recording session and brought him into the group.").

Tyler's own first album was done for ESP Disk in 1966. Later that year David Baker, who had been a student-teacher of the teenaged Tyler, got him a scholarship to Indiana University. Indeed, Baker played on Tyler's second ESP record (1967), in a group of alto, cello, and two basses. With school finished in 1968, Tyler found himself touring the West as he led, played, and sang with the Charles Tyler Vulcans. "That was a producer's band; I was just a product. That was when I started getting a folk music concept; I had written a few song lyrics, and I had young musicians with a kind of acid rock orientation. I wasn't really a rock musician—I was a jazz musician—but I had a name, so I was fitted into that situation. I was getting offers I couldn't refuse, money-wise, so I allowed it to happen." The band was signed to record for A&M when "I just left them; I couldn't take it no more."

He went to Los Angeles, where he played in combos and with the local underground figures like Horace Tapscott, Arthur Blythe, James Newton, Stanley Crouch, and Bobby Bradford. In 1970 he moved to San Francisco, a city he loved. He attended the University of California on the G.I. Bill, got his college teaching credentials, and taught at Merritt College in Oakland; at various times Wilbur and Butch Morris, Arthur Blythe, and a Berkeley high school student, David Murray, joined or sat in with his bands. It was in this period that he made a rediscovery: "When I was in the Army, I built up my muscles to play baritone, and I never really lost them, even though I stopped playing it from about 1960 to '69. By then it had gotten to the place where I couldn't stay away from it any longer."

Although Tyler says, "The whole five years I spent in California were beautiful," he was teaching more than performing, and he missed the New York free jazz scene, with its connections to performing in Europe, too. He moved to Brooklyn in 1974, and began working with musicians like drummer Steve Reid, trumpeter Earl Cross, and bassists Ronnie Boykins, John Ore, Wilbur Morris (now a New Yorker himself), and Kevin

Ross. He formed Ak-Ba Records, for which he recorded two albums on both alto and baritone.

Tyler's records, of course, are the best evidence of the steady increase in his powers over the years. There's a vivid difference between the embryonic style of his two '60s ESP albums and the bold realizations of his third LP, *Voyage From Jericho* (Ak-Ba 1000, recorded 1974). I've heard Tyler's alto solos in the latter described as "the missing link between Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler," and indeed, the wonderful *Saga Of The Outlaws* (Nessa 16; given five stars in *db*, 5/80) sounds like a reply to the frontier myth of Coleman's *Ramblin'* in the form of a long, multifaceted collective improvisation. But Tyler's methods of thematic improvisation are far different from Coleman's, as is his emotional world.

Definite—Volume 1 has proven one of the very best jazz albums of the 1980s. Earl Cross, Kevin Ross, and Steve Reid join him, and the initiating material is riffing, call-answer themes. The exciting *Just For Two* is the best example of the quartet's ensemble unity—this is one hot band! *Cadiz, Of The West Kentucky Woods* is where Tyler was born, and he opens his alto solo (he plays a Buffet Crampon with a Berg-Larsen 25/2 metal mouthpiece and Rico 3½ reed) with a lengthy, fabulous melodic phrase, after which lyricism and blues cries alternate with arches of sound to make a joyously dramatic musical narrative ("A solo should tell a story," as Lester Young said). On baritone (a King Zephyr with an Arnold Brilhart #6 mouthpiece and a Rico Royal #3 reed) Tyler plays *Lucifer Got Uplight*, alternating funky, swaggering phrases with sonically and harmonically shocking exchanges. "I like myself the most on baritone," he says. *The Waste Land* is his major baritone work to date, in the dark, mysterious mood of free-form improvisation to which he often returns in concerts.

By turns Charles Tyler's improvising suggests hard-driving hard-bop, a nervous Ornette Coleman, jubilant r&b, or the enigmas of pure freedom. The meat of this marvelously satisfying art is lyricism, energy, and infectious swing; the subtle yet quite distinctive unity of effect is achieved via thematic improvisation methods, particularly the kinds of theme recall characteristic of Sonny Rollins.

In the 1980s Tyler has played with several Billy Bang groups (it's with Bang that he's recorded on harmonica and clarinet) as well as in bands led by Cecil Taylor, Wilbur Morris, Ahmed Ab-

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GILMORE *continued from page 28*

music he grew up with, namely Jelly Roll Morton and Fletcher Henderson. Their tunes, like *Yeah, Man!* and *King Porter Stomp*, are interpolated seamlessly in the midst of the Arkestra's wildest free-for-alls. Gilmore figures prominently in both, like a tornado sucking in all of the disparate energies. Many of the most crowd-pleasing moments of recent Sun Ra performances are when Gilmore stands up to kick in a dark, gut-bucket clarinet solo in the bounce of *Yeah, Man!* On the other side, however, is Gilmore's harrowing tenor primal scream on *Constellation* from *Media Dream*. "Sun Ra's music is definitely on another planetary level," exclaims Gilmore. "It reaches levels and heights that Fletcher didn't reach in exploration."

Yet Gilmore retains a respect for the Henderson music, even as it's blended in Ra's synthesizers. "As far as playin' together and playin' some beautiful music, those cats were doin' it, definitely," he says reverently. "They don't have anything to be ashamed of with the music they were playing. Their records stand for themselves. But time moves on, and we're in the Space Age, and Sun Ra has to present something that's suitable for the age we're moving into, the 21st century. So there it is."

Gilmore and the Arkestra may have to wait until the 21st century before they realize the fruits of their labor. It has never been an easy road for the Arkestra, and even when they're working steadily, the money gets pretty sparse after it's spread among 18 musicians. Finances are often so tight that many of the band members live together. "We really didn't all start livin' together until we left Montreal and came to New York," relates Gilmore. "That was the only way it could be done financially. It works out pretty good to have everybody living together instead of paying separate rents, which would be almost impossible under some circumstances."

That may explain why so much of Gilmore's tenor work is scorched with pain and anger. The Arkestra may be singing about "the door to the cosmos," but Gilmore's living with five or six of them in a dilapidated rowhouse. "You play your experiences," he says matter-of-factly. "If you're not getting treated the way you should, or the band's not getting the right recognition, it comes out in the music." And it does, often with a vengeance.

Whatever their recognition and financial status, no one remains in a situation like Sun Ra's Arkestra for nearly three decades unless they love it or are insane. Gilmore is clearly in the former category, and his gentle disposition speaks to his contentment. He's seen dozens of musicians come through the Arkestra.

Many of them have been with Ra for years, including Marshall Allen, Danny Thompson, and June Tyson who have each been with him for over 15 years. "You just regard it as a school," explains Gilmore. "Some hang in there, and some can't. Some didn't have any intention of stayin' when they came in the first place. Some come to learn and then get out and make a name for themselves."

But why do some of them stay? "Because they see that there's no need in going out there because there isn't anything further. You can't do anything but go down a level. Any other band leader isn't going to be as well-versed or astute as Sun Ra in writing and exposing you to different types of music. So what's the point, unless you just want money and fame. If money and fame is more important, then you go; but other than that, there's nothin' out there but money and fame. That may not be lasting, so there's no point." **db**

PROFILE *continued from page 59*

dullah, David Murray, Ed Schuller, Gunter Hampel, and others. He's contributed strikingly to Barry Wallenstein's jazz-poetry works (on Ak-Ba records). Trumpeter Roy Campbell, pianist Curtis Clark, french hornist Richard Dunbar, and cellist David Baker recurringly play in Tyler's groups, and apart from the occasional European tours, most of his performing is in the New York area. There, he says, "The loft scene is dead. Now there are clubs that have been giving play to the newer musicians. More clubs are opening up, but it's a real struggle; behind the financial crunch, clubs are having trouble paying their rent. So whether you get a gig depends on how popular you are—it's not so much what kind of music you're playing, but whether you can pack the joint."

"It's been a little more difficult for me because I don't have a big name, but I've never had to lay dormant. I've always had enough work to hang on." Musically, "hanging on" is far too modest. Performances like *Saga Of The Outlaws* and *Definite—Volume 1* are moving demonstrations of the vitality of the jazz tradition even as it looks to the future. And it's a sign of the jazz public's increasing sophistication that Charles Tyler's music, after all his years of creativity, is now being appreciated. **db**

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into it, I decided I might as well play the whole thing exactly as it was transcribed [for solo piano]. With the exception of a couple of places where I improvised in *The Rite Of Spring* and a few liberties I took with *Petrouchka*, I did the pieces as faithfully as I could. There are a couple of passages in *The Rite Of Spring* that are just like jazz. It was the only part of the whole piece that I could relate to. The rest of it just sounded like music from Mars, especially when you get to the end of the piece. The finale of *The Rite Of Spring* is so difficult. It starts out in more or less D tonality with a lot of dissonance, then goes through all this difficult stuff. Then, just to really get your goat, he takes it down a half-step. Stravinsky is so clever.

The end of the final movement is so chaotic. In the ballet a dancer falls down and dies after doing this insane, furious dance. The music becomes very jerky and lurching and very emotional. It's the sound of somebody dying. Some of the chord jumps and movements of time signatures are so insane. **BM:** What was the struggle like in preparing for the recording session?

LC: It so happens that I ended up recording *The Rite Of Spring* on March 21 of 1983, which is the vernal equinox. It was also the day that my car got towed away for not paying a bunch of parking tickets, so there's some kind of balance there. Anyway, for the three months prior to that record date, I was obsessed with the project. People from overseas would come by my home in Connecticut to visit me, but I would always be practicing. In fact, I practiced so much that my hands broke out—sores and blisters. I got a callus on my left index finger from so much barring. But I think a lot of it was anxiety too. I mean, nothing could ever be that bad again, as far as anxiety. It got to a point where the mere mention of the name Stravinsky would intimidate the shit out of me. Scared me to death.

Three weeks away from the date, I called up Teo Macero, the producer of this project, and said, "Teo! I can't do this!" I was really faced with this mental block. I don't know if this is true of other artists, but inside of me there's this very negative voice, almost like a prosecutor, that says, "You can't do this." It just thrives on negativity. So Teo would call me over to his house and explain to me how he did certain things with Miles on his "Rodrigo" piece. He's amazing. He'd look at all these f*cking dots on the paper and just rewrite it. And in order to get through certain difficult sections, he had me slow way down and isolate on some double stops. And with his help I got through it. I'll be honest with you, it was a tremendous victory for our side to overcome my own insecurities.

BM: So Stravinsky really kicked your ass good, coming off that inert period in 1981.

LC: Yes he did. And I'm proud that I got through it. It's like, if you can tackle Stravinsky, you can tackle anything. It's like required reading. It's like playing *Donna Lee*. And after it was all over, I realized that I had passed a milestone in my life. I would never hear music the same again. Since the Stravinsky session, whenever I play blues, I don't play rock & roll blues anymore. I'm not sure what the connection is, but the effects of going through it will be with me for the rest of my life. I learned a lot about music and, of course, about myself from struggling with Stravinsky. And along the way I picked up some valuable lessons from other musicians as well. From Dizzy Gillespie I learned about chords and a lot about history. One of the most important things I got from playing with Sonny Rollins was the sheer love of music, and it shows in his playing. The charisma of that man! But what I got from working with Miles [Ed. note: they recorded some demos in 1980 that were never released] was just one word: Stop! When in doubt, stop. Don't finish that phrase. So the spaces are starting to open up in my solos, and that came from just a few intense weeks of being around Miles. db

COPELAND

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again when we had each accomplished our part. I participated in rehearsals for the film, in fact jamming on the drums while they were rehearsing; they were all very polite about it. Then I came down a few times while they were shooting. When they cut it, that's when I did most of the recording.

CD: Your drums on *Rumble Fish* are tuned looser, sounding sort of like the "L.A. fat snare." Has Stewart Copeland's sound gone Hollywood?

SC: No, they were tuned tightly; that sound comes through studio cosmetics. That thickening of the snare drum sound is certainly *not* the L.A. fatback sound. It was very interesting having to write for the studio musicians—strings and horns—that I added to my own performances [on guitar, electric and acoustic bass, keyboard and rhythm synths, tuned percussion, drums, typewriter, and kazoo], having to write everything down *pre-cise-ly*, with bar numbers and everything. With eight string players you can't say, "When it gets to the F, just hold that there and then wait; and when you hear the riff come in, go back into the opening figure." They just cross their eyes and look at you as if you've got two heads and say, "What bar number is that please, Mr. Copeland?" So you have to arrange everything very carefully, which is a good discipline, because when you're sitting at the piano working all this out, you can actually think up what you need, as far as strings and horns and orchestral instruments go, write them down, and on the day of the recording, they play it exactly as you imagined it—with a bit of pushing and pulling here and there to get the tone right, the feeling right, but basically they play the notes you want. Whereas with your rock & roll guitarist, who arrives at the session and you say, "Could you play something funky here?"—hopefully he comes up with something great, but generally he doesn't.

CD: Any other soundtracks on the horizon?

SC: Well, some people that I know in England have made a documentary on polo, and that's the kind of thing that ordinarily the BBC would spend 200 quid and get some hack to rustle up some tunes for or get something from the library, so I'm writing a *Concerto For Eight Ponies*. The film scoring goes along quite well with the Police. Right now [at the end of the lengthy Police tour] I'm itching to get into the studio and do a score. But after I've done a score and have that out of the way, I quite like to get back and do some of those songs again.

CD: So what's the deal on the movie you made?

SC: *So What??* It's now on release in arty theaters in New York, and soon, in Chicago and L.A. It's a 35-minute movie I shot about the punk scene in England in 1982, as opposed to '77, and in fact, it has grown. Even though the thinkers and the fashions have moved 10 times on down the line into new romantics and beyond, the punks have grown in numbers and gotten weirder in style and are actually quite photogenic. They're in a strange kind of limbo; the world isn't watching anymore, but they're still out there in Skunkthorp and Blackheath and Liverpool and Manchester and urban blight areas, unemployed and unemployable and completely estranged from society. And they live in this strange world of the bands, and just go from show to show and live a wild life.

CD: Where will Stewart Copeland be 10 years from now, still bleaching his hair, drumming for Sting, and fending off groupies?

SC: I beg your pardon [laughs]. Could we put that another way?

CD: Sure, where would you like Stewart Copeland to be 10 years from now?

SC: At least a three-goal [polo] handicap. I would like to have completed my first symphony [pause] and to have at least three months a year touring with the best band I know, the same two guys, the Police. db