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ON THE BEAT

BY CHARLES DOHERTY

The snobbish and artificial barrier between classical and popular music is one of the most obstinate ever erected in the music world. It's unlikely that this habitual separation between "good" (i.e. classical) and "bad" (i.e. popular, be it jazz, rock & roll, or whatever) music will ever be erased, though there are signs that the distinctions are blurring—witness the 1984 Grammy Awards Show where Wynton Marsalis performed a Hummel trumpet concerto (with a symphony orchestra) back-to-back with an original composition (with his jazz quintet). And Marsalis later won Grammys in both the classical and jazz categories.

When Duke Ellington said there were only two types of music—good and bad—he recognized that there was just as much bad "good" music (classical) as good "bad" music (popular). And it seems most people, given their druthers, would rather hear good "bad" music than bad "good" music.

Besides being famous for his revolutionarily designed steel and glass skyscrapers, architect Mies van der Rohe is known for his maxim that "less is more," which became a rallying cry for critics attempting to discuss the so-called "minimalist" movements in music and the other arts. In fact, Dizzy Gillespie has said that he played for years before he learned when *not* to play—that is, to play the spaces, the rests, a talent Miles Davis is often noted for. Indeed, classically trained musicians, with their prodigious technique and in their strive for perfection, often fall flat when attempting to play popular music because they overpower the material. Technically they're too good, while emotionally they're not good enough. The special skills required for popular music—swing, syncopation, soul, freedom—are not necessarily needed, and are even eschewed, in classical circles.

"If it gets too good, it ain't jazz," said Andrew White, another musician who's blurring the demarcation between classical and popular music. (White's resumé includes tenor sax stints with Kenny Clarke, Otis Redding, and Bobby Rydell; bass chores with Stanley Turrentine, Stevie Wonder, and the Fifth Dimension; and principal oboe and english horn player with the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra. White recently was awarded the 1984 Conductor Dean Dixon Memorial Award for outstanding achievement in the field of classical music.) In fact, in last month's **down beat** Larry Coryell said that White's statement contributes to the idea of balance in the guitarist's philosophy: "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. I find . . . 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." Quite a contrast to the younger Coryell who for years thought, "All I want to do is become the number one-rated guitarist in **down beat** by the time I'm 30."

Striving and arriving—to a certain extent—in this issue are dozens of hopeful young musicians, all winners in the seventh annual **down beat** Student Music Awards competition. Some will take the "high" road to classical chairs; some will take the "low" road to popular success; some may grow weary of the musician's life altogether; and one may even be the next Wynton Marsalis. Hopefully all will take Coryell's advice and avoid the perfectionist pitfall.

Speaking of Wynton, look for the double-Grammy trumpeter on the cover of our next issue as we continue to celebrate our golden anniversary. And stay tuned for other 24-carat surprises that will keep your turntables, televisions, and VCRs humming for another 50 years. **db**

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CHORDS & DISCORDS

On the Bruford beat

Your editorial focus on different types of music, emphasizing jazz (father to the others) encourages an open, receptive attitude to general musical excellence.

The Feb. '82 Bill Bruford issue was great. More drum solo transcriptions (such as the Tony Williams one, **db**, Nov. '83) of other classic drum works would be a good regular feature. It enhances listening.

Frederick Twist — Philadelphia

Better read than red

It's nice to see others pay attention to the non-American creative music scene, in this case Francis Davis' Ad Lib on (English) Leo Records (**db**, Apr. '84). However, some enlightenment is in order. Marilyn Crispell is not entirely "overlooked by domestic independent" record companies; Cadence Jazz Records released her first record (*Spirit Music*, CJR 1015) over a year ago. Nor has Leo Records been held indifferently by all of the American critical fraternity. Not only has *Cadence* magazine reviewed all of the Leo releases, *Cadence* has also reviewed some of the Ganelin Trio's releases on the Russian state-owned Melodia label, and has run interviews with Ganelin and other Russian improvising artists.

Because I am in a position [at Cadence Jazz Magazine/Records] to deal regularly and on a personal basis with hundreds of creative artists, I can tell you firsthand that just being able to go about the business of being a creative musician [in America] is a tremendously difficult job, and artists are constantly under pressure to knuckle under and practice a most humiliating censure upon their art. And speaking personally, having never been comfortable in bed with the ethics and aesthetics of the music industry, I have found that mainstream corporate America has its own very real gulag.

Robert Rusch — Redwood, NY

Rit readers see red

Regarding the Lee Ritenour interview in the Apr. '84 **down beat**: in portraying himself as being very hip and "'80s," Ritenour displayed a narrow-minded outlook by saying that people who aren't using drum machines and computers are behind the times. What's really "'80s" is that everything is valid. There is still as much to be said with acoustic formats as electronic. It's the music, not the equipment.

Bruce Swaim — Arlington, VA

Having read the article on Lee Ritenour (**db**, Apr. '84), I beg to differ with his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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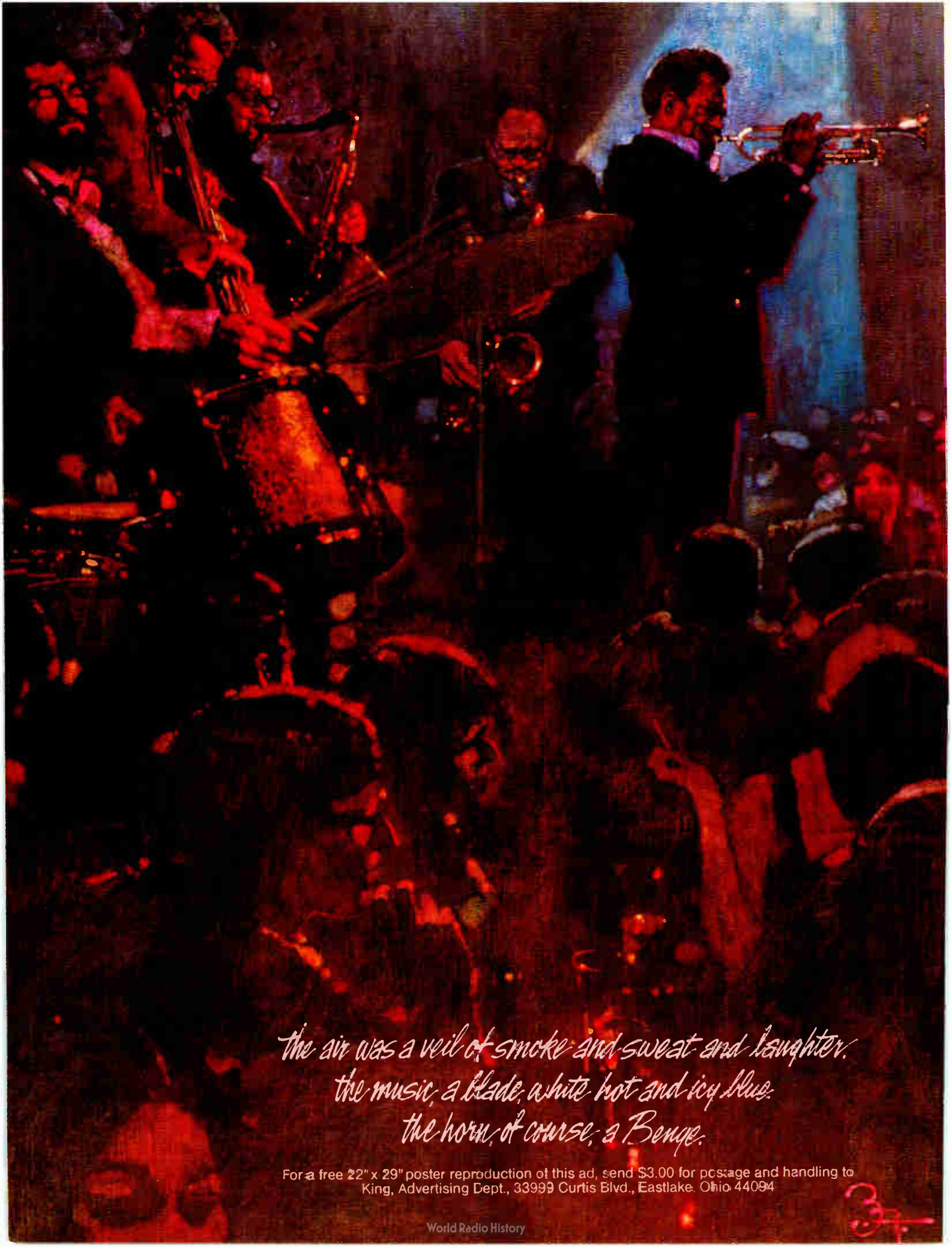

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statement about machines in music. I do not feel that a machine is necessarily good simply because it is new and/or innovative. I like some of the new guitar synthesizers, and the capabilities in terms of voices offered by a keyboard are very exciting; however, I cannot bring myself to give up a live drummer and bassist in a group. The idea of quantized music with no mistakes is definitely interesting, yet, to me, it seems more mechanical than anything else. Perfectly timed notes are unnatural, and I very much prefer an acoustic sound with that identifiable human touch that makes jazz or rock or classical so powerful to me. Music is supposed to express emotions, not the capabilities of the new [electronic music] machines. Also it is the people who have the emotions and write music. Until a machine is invented which can make music by itself, with its own inspiration, and draw every possible emotion from me, I will not be satisfied with machines.
James Feagin New Orleans

In reply to Lee Ritenour (**db**, Apr. '84), I ask, why would anyone want to make a guitar not sound like a guitar, or a piano like an oboe? By filtering or eliminating an instrument's textural and resonant qualities, we are working towards making it possible for all instruments to sound alike. (Is this the symptom of Western music's final leap to extinction, the perfection of the ultimate, undifferentiated sine drone?)

A sad by-product of these digital ages in music is the so-called "contemporary" musician's obsession with form instead of content, with stylization instead of the holistic development of one's own "voice" through mastery of an instrument devoid of technological accruements. As guitarists, some of us are periodically obsessed with imitating, say, the "Larry Carlton" sound, rather than working towards what could approximate consummate command of the guitar—just the guitar. The price of technology, the price each digital delay and each new guitar synthesizer effects on us, is virtuosity, if only because loving one diverts so much time away from basic practice of the guitar.
David G. White Jr. Claremont, CA

In defense of Lee, a careful reading of his interview indicates that he does not feel that the days of acoustic instruments have passed (in fact, his all-acoustic Rio *LP is Elektra Musician's best seller to date), but rather that acoustic instruments are now just "part of the picture," with electronics "taking over a bigger and bigger share of the picture." His basic complaint with (mainly jazz) players is that they "just haven't evolved with the technical times." He's afraid that by the time they wake up at the end of the decade, the electronic world will have passed them by.—Ed.*

♭ for the record

After reading Joel Simpson's news article on self-produced record labels in New Orleans ("Local labels spread new NO sound," News, **db**, Feb. '84), I was disappointed.

For the record, Prescription Records was begun as a joint venture with Ramsey McLean and myself. I do not disagree with Ramsey's philosophy of New Orleans music, but I do disagree with the way the article was written. Joel failed to mention that I co-produced and played on Prescription's first two releases: *History Is Made Every Moment, New Orleans Now*, by Ramsey McLean & the Lifers; and *No Compromise!*, by the Improvisational Arts Quintet. Joel should also be aware that the Improvisational Arts Quintet is co-led by Edward "Kidd" Jordan and myself.

Please accept my deepest expression for your efforts and good luck for 1984.
Alvin Fielder Starkville, MS

Joel Simpson replies: *Mr. Fielder is one of the most versatile and accomplished percussionists performing in the NO area. By day he is a pharmacist in Starkville, over 200 miles from New Orleans. I and* **db** *thank him for his correction and regret the omission.*

big city beat

CHICAGO

The Windy's debut **Blues Festival** fills Grant Park's Petrillo Music Shell 6/8-10 and includes a Tribute to Muddy Waters and a Texas guitar jam; (312) 744-3315 has the news . . . the **AACM** presents new music 6/22-24 at the 11th St. Theater with a Moye/Lyons/Cyrille/Jarman quartet and Sun Ra; (312) 752-2212 . . . the UIC's 3rd annual **Jazz Fest** 5/18-20 kicks off with Kenny Burrell's Ellington Forever group; (312) 996-4500 . . . Loyola U.'s **Urban Experience** series continues 5/28 with a Maxwell St. Gospel Blues Bazaar; (312) 670-3014 . . . the **Jazz Showcase**, current home of WBEZ-FM's *Windy City Jazz* live broadcasts, presents Zoot Sims 5/23-27, Clifford Jordan/Barry Harris 5/30-6/3; (312) 472-4300 . . .

CLEVELAND

Peabody's Downunder has the Ernie Krivda Quintet/Cleveland All-Star Jazz Orchestra 5/20, Stanley Turrentine 6/24, Rare Silk 6/26; (216) 241-2451 . . . **Spatz**, Skip Gibson's new nitery in Warrenville Hts., has McCoy Tyner on tap 6/10; (216) 587-4511 . . .

DETROIT

The **Jazz at the Institute** series kicks off at the Detroit Institute of Art 5/18 with the Louis Hayes Quartet (James Williams, piano; Bobby Watson, saxophone; Clint Houston, bass); next it's Randy Weston dueting with Roy Brooks 6/1, Ron Carter in duets with Cedar Walton 6/8, Jay McShann's trio w/ J. C. Heard 6/15 . . .

LOS ANGELES

Jazz from across the board will be heard at the 1984 **Playboy Jazz Festival** in the Hollywood Bowl; on 6/16—Mel Tormé, Woody Herman's Young Thundering Herd, B.B. King, Linda Hopkins, Shorty Rogers' Reunion Big Band, the Yellowjackets, James Newton Quartet, a Tribute to Willie Bobo (with Bill Cosby, Don Pullen, Sonny Sharrock, Don Alias, Oscar Brashear, Rudy Johnson, and Eric Bobo), plus Weather Report; 6/17—Ray Charles, Carmen McRae, David Sanborn, Jaco Pastorius' Word of Mouth, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, and Playboy All-Stars (Jackie McLean, Zoot Sims, Louie Bellson, Kenny Burrell); shows run 2:30-10:30 p.m., tickets at Bowl Box Office or call (213) 271-7577 or 480-3232 . . . three new clubs pushing the sound of surprise: in W.L.A., Orlando Orsini's **Jazz Club** is a posh joint featuring Joe Piscitelli's band Mon.-Tue., Maxine Weldon Wed.; (213) 277-6050 . . . in N. Hollywood, **One For L.A.** features the likes of Ray Pizzi, Jimmy Rowles, and Jack Sheldon nightly; (213) 509-9066 . . . **Jazz West** in Manhattan Beach also goes seven nights with Steve Huffsteter, Nick Lane, Brandon Fields; (213) 374-5134 . . . other clubs: **Baked Potato** has Don Randi & Quest Wed.-Sat., top fusion bands other nights, (213) 980-1615 . . . **At My Place** (Santa Monica) goes with Richard Elliot 5/18-19, Kittyhawk 5/25-26, and Roger Neumann's Rather Large Band 6/10 (213) 451-8597 . . .

MITCHELL SEIDEL

BIG APPLE BRASS: *Trombonist Urbie Green (right) guests with the Angel Rangelove/Jimmy Madison Big Band during a concert at the annual New York Brass Conference for Scholarships held at the Roosevelt Hotel in NYC recently. Rangelove (center) and Madison (left) prepared a musical tribute to Green, which ended with a 'bone-heavy jam. Trumpeter Maynard Ferguson was honored on the final night of the four-day conference of educators, musicians, and instrument makers.*

STEPPIN' OUT FOR DIXIE: *The opening day parade of the Sacramento (CA) Dixieland Jubilee (as pictured) is but one of the highlights that has drawn as many as a quarter-million dixie fans to the 10-year-old fest. This year's Jubilee, May 25-28, features over 100 dixieland bands from around the world. Tickets for the whole affair cost up to $40; less for daily events. For more info contact the Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee, 2787 Del Monte St., W. Sacramento, CA 95691.*

NEW ORLEANS

The **Blue Room** in the Fairmont Hotel kicks off its Summer Jazz Celebration with Mongo Santamaria 6/20-26, then Lonnie Liston Smith 6/27-7/3; (504) 529-7111 . . . when visiting the **Louisiana World Expo** (5/12-11/11) proceed straight from the gate to the Jazz & Gospel Tent (included in the $15 admission) for continuous, 12-hour-a-day music covering the whole spectrum of jazz, pop, blues, ethnic, and gospel music; for tix/info, write Louisiana World Exposition, POB 1984, NOLA 70158-1984 . . . fair-goers and old Crescent City hands alike will want to check out ***The Great Big Book About New Orleans***, a phone book-sized volume detailing the city's culture, arts, entertainment, recreation, food, government, services, shopping, transit, the works (**dbr** Joel Simpson edited the music section); $9 well spent; from Gambit Publications, The GBB, 921 Canal St., Suite 740, NOLA 70112 . . .

NEW YORK

Carnegie Hall welcomes two jazzmen rarely seen around these parts: violinist Stephane Grappelli 6/22 and trapster Louie Bellson 6/29 . . . Stan Getz blows into **Avery Fisher Hall** 6/24 . . . **George Wein**, an accomplished pianist better known as Mr. Festivals Productions, leads his Fesitval All-Stars to NYU's Loeb Student Center 6/8 . . . **Greene St.**'s got Armen Donelian 6/26-27 . . .

OSLO

The Norwegian fest scene's ready to roll: the **Köngsberg Jazz Festival** celebrates its 20-year jubilee 6/25-7/1 with Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, Miriam Makeba, James Newton Quintet w/ Jay Hoggard, Miroslav Vitous/Stanley Clarke duo, Pat Metheny/Billy Higgins/Charlie Haden, more . . . and the **Molde International Jazz Festival** runs 7/23-28 with Miles Davis, Elvin Jones, Texas Tenors (Buddy Tate, Arnett Cobb, Gus Johnson, Eddie Jones, Ray Bryant), Blood Ulmer, Fest All-Stars (Freddie Hubbard, James Moody, Kenny Burrell, Buster Williams, Michel Petrucciani, Billy Hart), B. B. King, Vocal Summit (with Jeanne Lee, Jay Clayton, Lauren Newton, Ursula Dudziak, Bobby McFerrin), more . . .

WASHINGTON, DC

Jazz still lives at the **Smithsonian**—solo pianist John Eaton plays Ellington 5-13, Carmichael Auditorium; pianists Randy Weston and Horace Tapscott team up 6/8, Baird Auditorium; and trumpeter Allen Houser and the Washington Jazz Ensemble come to Baird 6/27; all events produced by the Smithsonian Resident Associate Program; (202) 357-3030 . . . coming to **Blues Alley** are Dizzy Gillespie 5/15-20, Les McCann 5/22-27, Milt Jackson/Ray Brown & Co. 5/29-6/4, Joe Williams 6/5-10, Stephane Grappelli 6/12-17, Larry Carlton 6/18, Ahmad Jamal 6/19-24, Buddy Rich 6/25, Noel Pointer/Rodney Franklin 6/26-7/1; (202) 337-4141 . . . **Charlie's Georgetown** has Mel Tormé/George Shearing 6/1-3 & 6/5-10, Barbara Cook 6/12-17, The Great Guitars 6/19-24; (202) 298-5985 . . . scheduled for the **Maryland Inn** are John Coates Jr. 5/16-20 & 5/23-27, Charlie Byrd 5/30-6/3, Kenny Davern and the Charlie Byrd Trio 6/6-10, Ahmad Jamal 6/13-17, Joe Pass 6/20-24; (202) 261-2206. . .

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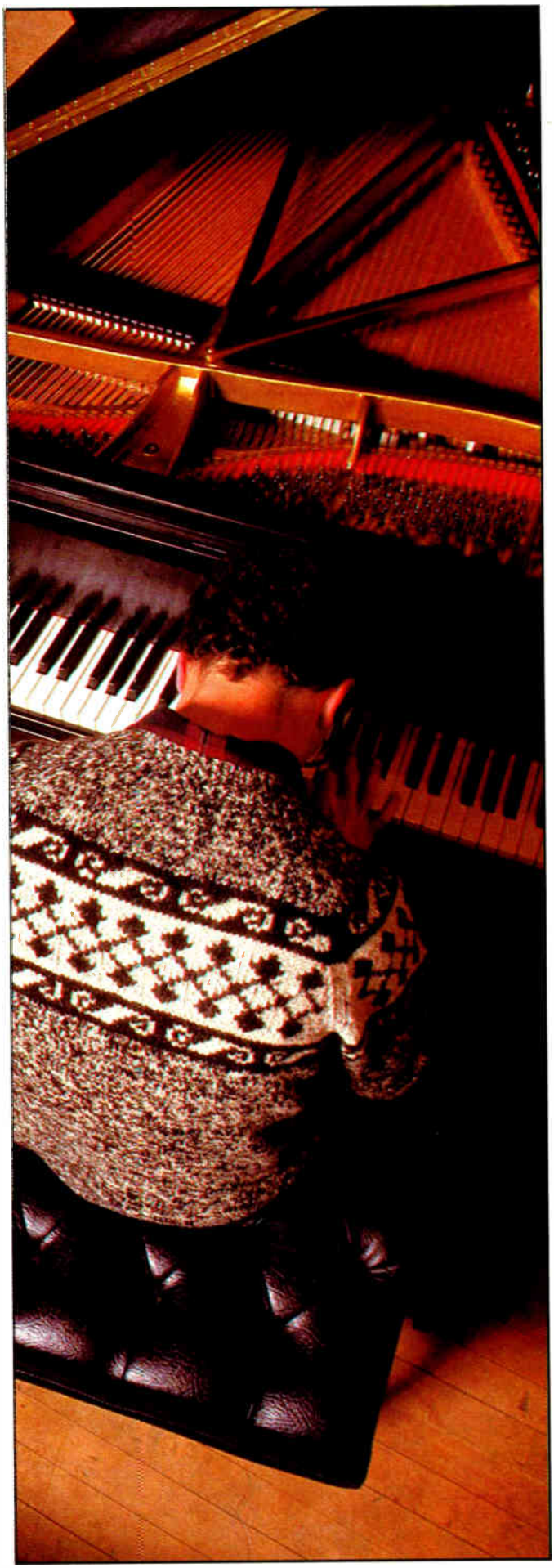
The Keith Jarrett Interview

By ART LANGE

Ladies and gentlemen, meet Keith Jarrett. You say you already know all there is to know about the pianist/composer/improviser? You've followed him through his reputation-building term with Charles Lloyd in the late '60s heyday of flower power; his subsequent electric excursions into Fillmore rock psychedelia alongside Miles Davis; his trend-setting solo piano extravaganzas stretching back over a decade; his two distinct yet decisive quartets, one American (Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, Paul Motian), one Scandinavian (Jan Garbarek, Palle Danielsson, John Christensen); his chamber music experiments from *In The Light*; his spontaneous hymns coaxed from a baroque organ; his composed "concertos" for (variously) piano, flute, saxophone, bass plus orchestra; even his recent return to a stripped-down trio (Jack DeJohnette, Gary Peacock)—and you know just how to categorize him: Jarrett the mystic, Jarrett the Romantic, Jarrett the poseur, Jarrett the Platonist?

You may know all that, but I humbly submit that if you know Keith Jarrett through his music, you know him not at all, for music is sound solely, and sounds can be deceiving. A note reveals nothing about the intent *behind* it—to discern that, you've got to open yourself. If nothing else, the encyclopedic list of activities above suggests a musician of more than a single mind; in fact, Jarrett is a man of contradictions. Some small sense of this *can* be heard in the range of emotions within his music—from the ruthless, slashing, Ornette-ish abandon of the American quartet to the simple, solitary, sweet, and sentimental ballad moments solo; from the gotta testify gospel chord changes to the meditational abstractions focusing on the beauty behind a single sound. . . .

But contradiction goes beyond sound. Though identified closest with spontaneously conceived solo piano concerts, where he seems to go one-on-one with the Muse, Jarrett's still concerned with the well-being of his audience. For the supposed egoist, he's insecure about his technique—so that his switch from solo concerts to classical concertos is a test not only for his audience, but for himself as well.



FRANCOIS ROBERT

"Do I contradict myself?/Very well then, I contradict myself/(I am large, I contain multitudes)," Walt Whitman wrote, suggesting that life is based on contradictions. Contradiction inspires concern *and* abandon—both necessary for a creative artist. Contradiction implies change and growth, not stasis. Contradiction allows for failures *and* successes. And contradiction acknowledged admits a struggle with forces possibly larger and more important than we casually care to recognize. Keith Jarrett, in his music and philosophies, is a contradiction. Good for him. Good for us.

Art Lange: I understand that you are concentrating on performing classical concertos these days, though you've been involved with classical music all your life . . .

Keith Jarrett: In the beginning I was trained to become a classical pianist, but it's just now becoming a public focus—actually it's not all that public yet. To develop repertoire takes a lot of years, and I'm mostly working on that now.

AL: Why have you decided to start performing concertos at this time?

KJ: It's a complex question. It's not a decision as much as a pulling back from a kind of expectancy of freedom in what I've been doing up to now—and I don't mean my own expectancy, I mean the audience's. Their definition of freedom is becoming as limited as it was when, let's say, a solo concert would have been a revolutionary thing to do. So now the audience is thinking that *unless* it's an improvised solo concert, it isn't as much music making as it is in, say, a Mozart piano concerto. I would like to direct them slightly away from that focus—including the fact that solo improvised concerts can go on forever. There's no reason for them to stop, which is a good reason to stop.

In order to hear the recent solo concerts, a listener has had to hear *how* I'm playing the piano, much more than they did during the *Köln Concert* years. Then it was a flurry of ideas coming up within a limited dynamic range; now the dynamic range and how to play the instrument is so much more important in order to hear the concert. So maybe I can direct a classical audience to improvising and direct a jazz audience to trying to gain a little bit of interest, let's say, to come to grips with what that person is doing *with* his instrument.

AL: How do you prepare for a notated classical piece? Is it different from the way you prepare for your own music?

KJ: It's exactly the same as if I were performing my own written music. But if I were going to improvise, then the preparation is reversed. Whatever you know about how to prepare for a written piece, you would have to reverse all the instructions for solo concerts. So you can understand why I cannot do both at the same time for very long periods of time. I'd go insane. "What am I doing tonight? Do I have the music? Do I have to have the music?" I have to sit down, for example, in order to play Mozart. Playing Mozart standing up is a contradiction in language. Also it's important for any player to know a lot about that composer, not just look at the notes. That's another parallel to knowing your instrument: knowing about the composer. "We don't want to worry about the composer, let's just play these notes." Well, that doesn't work.

At any rate, the way I prepare for a concerto is the way any concerto player prepares; I think perhaps I'm more fanatical than most because I have much more to lose by not succeeding. No matter what I do, it will probably get written up, whereas in a debut of someone in New York, no one's going to get all upset if he has a bad concert. If I have a bad concert, it's known all over the world.

AL: So, technically, you practice, whereas in getting set for improvising, you *don't* want to practice because you don't want preconceived things going in.

KJ: Well, when improvising, you don't know what language you might have to use, or what language might come out that you'd have to be involved with. In other words, you shouldn't even *hear* pianos or be near pianos for a while. It should all be, again, a new sound, from almost a primitive beginning. But with, let's just take Mozart for an example, to even get past what is banal about Mozart's music means you have to understand the language he speaks. To understand that language means you have to know about fortepianos and harpsichords to hear the sound he heard. Once you get into all these things, you start to realize how few people play *Mozart*, you know? Most people play themselves playing Mozart, and the more they ignore that side of things, the more they would be playing their own natural tendencies rather than Mozart's music.

AL: You're actually talking about another contradiction, because you're immersing yourself—or at least becoming comfortable—with certain aspects of Mozart's style, and "style" is a word that you want to avoid when you improvise.

KJ: That's right. Well, many improvisers might not think that way. The way I relate to it is that improvisation is really the deepest way to deal with moment-to-moment reality in music. There is no *deeper* way, *personally* deeper. But there is no less depth in working with someone else's music—having found *his* depth becomes exactly the same. And the people who think the two things are different are going to lose out when they come to listen to one or the other.

AL: Of the concertos you've played so far, Mozart is the only non-20th century composer. Is that because it's harder to get close to Mozart's style because you're chronologically so far removed from it?

KJ: This choice of how to start the ball rolling was more to do with the audience being able to accept my playing Bartok first, rather than my wanting to play Bartok first. I would have wanted to play Bach, Beethoven first. If it was just like, "What do you want to play today?" I wouldn't say, "Hey, Bartok, man." I would say, "Well, in the situation I'm in what would be the way to open this door?" Number one, the concerto I chose of Bartok's [*Concerto #2*] is one of the hardest piano concertos there is, so from the technical point of view, if I succeed at that, no one's going to fret anymore about whether I can play such and such a piece or not—including me. I mean I have to prove to myself that I can do it. Secondly, from the point of view of the material and how it relates to what I've done up to that time, the shock is less great for the audience. I mean, to go straight into Mozart would have been very difficult.

AL: Bartok, Barber, Stravinsky, who you've played, all have rhythmic elements that are closer to what a jazz audience is used to hearing than Mozart or Beethoven.

KJ: That's right; they can be digested. Their language is not that distant from what a jazz listener has heard. In fact, in Stravinsky's case, in Barber's case, they were influenced by a lot of jazz, wrote a lot of seemingly jazz-oriented things. Although in one of his interviews, Stravinsky—of all the people to choose as an example of an influential jazz player—chose Shorty Rogers: "If you listen to Shorty Rogers' phrasing you would find such-and-such a thing."

AL: If left to your own devices, your own choice, you would have wanted to initially play Bach, Mozart, Beethoven . . .

KJ: Well, I only say that because I don't play or think about Bartok very often. However, I always find it healthy to listen to Bach, and often to Beethoven.

AL: Do you think you'd like to play those pieces in public *because* they're so far divorced from jazz, so you'd personally want to go as far as you can in the other direction?

KJ: Good question. Right, except I have no intention of divorcing myself from jazz, and that's an interesting way of putting that question. I have absolutely no strings that have been untied from anything I have done; I'm just adding maybe a thicker rope, in a way, to all music that I consider, through certain subjective and objective processes, to be important to me. So the question about would I play Bach or Beethoven because of the *difference*—it's really the opposite. I feel that Bach and what I do myself are much *closer* than Bartok is to what I do in the solo concerts. It's the way the music sounds to the listener that makes it seem different. When it gets down to the nitty-gritty, Bach and I are friends, Beethoven and I are friends, Mozart and I are friends

sometimes, Bartok and I are friends because we're Hungarian, you know? And on and on. But I know if I went to jail and was allowed to take only one composer's music, I would probably take Bach's music.

AL: Do you think you feel an affinity for the three you mentioned—Bach, Beethoven, and to a degree, Mozart . . .

KJ: I should add Handel in there too . . .

AL: . . . because *they* were the improvising keyboard artists of *their* time?

KJ: I think the music *is* better *because* their relationship to improvising was so strong. I wouldn't say that I like their music because they were all improvisers, but there was something *in* the music, and I would say it is the ecstatic knowledge that comes through in Bach's music and in Beethoven's music. It's the knowledge of the ecstatic state—which means that's why their music conveys so much. [With Bach] almost every time and no matter what state you're in—at least I should speak for myself—there is something coming through, whereas with almost every other composer's music, I need to be in a certain mood to listen to it. So to me that means there's less being communicated. I know that when you're an improviser, a true improviser, you have to be familiar with ecstasy, otherwise you can't connect with music. When you're a composer, you can wait for those moments, you know, whenever. They might not be here today. But when you're an improviser, at 8 o'clock tonight, for example, you have to be so familiar with that state that you can almost bring it on.

AL: So you do that—you bring the *state* on, but you don't bring on the music that that state leads to.

KJ: And this is what I can give back to all the composers I play, who I believe were familiar with that state. Within their own language I might be able to give them just a little gift of having understood how tremendous their struggle was with a particular note. Classical players are aware of this process because they're usually studious about everything they do—if they're good—but that doesn't mean they're aware of the *state* as much as, "Oh yes, this phrase means this." If you don't have a relationship with the state that produced the phrase, you can't be as good a player of the music. That's what I hope I can bring.

AL: So far you've only performed concertos in public. Do you see yourself doing solo classical recitals?

KJ: Yes I do, but I'm not sure when.

AL: Do you have any idea yet what music?

KJ: Not really. I've been working on the Beethoven sonatas for about 13 years now, fairly regularly. I didn't have this studio until several years ago, and before that I didn't practice a hell of a lot because improvising and practicing don't work together.

AL: I take it you wouldn't consider doing a program of a Bach toccata, a Beethoven sonata, and a Jarrett improvisation.

KJ: No, probably not. That subject has come up, as you can imagine. An orchestra says, "Would you do this concerto with us and would you improvise in the second half?" No. I feel that is using my music merely as a means of filling out the program.

AL: You don't feel that it might highlight some of those connections to the audience—you've played Bach and then you play your music so that they could hear some of the things you hear?

KJ: It certainly would be possible, but it would be too easy. For them *and* for me. Already we're at the point where they want to hear rich ideas related to their favorite solo recordings. They do not want to see that next step, and they won't accept that next step within the context of a solo improvised concert.

I had an interesting interview with the Japanese composer, Toru Takemitsu, recently. He decided he wanted to interview me for their classical music magazine. He was asking why my solo concerts were slowing down and stopping, and he said something about, "Is it because you don't want to possess the music anymore?" And that was precisely right. The only reason I bring this up is because I don't feel like a composer at this moment at all. And I talk to people about my stopping the solo concerts, and they say, "Oh my god," or "Well maybe you'll be writing something soon." And I tell them, "Wait a minute, you don't understand. This is a *positive* thing that is happening to me." It really is positive, in the sense that anyone who wants to listen to what I'm doing this year has to listen to other people's music, who they may not have a relationship with, and come to terms with whether they can deal with *my* relationship to those people or not. Which is exactly what you do when you're listening well, you know? "What did I like or what didn't I like about it? Was it the piece, or was it the way they played the piece? Or maybe I just don't think he can do this; he shouldn't be doing this." All those things have no application to this point because people assume that if Keith Jarrett's going to play somewhere, he's going to play his own music. Even now if I play a concerto and the audience wants an encore, they want me to improvise.

AL: So in addition to broadening your own musical experience, you're trying to broaden the listener's range of musical experience as well.

KJ: My experience has been that when you risk losing a listener, you're either doing something terrible or doing something very important. I've come to terms with when I'm doing something terrible—I'm the first person to know it's bad. If I continue to know that, then all I have to do is put those pieces together, and if I'm still risking the listening public, it's got to be a right step, you know? With the exception of pure shock value—anyway, there's no shock left.

AL: Let's talk about the difference between writing for orchestra and writing for "jazz" quartet. You've had two well-known quartets that you've written for . . .

KJ: The hard part of writing for an orchestra is writing for an orchestra. The hard part of the quartet situation is not the writing at all—it is the question of how to make it a personal statement for everyone in the band. So that's a separate thing. In other words, if you take these four people and subtract even one and put a different person in it, the music I would write for *that* group should be different. And if anyone ever does a study on it, they'll see that the American quartet and the Scandinavian group and even the music I wrote for the trio at the Vanguard—I don't know if it will ever get recorded—but you could put them beside each other—and even the string music for Jan—and see how much consideration went into *who* was playing.

AL: I think they sound very different . . .

KJ: Yeah, but a lot of people attribute that to the players. Like

KEITH JARRETT SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

STANDARDS VOL. 1—ECM 1255
THE CELESTIAL HAWK—ECM 1175
SACRED HYMNS—ECM 1174
CONCERTS—ECM 3-1227
NUDE ANTS—ECM 1171
INVOCATIONS/MOTH AND THE FLAME—ECM D-1201
SUN BEAR CONCERTS—ECM 1100
STAIRCASE—ECM 1090
EYES OF THE HEART—ECM T-1150
HYMNS/SPHERES—ECM 1086/7
SURVIVORS SUITE—ECM 1085
MY SONG—ECM 1115
BELONGING—ECM 1049
ARBOUR ZENA—ECM 1070
LUMINESSENCE—ECM 1049
IN THE LIGHT—ECM 1033
THE KÖLN CONCERT—ECM 1064/5
SOLO CONCERTS—ECM 1035/7
FACING YOU—ECM 1017
THE BEST OF . . .—ABC 9348
BIRTH—Atlantic 1612
GREAT MOMENTS WITH . . .—MCA 2-4125
BOP-BE—MCA 29048
BYABLUE—MCA 29047
DEATH & THE FLOWER—MCA 29046
FORT YAWUH—MCA 29044
MOURNING OF A STAR—Atlantic 1596
SOMEWHERE BEFORE—Atlantic 8808
TREASURE ISLAND—MCA 29045
EXPECTATIONS—Columbia 31580
MYSTERIES—Impulse 9315
SHADES—Impulse 9322
EL JUICIO—Atlantic 1673
RESTORATION RUIN—Vortex 2008
LIFE BETWEEN THE EXIT SIGNS—Vortex 2006

as a composer

RITUAL—ECM 1112

with Jack DeJohnette

RUTA & DAITYA—ECM 1021

with Kenny Wheeler

GNU HIGH—ECM 1069

with Gary Peacock

TALES OF ANOTHER—ECM 1101

with Gary Burton

GARY BURTON & KEITH JARRETT—Atlantic 1577

with Art Blakey

BUTTERCORN LADY—Trip 5505

with Miles Davis

AT FILLMORE—Columbia 30038
LIVE-EVIL—Columbia 30954

with Charles Lloyd

THE BEST OF . . .—Atlantic 1556
AT MONTEREY: FOREST FLOWER—Atlantic 1473
DREAM WEAVER—Atlantic 1459
LOVE IN—Atlantic 1481
FLOWERING OF THE ORIGINAL QUARTET—Atlantic 1586
IN EUROPE—Atlantic 1500
IN THE SOVIET UNION—Atlantic 1571
JOURNEY WITHIN—Atlantic 1493

IRA BERGER

KEITH JARRETT'S EQUIPMENT

Keith Jarrett has a preference for Steinway pianos. "German Steinways are more consistent; American ones can be great or not-so-great. I keep both in my studio, so when I'm preparing a hard [classical] piece, depending on where I'm playing and what sort of action it's going to have, I try and practice on the appropriate piano. Besides, the German ones have sharp beveled edges on ivory keys—well, the new ones are plastic—and the American ones are plastic keys with not-so-beveled edges, and there have been occasions when I have chosen a piano because I knew ahead of time my hands were going to be moving around so much, and I had to play again the next day, I would have to choose one not because of how it sounded but because of how sharp the keys were.

"Bösendorfer pianos have a straight-line sound; when you hit them harder, they get louder, but they don't sing more. The Steinways have singing harmonics up there, and especially on some of my more recent recordings, there are times when I'm playing the harmonics, and not so much the prime note.

"I haven't played the soprano sax much lately; it's an old King. I don't know what kind of mouthpiece it has, and it's probably had the same reed in it for the past three years [*laughs*].

"I think that of the other instruments I play, I probably know more about the drums and recorder than I do about the soprano sax, besides the fact that it's impossible to play in tune [*laughs*]. Recorders are sort of a hobby; I have several different kinds, some ebony baroque ones, made by Moeck mostly. They're the best that are factory made. Badal Roy got me a pair of tablas I like very much. My son plays drums too, and I use his set once in a while, but I don't even know what kind it is . . . I'm not so interested in brands anymore.

"I also have a harpsichord and clavichord made by Carl Fudge, a Winchester, MA builder, and these are deserving of note."

they'll say positive or negative things about, "The Swedish band doesn't exert enough pull against Jarrett's free-flowing melodic lines." Or, "Charlie Haden and Paul Motian were always pulling and stretching things, and we think that challenged Jarrett's creativity." But what they're really hearing isn't quite what they're saying. What they're saying is true, but what they're hearing is how considerate I had to be to write for each of those bands. If I wrote the *Belonging* music with Charlie and Paul in the band, they couldn't be pulling in that way. The language wouldn't work. I'd have to stop and say, "Listen, Charlie, you gotta come down on 'one' here." If I wrote chords in a certain manner for Dewey, for example, and he was playing on changes, it would be a whole different sound. By Jan somehow changing his language, and the way the four of us played together, that worked. Someday I'm pretty sure that there'll be some serious studies of a lot of things, and I hope to be alive to see a few of them [*laughs*]. Just for fun, to see if it ever really happens.

AL: So whenever you've composed something, it's been for very specific reasons or a specific situation. If you had to compose quartet music, it was for a particular group of players . . .

KJ: In jazz, yeah . . .

AL: . . . and if it was an orchestral piece, it was because you were commissioned or . . .

KJ: Well no, actually *In The Light* was a collection of pieces I wrote with no outlet at all. But we all have youthful flows of ideas at a certain stage in our lives, and whatever happens, happens in that period of time. What happened in that period for me was I was not working, I didn't have a good instrument, I didn't have a suitable place to live, and writing certainly made some sense. It was a way of expressing something.

AL: You've titled a lot of pieces *Hymn*, even though they're different sounding pieces in different contexts. Why *Hymn*?

KJ: Well, in the sense that Bach always ended his pieces with a dedication to God. It's the same thing. If I could call everything I did *Hymn*, it would be appropriate, because that's what they are when they're correct. I connect every music-making experience I have, including every day here in the studio. If it does not connect with a greater [*long pause*] power, and if I do not surrender to it, nothing happens. In that sense everything feels like a hymn, because I don't have access to this just by the fact of being Keith Jarrett and having recorded all this time. There's no reason why I should have this experience *ever*. Everytime it's a gift. So if I want to acknowledge this gift, I would have to call it a hymn. *Ritual* was, in a way, just another word about something perhaps surrounding a state of prayer.

AL: When trying to describe your solo concerts, a lot of people say they hear traces of all different kinds of music: Oriental music, Russian music, Mideastern music, Scottish bagpipe drones, English folk tunes, Indian folk music, and all this other stuff. I don't know if they think you've digested all this stuff, and are consciously or subconsciously throwing it in there. Why do you think that is?

KJ: If I were a "stylist," it wouldn't happen. If I were a self-conscious artist the way most people think an artist is supposed to be for some reason—and mostly critics seem to think that—I would be saying something only *I* could say, and I would always be avoiding saying anything anyone else has ever said, and I would somehow sound unique. Where to me—I've said this before—that's step number one: you finally have your sound and what you like; you have a way of making your music. Now, throw that away, and that's the beginning of being an artist. People want to stop at step one and say, "Listen, man, this sounds like everything; it's eclectic!" Call it anything you want; all I know is that step two is that you have to throw that away. And if you throw it away, then at any moment you *can* sound like anything, except it won't *be* that other thing.

AL: Does it bother you when people use those "influences" to latch on to?

KJ: It bothers me how easy it is to do it, and that they choose listening to it that way because it's easier to do that. Associative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 63

1984

The Seventh Annual down beat Student Music Awards

The annual ***deebee*** *Student Music Awards honor the accomplishments of U.S. and Canadian high school and college student musicians.*

Even more in '84! Surpassing last year's record-breaking response, this year turned out the biggest and best crop of entries ever for the seventh annual **down beat** Student Music Awards—entries featuring thousands of exceptionally talented young musicians. Again we must thank the National Association of School Music Dealers, who endorsed and cosponsored the "deebees" for the second straight year, helping to chart the achievements of the upcoming wave of new musical talent.

The Winners and Outstanding Performances in each of the 17 categories (with separate divisions for high school and college) revealed a pleasing blend of newcomers and return winners. Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY) trumpeter Jeff Beal added a Jazz Instrumental Soloist win and an Original Composition OP to his wallful of past "deebee" honors—'82 and '83 Jazz Instrumental Soloist OPs, '83 OPs in Blues/Pop/Rock Instrumental Soloist and Original Composition, and an '83 Best Jazz Arrangement co-win. And Eastman reedman Joel McNeeley doubled too, winning as Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist and also turning in a Jazz Arrangement OP (the Joel McNeeley Quartet turned in an OP in '83 as a Blues/Pop/Rock Group). Trumpeter Richard Hollyday took his scholarships won via OPs as high school Jazz Instrumental Soloist in '82 and '83 to the Berklee College of Music, where his quintet this year captured a Jazz Instrumental Group OP (Hollyday also recorded an LP with Boston pro's Bill Pierce, Alan Dawson, and others; it's reviewed on page 40).

In terms of school recognition, Amador Valley High School (Pleasanton, CA) received the most "deebee" h.s. citations in '84—six (three wins, three OPs)—with the AVHS Quartet capturing both the Jazz Instrumental and Blues/Pop/Rock Group honors, thanks to the winning (Blues/Pop/Rock) and Outstanding Performance (Jazz Instrumental) solos by pianist Roger J. Manning Jr. (who turned in a Blues/Pop/Rock OP in '83). Manning scored a triple this year, with an OP as Classical Instrumental Soloist, sharing with school-

mate tenor saxist David Jensen. Trumpeter/flugeler John Bailey of East Lansing (MI) H.S. also copped OPs in both the Jazz and Classical Instrumental Soloist categories (shades of Wynton!).

In the college division, thanks to Beal and McNeeley, Eastman leads the way with four wins and six OPs, followed closely by Northern Illinois University (De Kalb) with three wins and five OPs. NIU continues to dominate the group categories. The NIU Wind Ensemble won the Symphonic Band category for the fourth year running, and the NIU Chamber Winds racked up a third straight Chamber Music Group win, while the NIU Philharmonic copped the Classical Orchestra crown which they'd won previously in '81 and '82.

The judges, as usual, were tough but fair; high school musicians were looked upon as aspiring professionals, while collegians were judged as pro's. We congratulate all those commended below; their prizes include "deebee" plaques, certificates, and pins; Shure microphones; Berklee College of Music scholarships; and cash scholarships (details will follow). But congratulations are also due the devoted instructors and various school programs, in addition to the local school music dealers, which help these award-winning musicians and the thousands like them across the country prepare for a musical future, to the benefit of us all. *—the editors*

Key To Award Listings:

WINNER or
OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
(listed alphabetically)
Recipient, Instrument (or *Song Title*)
School
Faculty Adviser
Cooperating Music Dealer

JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL GROUP

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Amador Valley H.S. Quartet
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Best Music, Oakland, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Denver Citywide H.S. Jazz Combo
Career Education Center, Denver, CO
Neil W. Bridge, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

COLLEGE WINNER
U. of Cincinnati Jazz Chamber Ensemble
U. Cincinnati-Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, OH
Rick Van Matre, director
Ray Lammers Music, Cincinnati, OH

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Richard Hollyday Quintet
Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA
Larry Monroe, chairman
Rayburn Music, Boston, MA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Jelly Roll Stompers
U. CO-Denver, Denver, CO
Roy Pritts, assoc. professor
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
George Robert Quartet
Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA
Andy McGhee, instructor
Rayburn Music, Boston, MA

JAZZ VOCAL SOLOIST

COLLEGE WINNER
Sara E. Lazarus
Harvard U., Cambridge, MA
Thomas G. Everett, director
Coffey Music, Norwood, MA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Nancy Shallman
New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA
Miroslav Vitous, chairman
Rayburn Music, Boston, MA

JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL SOLOIST

Gregory Gisbert

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Gregory Gisbert, trumpet
Heritage H.S., Littleton, CO
Steve Asheim, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
John Bailey, trumpet/flugelhorn
E. Lansing H.S., E. Lansing, MI
Jane Gruber, director
Marshall Music, Lansing, MI

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Philip A. Cordaro, guitar
Poughkeepsie H.S., Poughkeepsie, NY
Robert Shaut, director
Atwell/Wolf Music, Albertson, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Tom Garung, trombone
Barrington H.S., Barrington, IL
David K. Hans, director
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Joe Jackson, trombone
Arts Magnet H.S., Dallas, TX
Bart Marantz, jazz department head
Brook Mays Music, Dallas, TX

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Jeff King, tenor saxophone
Barrington H.S., Barrington, IL
David K. Hans, director
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Roger J. Manning Jr., piano
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Alcosta Music, San Ramon, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Donny McCaslin, tenor saxophone
Aptos H.S., Aptos, CA
Don Keller, instructor
Dennis Heaney Music, Santa Cruz, CA

The Fullerton College Jazz Band

Jeff Beal (left) with Wynton Marsalis

COLLEGE WINNER
Jeff Beal, trumpet/flugelhorn
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Anders Bostrom, flute
Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA
Roberta Bradley, teacher
Boston Music, Boston, MA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
John Caviani, trombone
Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA
Phil Wilson, instructor

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Ray Herrmann, tenor saxophone
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Ron Modell, professor
Mel Elliott Music, De Kalb, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Eugene Jablonsky, bass
WA St. U., Pullman, WA
Gregory Yasinitsky, director
Keeney Brothers, Moscow, ID

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Harold Manning, tenor saxophone
Fullerton College, Fullerton, CA
Terry J. Blackley, chairman
Gary's Music, San Bernardino, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Pete Distead, trumpet
U. Northern CO, Greeley, CO
Gene Aitken, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Mark Ellis Stephens, piano
Fullerton College, Fullerton, CA
Terry J. Blackley, chairman
Gary's Music, San Bernardino, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Rich Thompson, drums
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Jack Waltrip, tenor saxophone
U. Northern CO, Greeley, CO
Gene Aitken, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Horace A. Young III, flute
WA. St. U., Pullman, WA
Gregory Yasinitsky, director
Keeney Brothers, Moscow, ID

JAZZ BIG BAND

JR. HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Rose Hill Jr. High Band
Rose Hill Jr. H.S., Redmond, WA
Gary H. Evans, director

SPECIAL PERFORMING ARTS
HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
HSPVA Jazz Ensemble
H.S. For Performing and Visual Arts,
Houston, TX
Robert Morgan, chairman
H & H Music, Houston, TX

SR. HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Rithum Machine
Barrington H.S., Barrington, IL
David K. Hans, director
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Decatur MacArthur Jazz Ensemble
Decatur MacArthur H.S., Decatur, IL
Jim Culbertson, director
Thompson-Kramer Music, Decatur, IL

COLLEGE WINNER
Fullerton College Jazz Band
Fullerton College, Fullerton, CA
Terry J. Blackley/Jim Linahon, directors
Gary's Music, San Bernardino, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Eastman Jazz Ensemble
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
U. of Miami Concert Jazz Band
U. Miami, Coral Gables, FL
Whitney F. Sidener, director
Gables Music, Coral Gables, FL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
UNC Jazz Lab Band I
U. Northern CO, Greeley, CO
Gene Aitken, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

JAZZ VOCAL GROUP

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Mt. Pleasant Studio Singers #2
Mt. Pleasant H.S., San Jose, CA
Jan DeShera, director
Tony's Music, San Jose, CA

COLLEGE WINNER
Gold Company Quartet
Western MI U., Kalamazoo, MI
Stephen Zegree, director
Farrow's Music, Kalamazoo, MI

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
UNC Vocal Jazz Quartet
U. Northern CO, Greeley, CO
Gene Aitken, director
Flesher-Hinton Music, Denver, CO

JAZZ VOCAL CHOIR

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Mt. Pleasant Jazz II
Mt. Pleasant H.S., San Jose, CA
Jan DeShera, director
Tony's Music, San Jose, CA

COLLEGE WINNER
Gonzaga University Jazz Choir
Gonzaga U., Spokane, WA
Michael Yachanin, chairperson
Hoffman's Music, Spokane, WA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Gold Company
Western MI U., Kalamazoo, MI
Stephen Zegree, director
Farrow's Music, Kalamazoo, MI

SYMPHONIC BAND

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Boardman Symphonic Band
Boardman H.S., Boardman, OH
Thomas A. Groth, director
Neapolitan Music, Youngstown, OH

COLLEGE WINNER
NIU Wind Ensemble
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Stephen Squires, conductor
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

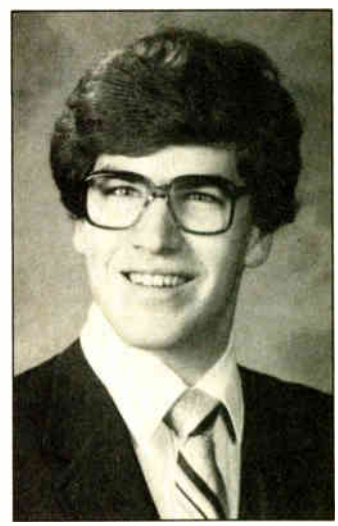
CHAMBER MUSIC GROUP

COLLEGE WINNER
NIU Chamber Winds
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Stephen E. Squires, conductor
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
The Trombone Quartet
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Ron Modell, professor
Mel Elliott Music, De Kalb, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Vermilion Quartet
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Marc Johnson, asst. professor
Mel Elliott Music, De Kalb, IL

CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTAL SOLOIST



Jeff Knutson

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Jeff Knutson, trombone
North H.S., Fargo, ND
Ed Christiasson, director
Schmitt Music, Fargo, ND

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
John Bailey, trumpet
E. Lansing H.S., E. Lansing, MI
Jane Gruber, director
Marshall Music, Lansing, MI

The Boardman High School Symphonic Band; Thomas A. Groth (upper right), director

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
David Jensen, tenor saxophone
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Best Music, Oakland, CA

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Roger J. Manning Jr., piano
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Alcosta Music, San Ramon, CA

COLLEGE WINNER
Craig Whittaker, alto saxophone
U. AZ, Tucson, AZ
Elizabeth Ervin, assoc. professor
Beaver's Band Box, Tucson, AZ

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Lily Ho, violin
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Carl Roskott, conductor
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Paul Loiselle, bass trombone
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Ron Modell, professor
Mel Elliott Music, De Kalb, IL

CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA

COLLEGE WINNER
NIU Philharmonic
Northern IL U., De Kalb, IL
Carl Roskott, conductor
Karnes Music, Elk Grove, IL

BLUES/POP/ROCK INSTRUMENTAL SOLOIST

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Roger J. Manning Jr., electric piano
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Alcosta Music, San Ramon, CA

COLLEGE WINNER
Joel McNeeley, flute, alto flute, alto saxophone
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

Maria Schneider

COLLEGE WINNER
Maria Schneider, *Now And Then*
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Jeff Beal, *Cornucopia*
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Steve Kenyon, *Winter Soltice*
U. Miami, Coral Gables, FL
Ron Miller, asst. professor

BLUES/POP/ROCK GROUP

HIGH SCHOOL WINNER
Amador Valley H.S. Quartet
Amador Valley H.S., Pleasanton, CA
Dick Dorr, director
Best Music, Oakland, CA

COLLEGE WINNER
Aztec
U. Miami, Coral Gables, FL
Gary Lindsay, asst. professor

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Bas Relief
New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA
Miroslav Vitous, director
Rayburn Music, Boston, MA

JAZZ ARRANGEMENT

Patricia Schultz

COLLEGE WINNER
Patricia Schultz, *Seven Steps To Heaven*
Lawrence U., Appleton, WI
Mark L. Lusk, director
Heid's Music, Appleton, WI

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Peter Margulies, *Miles' Mode*
astman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Joel McNeeley, *My Romance*
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

JAZZ STUDIO ORCHESTRA

COLLEGE WINNER
Eastman Studio Orchestra
Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY
Ray Wright, professor
Wendell Harrison Music, Rochester, NY

STUDIO RECORDING

COLLEGE WINNER
Larry Darling & Jim Kowald, engineers
Lawrence U. Conservatory of Music, Appleton, WI
Frederick I. Strum, asst. professor
Heid Music, Appleton, WI

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Bob Brockmann & Jerry Placken, engineers
U. Miami, Miami, FL
Ken Pohlmann, director

LIVE RECORDING

COLLEGE WINNER
Jeffrey Mason, engineer
with Dan Chien & Sue Fisher
SUNY College-Fredonia, Fredonia, NY
David Moulton, chairman
R.J. Crino Music, Dunkirk, NY

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
Bob Brockmann, engineer
U. Miami, Miami, FL
Ken Pohlmann, director

AWARDS & PRIZES

- **deebee Award Plaque** (a golden replica of a **down beat** cover "featuring" names of winners) is awarded to the music department of each winning high school and college.
- **deebee Award Certificate** is awarded to each individual winner and directors of winning ensembles.
- **deebee Award Pin** (a golden stickpin) is awarded each winner and Outstanding Performance recipient and faculty adviser.
- **Shure Microphone Award** is only presented to individual student winners and student leaders (or faculty conductors) of each winning ensemble. This year Shure Bros. Inc. (Evanston, IL) is presenting the new PE66L-LC, the top-of-the-line instrument microphone in their Professional Entertainer Series. It is a unidirectional, dynamic model with a wide, specially tailored frequency response for clarity and distinction in instrumental and vocal pickup. The PE66L-LC comes supplied with a ruggedly built swivel adapter and a padded vinyl gig bag.
- **Berklee College of Music Scholarships** are awarded in the high school division only and are applicable towards tuition; individual winners and student directors of winning ensembles receive $1,000 scholarships; Outstanding Performance recipients receive $500 scholarships.
- **deebee Cash Scholarships** are awarded in cooperation with and with the support of the National Association of School Music Dealers and the National Association of Music Merchants; these scholarships are applicable towards tuition at any accredited school and are awarded to both high school and college winners and Outstanding Performance recipients at the discretion of the judges.

JUDGING CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- 1) Overall sound
- 2) Presence or authority
- 3) Proper interpretation of idiom
- 4) Improvisation (for jazz) or creativity
- 5) Technique
- 6) Intonation
- 7) Phrasing
- 8) Dynamics
- 9) Accurate rhythm/time
- 10) Material

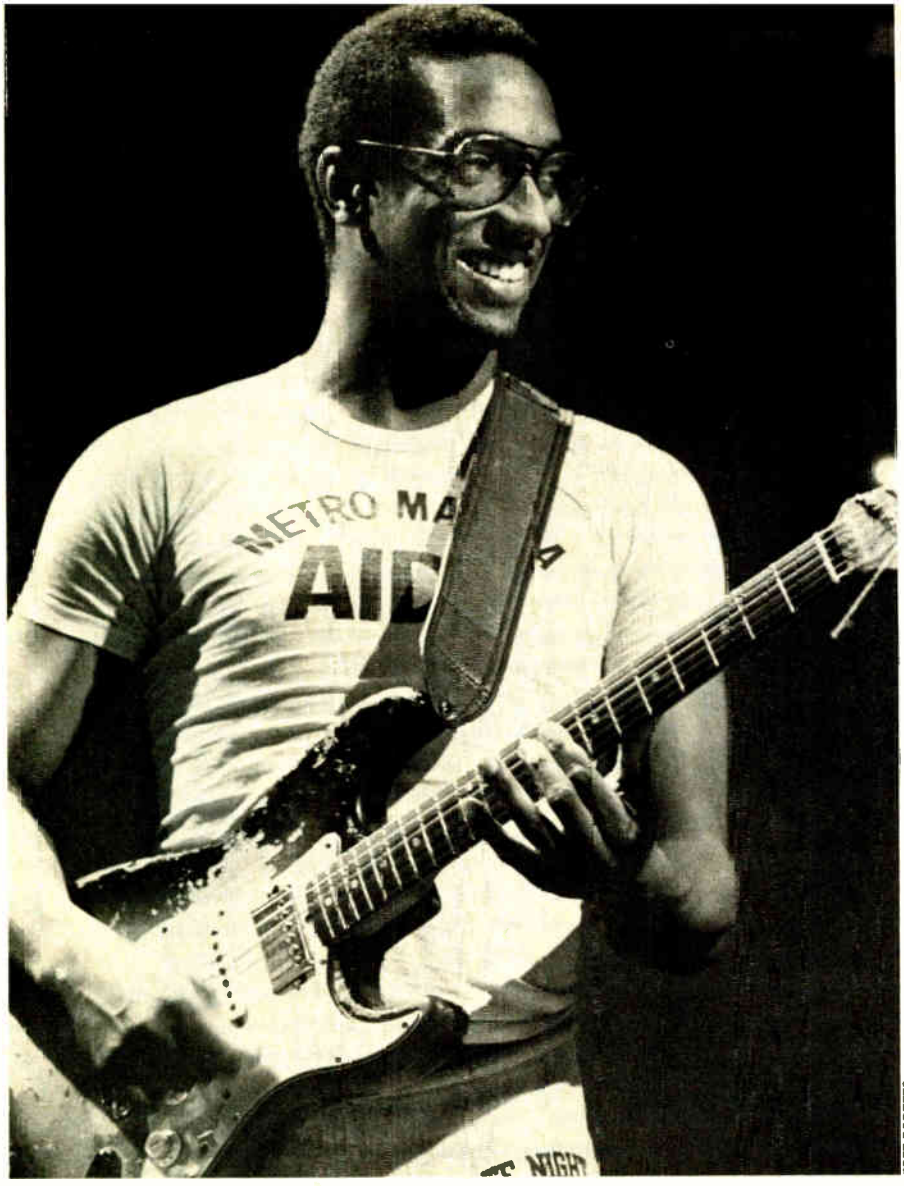
ENGINEERING CRITERIA

- 1) Perspective: balance of channels; amount and type of reverb; blend (do all sounds seem to have been performed at the same time and place?; do solos seems natural or do they stick out?).
- 2) Levels: tape saturation or other overload, undermodulation resulting in exessive hiss, consistency of levels, left/right balance, etc.
- 3) Transparency and apparent transient response.
- 4) Special effects: Are they appropriate? Do they add or detract?
- 5) Extraneous noises, clicks, hum, etc. (for a non-live performance, any non-musical sound).
- 6) Professional etiquette: labeling of box for tape speed and format, labeling of cuts, leadering.

THE JUDGES

- **David Baker**: Professor of Music and Chairman of the Jazz Department, Indiana U., Bloomington; author/composer/arranger/multi-instrumentalist.
- **William L. Fowler**: Professor of Music, U. of Colorado, Denver; PhD in music composition; composer/clinician; **down beat**'s Education Editor.
- **Bonnie Herman**: Lead singer with Singers Unlimited; radio and tv commercials and sessions.
- **Les Hooper**: Composer/arranger for motion pictures, television, commercials, orchestras, and records; six-time Grammy nominee; clinician.
- **James Mack**: Chairman of the Music Department, Loop College, Chicago; arranger/composer/conductor.
- **Larry Novak**: Pianist; studio musician/recording artist/clinician/conductor.
- **Tom Radtke**: Drummer, studio musician, lecturer/teacher of jazz studies, DePaul U., Chicago.
- **Don Shelton**: Studio singer and musician (woodwinds); radio and tv commercials, records with Singers Unlimited and the Hi-Lo's.
- **Universal Recording Studio** (Chicago): Murray Allen, owner; Mike Mason, engineer.

db



EBET ROBERTS

Hiram Bullock

Late Night Vagabond

By Bill Milkowski

Four times a week Hiram Bullock dutifully reports to 30 Rock, the towering mid-Manhattan headquarters of NBC. It's an unlikely place for a barefoot bohemian guitarist to be employed, but for the past two-and-a-half years 30 Rockefeller Center has been a second home to Hiram. As a member of the house band for NBC-TV's *Late Night With David Letterman*, Bullock picks up some decent money for essentially one hour of work, and in the process he garners more visibility than any of his New York contemporaries could accrue in six months of touring. His blistering guitar work is heard nightly by millions of viewers across America.

It's his bread-and-butter gig—and Bullock maintains that working at NBC represents perhaps his only link with what is commonly known as "the real world . . . where people wear ties and the whole bit"—but it is hardly his only gig these days. Bullock still keeps a hand in the lucrative field of session work by day, and he continues to play by night with a host of New York's finest young post-fusion jazzers. One memorable night at 55 Grand in SoHo saw Hiram jamming up a 40-minute version of *All Blues* with the likes of Mike Stern, David Sanborn, Jaco Pastorius, Delmar Brown, and Bob Moses.

One other important side gig that has come along is with the Gil Evans Orchestra, which Bullock credits with changing his whole attitude about music. He has been playing regular Monday night gigs with the venerable bandleader/keyboardist/arranger at such Greenwich Village haunts as Sweet Basil and Seventh Avenue South, and last year he toured Japan with the orchestra on a package that also included the Miles Davis group. That memorable tour and his ongoing association with Evans has provided Bullock with invaluable insights and inspiration, though he recalls feeling initially uncomfortable when he first toured with the organic aggregation back in 1981.

"I was really studio-ed out at the time. I was so used to everything being very defined and dictated, and with Gil it's just totally different. There's never a song list or anything set up in advance, and he rarely calls tunes. Mostly he just plays his own little personal cues on the keyboard, which people like Lew Soloff and Pete Levin, who have been doing the gig for 15 years, can instantly recognize. So it's always in code. He just starts playing. Sometimes I'll come out and just start tuning up, and he might start playing, then the whole band comes in and plays for 15 minutes behind what I started tuning up. And somehow this would metamorphize into a tune. It's totally unstructured in that way. Somehow, out of 15 or 16 guys, it just emerges. It's weird. It has a life of its own."

He adds, "Playing his music gives you a different perspective because with Gil you can't come up with a rote part to play night after night. Every second that you're playing, you have to actually be playing. You have to be either listening and playing, or else you should just lay out. You can't just play the parts because the music is constantly fluid and constantly changing. That's the beauty of it. It's never . . . you know how a band will go out on the road and even in the freer sections they will work up little riffs that they can go towards every night. You can't do that with Gil. He and Miles are the same way in that respect. When a thing gets too regular—like if everyone is vamping on a certain groove and it's locked in—they'll play something jarring to totally throw it off kilter. They don't want it to ever get predictable. It's always got to be on the edge, where it keeps everyone on their toes. It's a whole different way of looking at music.

"Gil really showed me a lot about myself and about life in general. He has a very cosmic viewpoint. And I guess I would too if I was 72 years old. Anyone who lives to that age and is still that aware

EBET ROBERTS

THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS BAND: *Puttin' the finger on Hiram Bullock (from left) are Steve Jordan, Paul Schaffer, and Will Lee.*

and that hip . . . I mean, it's not like he's just some cute old guy walking around in a cloud. He sees everything that's happening. He knows what's going on. Totally. Gil's the cat. He's like a Jedi master. As far as I'm concerned, he's the Obi Wan Kenobi of this scene."

* * *

Bullock was born in Osaka, Japan, and grew up in Baltimore, where he began studying piano at age three. He picked up a sax at age 11 but quickly grew frustrated with that instrument. "My sister was going out with this guy who played great bebop alto sax, and I realized that I could never play that good, so I just gave it up."

While living in Panama, Hiram began playing bass in high school dance bands. It wasn't until his family moved back to Baltimore in the summer of 1970 that he actually picked up a guitar. "I played some gigs in Panama for about nine months. At that time I'd say my biggest influences were soul records—James Brown stuff and tunes by Archie Bell & The Drells or anything that had any kind of funky bass riff in it. But when we moved back to Baltimore, I just got really bored with playing bass. And besides, it seemed like the guitar players were getting all the girls, so I started playing guitar."

His main guitar influences then were all rock players, particularly Duane Allman, Steve Miller, and Eric Clapton. "The whole area where I came from in Maryland was really a blues-rock scene. People there were heavily into Clapton. All the guitar players there cut their hair like him, bought slinky strings just like he had, and they'd sit around practicing their vibrato. Nobody was really into speed or scales or facility . . . just one-note vibrato stuff. And I was right in there too."

Though Bullock did like the music of Hendrix, he says he consciously avoided trying to sound like Jimi. "Hendrix influenced everyone of that period. There's no getting around that. But back then if you were black and you played rock music, people automatically thought you were trying to be some kind of Hendrix clone, so I kind of steered clear of that."

When he was 18 years old, Bullock enrolled at the University of Miami, one of the few schools in the country where you can major in electric guitar yet also get a balanced curriculum of the traditional academics. It was there that Hiram met a lot of the musicians he now hangs out with today, including Will Lee, Clifford Carter, Mark Egan, and Steve Morse to name a few. He studied bass for a while with Jaco Pastorius and also studied guitar with Pat Metheny, both big influences on him.

"When I studied with Jaco, he hadn't really been heard of outside Florida, but he was still Jaco. He was the only bass teacher in the jazz department, so he ended up having to teach all these beginners who couldn't even name the strings, let alone play them. It used to make him so frustrated. But I was one of the few students of his who could play, so when I would come in to take lessons with him, we'd jam. I'd lay down grooves or do a walking line, and Jaco would just go wild on top of it, just to get his rocks off after going through all that frustration with his other students.

"And Metheny was obviously a big influence on me. I studied with him in the fall of '83. I'd say that the main thing he taught me was about playing less notes and about phrasing. He taught me a lot of concepts that I hadn't thought of before, like developing a sense of lyricism and melody. Just the whole concept of studying the guitar was foreign to me. Rock & roll was all lick-oriented. All you had to do was string together a bunch of neat licks and people thought you were good. But Pat had a whole different way of thinking about the instrument—that whole linear concept. Playing the guitar had always been strictly a social thing for me, but Pat really gave me an awareness of the instrument."

In spite of his serious studies at the university, Bullock says he never really looked at music as a career possibility. "I actually only started thinking of it in those terms when I landed this job with the *Letterman* show," he adds.

There was a time when he was strongly considering a career as an attorney. While he was busy studying guitar with Metheny and Joe Diorio, he was also holding down a steady 3.9 grade point average.

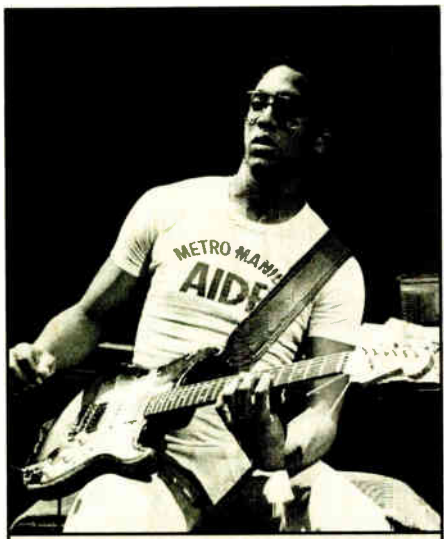
"I had about half a semester of school left," he recalls, "and was ready to take the LSAT law exam. I kept waiting for myself to grow up and get a real job, and I thought that law might be it. But at the same time I was playing in a band with Phyllis Hyman, doing Ramada Inn-type gigs around Miami. Well, everyone in the band got disgusted with Miami and started talking about going to New York to try their luck there. During the Christmas break of 1975, Phyllis talked me into coming up to New York. I planned on returning to Miami right after that break."

* * *

But success intervened in his plans. His band landed a gig uptown at the Cellar, a club right around the corner from Mikell's, where the likes of Michael and Randy Brecker and David Sanborn and a host of other hot New York players regularly hung out. These notables would stop in to see this new singing sensation, and it was on this gig that Hiram first met Sanborn.

"Phyllis created a tremor," Bullock recalls. "All the celebrities and great musicians I dreamed of meeting were coming by every night. We had Mark Egan, Cliff Carter, and Bill Baulker in the band. And one night the Breckers came by to see us. They knew that Sanborn was looking for a guitarist to play on his album, so they got him to come see me. And I got the job. I was very lucky. That was my first real important date. I had done other recording dates in Florida—everything from country to rock—but this was big, and being that it was Phil Ramone producing the album, that sort of catapulted me into a different level all of a sudden. It seemed like everyone thought I had been around for a while, but I hadn't. I had only been in town for about six weeks when I got the [Sanborn] gig."

Bullock never returned to the University of Miami, never finished out his final semester, never took the LSAT exam, and ended up canceling the lease on his



EBET ROBERTS

HIRAM BULLOCK'S EQUIPMENT

Hiram Bullock still has the same old beat-up '63 Fender Stratocaster that he's been playing since he was a Steve Miller-inspired rocker back in Baltimore. It has two humbucking pickups, and he's filed the frets down. That's his main ax, and most versatile of the three he owns. He also has a Hamer guitar, which he uses strictly for loud power music. And while in Japan a few months ago, he received a present of a Moon guitar, which he described as "basically a Schecter Strat." He used this guitar on his dance single, *Born To Be Wild*, relying heavily on the wang bar feature to create some nasty sounds for that biker anthem.

His amplification setup varies from gig to gig. On the *Letterman* show he plays through a Roland Chorus 120. For live gigs and concerts he uses Mesa Boogie amps exclusively, and in the studio he uses either Boogies or Fender Twins. He prefers heavy picks and Ernie Ball regular slinky strings (in a .010-, .013-, .017-, .026-, .036-, .046-gauge progression). His effects include an MXR digital delay, a Vox Cry-Baby Wah-Wah, and an MXR Omni rack, which includes a compressor, distortion, flanger, analog delay, and equalization.

HIRAM BULLOCK SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

FIRST CLASS VAGABOND—Trio 25031

with 24th Street Band

24th STREET BAND—Denon YX7547
SHARE YOUR DREAM—Nippon Columbia YX7268
BOKU TACHI (WE ARE)—Nippon Columbia YF7012

with David Sanborn

SANBORN—Warner Bros. 2957
PROMISE ME THE MOON—Warner Bros. 3051
HEART TO HEART—Warner Bros. 3189
HIDEAWAY—Warner Bros. 3379
VOYEUR—Warner Bros. 3546

with Bob James

TOUCHDOWN—Columbia 35594
LUCKY SEVEN—Columbia 36056
H—Columbia 36422
AROUND THE TOWN—Columbia C2X 36786

with Carla Bley

HEAVY HEART—ECM/WATT 14

with Billy Joel

THE STRANGER—Columbia 34987

with Kenny Loggins

CELEBRATE ME HOME—Columbia 34655

with Steely Dan

GAUCHO—MCA 6102

with Barbra Streisand

A STAR IS BORN—Columbia 34403

with Bonnie Tyler

FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT—Columbia 38710

with Chaka Khan

WHAT CHA' GONNA DO FOR ME?—Warner Bros. 3526

with Paul Simon

ONE TRICK PONY—Warner Bros. 3472

Miami apartment. He's been in New York City ever since, playing on countless album sessions, commercial jingles, and tv shows. "It was a fortunate coincidence for me," he explains. "I came to New York just as guys like Eric Gale, John Tropea, and David Spinozza were starting their solo careers. So there was a dearth of guitar players on the studio scene, and I just fell right into it.

"Along the way we put together the 24th Street Band," he recalls. "That was me, Cliff Carter on keyboards, Will Lee on bass, and Steve Jordan on drums . . . basically the same band we have now on *Letterman*, but with a different keyboard player. We did three albums together and were really popular in Japan, which is where I was born. So it was like this little joke to the Japanese, that I was their hometown boy who made good. We came together in '77, went through a couple personnel changes, and finally arrived at a solid lineup around '79, which is when we did our first tour of Japan. It was wild . . . like a miniature Beatles or something. We were a riot-oriented band. We had developed a very wild show, with me and Will upfront singing and running around and going crazy. By the end of every show, everybody would be wigging out, rushing the stage, chicks going wild. So that went on for a couple of years.

"Our final gig was January 29, 1981 in Kyoto. They ripped the clothes off of two of the guys in the band. At one point we were going to be signed by Bill Graham, but that never happened. We had a few meetings, but it fell through. That was the last we heard of it. That sort of organization probably would've kept the band together, but it was coming apart internally. Cliff and I were kind of holding things together, but toward the end neither one of us really had the strength or the inclination to keep doing that. So after we finished that Japan tour, we just quit.

"After the band broke up, I did whatever was there. I did a lot of jingles and whatever projects came my way. That's when I did Steely Dan's *Gaucho* and a few other good album projects. I was out on the road for about five months that year. I toured the states with Bob James, toured Europe with Gil, then I flew from Helsinki to Los Angeles, where I became the musical director for Chaka Khan, touring for about six weeks. That was a really wild tour! Then when I ended up back in New York City after vagabonding around, I got the idea to do a solo record [*First Class Vagabond*], just to give me a little direction, 'cause things were really getting crazy with me.

"The one big mistake I made with that record was the fact that there's very little guitar playing on it. Most of the guitar work is just inside parts or rhythm guitar playing. There are some brief solos, but overall the flavor of the album is not like a guitar album at all. It's really more of a singer's album. So it didn't really capitalize on what I'm known for doing. Now I've got a reputation of being a guitar player, so the next one I do is gonna have a lot of solos on it."

Bullock is now negotiating with an American label for another solo album project. Meanwhile, he has released a 12-inch dance single on Silver Screen Records, a remake of Steppenwolf's *Born To Be Wild*.

* * *

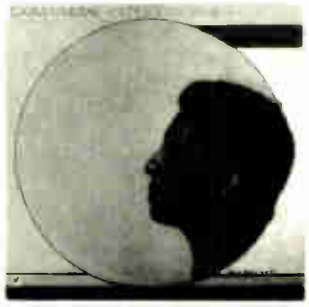
The *Letterman* show reunites Hiram with his old 24th Street mates Lee and Jordan and bandleader Paul Schaffer, who co-produced two of the 24th Street Band's albums. "These are the guys I'd be hanging out with anyway, so it's an especially fun gig. And Paul is a great boss to work for—just like one of the guys." Sometimes billed as the World's Most Dangerous Band, they perform some of the hippest, funkiest material ever heard during a commercial break—*Green Onions*, *Brown Sugar*, Sly Stone's *Take You Higher*, the Beatles' *She's So Heavy*, Thomas Dolby's *She Blinded Me With Science*—all featuring Bullock's wicked Strat lines wailing over the top.

Besides the steady pay and high visibility that the show offers, there's also the fringe benefit of being able to meet so many fascinating people from all walks of life every night, not to mention the countless musical guests that Bullock has had the opportunity to play with on *Late Night*. Some of the more memorable ones have included James Brown, B. B. King, Toots Thielemans, Wayne Cochran, Doctor John, Roberta Flack, Carole King, poet Allen Ginsberg, trash-drag actor Divine, and comedian Bill Murray (mock-singing Olivia Newton-John's big hit, *Let's Get Physical*).

"It was also important for me, at that stage of having been out in outer space for a year on the road without any kind of ties to any place, to get back in touch with reality," Bullock says. "I mean, if you live downtown and all your friends are like you and you never get up during the day and you stay up every night till sunrise and you just sort of live on the streets, it's a totally different life. So I had no real awareness of the so-called straight world. And, in fact, I had a certain kind of apprehension about it, a certain mistrust of that whole scene. You know, the basic bohemian attitude of, 'If a guy wears a suit, then he must suck,' which isn't the case at all.

"So now I go to this place every day where all these regular corporate-type people are, and I actually interact with them. I think it's important for bohemians and individualists to get to know how the regular world lives, to eliminate this fear of the 'straight world.' So I think doing the *Letterman* show has helped me a lot in that area of being a little bit more broad-minded." **db**

Concord Jazz



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Transitions

Peter Sprague CJ-237
Musica Del Mar

The Laurindo Almeida Trio CJ-238
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Michel Petrucciani GW-3001*
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Stephane Grappelli CJ-225
Stephanova

Tania Maria CJP-200
Come With Me

Tito Puente And His Latin Ensemble CJP-207
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Sings The Music of Harold Arlen

Tania Maria CJP-230
Love Explosion

The Scott Hamilton Quintet CJ-233
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THE BLASTERS

By BILL BENTLEY

They've got the Louisiana boogie and the Delta blues, country swing and rockabilly too, jazz, country western and Chicago blues, it's the greatest music that you ever knew—

AMERICAN MUSIC.

Who would have guessed that a quartet from Downey, California, formed only five years ago, would become one of America's prime purveyors of roots-soaked rock & roll? After three albums and a live EP recorded in England, the Blasters are teetering on the edge of making a musical breakthrough into the minds of the masses.

The foursome has since grown to seven pieces, including the blistering tenor saxophone of New Orleans kingpin Lee Allen, and they're presently putting the finishing strokes to their fourth LP, tentatively titled, appropriately enough, *Trouble Bound*. And if their brief but brave history has shown this bunch anything, it's be ready to roll with the punches and come out rocking. When you're living on Blaster-time, anything less would be sheer folly.

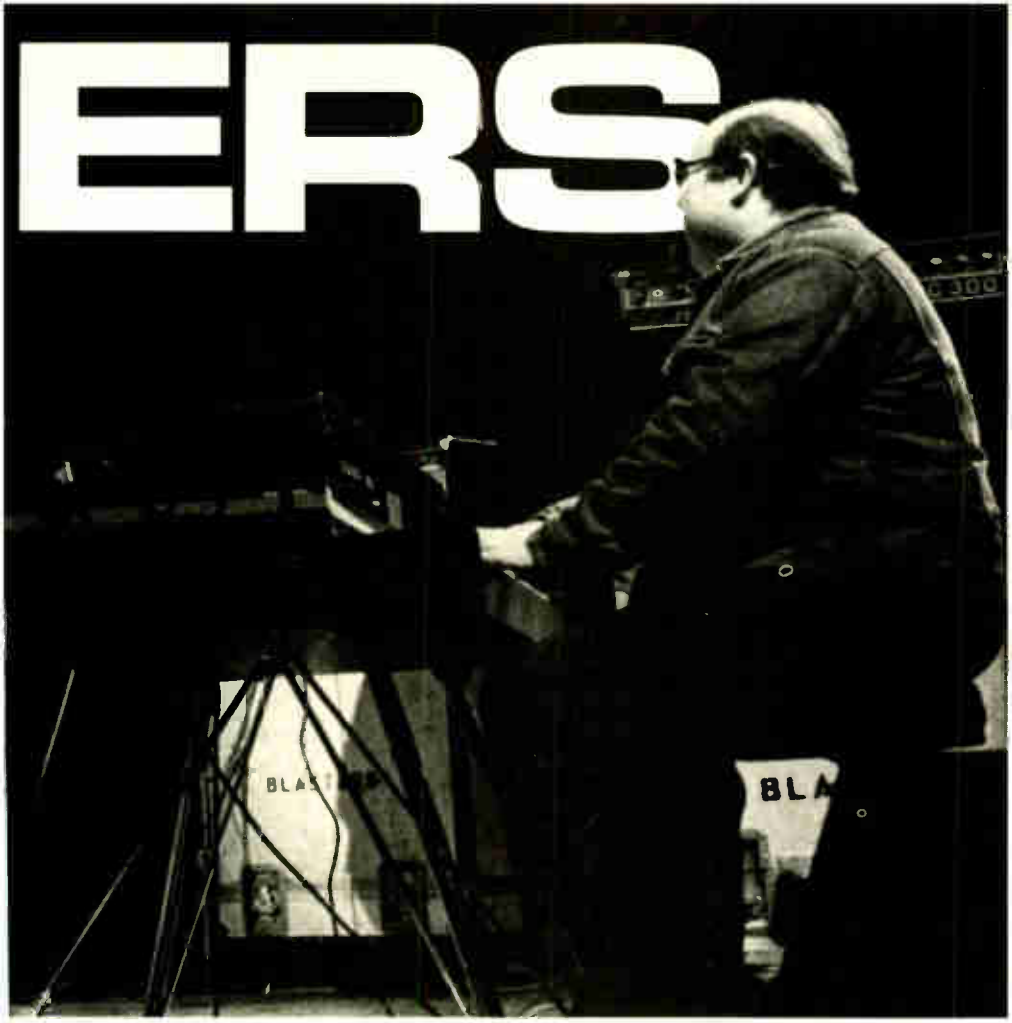
Remember, out in the sun-drenched expanses of Southern California, the dizzying facade of popular music has often gotten the upper-hand on full-tilt rock & roll. Blame it on the fact that the entertainment conglomerates of the country call Los Angeles home, or simply say the easeful and enjoyable lifestyle of the area doesn't exactly contribute the kind of influences at the heart of the darker side of American music. Whichever, the Golden State has always been more readily identified with the bombastic pop sounds of Phil Spector, the surf-laden and car crazy yearnings of the Beach Boys, or the folk-tinged frolicks of Crosby, Stills & Nash.

Up until several seasons ago, when rockers across America were re-energized by the sonic punk strains pouring out of Great Britain, few would have felt that L.A. could give birth to a group as honestly hard-hitting as the Blasters. Even considering the good-time antics of the rockabilly set that grabbed the city's spotlight in 1979, the band has gone on to land a series of surprise punches to the solar plexus of press and fans alike. A few peeks into their backgrounds, though, shows how this is one group of musicians who couldn't play any differently even if they wanted to.

* * *

At the end of the '70s, the brothers Alvin—Dave and Phil—joined drummer Bill Bateman and bassist John Bazz in a prototypical garage band, with the exception being they played in Bateman's bedroom. But before that, each had pursued a wide range of musical paths, among a myriad of styles ranging from gospel groups and salsa bands to the purer sounds of country and urban blues. Their hometown of Downey has been described as a "white middle-class island surrounded by a large black and brown community," and the variety of sounds which surged through the city's streets lent itself to a melting-pot result.

The Alvins both began playing in their early teens. Phil, the elder half, tapped



ANN SUMMA

into the blues as his strongest influence, blowing harmonica and playing acoustic guitar along with records by such black music stalwarts as Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters. Dave, the group's songwriter and lead guitarist, first started on flute and saxophone but switched to guitar before he began sitting in with Phil's bands. Though none of these endeavors made it much past their own neighborhood, each of them felt the incurable itch to later make music their livelihood. When the chance came along for Phil to learn some firsthand lessons from seasoned bluesmen like Big Joe Turner and T-Bone Walker, it seemed a natural progression from distant emulation to direct instruction. By then, the blues side of his playing had taken a strong hold on his imagination, and was fast becoming the older Alvin's most immediate trademark.

The Blasters' rhythm section is also a study in contrasts. Bassist John Bazz had previously concentrated on drums and guitar, and never really played bass until taking up the position with the Blasters. His past experiences ranged from rock groups to gospel configurations, and his style now suggests someone who's spent time studying other instruments. Bill Bateman's drum work has always been a crowd favorite, swinging from smashing snare beats to a galloping and relentless rhythm. Along with several additions and subtractions, this four-piece incarnation of the band would be the one to first break onto the burgeoning L.A. club scene in early '80.

As Dave Alvin remembers it, the Blasters' first few jobs were promising, if not exactly propitious. "When we started the band, I didn't even have an electric guitar," he explains. "We had to go down to a pawn shop, which is where I got the Fender Mustang I'm still playing, for something like 60 bucks. To me, that guitar will always be the sound of the Blasters. Our very first gig was for a friend's wedding, and then we got a Wednesday night slot at a biker bar for all the beer we could drink. We did that for months, and then decided to make some forays into the beach blues circuit, which has always been a mainstay of rhythm & blues bands in Southern California. But even though the bulk of our music then was something similar to Chicago blues, we were always either a little too loud, a little too hectic, or a little too fast. See, we'd been going into L.A. to this punk club, the Masque, to hear bands like the Screamers and the Weirdos, so a little bit of that edge had probably worn off on us. Between that, and earlier hanging out with the blues guys, we'd stumbled into a twilight zone sort of roots sound."

Twilight zone or not, the Blasters were about to form an important part of the fast-rising Los Angeles band scene. After getting off to a pop start with the chart-topping hit *My Sharona* by the Knack, L.A. had begun bouncing back with the bracing sounds of bands like X, the Plugz, and the Plimsouls. Young people were filling the clubs once again, similar to the late '60s Sunset Strip heydey, and small, independent labels were committing the new bands to vinyl. And while radio still wasn't paying much attention to the new West Coast music, the national press was having a field day covering the activity. Into this buzzing minefield of music strolled the Blasters, who immediately captured the ears of an audience unused to songs by people like Jimmie Rodgers, Slim Harpo, and Billy Boy Arnold. As Dave Alvin recalls, "There was a very collective feeling in the clubs then. We were getting asked to open shows for a lot of different bands, and even though

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Bass Blaster John Bazz/Mustang Wrangler Dave Alvin

our music was different, people were real open to what we were doing. It was sort of an 'L.A. bands rule' attitude; now it's become more like 'Who's on MTV?' Of course, this thing is all just trends, but a few years ago there was a definite excitement that's missing today."

From their opening spots on prestigious club dates, the Blasters defined themselves as an extremely explosive force among the city's infinite roll call of bands. Their music had always possessed a powerful undercurrent of fury, but once the limelight began to turn their way, the group upped the excitement ante with easy aplomb. Phil's vocals took on a contorted intensity, his face screwing up with a near-frightening fervor. The words were spit out with a relentless fury, and the singer's fascinating style of finger-picking rhythm guitar let his blues roots shine through. Brother Dave fell all over the stage unscrewing a jagged but soulful lead pattern, sometimes barely racing back to the verse before his break was up. Bazz, typical of bass players everywhere, anchored down a corner of the stage like a crafty carpenter, never missing a note. Bateman, maniacal behind his simple four-piece set, popped his snare with the power of a .45 pistol and hammered out cymbal rhythms as if his life depended on it. In a time of noise bands and angst-ridden images, the Blasters opened a whole new door for music fans around the city. Naturally, it was only a matter of time before their sound found its way onto a record.

Oddly enough, it was from reading the address of a fledgling rockabilly producer in a free weekly paper that the Blasters scored their first recording contract. The small Rollin' Rock company had become known for signing just about anything that had the slightest similarity to rockabilly, so the Blasters made the trek to their studio with dreams of turning a demo into a big-bucks contract. Their first album, cut in two days and done with a maximum of three takes per song, didn't establish any sales records, but gave the band a finished product and allowed them an insight into one of their strongest future suits—songwriting.

"Ronnie Weisser, who owns the company, told us right away that we had to get to work on some originals," Dave says. "So we came back to do our first session, and I had come up with a couple of tunes, *American Music* and *I Don't Want To*. I'd already written poetry when I was in college, but until then could never figure out how to turn it into songs. For that record I just narrowed my idea of what a song was—something that fit a certain style—and it started to come naturally. I still use it, and sometimes it seems like it's gotten harder rather than easier. But it works for us, so I don't worry about it. Whether I could write for other bands, I don't really think so."

ANN SUMMA

THE BLASTERS' EQUIPMENT

Phil Alvin (pictured above, left) sings through a Shure SM58 mic, harps on Hohner Golden Melody harmonicas, and strums either a Gibson 225 or 347 through a Randall Commander-2 amp. The plucky Blasters use, variously, GHS, Ernie Ball, and Gibson strings.

Dave Alvin's slightly reworked Fender Mustang guitar is run through a Fender Bassman 50-watt head into an Ampeg V-4 cabinet, sometimes via a DOD digital delay.

John Bazz uses a Fender Precision bass and a Randall combo—500-watt amp and 2 X 15 cabinet.

Gene Taylor (pictured right) prefers Baldwin or Yamaha baby grand pianos, outfitted with a Helpinstill pickup; electrically, it's the Yamaha CP-70 baby grand; a customized Randall 300-watt amp powers Electro-Voice speakers.

Bill Bateman beats a basic Ludwig four-piece drum kit—5 x 14 snare, 9 x 13 rack tom, 16 x 16 floor tom, 14 x 22 bass drum—with A. Zildjian cymbals—22-inch ride, 18-inch crash, 15-inch hi-hats. He uses Regal Tip 2B sticks and Remo Weather King coated Emperor drum heads.

Lee Allen plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone with a Berg-Larsen metal mouthpiece and Rico reeds.

Steve Berlin's baritone sax is a Selmer Mark VI with a stock mouthpiece and Rico reeds.

THE BLASTERS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

AMERICAN MUSIC—Rollin' Rock LT-021
THE BLASTERS—Slash/Warner Bros. 3680
OVER THERE: LIVE AT THE VENUE, LONDON—Slash/Warner Bros. 23735-1B
NON-FICTION—Slash/Warner Bros. 23818-1
TROUBLE BOUND—Slash/Warner Bros. 25093

With the first album out and a growing reputation among music watchers, the Blasters took a quick swing through the South to see what waited beyond the L.A. city limits. "In L.A. we'd become a staple on the circuit, even taking a lot of people by surprise," Dave recalls. "See, we'd already spent a lot of time playing outside the normal club crowd, so we had our sound down. We came up so suddenly that some people started rumors we were from Texas, or we'd just gotten out of jail, or whatever. And when we got out of town, I remember sitting in a club in New Orleans and talking to someone, and he said, 'Oh yeah, the Blasters, aren't they from Texas?' And I couldn't help saying, 'You're right.'"

Once they returned from that first tour, the band signed with Slash Records, a feisty independent label known for its work with punk mainstays like X and the Germs. The Blasters gave the company a new visibility for eclecticism, and the Slash name allowed the group a heightened respectability among industry trend watchers. The following album, titled simply *The Blasters*, captured the band at its raging best. They'd recently expanded the lineup, adding saxmen Steve Berlin and Lee Allen along with pianist Gene Taylor. The new, improved band allowed them to tackle a slew of new sounds, from the New Orleans lope of *Hollywood Bed* to the smashing rhythms of Little Willie John's *I'm Shaking*. The songs on that record still stand as among the best examples of what the band is capable of, and appeared on many year-end "best of" lists, including *Time* magazine's. Of the group's recordings it's shown the longest life and will likely be numbered among the strongest releases by any Los Angeles band.

Their follow-up EP, recorded live in London, now seems more like a holding-pattern attempt to keep some product on the market, but still captures a taste of the reckless spirit of their live shows. Its successor, *Non-Fiction*, came at a time when the Blasters were on the verge of either an imminent breakup or a big step forward, and Dave feels it's the band's strongest collection of songs. That it sold so little has been blamed on the tentative nature of Slash's then-new distribution arrangement with mighty Warner Bros., but even so, nobody is publicly throwing spitballs about it.

What everyone is excited about is *Trouble Bound*. For the first time, the Blasters have used an outside producer, Jeff Eyrich, and expanded their vocal arrangements to include noted Nashville backup voices—the Jordanaires and the gospel group the Jubilee Singers. Along with that, the selection of songs, most of them originals, has been enlarged stylistically to include Cajun material and more evocative ballads, and a wider selection of instruments is employed. While it's too soon to know how the music will fare on the marketplace, all involved are hoping there might even be a hit single lurking within the tracks. A summer release is scheduled to coincide with the Blasters' performance in the new Walter Hill film, *Streets Of Fire*.

In general, there's a promising ring in the air of Blaster-land, and no one could be happier than Dave Alvin himself. "It's like we're all addicted to being in this band," he explains. "Of course we fight a lot, but then we've known each other all our lives, so that's not so unusual. When I think about leaving, I always realize there's nobody else I would want to go play with and be able to get the same feeling. We've had hard times, but we rebound nicely." Rebound, definitely. And flourish? It's impossible to predict, but there just might be a bigger Blasters in America's future. **db**

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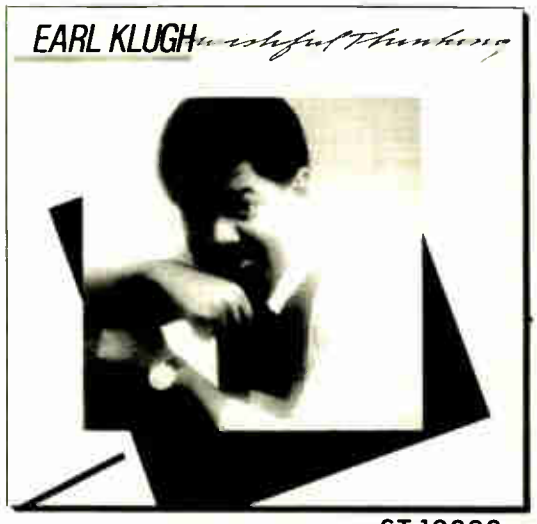

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PHILLY JOE JONES/ DAMERONIA

LOOK STOP AND LISTEN—Uptown 27.15: *LOOK STOP AND LISTEN; IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW; CHOOSE NOW; FOCUS; KILLER JOE; DIAL B FOR BEAUTY; OUR DELIGHT; THEME OF NO REPEAT.*
Personnel: *Jones, drums; Johnny Griffin (cuts 1, 2, 5, 7), Charles Davis, tenor saxophone; Don Sickler, trumpet, music director; Virgil Jones, trumpet; Benny Powell, trombone; Frank Wess, alto saxophone; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Walter Davis Jr., piano; Larry Ridley, bass.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CONTINUUM

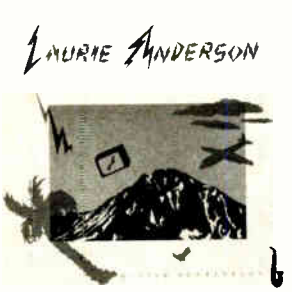
MAD ABOUT TADD—Palo Alto 8029-N: *SID'S DELIGHT; IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW; THE SCENE IS CLEAN; LADY BIRD; NEARNESS; SQUIRREL.*
Personnel: *Slide Hampton, trombone; Jimmy Heath, tenor saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Art Taylor, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The importance of Tadd Dameron's contribution to bebop can never be fully appreciated if we persist in regarding that unique phase of musical history as the sole province of the improvising jazzman. True, the groundbreaking innovations of bop's first great soloists served to define the new style and establish its vocabulary and syntax; but in order for bop to become a practical medium of expression for bands larger than the four-, five-, and six-man combos rampant in the early and mid-'40s, it required the talents of an arranger with as keen an understanding of the new language as the men who devised it.

A forward-looking arranger/composer from the beginning of his professional career, Dameron quickly mastered the harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic implications inherent in the improvisations of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. However, Dameron's greatest significance lay in the gift he had for distilling this new language to its very essence and, further, to construct a body of music that is, at the same time, both reflective of its source material and wholly independent in the manner of its design. Because of this, Dameron's music continues to be a reservoire of inspiration, not only for younger players first becoming aware of its beauties, but for seasoned bop veterans as well. Thus, it is heartening to report the existence of two similarly inspired endeavors on the part of those who knew him and grew up with his music firsthand.

Consistent with the differences in instrumentation between the two groups, there is, accordingly, a greater use of orchestration found on the record by Dameronia (its second for this label, the first being *To Tadd With Love*, Uptown 27.11). For the most part, the arrangements were painstakingly transcribed from older records by Don Sickler and John Oddo, the only exceptions being Slide Hampton's rearrangement of *Our Delight* and the inclusion of Benny Golson's *Killer Joe*, the drummer/leader's customary theme. Tenor saxist Johnny



Griffin, a most welcome ringer, is featured extensively on four of the eight charts, while virtually all of the other bandsmen are also to be heard from on occasion, the most notable being Powell and Wess. I have saved comment on the leader's contribution for last simply because it was his playing here that made me realize how wrong most other drummers are. In accordance with this epiphanic moment in my life, I will now unhesitatingly place Philly Joe directly in historical line and importance with the other giants who knew how to play not only with, but "for" a band: Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Sid Catlett, Dave Tough, Jo Jones, and Chick Webb. Though Joe solos quite a bit on this record—and I am certainly no enthusiast of drum solos—I never failed to find his work integrated, relevant and, above all, highly sympathetic to the purpose at hand.

Perhaps any other record would be a comedown after Dameronia's, but not so with the Hampton/Heath gem. Equally well recorded and equally well conceived and executed, Continuum's offering promises to be the first in a series of tributes to other worthy bop writers, i.e. Kenny Dorham, Benny Golson, Hampton, and Heath. But whatever else may develop from this admirable enterprise in the future, what we have now is one superlative example of the group's well-boistered enthusiasm for its project. Everyone concerned is at the top of his form, with both Jimmy and Slide receiving highest grades for the consistently displayed elegance of their solo work.

Some of the more easily obtainable reissue albums of original Dameron recordings are *The Arrangers' Touch* (Prestige P-24049; a two-fer shared with Gil Evans) and the recently released *Fontainebleau* (Original Jazz Classics OJC-055; a budget-priced reincarnation of an early Prestige now produced by Fantasy, etc.). Hardy souls may also inquire as to the current availability on bootleg labels of the airchecks of the classic Dameron Royal Roost band with Fats Navarro and Allen Eager, or look for Blue Note and Milestone Dameron dates now under Navarro's name.

—*jack sohmer*

LAURIE ANDERSON

MISTER HEARTBREAK—Warner Bros. 25077-1: *SHARKEY'S DAY; LANGUE D'AMOUR; GRAVITY'S ANGEL; KOKOKU; EXCELLENT BIRDS; BLUE LAGOON; SHARKEY'S NIGHT.*
Personnel: *Anderson, vocals, Synclavier, violin, whistle, vocoder, electronic conches, bell, percussion; Adrian Belew, Nile Rodgers, guitar; Bill Laswell, bass; Anton Fier, drums; Daniel Ponce, percussion; David Van Tieghem, percussion, Simmons drums, drums, steel drum, gato, bamboo; Peter Gabriel, vocals, Synclavier, Linn drum; Sang Won Park, kayagum; Bill Blaber, soprano saxophone; William Burroughs, Michele Cobbs, Dolette McDonald, Brenda Nelson, Phoebe Snow, Atsuko Yuma, Connie Harvey, Janet Wright, vocals.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Laurie Anderson comes to you out of your dreams. She inhabits a landscape between the real and surreal, memory and contrivance. It's a landscape cluttered with cultural icons, mementos, and cliches. Only the mementos have been misplaced, and the cliches have taken on a new, hidden meaning. Laurie Anderson is back with another segue out of reality, and it's her most engaging statement to date.

Mister Heartbreak is more exotic and richer than her previous LP, *Big Science*. *Big Science* was adapted from her expansive performance art production, *United States I-IV*, an audio Escher drawing as seen through Franz Kafka's eyes. In *Mister Heartbreak* Anderson slips through her black and white imagery and begins dreaming in color.

Sharkey's Day is full of tropical shadings from Daniel Ponce's jabbering percussives, overlaid on Anton Fier's funky march rhythms and played against Adrian Belew's yammering macaw guitar solos. With detuned guitar slides and horns blasting from the distance, Anderson narrates the story of Sharkey's psyche (he's *Mister Hearbreak*) as it travels along the twisted ruins of the American dream, shifting perspectives from spectator to spectacle.

There's a chapter's worth of American iconography in this one song. On *Sharkey's Night* author William Burrough's manic monotone has Sharkey looking at himself looking at himself in a hopeless loop.

Anderson makes some subtle use of the Synclavier, sometimes just droning in the background, but other times, as on *Gravity's Angel*, creating metal harps and nightmarish organs. This track evokes the spirit of Thomas Pynchon's psychotic novel *Gravity's Rainbow* with menacing electronic drums, the warning clamor of a railroad bell, and Anderson's own haunting falsetto, singing about illusory images.

Mister Heartbreak is full of sonic detail and verbal imagery. *Kokoku* is a beautiful meditation on life and death with a lovely haiku, sung in Japanese through a whispering wind of sound effects and Bill Laswell's subliminally pulsing bass. *Blue Lagoon*'s funky clavinet and jews-harp voice contrasts against Anderson's own wistful reminiscence. *Mister Heartbreak*, with it's oblique symbols and varied environments could be the new music *Sgt. Pepper* of the '80s.

—john diliberto

CHICK COREA/ GARY BURTON

LYRIC SUITE FOR SEXTET—ECM 1260: *Part 1, Overture; Part 2, Waltz; Part 3, Sketch (For Thelonious Monk); Part 4, Roller Coaster; Part 5, Brasilia; Part 6, Dream; Part 7, Finale.* **Personnel:** *Corea, piano; Burton, vibraharp; Ikwhan Bae, Carol Shive, violins; Karen Dreyfus, viola; Fred Sherry, cello.*

★ ★ ★ ★

While *Lyric Suite For Sextet* combines classical and jazz traditions, it does not really flow in the Third Stream navigated by the likes of Ran Blake or, for that matter, the Chick Corea of *Three Quartets* (Warner Bros. 3552). Blake's work and the *Quartets* court the avant garde by attempting to bring together the most advanced streams of classicism and jazz. The resulting music is challenging, difficult, and often unrelentingly cerebral.

But *Lyric Suite* combines the classical and jazz approaches differently to produce something rare in modern music, rare perhaps since the era of Mozart and Haydn: *intelligent* light entertainment. I stress "intelligent," and by "light" I do not mean lightweight so much as luminous. As with the divertimentos of Mozart or the cassations of Haydn or the *Little Symphonies* of Darius Milhaud, the *Lyric Suite* primarily functions to give pleasure. It should also excite admiration for its exquisite craft, but it will move no one to ponder deep thoughts, to plumb profound emotion, or to contemplate the frontiers of musical aesthetics. But, then, neither will it numb one with the distressingly lucrative banalities of such easy-listening music as the work of Claude Bolling.

Lyric Suite is essentially a concertante work. The sextet consists of a string quartet, piano (Corea), and vibraharp (Burton). Music for the strings is completely scored, while the pianist and vibraharpist are left largely to improvise. The two soloists engage in dialog not with the quartet—the "orchestra"—as they would in a concerto, but with each other. This more intimate interaction takes place above the "orchestra": a classical concertante arrangement.

Though the foundation of the work is laid in the 18th century, and its assertive opening *Overture* recalls the thick but vigorous textures of Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso No. 1* (1925)—a modern incarnation of a baroque concerto grosso for piano and strings—the composition's lyricism and the lucidity of its instrumentation seem to belong in the sunlit world of Gabriel Fauré and Darius Milhaud. Piano and vibraharp sparkle over the elaborated ostinato of the string quartet.

Overture is followed by *Waltz*, a dreamy, languidly syncopated jazz waltz conceived in those ubiquitous French harmonies. Corea and Burton improvise with elegance and suavity over rhythmically witty fills from the quartet. The most satisfying movement of *Lyric*

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7153 SIERRA—STEVE NARAHARA
A new name but with some star performers, Steve makes his debut on Pausa. Produced by Dan Siegel, it features Tom Scott, Abe Laboriel & Steve on guitar.

7154 WE'RE ON OUR WAY—JULIE KELLY
A wonderfully refreshing new voice, Julie illuminates the stage when she performs. She's soul, she's a belter & a jazz singer.

7155 COLLAGE—LUIS ARTEAGA
The flavor of his music is Latin-jazz with some tasteful mild fusion sounds to compliment this melodically performed debut album. Arteaga is a guitarist with Mexico his homeland.

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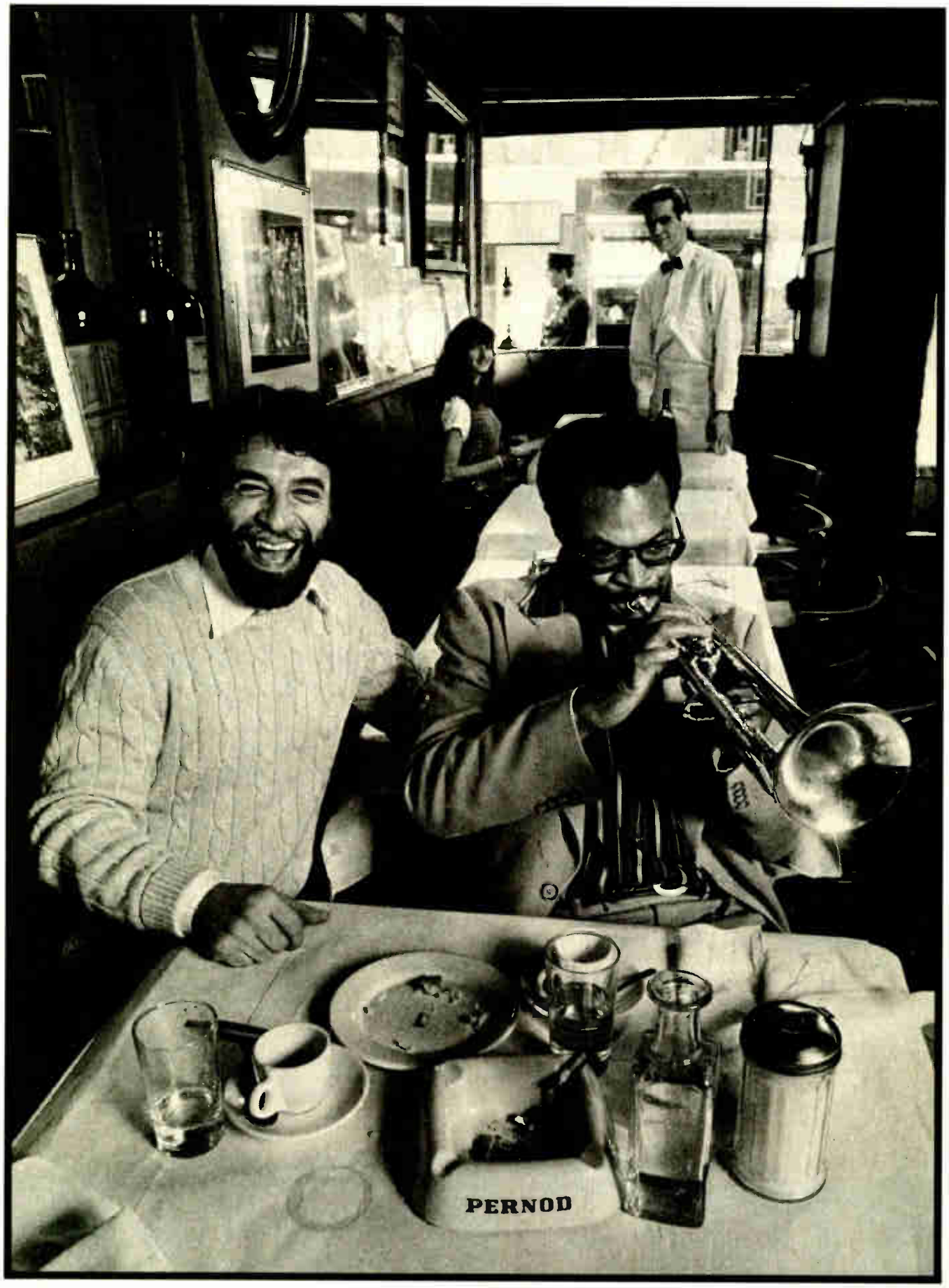

You don't explain it. You feel it.

Marvin Stamm and Woody Shaw on Life, Music and Yamaha's new 6000 Series trumpets.

The following is a conversation between two of the foremost trumpet players in the world. Marvin Stamm, one of the most respected studio players around today, and Woody Shaw, whose accomplishments in jazz are legendary.

MS: Woody, about thirty years ago, my dad gave me some good advice that I'll pass on to my own kids. He told me whatever I picked to do for a living, make sure I really like it. Because I'll probably be doing it for a long, long time. For me, the answer was music.

WS: Actually, I think we're both pretty lucky on that score. Imagine, getting paid for doing what you love.

Matter of fact, nothing else matches the feeling you get when what you hear in your mind comes out the end of that horn. It's beautiful. A feeling you can't describe.

MS: For sure. And the *people* are so important. There are an awful lot of good cats around. It's not like the old days when everybody was cutting each other. Now it seems like you have more really good experiences.

WS: You're right, man. I just had one Saturday in Newark. They gave a concert for me and gave me an honorary degree from Arts High. There were three great high school orchestras. I saw my old trumpet teacher. Man, I cried for half an hour.

MS: That's what music's all about. You don't explain it. Not really. You *feel* it. It comes from deep inside. The trick is getting it out. And if I don't have the right horn, I can't do it. That's why I'm so excited about these new Yamahas. And it's *fun* to be excited about a horn again.

WS: Right. You can play anything on them. And everything comes so much easier. I don't use as much energy to play. It's like they took all the best parts of the great trumpets and rolled them into one. On the European tour I just finished, several classical players came up to me and asked about the horn...

MS: They were hearing something.

WS: Yeah. And I *know* what they were hearing. Because sometimes it feels like I can just reach out and *touch* the notes.

MS: Absolutely. I can play a soft ballad. It responds. I can play loud and fast. It responds. Brilliant, fat, rich sounds. It comes from the way these horns are made.

WS: You said it. From the very first time I picked up my Yamaha horn, it was so *on*. The intonation's so perfect, it took me a week to get used to it! The high G's were like silk. And on the slow things where I used to use a fluegel, I end up staying with the trumpet 'cause it can give me the kind of full, dark sound I want. My trombone player said, "Woody, I never heard you sound like that before." I said, "Me neither." I really love this horn.

MS: For sure. My reputation as a studio player is based on versatility. The ability to play any kind of music any time. Whether it's classical or playing lead on top of a rock thing or sitting in a section.

And this new horn from Yamaha is the epitome of versatility. It got me to switch when I thought I never would.

WS: You're absolutely right. You know what horn I used to play. Nothing was going to make me switch but one thing. A better trumpet.

MS: You have to respect and respond to Yamaha quality. And that's something that goes beyond the trumpets they make.

It's the way they believe in giving back to the community. They're sensitive to people and to music. They're dedicated to bringing out the best in life. Not just here, but throughout the world.

WS: Amen to that, Marvin. Amen to that.

The new 6000 Series professional trumpets from Yamaha. For information, visit your authorized Yamaha dealer or write Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1S3R1. Also available from Yamaha Musical Products, 3050 Breton Rd. S.E., P.O. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.

YAMAHA

Suite, Waltz is characterized by motivic and melodic coherence and infectious charm.

Sketch (For Thelonious Monk), a solemn blues meditation, and *Roller Coaster*, in which the quartet is handled in the manner of Bela Bartok—slapped pizzicatos and all—are concise miniatures. In contrast, *Brasilia* and *Dream* are extended essays whose static melodies call to mind *very early* John Cage and may well try the patience of some listeners. *Brasilia*, a slow-motion samba in embryo that sounds more like a latin sarabande, is wistful in its quiet somberness of muted strings and delicate vibraharp line. But despite a rapturous opening melody played on the cello's lower register, *Dream* is more diffuse, less colorful, and generally less interesting than any of the other six movements. A contrastingly terse *Finale* once again makes use of the kind of leaping, driving, almost fugal figures and broad themes that opened the *Overture*.

Some may object to the length and even languor of *Brasilia* and *Dream*. Some may find the immersion of the entire piece in classical and later French traditions overly derivative. Nevertheless, there remains enough good music and fine craft in *Lyric Suite For Sextet* to charm listeners of most any aesthetic persuasion.

—alan axelrod

MADNESS

KEEP MOVING—Geffen 4022: *Keep Moving; Wings Of A Dove (A Celebratory Song); The Sun And The Rain; Brand New Beat; March Of The Gherkins; Michael Caine; Prospects; Victoria Gardens; Samantha; One Better Day; Give Me A Reason; Turning Blue.*

Personnel: *Carl Smyth, Graham McPherson, vocals; Mike Barson, keyboards; Lee Thompson, saxophone; Mark Beford, bass; Chris Foreman, guitars; Daniel Woodgate, drums; Louis Jardim, percussion; Michael Caine (cut 6), voice; the Inspirational Choir (2), vocals; unidentified steel band (2).*

★ ★ ★ ★

Madness has been one of England's hottest rock bands since their North London inception in 1978; hit records come as easily to them as laughs do to Benny Hill. Once sloppy ska revivalists/hitmakers, part of the "Two-Tone" explosion (1979) with such groups as the Specials and Bad Manners, the seven young upstarts have streamlined their Jamaican and American black music influences into an ebullient, shimmering pop sound, one expansive and perky enough to have finally dented the stateside charts (the single *Our House*). Madness will probably be considered too peculiar, too "British sounding" for sustained popularity in the colonies, but their unforced cheekiness and heartfelt sentiment have been a godsend to our commercial airwaves.

Madness champions British Music Hall buffoonery for purposes of image—check out the seven Cheshire Cat grins in photographs sometime—but their music is largely serious. *Keep Moving*, beautifully produced by Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley, has 12 charming tunes, *all* of which are worthy of a mass audience. (Three songs have already scored on the British charts.) The title mock-opus is my favorite: it moves from a Drifters *On Broadway* lilt into a full-blown horn juggernaut, making references to Stax-era Steve Cropper guitar and r&b saxophone stylings in the process. Other album highlights are the ultra-catchy chorus of funny/sad *Michael Caine*, the jaunty bass guitar in the eerily pretty *Samantha*, and the steel band-plus-choir uplift of *Wings Of A Dove*. Pompous? A bit. Peculiar? Gloriously so. Wonderful pop music? Absolutely.

The band's lyrics—the centerpiece of every song—express social observations or reflect wistfully on days of youth long gone. Yet the words sung by earnest-but-unassuming Carl Smyth and Graham McPherson must be carefully scrutinized before meaning is unveiled. The allusions to attitudes and things Britannic sometimes are difficult to grasp. And the enclosure of a lyric sheet would help decipher the occasional other-side-of-the-Atlantic vocal inflection that's evasive. Madness uses mild humor and sunny musical settings to cover moral instruction. Clever lads.

—frank-john hadley

VARIOUS ARTISTS

HYDE PARK AFTER DARK—Bee Hive 7014: *Hyde Park After Dark; You're Blase; Lotus Blossom; Sad Sam; I Waited For You; I'm Glad There Is You; Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West.*

Personnel: *Von Freeman, Clifford Jordan, tenor saxophone; Cy Touff, bass trumpet; Norman Simmons, piano; Victor Sproles, bass; Wilbur Campbell, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

Shades of the '50s: Jordan blowing feathery phrases in a tight, cool tone; Freeman squirming through restless lines and pitches; Touff bopping on both coasts; Simmons, Sproles, and Campbell making the accompaniment crackle and swing like Basie reborn in the bop era. *Hyde Park After Dark* is one of those records that bring fresh sensory experience from the real and imagined past.

John Litweiler's evocative liner notes tell us that the Hyde Park district was Chicago's nightlife center during the '40s and '50s. The Bee Hive night club thrived there and featured this house rhythm section backing guests like Wardell Gray, Bird, Ira Sullivan, Jordan and Freeman, Johnny Griffin, Touff, and others. A seven-photo insert with this album helps capture the scene.

The music? It's Chicago all the way, like a novel by Nelson Algren or a column by Mike Royko. Lots of blues feeling, a tenacious grapple with the changes: the-wind-is-howling-and-we're-facing-it-down, down-in-some-jazz-joint.

Jordan works the bottom of the tenor cannily and compactly. He is healthy and trim, especially on his feature, *I Waited For You*, and may foreshadow a new cool. Freeman's solos and his feature, *I'm Glad There Is You*, make you wonder what's on the other side of his twisted intonation, muttering articulation, and wavering (but apparently secure) rhythms. Innocent expression, pain, the voice of an empirical avant gardist probably.

Touff's bass trumpet sounds more like a slide trombone than a valve trombone does. (It makes the valve trombone sound more like a baritone horn.) His warm tone is full of vocal insinuation and blues references and, with the tenors, gives pianist Simmons' charts a muffled, mellow quality. The rhythm trio clips through *Blase*, Simmons joining the charm school of Hank Jones and Tommy Flanagan. Bass and drums are solid and ensemble-oriented throughout the album.

There is a Chicago modern jazz style, and it's neither as self-consciously intellectual as the New York style nor as polished as the West Coast style. It has that working-at-it something you don't hear everyday. It's good to hear.

—*owen cordle*

WEATHER REPORT

DOMINO THEORY—Columbia 39147: *Can It Be Done; D-Flat Waltz; The Peasant; Predator; Blue Sound-Note 3; Swamp Cabbage; Domino Theory.*

Personnel: *Zawinul, keyboards; Wayne Shorter, saxophones; Victor Bailey, bass; Omar Hakim, drums; Jose Rossy, percussion; Carl Anderson (cut 1), vocal.*

★ ★ ★

Ever since Jaco Pastorius went out through Weather Report's revolving door to become one of the most flamboyant big band leaders since Xavier Cugat, the band has lacked the creative tension that fueled its best music. Pastorius was an effective foil for Zawinul, a musician and composer whose brilliance challenged the band's dominant personality. His departure left a void that remains unfilled.

The last WR album, *Procession*, was inevitably a transitional work, and it failed to break any new ground. *Domino Theory*, unfortunately, shows little growth. WR's music, frequently cited for its innovation, seems to be in danger of becoming formulaic. The crux of the problem is Zawinul's complete domination of the sound.

Wayne Shorter, nominally the co-leader, is little more than a sidekick these days. He remains curiously withdrawn, rarely soloing for

more than a few bars. The younger members of the group also stick to supportive roles. Although there are echoes of Pastorius in Victor Bailey's playing, he has largely returned the bass to the role it served when Alphonso Johnson was in the band. Jose Rossy makes only a minor contribution here and has since left the band. Omar Hakim is the most assertive, and his fluid style is highly adaptable to the varying demands of the music.

Not surprising then, much of the music on the album is essentially a dialog between the drums and keyboards. The most impressive piece, Zawinul's *D-Flat Waltz*, begins this way, and the saxophone and bass are brought in as extensions of the synthesizer lines. The tune also features a boppish scat vocal line, and its combination of strong rhythms, kaleidoscopic synthesizer textures, and solid linear development places it with the best of WR's work.

The rest of the album is very uneven. *Can It Be Done* is an unspectacular vocal tune, and Shorter's *Predator* is little more than an orchestrated riff in the manner of Herbie Hancock's *Rockit*. *Blue Sound-Note 3* is intriguing, building from a sparse, atmospheric intro into something considerably more potent. Shorter even gets untracked for a short stretch here. The other tunes have a vague, unfocused quality. The title tune is typical. It rumbles along auspiciously on Zawinul's fragmented synthesizer lines, gathers more and more momentum, then suddenly ends on an inconclusive fade. We want to know: where's it going? And that's a question we might ask about the group as well.

—jim roberts

RICHARD HOLLYDAY

MOMENT'S NOTICE—Shiah 114: *NOVEMBER AFTERNOON; CAPE VERDEAN BLUES; STELLA BY STARLIGHT; CHEROKEE; CAROLYN; AFRIQUE; MOMENT'S NOTICE.*

Personnel: *Hollyday, trumpet; Bill Pierce, tenor saxophone; James Williams, piano; John Lockwood, bass; Alan Dawson, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

When youngsters take charge, it's a thrill for all. Out of the mouths of babes spring truths that make adults take stock and may even stun the kids. Just 17 when he led this date in June '83, Richard Hollyday brings his hot, fluid trumpet to reshape seven tunes that comprise a personal history of bebop trumpet, from Tom McIntosh's *November Afternoon* (originally written for Diz), through tunes identified with Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, and Kenny Dorham—idols all.

With the Norwood, MA teenager are the cream of Boston's players in the idiom: Jazz Messenger alumni Bill Pierce and James Williams, South African bassist John Lockwood, and New England's first-call percussionist and teacher Alan Dawson. Hollyday (who gigged with them at the Willow just before the date) sounds perfectly relaxed, plays with great aplomb and good control, calls a cheerful, well-balanced set of proven standards, not inferior originals. No wonder: he was Massachusetts NAJE's "Most Valuable Musician" three years running through his training and appearances with the Norwood H.S. big band, was named an Outstanding Jazz Soloist in the annual **down beat** Student Music Awards in 1982 and 1983, and his college quintet copped an OP this year. Hollyday studied with Leon Merian and now at Berklee College with Greg Hopkins, who arranged *Stella* and *Cherokee*.

Hollyday has a clear, tart sound, not too big but pleasing and brightly colored, like cranberry wine. He doesn't rush himself (neither pushing a phrase nor busting his lip) or get fancy for fancy's sake; nor is he afraid to make a few honest mistakes in pursuit of direct, well-knit ideas. That shows maturity beyond his years, as does his steady, crisp front-line style with Bill Pierce. Pierce seems especially inspired by the latin heads, taking impassioned choruses on *Blues* and *Afrique*, while Hollyday counters with restrained and economical yet assured and polished statements that bode well for a flash-free, lengthy career. The rhythm team, long a unit, buoys and challenges admirably, and makes this, by any standard, an above-average date. The last star is one to grow on.

—fred bouchard

HANK CRAWFORD

INDIGO BLUE—Milestone 9119: *ALL ALONE AND BLUE; THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU; THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE; FUNNY; INDIGO BLUE; JUST FOR A THRILL.*

Personnel: *Crawford, alto saxophone, electric piano; David "Fathead" Newman, tenor saxophone; Howard Johnson, baritone saxophone; Martin Banks, Danny Moore, trumpet; Melvin Sparks, guitar; Dr. John, piano, organ; Wilbur Bascomb, bass; Bernard Purdie, drums.*

★ ★ ★

Hank Crawford played *Midnight Sun* that night; it was 1962, Crawford was the lead alto player with the Ray Charles band, and I was attending my first professional jazz concert. Fathead Newman walked onto the bandstand with his flute stuck in the bell of his tenor. Later he autographed a ticket stub for me.

Twenty-two years later, Crawford, Newman, and company are still trading in the same bluesy sound and style. I hope their message goes on forever, because jazz needs the blues just as communities need churches and watering holes, places of spiritual comfort, expressiveness, and inspiration. The common ground for this music—and those places—is one's soul.

And the musicians on this session are eloquently bent-note, pleading-toned, don't-rush-the-climax soulful. Crawford voices the melody with the rhythm section alone or with sparse horn backgrounds. His horn writing is just a hint of what it could be if the horns were foreground instead of background. Another little problem: the group sounds out-of-tune in

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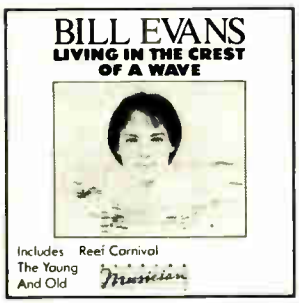

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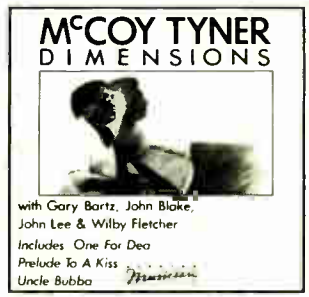
Bill Evans
Living In The Crest of A Wave
Producer: Mike Gibbs

The debut solo album by one of the brightest new saxophonists in Jazz, Bill has gained acclaim for his work with Mike Davis over the past three years and will next be featured with the re-formed Mahavishnu Orchestra. His exciting debut album features Bill on Tenor and Soprano sax in a program of all Evans originals. Supporting players include Mitch Forman, Adam Nussbaum, Mark Egan and Manulo Budrena.



1-60350 **$9.98**

McCoy Tyner
Dimensions
Producer: McCoy Tyner

The extraordinary pianist composer joins Musician for a powerful debut album by his new Quintet featuring Gary Bartz—alto, John Blake—violin, John Lee—bass and Wilby Fletcher an drums. Compositions include "Understanding," "Just In Time," "Uncle Bubba" anc a stunning Tyner solo performance of "Prelude To A Kiss."

1-60351 **$9.98**

Steps Ahead
Modern Times
Producer: Steps Ahead

Steps Ahead is building a reputation as one of the true "super bands" in jazz for the 80's. Having placed at #2 in the Downbeat Critics Poll as Best Acoustic Band of 1983, the group has produced a more widely accessible second album that features both acoustic and electronic music. A major U.S. tour is planned to support this album. With Mike Mainieri on vibes, Mike Brecker—tenor, Eddie Gomez—bass, Warren Bernhardt—piano and Peter Erskine—drums, this group has a totally distinctive ensemble sound and five moster soloists who are also young and charismatic. We believe that this will be one of the major crossover jazz lp's of 1984.

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A specially priced 2 record set featuring the most exciting moments of the 1982 Festival at The Hollywood Bowl. Grover Washington, Jr., Pieces Of A Dream, Weather Report, Dexter Gordon and Woody Shaw. The Great Quartet with McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones, Nancy Wilson and The Art Farmer, Benny Golson Quintet. Special feature is Weather Report and The Manhattan Transfer together for the first time on 'Birdland.'

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Bill Evans
The Paris Concert, Vol. II
Producer: Helen Keane

More brilliant performances from Bill's historic 1979 Paris Concert. Our first edition was heralded as one of his finest recarded concert performances and was awarded an 'Oscar' as Best Jazz Album of 1983 by The Association of French Jazz Critics. Edition 2 features "Nardis," "Joanna," "Re: Person I Knew" and more. Joe LaBarbara is on drums and Mark Johnson is on bass.

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RECORD REVIEWS

certain passages. But there are no problems with the soloists, tempos, choice of material, or (back)beat.

Some *groovy* moments: the horn kicker and slow dance tempo on Willie Nelson's *Funny*, Crawford's wringing alto recitation of *The Very Thought Of You*, Newman's speech-like articulation and blues variations on the title cut, Sparks' laidback pacing and B. B. King-sized whine (he's a fine guitarist, based on this and his work with organist Jimmy McGriff), and Dr. John's subtle organ fills and boogie-rolling piano solos. Rhythm section groove merchants Bascomb and Purdie are invariably right for this music which is fun to listen to, good for dancing, and honestly soulful.

—owen cordle

CONLON NANCARROW

COMPLETE STUDIES FOR PLAYER PIANO VOL. 4—1750 Arch Records S-1798: *Studies No. 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 34, 36.* **Personnel:** *Modified Ampico reproducing player piano.*

★ ★ ★ ★

It's hard to imagine an artist today working without the legitimatizing buffer of a "circle" or "school." Every new innovator seems to spawn a cottage industry of imitators. Since 1940, though, Conlon Nancarrow has lived in Mexico, composing in the kind of solitary environment found more in novels than in real life. Between 1950 and 1968, Nancarrow produced 37 studies for the player piano. This recording is the fourth and last volume in a series presenting the studies. It's a tantalizing sample of his output.

The studies are varied in character, though they share a common focus on rhythm. *No. 34* is one of the most complex and attractive. Though it starts with a canon in three voices, the resemblance to a folksy round ends there. Tricky metric relationships—a Nancarrow trademark—are precisely calculated. Patterns overlap and split apart, creating a sense of swelling and abating. All this innovation takes place within an arch form that provides the stability of a definite beginning, middle, and end.

Like Beethoven or Haydn, Nancarrow works from the ground up, taking small gestures rathern than full-blown melodies as his sources. He builds on these rhythms or melodic shapes, sometimes suggesting popular music. In *Studies No. 9* and *11* boogie woogie

School Bands On Wax

Big band programs in the schools continue apace, as popular as soccer and computers. They seem a great indoor sport and healthy competitive pursuit, in addition to the obvious educational value. Recording of high school and college bands also is expanding, as mixing boards and engineers pop up everywhere. With tiny production, continually evolving personnel, and grads going off in musical and other professions, they would seem to serve as yearbooks or documentation of a brief period in the band's evolution, and must be judged leniently.

Both **Houston's High School For Performing and Visual Arts** and the **University of Texas Jazz Orchestra** celebrated their recording efforts by inviting a guest to participate. HSPVA's *Morning Glory* (Mark 20376) is a pleasant outing for some hard-blowing teenagers who keep the pace easy under director Bob Morgan and show accurate, if a bit sluggish, section work. There's a good feel of swing to the charts, which really counts. There are outgoing charts by clinician/trombonist Phil Wilson, Thad Jones, and Dave Grusin that are very musical and not over-taxing. Guest trombonist Frank Rehak has a short feature and a longer mix-it-up with the trombone section that makes his presence felt. Student soloists of note are Lance Hosey (soprano), Caral Richard (tenor), and Victor Nash (trumpet).

The University of Texas Jazz Orchestra is one of the more established ensembles; they blitzed the '83 Wichita Collegiate Jazz Festival for plenty of awards, and here their smooth, intimate recording, well-integrated brass, and arranging excellence show best. They polish off a difficult Rob McConnell chart, and get through thick voicings of a Bob Brookmeyer *Willow Weep For Me* beautifully. Paul McKee plays a lot of trombone and contributes the acrobatic, exotic *Tsunami* and the strung-out title track (*Sublime In Time*, Mark 20400). Guest Toshiko Akiyoshi contributes a strutting shuffle a la *Road Time*, which the band handles jauntily. Director Rick Lawn wrote a hunky showcase number for percussion. Jeff Benedict, an '83 high school "deebee" winner who says more on tenor sax than on soprano, and trombonist McKee make the better soloists.

The 1980 *Alive II* (Mark 5546) from **University of Northern Colorado's Lab Band I** may be a holdover from when Ferguson-o-mania was peaking, with its screaming trumpets and funky, high-speed rhythm. It's a real hyper band; arrangements are hectic and cacophonous for the most part, and soloists scurry ahead of fat chord anvils. This band won several awards for their work the previous year; did it go to director Gene Aitken's head, or am I just a moldy fig of big band appreciation? I have no objection if bands strive among the student body for the same enthusiastic response as the football team at a pep rally, but they shouldn't have to show as much rah-rah and muscle, particularly with overwrought arrangements.

Fullerton Community College did the whole ball of wax themselves—art, recording, photos—on *Time Tripping* (JEFC 32883). The band sounds quite crisp and classy, but not always in tune. A hefty faculty quotient makes itself felt on the wave-lapped title suite with a horn in each section and the whole rhythm section. It makes for a better product, but that's quite an overlap. Would that they had written less weak original material, and got some charts the kids could get their chops better into. The Band II gets one punchy Basie-like flagwaver that shows off the reeds and tenor sax of Brian Bez.

—*fred bouchard*

pokes a dancing foot tentatively into the fray. Similarly, Spanish touches in *No. 12* are readily identifiable, even though the study is much more than a flamenco remake.

Like many contemporary academic composers, Nancarrow loves virtuosity and complexity. In writing for the player piano, he chose an instrument that could perform feats of speed and metrical intricacy that no human could match. The concept of idiomatic writing is taken to its limits with Nancarrow drawing on not just the flexibility but also the unique timbre of the instrument. Certain effects, like the glassy chattering in *No. 27*, are unlike anything I've heard on a keyboard instrument, whether acoustic or electric.

Precedents for composing by numerical schemes were set by some of the most illustrious composers. Bach himself was a mathematically inclined type who worked ciphers into his compositions. Nancarrow sometimes gets carried away with such machinations. As with Boulez' music, no listener could reasonably be expected to detect the infinitesimal shifts in metrical ratios that occur. The important question is whether the listener can intuit the logic without having to break the mathematical code. These studies pass that test. For analysis or pure enjoyment, Nancarrow's music merits the closer look it receives in this retrospective collection. —*elaine guregian*

UNITED FRONT

LIVE IN BERLIN—FMP/SAJ 45: *Friction; Acrophilia; But The Shadow Marred The Master Plan; Talking In Tongues; Ballad Of The Landlord; Back Home Again.*

Personnel: *George Sams, trumpet; Lewis Jordan, alto saxophone; Mark Izu, bass; Anthony Brown, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

RAY COLLINS

MAGNOLIA—Montclair 0001: *Magnolia; Chokmah And Binah; Nefertiti; Just Squeeze Me; Croquet Ballet.*

Personnel: *Collins, tenor, soprano saxophone; George Sams, trumpet; Rudi Abdullah Mwongozi, piano; James Lewis, bass; Anthony Brown, drums; India Cooke (cut 1), violin.*

★ ★ ★ ★

Magnolia and *Live In Berlin* are fine companion pieces that, to a substantial degree, reflect the vitality of the new jazz emerging from the Bay Area. Beyond sharing personnel, the two albums display a similarly strong, unsentimental sense of tradition; though Collins' quintet focuses as much on chestnuts as they do on original compositions, their program has, overall, the same bristling edge as United Front's synoptic overview of the post-Coleman landscape. More importantly, each ensemble forwards a collective identity so fully formed that a fluent trumpeter like George Sams can favor a honey-hued, Lee Morgan-like approach on *Magnolia* and employ sinewy lines and an unvarnished finish on *Live In Berlin*.

With *Live In Berlin* United Front makes the

transition from a well-versed unit with a local/regional following to an internationally recognized barometer of American sensibilities. More than their previous self-produced efforts—*Path With A Heart* and *Ohm: Unit Of Resistance*, both on the RPM label—*Live In Berlin* infuses the innovations of the past two decades with a folkloric sweep; the funky strut inserted into the Colemanesque *Talking In Tongues* points up United Front's frequent use of juxtaposition to this end. The "home" of *Back Home Again* may have been homesteaded by Coleman, Roscoe Mitchell, etc., but the current occupants have made major renovations. Certainly, Sams and Lewis Jordan—whose alto has a blues-drenched heft—owe much to the fluidity of Coleman/Cherry and the punch of the Art Ensemble Of Chicago's front line but, particularly on their unaccompanied dialog on *Back Home Again*, they display an empathy based on uniquely complimentary phraseologies. Much the same can be said about Mark Izu and Anthony Brown who, especially on *Friction*, a piece built upon short rhythmic bursts of texture, highlight color as much as they provide a strong foundation.

Ray Collins' first self-produced album—*Of Blues, Myself & I* (KRC 001)—was built around several duos featuring the reedist's diversified compositional interests, his Bechet-laced soprano, and a tenor that has the lean power of such second-wave hard-bop players as Wayne Shorter and George Coleman. *Magnolia* reveals him to be a very able musical director as well, as the various facets of his program—ambling Ellington on *Just Squeeze Me*, a mysterious version of Shorter's *Nefertiti*, and a well-muscled reading of Billy Harper's *Croquet Ballet* meshes with Collins' floating, meditative title piece and Rudi Abdullah Mwongozi's surging *Chokmah And Binah*—reflects both a generalist's scope of knowledge and a specialist's depth of knowledge. In addition to the work of Collins and Sams, the spirit of the Blue Note era is present in Brown's spattered cross rhythms and Mwongozi's two-fisted block chords and lightning right-hand lines. Ray Collins and Autumn are an ensemble unafraid of being a band; specifically, a band that cooks.

—bill shoemaker

KIRK LIGHTSEY/ HAROLD DANKO

SHORTER BY TWO—Sunnyside 1004: *Ana Maria; Dolores; Dance Cadaverous; Pinocchio; Armageddon; Lester Left Town; Witch Hunt; Iris; El Gaucho; Nefertiti.*
Personnel: *Lightsey, Danko, pianos.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

The rich mine of fervent lyricism and subtle texture in the corpus of Wayne Shorter's compositions is being delved by musicians, but as slowly as with pick and ax. Only master pianist Jimmy Rowles, himself a sensitive soul, has "pawed" over Shorter's pre-Weather Report tunes with any consistency and ear for their vast potential. Here pianists Danko and Lightsey fix their laser vision on the mother lode and strike it rich. They know Shorter's music has essentially soft qualities: feminine endings, sighing cadences; that it walks, like Carl Sandburg's *Fog* "on little cat's feet" and endures no big beat; that it is redolent of perfume and poetry, speaks in sidelong glances and eloquent, mystical gestures. They play as one their seamless, spontaneous versions that glide in space and time like elegant, ornate phoenixes: ardent, self-renewing. Their classical training and accompanist backgrounds (Lightsey with Betty Carter, Esther Phillips, Pharoah Sanders, Bobby Hutcherson, Dexter Gordon; Danko with Woody Herman, Lee Konitz, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Chris Connor; both at times with Chet Baker and Anita O'Day) serve them well in sorting out up front who does what, when, so they never falter or stumble on their chosen path through the dense harmonic undergrowth.

Passing by oft-played, oft-recorded tunes, they instead finger overlooked gems (the somber *Armageddon*, the pixillated *Dance Cadaverous*). *Lester* boogies; *El Gaucho* gal-

lops. They probe, carefully yet joyfully, the mysteriously plodding *Witch Hunt* and whimsical *Pinocchio*, following unison alarms with introspective ruminations. Best of all, they entertain the female shades of Shorter's pantheon: *Ana Maria* and *Dolores* samba nimbly in earthly garb while *Iris* and *Nefertiti* remain goddesses aloof. It is a sure sign of the warmth and empathy that these full orchestral-like interpretations convey that you never forget which women have blood, and which ichor, in their veins. *—fred bouchard*

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM

AUTOBIOGRAPHY—Plainisphare 1267-6/7: *Anthem; Moniebah; Ishmael; Little Boy; The Dream; I Surrender Dear; Duke Ellington Medley; Take The A-Train; Coming On The Hudson; Mannenberg; Children Of Africa; Anthem; Khoisan.*
Personnel: *Ibrahim, piano, bamboo flute.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

LIVE AT SWEET BASIL VOL. 1—Ekapa-004 Digital: *The Dream; And Find Me A Shelter In The Storm; Mummy; For Coltrane I, II New York City; Anthem For The New Nation; Gwangwa; Theme From King Kong; Black Lightning; Gwidza; The Stride; Soweto.*
Personnel: *Ibrahim, piano; Carlos Ward, alto saxophone, flute.*

★ ★ ★ ½

RANDY WESTON

BLUE (AFRICAN RHYTHMS)—1750 Arch S-1802: *Penny Packer Blues; Earth Birth; The Last Day; Lagos; Blue In Tunisia; Mystery Of Love; Ellington Tusk.*
Personnel: *Weston, piano.*

★ ★ ★

Abdullah Ibrahim (or Dollar Brand) has recorded so often, with such consistency, that no one of his works can be claimed definitive—each of them represents the man's noble talents. With a strong and gentle touch, self-effacing dexterity, and a deep feeling that spans African and American traditions he's absorbed through direct experience, Ibrahim in his every performance seems to reexamine, amplify, and embellish his self-expression. There's variety in his career, ranging from the ruminations of his solos to the rowdiness of some of his ensembles, but his essential character seems immutable.

Ibrahim's frequent devices are the ostinato bass, locked-hand clusters of richly voiced chords which break into punctuating counterpoint and throbbing tremolos, and a rhythmic pulse that accelerates like your heart on an exuberant hill climb. His mentors are two great pianist/composers of modern jazz, Ellington and Monk. His history, of exile from South Africa to acclaim in the concert halls (he hallows even the smokiest dive) of Europe and the U.S., has reinforced his sober, authoritative sensibility. *Autobiography*, a 75-minute double-disc set recorded live at the Nyon Jazz Festival in 1978, is a handsomely produced

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(though there's some breakup in loud passages) documentation of Ibrahim's continuing self-portrait.

The images he presents, fading into each other and echoing in their recurrence, detail his evolution. *Anthem* is his theme song, able to reflect his many moods and encompass his basic style. *Moniebah* and *Ishmael* suggest his early musical influences, the piano accompaniments to missionary church choirs, and the modality of Islam. *Little Boy* is flush with self-discovery, while *The Dream* shifts from idealism through concerted struggle to nostalgic recall and back to determined growth with persuasive objectivity. Side three, Ibrahim's homage to the Americans whose examples sustained his own individualistic urge, casts tunes by Ellington and Monk in a most intimate perspective—has *A-Train* ever been so tempered by reverence? There are fleeting references to other, linear piano styles, but Ibrahim returns to full orchestrations of motives and carefully conceived single-note runs rather than letting his hands lead him into spinning tangents or far-flung threads.

By *Mannenberg* and *Children Of Africa* he's convinced us of the inevitability of his fabrications—there are syncopations that recall New Orleans as turnarounds in an upbeat processional, and dramatic, minor bass figures intertwined with a melody that gives *Caravan* a slavish tinge. *Anthem* repeats Ibrahim's to-this-point conclusions—stately, self-assured, healing conclusions that don't ignore the world's sorrow or suffering, but seek to stand in response against self-pity or surrender. The flute

critics' choice

Art Lange

NEW RELEASE: Ella Fitzgerald/Andre Previn, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (Pablo). A return to the Gershwin songbook, this time without the pomp of orchestral backing; Ella's winsome, intimate, and to-the-point, while Previn provides apt accompaniment.
OLD FAVORITE: Herbie Hancock, *Head Hunters* (Columbia). Of course I like *Rockit*, but *Chameleon* make me want to dance too.
RARA AVIS: Bert Jansch/John Renbourn, *Stepping Stones* (Vanguard). Imagine a toned-down, subtle, English folk-inspired version of McLaughlin and Coryell, and you'll have this guitar duo.
SCENE: Mose Allison, calm and cool-as-you-please, dishing out wry songs and bluesy Southern hospitality at Rick's Cafe Americain in Chicago.

Charles Doherty

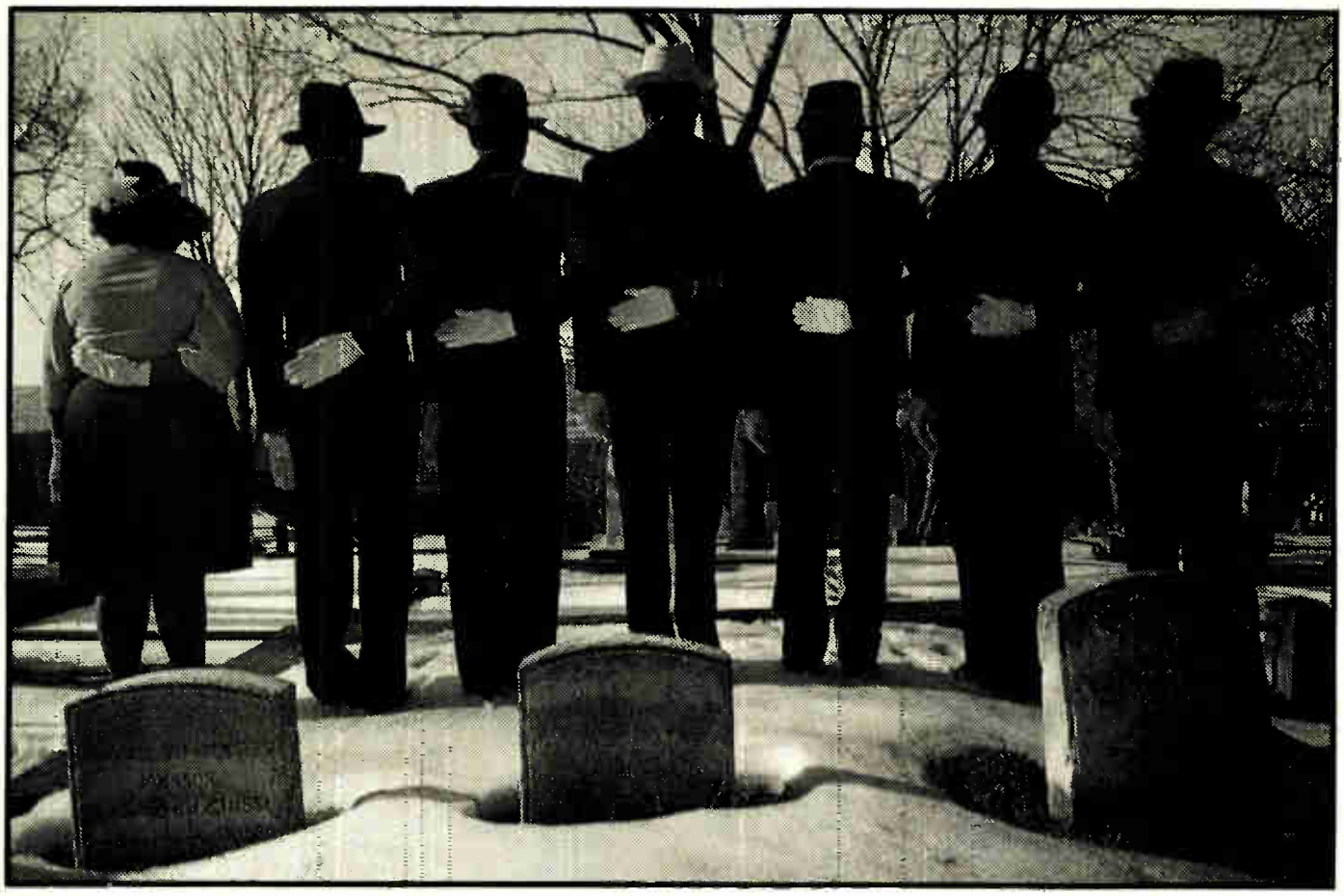
NEW RELEASE: Patrick Moraz/Bill Bruford, *Music For Piano And Drums* (Editions EG). Moody Blues keyboarder Moraz and King Crimson stickster Bruford forsake their electronics for furious acoustic improvs.
OLD FAVORITE: Ornette Coleman, *Ornette On Tenor* (Atlantic). The harmolodic altoist bops the blues and bares his Lone Star soul on a bigger horn.
RARA AVIS: Sun Ra And His Outer Space Orchestra, *A Fireside Chat With Lucifer* (Saturn Gemini). The dark side of Le Sun—a sidelong bop bout with Beelzebub, the *Nuclear War* dirge, a mournful *Retrospect*—until the roller-rink redemptive *Makeup*.
SCENE: Weather Report in the Windy City: near-record breaking heat, with a noted absence of Jaco, on-stage at the Park West; fair for the record; partly cloudy forecast.

Bill Milkowski

NEW RELEASE: Jimmy Ponder, *Down Here On The Ground* (Milestone). Unsung guitar hero picks with soul and class on something old (*Lush Life*), new (*Billie Jean*), borrowed (*Epistrophy*), and decidedly blue (his own *Another Kind Of Love*).
OLD FAVORITE: The Cats & The Fiddle, *I Miss You So* (RCA/Bluebird). Swing guitarist Tiny Grimes in his pre-Tatum days, with frantic scat-singing cohorts Austin Powell, Ernie Price, and Chuck Barksdale.
RARA AVIS: Penguin Cafe Orchestra, *Mini-Album* (Editions EG). Lilting minimalism with a difference, led by Simon Jeffes on guitar, pitch pipes, pennywhistles, cuatro, piano, and vocals.
SCENE: Look ma, no rhythm section! The Persuasions, Georgia Sea Island Singers, Sweet Honey In The Rock, and the Harmonic Choir partook of NYC's first all-voice music fest; a three day affair at St. Ann's Church in Brooklyn Heights.

Jim Roberts

NEW RELEASE: Joe Jackson, *Body And Soul* (A&M). Intelligent, well-crafted pop that draws on jazz, r&b, and latin sources. And the album cover, done in the old Blue Note style, is a gas too.
OLD FAVORITE: Charles Mingus, *Mingus Plays Piano* (MCA/Impulse). Haunting, evocative improvisations that illuminate the depth of soul behind one of our greatest composer/instrumentalist/bandleaders. One title puts it perfectly: *Myself When I Am Real*.
RARA AVIS: Captain Beefheart, *Clear Spot* (Reprise). One of several masterpieces from the Capt.'s most productive period, this '72 LP includes Delta blues, extraterrestrial boogie, sweet soul music . . . and wondrous poetry.
SCENE: Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble ripping it up in a night club in Amherst, MA. His version of Hendrix' *Voodoo Chile* proved that guitar heroes are still alive and well in an age of techno-pop.



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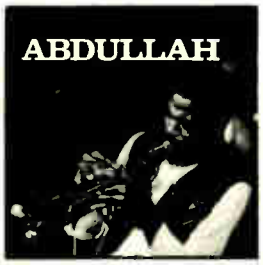

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encore is lively, folkloric, and warm.

At Sweet Basil, Greenwich Village's most progressive jazz club, Ibrahim and Carlos Ward have regularly practiced a duet of such closeness their listeners are almost always drawn in. The digital recording of about half of one Monday night set captures a slight sourness of tone in the piano, but otherwise presents the meditations of the duet with loving fidelity. On alto Ward intones the themes with Coltranesque focus; he has a saxist's tone on flute, and on either instrument seems to embody his composer/pianist's intentions. Ibrahim's music loses little in expansion from his solo playing; though this album is less auspicious than *Autobiography*, it is no less representative of his art and, in fact, several of the titles are just different names for the same themes heard in the Plainisphare set.

Randy Weston shares an appreciation of Ellington and Monk with Ibrahim, as well as an authority of touch and even some life experience in Africa—though he came from Brooklyn and lived in the very different North African culture. In *Blue* Weston begins with a lighter heart than Ibrahim usually admits to, but progresses to emphasize an unrelieved sobriety of tone. Though fleet of right hand and sparing of left, Weston, too, is a thematic improviser; he often breaks time to offer contrasts rather than a single, elastic pulse, and so his solos seem airy and his orchestrations across the keyboards purposeful. *Earth Birth* is one of his waltzes; *The Last Day* meanders through programmatic gestures rather than keeping to a song form, and *Lagos*, too, seems extemporaneous. *Tunisia* is impressionistic, effective in isolating tinkling trebles from rumbling bass through pedal work. Weston identifies *Mystery Of Love* as his theme song, yet this version is muted, and *Ellington Tusk* rests on Weston's blues licks and some passing references to characteristic Ducal piano habits. Overall, considering Weston is not often recorded, this program seems a bit diffuse and offhand. The pianist's firm touch is present, but his heartiness is missing, and the subtitled *African Rhythms* are certainly offered in small portion. Perhaps a more substantial Weston project is in the offing? —*howard mandel*

waxing on

Post-modern Piano

DAVID LOPATO: *Giant Mbira (Lumina 9)* ★ ★ ★ ½
MARTIAL SOLAL: *Bluesine (Soul Note 1060)* ★ ★ ★ ★ ½
RAN BLAKE: *Third Stream Re Compositions (Owl 017)* ★ ★ ★ ★
KIRK LIGHTSEY: *Lightsey 1 (Sunnyside 1002)* ★ ★ ½
KIRK LIGHTSEY: *Lightsey 2 (Sunnyside 1005)* ★ ★ ★
JOE BONNER: *Devotion (SteepleChase 1182)* ★ ★ ½
PATRICK GODFREY: *Bells Of Earth (Apparition 0982-3)* ★ ★ ★ ★
WOLFGANG DAUNER: *Solo Piano (Mood 28.635)* ★ ★ ★
WALTER DAVIS JR: *400 Years Ago, Tomorrow (Owl 020)* ★ ★
HORACE TAPSCOTT: *The Tapscott Sessions, Vol. 1 (Nimbus 1581)* ★
HORACE TAPSCOTT: *The Tapscott Sessions, Vol. 2 (Nimbus 1692)* ★ ½
HORACE TAPSCOTT: *The Tapscott Sessions, Vol. 3 (Nimbus 1703)* ★ ★
MARILYN CRISPELL: *Rhythms Hung In Undrawn Sky (Leo 118)* ★ ★ ★ ½
MARILYN CRISPELL: *A Concert In Berlin (Free Music Production SAJ-46)* ★ ★ ★ ★
SAKIS PAPADIMITRIOU: *Piano Plays (Leo 111)* ★ ★ ★ ★
FRED VAN HOVE: *Prosper (Free Music Production SAJ-39)* ★ ★ ★
BORAH BERGMAN: *A New Frontier (Soul Note 1030)* ★ ★ ★ ★

Twenty—even 10—years ago a reviewer could divide most of the musical world into opposing camps: Traditional vs. Modern. Unlike classroom teachers, many critics like to think of themselves as path-breakers into new territory rather than conservators of received tradition. The modernists, therefore, found ready champions, if not always ready audiences. But today modernism has itself fallen under attack from a new species of traditionalism, one that has in its turn garnered the support of a good many critics. What separates the new traditionalism from the old is the acute self-consciousness of its practitioners, who appropriate the past with a calculated mixture of reverance and irony. Borrowing a term most often applied to recent architecture, we might call the new traditionalism in music "post-modernism." Like some architects of late, many composers now seek to overcome absolutist allegiance to tradition by *using* tradition, employing time-honored forms and gestures self-consciously, with wit and invention and in a self-opposing context of modernism. Thus tradition is transcended but is also used to transcend the alienating effect of the modernist's radical individualism that may sever an artist from anything like a sympathetic public. At its most successful, post-modern art draws on a communal vocabulary in order to give voice to individual vision.

Diverse as their visions are, the 13 solo pianists here—with, I think, a single exception—share a desire for individual expression balanced by a concern for tradition. I begin with **David Lopato**'s *Giant Mbira* because, by deliberately declaring its aesthetic progenitors, it very nearly constitutes a catalog of influences present in the work of many of the pianist/composers represented on these discs. In a brief liner note, Lopato enumerates his kindred: Paul Bley, Olivier Messiaen, Muhal Richard Abrams, Thelonious Monk, and James P. Johnson. (Delete Bley and add Cecil Taylor and Keith Jarrett as well as a dash of Bartok and Debussy and the list will serve for most of the artists under review.)

Lopato's *One For Olivier For Muhal* opens with brief bursts of octave runs shaped by skillful application of the pedals for shimmering atmospheric effects. This is Messiaen of *Catalogue D'Oiseaux*, but with a strong jazz inflection that echoes Abrams. What follows is a set of atonal elaborations on the opening motif incorporating structures of generous dimension measured in octave leaps. The piece then dramatically narrows into a minimalism John Cage would feel comfortable with. In contrast to this complexity is *Fast*, with stride playing drawn directly from James P. Johnson. In *Dear Sphere* the stride becomes the tradition of Thelonious Sphere Monk, an *hommage* to Monk's own pianistic heritage. Finally, in the title cut, *Giant Mbira*, Lopato declares his debt to the African traditions that are the foundation of all jazz (the mbira is the so-called thumb piano, an African folk instrument). At the same time, with its emphasis on repetitive patterns, the piece suggests an affinity with such forward-looking composers as Philip Glass.

Lopato's stylistic range and technique are prodigious but, as with many post-modernists—in music I think first of George Rochberg—his art is not wholly convincing. While not merely imitative, Lopato is so eclectic that any distinctive musical personality is submerged in a sea of allusion. Such is not the case with **Martial Solal**, whose *Bluesine* is a stunning synthesis of tradition and individual talent. Solal combines intellect, heart, and virtuosity with a mastery of diverse jazz and classical idioms. The title composition, for instance, is a modern, angular treatment of blues that calls to mind Lennie Tristano but makes its point more concisely and with greater generosity toward the warmth of traditional blues feeling. *Moins De 36*, another Solal work, accomplishes something similar for stride, while *14 Septembre* brings Bela Bartok to jazz with a relentless bass line treated as Oscar Pettiford might have played it on strings. To standards like Richard Rodgers' *Lover* and Monk's *'Round Midnight* Solal brings an analytical mind tempered by romantic feeling. His approach to *Lover* is a reinterpretation of the blues that amounts to a deconstruction of the idiom, yet with a love for the style always in evidence. With its wide-interval jumps and shifting rhythms, his treatment of *Midnight* is virtually Cubist. Demanding on pianist and audience alike, this approach is a perfect foil to the irresistible suavity of Monk's lush tune.

While Solal is master of classical and jazz idioms, it is his jazz feeling, especially the blues, that predominates. For **Ran Blake**, whose Third Stream music attempts to synthesize jazz and classicism, the classical finally emerges more strongly. But by "classical" I mean the playful and inventive strain of Charles Ives rather than, say, Mozart or Beethoven. To this Ivesian spirit Blake successfully brings a virtually antithetical impulse toward austerity, even minimalism. *Third Stream Re Compositions* seems the child of a marriage between Ives and Anton Webern.

The effect is more cerebral than visceral, but Blake is certainly the wittiest of the composers discussed here. His elaborate "re composition" of *Volare* is singularly priceless, calling to mind the mock solemnity of Ernst von Dohnanyi's *Variations On A Nursery Song* (a grandiose concerto-like work for piano and orchestra built on *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*). *Fascinating Rhythm* is a gem of a miniature, while *April In Paris* is so broadly conceived as to recall the coruscating harmonies of Ives' *Concord Sonata*. Superficially more jazzlike is *Ain't Misbehavin'* but its angularity again allies it more closely to modern classical music. The ostinato bass is a diabolically classical reading of more customarily warm-hearted stride. Indeed, the bass line is transformed into a retrograde canon, and the entire piece is a tour de force of musical vocabularies.

The three records just discussed suggest the range of post-modernism—from wholly eclectic, to jazz-oriented, to classically flavored—found among at least 12 of the 13 artists represented here. I will discuss the remaining albums roughly in order of their manifest allegiance to these traditions, beginning with the most conservative. Yet there is little to say about **Kirk Lightsey**'s *Lightsey 1* and *Lightsey 2*. The work here is meticulously

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crafted and played, but runs perilously close to (admittedly high-class) cocktail lounge jazz. Supple melodic invention (more rarified and interesting in *Lightsey 2*) keeps the music from banality, but harmonic structures are remarkably derivative of Debussy and even Fauré. Softcore jazz.

Devotion is earthier than Lightsey's albums, but **Joe Bonner** lacks Lightsey's craft. *A Tale Of Two Cities* combines epigrammatic punches—body-slam accents on bass chords—with blues licks and Tatum-like ornaments. Nevertheless, there is little gradation of touch and color. Bonner fails to offer a subtle palette, so that even *Song For Cathy*, with its delightful bossa pulse and rapid figures rippling like fountains, emerges monolithically. Monk's *Epistrophy* is played soft-edged, mushily romantic; it entirely lacks the wicked irony at the core of Monk's most characteristic music. A cascade of declamatory disonances assaults the listener at the conclusion of the piece, but in the context of what comes before, the gesture is meaningless. There are strong moments throughout this album; however, the overall impression is one of talented maundering.

Perhaps the prettiest of the offerings reviewed here is *Bells Of Earth* by **Patrick Godfrey**. The opening bars of *Tolling*, with their juxtaposition of close-interval chords at the extreme top and bottom of the keyboard and their repetitive staccato figures, reveal an affinity for Keith Jarrett, while the more open harmonies and heroic melodies of later sections recall Aaron Copland's piano music. *Romanza*, a wistful waltz composed of delicately spun accelerando phrases, is romanticism at its most evanescent. The pianism is precise, the touch classical rather than jazz. Two four-movement works, called *First* and *Second Quartets*, define the scope of Godfrey's classical influences. Copland is most evident in the *First*, the third movement of which sounds a lot like *El Salon Mexico*, and the 12-tone tradition dominates the *Second*, which is the record's most impressive composition because of the effective tension developed between tonality and atonality, a tension also employed (we shall see) by Marilyn Crispell, whose music is otherwise very different from Godfrey's.

Jarrett, John Lewis (I'm thinking of his *Point Of View*), and the early McCoy Tyner help to shape **Wolfgang Dauner**'s *Solo Piano*. Despite a tendency toward bland harmony, there is much to hold interest here. *Wendekreis Des Steinbocks* uses a relentlessly repeated bass under a cascading lyric treble to create an assertively masculine sense of high drama. This sense is intensified by the aggressive sonic "presence" of digital recording and the use of that magnificent behemoth, the Bösendorfer piano. In *Die Wiederkehr Des Gleichen*, Dauner fully exploits the grand sound of his instrument and makes subtle use of the pedals—as well as overdubbing—to create a damped-down ostinato that percussively verges on a Caribbean cadence. He is capable, too, of evoking the moody atmosphere of urban contemplation in *Nachmittag Über Den Dächern Von Stuttgart* and *Sendepause Der Gefühle*, but Dauner is finally restrained and avoids the visceral. His technique of motto-style statements issued over perpetual-motion ostinatos owes something to Jarrett, yet Dauner so reins in his music that he is in danger of eliciting nothing approaching the kind of meditative states associated with Jarrett's improvisations.

Walter Davis Jr.'s *400 Years Ago, Tomorrow* is gutsier than Dauner's work, though it also owes debts to Jarrett for rhythmic patterns. Melodically, much on this album is allied with McCoy Tyner. Davis is a savage pianist who communicates great energy. However, he depends heavily on schizophrenic contrasts and melodrama in tune after tune. *Scorpio Rising*, for example, spins out bop runs over black key chordal jabs, then a soaring right hand over more heavy block chords from the left. This kind of emotional counterpoint (rather than genuinely musical counterpoint) asserts itself quickly, but also quickly exhausts its possibilities. *Untitled Ballad* revels in Monkian "wrong" notes, but what Sphere would have handled slyly, Davis plods through clumsily and with schmaltz aplenty.

If anything, **Horace Tapscott** fares less well. Like Davis, he relies on extremity of contrast. Unlike *400 Years Ago, Tomorrow*, however, *The Tapscott Sessions (Vols. 1-3)* lack compelling energy. There's some brutally frenetic episodes, bursts of frantic atonality punctuating the terribly French pleasantries of *Jenny's Spirit Waltz* (*Vol. 1*), for example, but the most enduring impression made by the three albums is of unrelieved banality. Banality is catchy, and some listeners may enjoy *This Is For Benny* (*Vol. 1*), which sounds like something out of *Evita*, or *Alone Together* (*Vol. 1*), played like some tune from another Broadway show. Sadly, Tapscott's more ambitious work, the half-hour-long *Struggle X: An Afro-American Dream* (*Vol. 2*), suffers pretty equally from banality of conception and sounds like the soundtrack to a Hollywood epic. All we lack is orchestration. *Vol. 3* attempts to pull away from the middle of the road, but pieces like *The Tuus*, played in meditative tempos, contain precious little to meditate on.

More demanding and of greater interest is **Marilyn Crispell**, whose *Rhythms Hung In Undrawn Sky* and *Concert In Berlin* shift far from Jarrett and closer to Cecil Taylor as well as two of the influences at work behind Taylor—Bela Bartok and Olivier Messiaen. Most of the music on the first album features jagged rhythms and broad, often luminous atmospheric effects. The shifting tempos and complex contrapuntal textures may pose some difficulties for the listener, but Crispell commands a virtuoso technique that produces great clarity even at the moments of greatest complexity. Indeed, repeated listening reveals a sureness of structure in this music, a sureness that is founded on an acutely and subtly realized tension between the atonality that dominates the compositions and the incursion of tonal gestures that irrepressibly make their presence felt. The music creates a nervous atonality that sets the context for poignant moments of tonal grace.

The struggle between atonality and tonality characterizes just about everything on *Rhythms Hung In Undrawn Sky*, so that the pieces impress one as cut from the same cloth.

The live *Concert In Berlin* offers more variety. *Rounds* is almost completely atonal, but it is also driven by a greater sense of common pulse behind its shifting rhythms. It is, therefore, more readily accessible than anything on the Leo album. *Ode To Messiaen* is a mystic paean to a mystic composer, while the minimalist *Spaces & Elements* offers hard-edged Cubist fragmentation. *Into The Blue* is a musical pun, with "blue" suggesting both stratospheric flight and the blues tradition that barely but tellingly caresses this music. *America*, with its playful and demonic allusions to the patriotic song, echoes Ives and also suggests a project similar to Ran Blake's "re compositions."

The next two albums pay homage to a tradition newer than those that influence the other artists under discussion. Indeed, the "tradition" behind **Sakis Papadimitriou**'s *Piano Plays* and **Fred van Hove**'s *Prosper* is so new and relatively limited that it is probably better to call it a "precedent." While Papadimitriou is essentially a tonal composer and van Hove does not always rely on tonality or even systematic atonality, both men make extensive use of consciously naive and repetitive rhythmic patterns and unconventional sonic effects and sonorities. Precedents for this manner of composition include variously the work of Harry Partch, Henry Cowell, John Cage and, most recently, George Crumb.

Unlike Cage, Papadimitriou does not use a prepared piano, but he does venture inside the instrument to play directly on the wires. His music, strongly flavored by Eastern traditions, features atmospheric and mood effects similar to those of Crumb but with exotic dance meters that suggest Lou Harrison's Oriental-inspired work. The album is inventive and charming, and the recorded sound is astoundingly good.

Fred van Hove's *Prosper* presents more basic aesthetic problems. Cage-like minimalism, plucked and scraped piano wires, use of the instrument's sounding board as a tuned drum are juxtaposed to grandiloquent arpeggios and shimmering pedal effects. Harp sounds and dulcimer tones alternate with stride as Prokofieff might have played it. Much of this is very exciting, but one cannot help coming away from this music feeling that it is all palette and no painting.

Finally, the dark horse, the black sheep, the maverick on *A New Frontier*. Alone among all of these pianist/composers, **Borah Bergman** has substantially eschewed tradition except the broadest concept of polyphony. Nevertheless, though tradition is lacking, there are analogs. I, for one, would relish hearing Bergman attempt a piano reduction of Ives' *Fourth Symphony*, which assigns unrelated music to two opposing but simultaneous orchestras. The pianist is fully capable of such a feat, for he has somehow made left hand and right autonomous and fully equal instruments. The music that results is vertiginous, a dialog at once simultaneous and fragmentary, punctuated by fleeting motto phrases that one greedily seizes upon as points of orientation. Monolithic, thick textured, the product of phenomenal virtuosity that is anything but pleasant, this music will challenge even the most advanced listener. —*alan axelrod*

new releases

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Anthony Braxton, first waxing of new quartet (Lewis, Lindberg, Hemingway), FOUR COMPOSITIONS (QUARTET) 1983. **Art Farmer/Benny Golson**, new and old charts to celebrate the Jazztet's return, MOMENT TO MOMENT. **Barry Altschul**, evocative drummer fronts quartet in original program, IRINA. **Bobby Bradford**, trumpet cohort of Ornette and John Carter leads his own Motet, LOST IN L.A. **Hugh Lawson**, underappreciated Detroit pianist in trio performance, COLOUR. **Amina Claudine Myers**, trio recording brimming w/ soul from the pianist/organist/vocalist, THE CIRCLE OF TIME.

MUSE/SAVOY JAZZ

Willis Jackson, Gator's tenor combines w/ Groove Holmes' organ for soulful sounds, YA UNDERSTAND ME? **Mark Murphy**, a fave jazz crooner joins Viva Brasil for latin program, BRASIL SONG. **Bill Hardman**, bop trumpeter in classic quintet setting, FOCUS. **7th Ave. Stompers**, reissued '58 date for Emmett Berry, Vic Dickenson, Buster Bailey, et al., FIDGETY FEET. **Hank Jones**, '56 quartet session led by the classy pianist, RELAXIN' AT CAMARILLO. **Brownie McGhee/Sonny Terry**, vet bluesmen pick and wail on various '52 and '55 reissues, CLIMBIN' UP. **Frank Wess**, ex-Basie reedman joins fellow alumni in '59 cooker, I HEAR YA TALKIN'. **Curtis Fuller**, '59 quintet finds the trombonist alongside Benny Golson, BLUES-ETTE. **Johnny Hartman**, 10 examples of velvet-smooth vocalizing from '47, FIRST, LASTING & ALWAYS.

PALO ALTO

David Friesen, bassist brings together all-star cast (Corea, Horn, Henderson, Moreira, Motian), AMBER SKIES. **Elvin Jones**, typical hot quartet for the drummer, BROTHER JOHN. **Victor Feldman**, British pianist adapts classical pieces for jazz trio, TO CHOPIN WITH LOVE. **Larry Vuckovich**, Bay Area keyboarder benefits from Jon Hendricks' vocals, CAST YOUR FATE. **Dusan Bogdanovic**, debut of acoustic guitarist in fast company (Newton, Haden, Jones), EARLY TO RISE.

FANTASY

Willie Dixon, legendary blues bassist/composer's first leader LP, from '59, w/ Memphis Slim and others, WILLIE'S BLUES. **Lonnie Johnson**, '60 reissue marking the return of the great early jazz/blues guitarist/vocalist, BLUES BY. . . . **Sonny Terry**, harmonica whoops and hollers sans Brownie this time out, SONNY'S STORY. **Pink Anderson**, reissue of '60 documentation of rural bluesman, CAROLINA BLUES MAN, VOL. 1. **Brownie McGhee**, '62 date for the guitarist/vocalist alongside longtime partner Sonny Terry, BROWNIE'S BLUES. **Lightnin' Hopkins**, unaccompanied '61 acoustic circumstances reissued, BLUES IN MY BOTTLE. **Memphis Slim**, solo '60 piano/vocal program of sensitive, rowdy, and ribald songs, ALL KINDS OF BLUES. **Odetta**, backed by strong jazz'sters, sings a '60 selection of '20s-style blues, ODETTA AND THE BLUES. **Alberta Hunter/Lovie Austin**, reissue of rare '61 reunion of the blues chanteuse and piano pounder, CHICAGO, THE LIVING LEGENDS. **Various artists**, Mama Yancey, Little Brother Montgomery, others from '61 display SOUTH SIDE BLUES.

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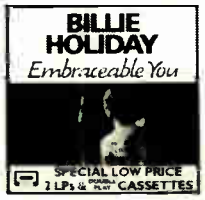

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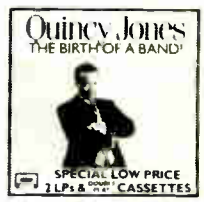

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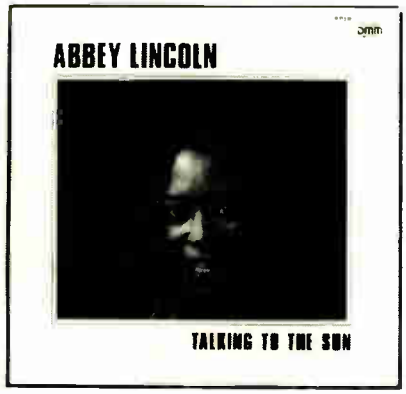

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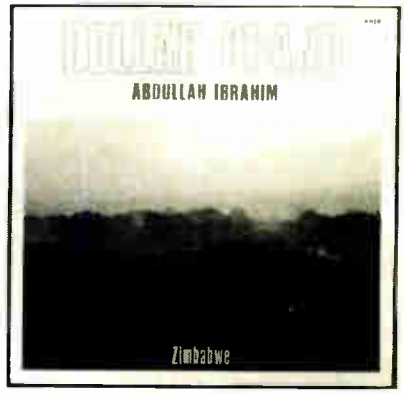

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BLINDFOLD TEST

Anthony Davis

By HOWARD MANDEL

Anthony Davis seems able to make music in both jazz clubs and symphony spaces with apparent ease. "I came out of bebop," he claims, but was also performing the European classical repertoire during his teens (he's now 33). Already his own works for orchestras have been performed or commissioned by the Brooklyn and New York Philharmonics and the Houston Symphony; his opera X, with libretto concerning Malcolm X's life by the poet Thulani Davis, debuts this month in Philadelphia.

Still, Davis likes to improvise, with a MJQ-like group (on *Song For The Old World*) or as a solo pianist (on *Lady Of The Mirrors*—both from India Navigation), in chamber trio with flutist James Newton and cellist Abdul Wadud (on *I've Known Rivers*), in strict structures he composes for larger ensembles (*Episteme* and *Hemispheres*, all from Gramavision Records), or confounding categories entirely (*Hidden Voices* on IN, *Variations In Dream-Time* on GR). Davis was given no information about the records played in this, his first Blindfold Test.


DARRYL PITT

1 FATS WALLER. *AFRICAN RIPPLES (from PIANO SOLOS, 1929-1941, RCA Bluebird). Waller, piano.*

Is that *African Ripples*? I have it; I listen a lot to this stuff. With Willie "The Lion" Smith and James P. Johnson, Fats Waller is one of my all-time favorites. In terms of orchestrating the instrument, the stride pianists had a concept which influenced all 20th century music, not just the Afro-American tradition but Stravinsky, too. I'm influenced by stride; I practice it at home. It's a challenge, and I enjoy playing it; it's influenced my rhythmic concept. I grew up on this—my father told me about these legendary masters, and Fatha Hines, Errol Garner. He took me to hear Art Tatum, and had their records.

2 THELONIOUS MONK. *IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING (from THE RIVERSIDE TRIOS, Milestone). Monk, piano; Duke Ellington, composer.*

[*Laughs*] That's Thelonious Monk playing Ellington's *It Don't Mean A Thing*. Funny you should play me Monk playing Duke, since Monk himself is one of the great composers of the century. People think of Monk coming out of Ellington's piano playing, but they share common precedents in Fats and James P. Johnson.

Whenever you play a Duke tune, you have to concentrate on how Duke approached it, his sense of harmony. Here, Monk uses voice leadings, plays the seventh chord as just that one note—most bebop pianists had fuller-sounding chords, but were less rich in counterpoint than Monk. Monk comes closer to Duke's approach, really articulating the tune. They were both thematic improvisers, instead of just spinning out eighth notes.

Duke and Monk are probably the two musicians who've influenced me the most, philosophically, if not exactly musically. Monk's music is what made me decide I wanted to improvise; *Crepescule With Nellie* was one of my big favorites. I went through a phase of trying to understand his music—but he's such an original you try to appreciate his talent, not imitate it. It should inspire you to go your own way, 'cause he sure did. No doubt about that.

3 CECIL TAYLOR. *D TRAD, THAT'S WHAT (from LIVE AT THE CAFE MONTMARTRE, Fantasy). Taylor, piano; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone; Sonny Murray, drums. Recorded Nov. 23, 1962.*

Early C.T., definitely. Those fourth chords in his left hand, later on you don't hear that so much—that's the Horace Silver influence Cecil talks so much about. Jimmy Lyons on alto, probably Sonny Murray drumming. Cecil Taylor is a real pioneer.

The way Monk stood in the '40s and '50s, Cecil Taylor stands to the '60s and '70s. I think he developed a lot more as a pianist after this, and became more interesting as a composer too, though *Looking Ahead* is one of his great albums—in those tunes he seems to be trying to come to terms with his relationship to bebop. But his development beyond that, on *Conquistador* and *Unit Structures*, his bringing of a sense of development into composition, of creating suites, his way of orchestrating so the music is not strictly soloistic, his opening up vistas on textures and recurring, evolving motives has made him one of the seminal figures in music in the last 20 years.

4 CHICK COREA. *DUET (from PARIS CONCERT, ECM). Corea, piano; Anthony Braxton, reeds.*

Keith trying to sound like Cecil. Oh, no, this is Chick and Braxton, excuse me. This is from the Circle days. Chick is such a chameleon—and such a fantastic musician—I've never been quite sure what his own music is. But then, Herbie Hancock and Chick are both examples of people who work well in many different modes. I don't hear the conviction in this that someone who's really devoted to free improvisation has, and I find his approach a little static in the freer music. But I think Chick's been important—he brought his harmonic background from bop into different forms; he's been a link from the mainstream to the avant garde, exploring their relationship, bringing attention to people like Braxton from his well-established position in the mainstream. I've been listening to him since *Tones For Joan's Bones*, and *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*.

5 HERBIE HANCOCK. *ROCKIT (from FUTURE SHOCK, Columbia). Hancock, electronic keyboards, vocoder, rhythm/programming; Bill Laswell, bass, co-production; Michael Beinhorn, programming, co-production; Grand Mixer D. St., turntables; Daniel Ponce, bata.*

Herbie! *Rockit*! Bill Laswell! When I first heard this, I hated it, but then it grew on me. I thought the video was clever—my son loves it. I saw another video taken from the same album where he plays a little more piano.

I think it's fun for what it is. As pop—it's interesting, more interesting than 90 percent of what's out there. Most of the attempts by the cats to make pop music have been much less raw than this—he didn't rest on cliches; Herbie took some chances. It's interminable, though; he wants to be the Ramsey Lewis of the '80s.

I'm not necessarily against the notion of reaching a lot of people. Herbie Hancock has contributed a lot to the music already, and I'm glad he won his Grammy. He's getting the attention he's deserved, and it may free him up to do a lot of things musically. **db**

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PROFILE

Mark Isham

Balancing brass and synthesizers, studio and live sessions, jazz and rock and film music comes easily for this multifaceted musician.

BY RUSS SUMMERS

Achieving proficiency and originality on any one instrument is a difficult enough task, but Mark Isham is talented enough to pull it off on a number of seemingly disparate instruments. Because of Isham's ability to master synthesizers as well as brass instruments, he has proven that not only can an effective pairing of electronic and acoustic idioms be accomplished, but that the pairing can also make for exciting new possibilities within different musical contexts.

It isn't too surprising that someone with Isham's versatile talents grew up in a musical family. Both his parents were concert violinists. Following in their tradition, Mark began his musical training by taking both violin and piano lessons, until he felt the need to find his own niche. His switch to brass instruments was ". . . a revolt against my mother! Other than a kettle drum, the trumpet was the most different instrument in the orchestra from a violin. Maybe there was something about the sound of the instrument built off of pure overtones that just attracted me."

So at age 13 Isham began trumpet lessons, and because he progressed rather quickly, he performed in junior high school stage bands (who played what Mark considered to be "watered-down Swing music") shortly thereafter. It was also at this time that Mark started listening to music that would have a profound effect upon him: Baroque brass pieces of Bach, Vivaldi, and Purcell, along with the jazz of Cannonball Adderley and various Blue Note artists.

Most of Mark's childhood was spent in New York, but late in his teens, Isham and his family made the move to California. Not long after that, Mark began attending the University of California at Santa Barbara. However, that lasted only a year, because in Isham's words, "At least in the program I was involved in, it seemed that a lot of the information that I wanted was sort of slow in coming."

TOM COPI

Mark was quite involved with classical music after leaving school, and he performed with the Oakland and San Francisco symphonies, as well as taking lessons from fellow orchestra members and jazz trumpeter John Capolla. Isham also generated more and more work elsewhere, playing locally with such acts as Esther Phillips, Charles Lloyd, Horace Silver, and Pharoah Sanders. Of those experiences he says, "Nobody really sticks out. Everything I had done up until then was really more of a job, and wasn't necessarily something I would have done unless I needed the wage side of it."

Joining pianist Art Lande's band was more than just another paycheck for Isham. Mark met Art through guitarist Peter Maunu and keyboardist Mike Nock, who were playing together at the time. Mark, Peter, and Art started off doing a lot of free improvisation, but that ended when Lande wanted to play more structured pieces. He then formed a band with Steve Swallow, Eliot Zigmund, Glenn Cronkhite, and Mel Martin, but when that broke up, Isham and drummer Terry Bozzio approached Lande about forming a new group.

The resultant band, Rubisa Patrol, was formed with the addition of Bill Douglass on bass and Cronkhite on percussion. When Bozzio got the call to join Frank Zappa's band, Cronkhite moved over to drums (eventually being replaced by Kurt Wortman), and that combination recorded two albums for ECM, *Rubisa Patrol* (1-1081), and *Desert Marauders* (1-1106). Isham says of the band, "That became the first really exciting learning experience for me. The whole way that band worked together was at a much higher level than anything else I had done before."

It was also on the Rubisa Patrol albums that Isham got his first chance to really display his finely attuned trumpet playing, which was extremely tasteful and dramatic due to the fact that Mark plainly paid close attention to what *not* to play. When asked if his love of Miles Davis' music and playing attributed to this factor, he replied, "It did come a lot from listening to Miles, and just realizing that the general musical impact of that approach to playing seemed so much stronger. Perhaps one of the things I really enjoyed about Miles was, as a trumpet player, he somehow echoed a real simplicity of, say, Bach's writing for the trumpet, just the way that one could use the sound of the instrument to its utmost and fullest capacity to get the emotion across."

Shortly after leaving Lande, Mark landed a studio session on which he was to play piccolo trumpet for vocalist Van Morrison. The session was to originally last just for one song, but when Van discovered that Isham had more brass instruments, Mark ended up playing on the entire *Into The Music* (Warner Bros. 3390) album.

Not only did Isham finish that LP, but he eventually recorded three more albums and did several tours with Morrison. Especially with the release of *Inarticulate Speech Of The Heart* (Warner Bros. 9 23802-1), it seemed as if Mark had a lot to do with the direction of the music, as it became moodier and more synthesizer-oriented. "Before *Beautiful Vision* [Warner Bros. 3652] Van and I spent a lot of time together talking about music, and listening to a lot of different music," remembers Isham. "He was very intrigued by what is called New Age music, and he was especially intrigued by the role of synthesizers and the mood that they can establish. We did a lot of experimenting, just the two of us playing together. We actually did some recording of just piano, synthesizer, and flutes, along with other small combinations. All of this kind of ended up in various forms leading towards parts of *Beautiful Vision*, then ultimately to *Inarticulate Speech Of The Heart*."

Even with his involvement with Morrison and several other commitments, Isham found time to form Group 87, with Maunu, Bozzio, and bassist Patrick O'Hearn, all of whom kept in touch because of their common interest in modern electric jazz. They recorded a striking album, *Group 87* (Columbia 36338), but the band was dropped from Columbia's roster almost as soon as the album was released. Thanks to the hard

work of a&r man Bobby Colomby, though, the band has signed with Capitol Records.

Involvement with Group 87 also firmly established the electronic side of Mark Isham. Throughout the years Isham collected various synthesizers and other electronic equipment, working with them to establish his own voice on the instruments. Early purchases included a Moog 12 modular synthesizer, an ARP 2600, and an Oberheim Four-Voice. Later on, he picked up on a Prophet 5, Roland MC4 and MC8 Microcomposers (which he uses for computer control of his modular equipment), and a Steiner EVI (Electronic Valve Instrument). Aside from all of that, Mark uses a host of rack-mounted effects, which he feels are ". . . as valid as any real synthesizer." Those effects include harmonizers, digital delays, and the Lexicon Prime Time II, a device that can infinitely loop any audio signal in eight-second intervals. The Prime Time is used for much of Isham's "pattern-generated" music.

Probably the most unique of all of Isham's electronic instruments is the Steiner EVI. "It's a very difficult instrument to play," comments Isham. "It's not the sort of thing that even someone who's been playing trumpet as long as I have could just pick up and immediately play. The technique really has a lot less to do with trumpet playing than one would suppose." The Steiner consists of right-hand buttons that are set up like trumpet valves with the same values in terms of note displacement, while the left hand has to control an entire overtone series using a canister that is to be twisted. The canister has seven notches, each of which represent an octave, and a button that gives a lowered fourth. Mark has not used the instrument extensively yet, but interfaced with his ARP 2600, he used it for some woodwind sounds on his album *Vapor Drawings* (Windham Hill 1027).

Vapor Drawings, Isham's first solo effort, is a real tour de force. Most of the tracks are predominately electronic, but he doesn't forget his roots as he blows some fine trumpet and plays touches of impressionistic acoustic piano. And there are some interesting influences to be heard. "On *Something Nice For My Dog* I'm afraid I was very consciously thinking of Eric Satie. *Sympathy And Acknowledgement*'s title partially reflects an acknowledgement to Steve Reich, for being a major influence of mine not only for composition, but also for sound textures." March rhythms pervade *On The Threshold Of Liberty*, and Mark attributes that to his love of Gustav Mahler.

Another project that is currently being negotiated for release by Windham Hill is the soundtrack Isham did for the film *Never Cry Wolf*. In addition, following his recent move to England, Isham has taken on a bewildering array of sessions, including work with former Van Morrison-sideman Herbie Armstrong, ex-Japan lead singer David Sylvian, the British all-star conglomeration RMS, and Neil Innis from the Bonzo Dog Band, among many others.

Besides the studio situation in England, Isham has been getting calls to do more film scores, and he is currently looking over several scripts. ECM's Manfred Eicher recently called Mark and asked him to do some work later this year. There is little question that Mark Isham has been blessed with some very unique talents, and now it's starting to pay off for him in a big way. **db**

CAUGHT

RICHARD STOLTZMAN

CARNEGIE HALL

NEW YORK—Richard Stoltzman walked on-stage, perched himself on the end of the unoccupied piano bench, crossed his legs in front of him, and played a transcription of Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy And Fugue In D Minor*, sounding and looking like an Indian snake charmer. The informality of posture and the risky selection of an extended contrapuntal work for harpsichord played on clarinet, a single-line instrument, are typical of Stoltzman's good naturedly unconventional approach to performance. Classically trained, veteran of many recitals and concerto performances with the nation's major orchestras, and a founding member of the innovative chamber music ensemble Tashi, Stoltzman grew up in San Francisco among his father's recordings of Lester Young and Ben Webster. His predominantly classical program at the redoubtable Carnegie Hall included some tunes by Thelonious Sphere Monk.

But it is not so much the jazz that makes Stoltzman unconventional. After all, Carnegie Hall has been more or less open to jazz since the days of George Gershwin, Paul Whiteman and, later, Benny Goodman. More radical is Stoltzman's audacity in making a concert career as a *clarinet* recitalist. A clarinet player is chronically pressed for good repertoire, and the instrument is exceptionally demanding. It is a testament to Stoltzman's stage personality and musicianship that he attracted a near-sellout audience.

The unaccompanied Bach transcription demonstrated his technical facility and the purity of his tone, at some moments as rarified as an oboe. Pianist Irma Vallecillo joined him for Max Reger's 1908-09 *Sonata No. 3 In B-flat Major*, a technically and musically exacting work in the late romantic vein. Steeped in dusky autumnal brooding, the sonata spins out seemingly endless, sinuous melodies. While Reger's work is short on overtly bravura writing, its long lines demand consummate virtuosity. Stoltzman is eloquent with such music.

After intermission the clarinetist marched back into the hall, entering from the rear playing *Entrata No. 2*, a fanfare a la Pied Piper composed last year by William Thomas McKinley. This was followed—on-stage—by Witold Lutoslawski's charming *Dance Preludes* (1954), a series of pieces based on folk music from northern Poland.

Before turning to Monk, Stoltzman and Vallecillo performed *Sonata For Clarinet And Piano* (1962) by Francis Poulenc. The willed naivete, broad melodic gestures, and burlesque finale were a fitting prelude to Monk. The slow middle section of the sonata's first movement and the ballad-like second movement (marked "trés calme") manifested the affinity for jazz that has been present in French music since Darius Milhaud's *La Création Du Monde* (1923) and Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto In G* (1931).

In the Poulenc, then, Stoltzman found opportunity to hint at his sensitivity to jazz idioms. But his performance of *'Round Midnight* and *Well, You Needn't* suggests that this sensitivity does not yet amount to mastery. *'Round Midnight* was played with grace and charm, but was also old-fashioned and straitlaced, with a self-consciousness redolent of a 1950s Greenwich Village coffee house. *Well, You Needn't* fared better, in no small part due to a brilliant introductory cadenza by bassist Eddie Gomez, who played like a one-man band: guitar-style melody high up backed by heavy off-beat strokes on the low strings. Stoltzman, too, approached this tune more freely and with a greater spirit of invention.

Two encore numbers, though, were less successful. Light, clever, jazz-inflected but finally suffused with French classicism, *Rhythm-a-ning* sounded closer to Poulenc than to the sly and funky irony of Monk. *Blue Monk* (to which Stoltzman appended by way of preface a reharmonized version of Sphere's favorite hymn tune, *Abide With Me*) was highly engaging but also sanitized.

Despite Stoltzman's unaffected regard for Monk's music, jazz was slighted here, however unintentionally. Except for some brief but extraordinary bass work, we heard little beyond the tunes themselves. Sympathetic to jazz feeling, Stoltzman is nevertheless no jazz musician—by which I mean a musician whose principal work is extended improvisation. Still, great tunes are great tunes, and it did the Carnegie Hall audience no harm to hear them affectionately and respectfully rendered. —*alan axelrod*

TAPSCOTT/HILL/ WESTON

WILSHIRE EBELL THEATRE

LOS ANGELES—Three men, who each project a unique sphere of influence in modern music, gathered here recently, billed as a "World Piano Summit," a concert of the first rank. Horace Tapscott: veteran of the Watts barricades where he led the Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra from flatbed trucks in the 1960s, legendary composer of *Birth Of The New Cool* sessions for saxist Sonny Criss, volatile, romantic visionary rooted in Houston of the 1930s, Central Avenue of the 1940s, Lionel Hampton's band of the 1950s. Andrew Hill: originally of Haiti, uncompromising innovator whose Blue Note recordings of the 1960s brought him into international prominence, leader of a recent and superb Eric Dolphy tribute in San Francisco. Randy Weston: Brooklyn-born ambassador and world citizen whose years in Africa run like a river through every note he plays—African heartbeat, the blues, and unequivocal joy. A thousand people in the audience waiting excitedly for the first note revealed one of the ironies of the system. None of these major stylists get their fair share of radio play, and their names are often unknown to the mainstream jazz-listening public.

Horace Tapscott began with his *Ancestral Echoes*, a rich storytelling evocation of a past both personal and historical. Swelling into march time, breaking into childhood rhymes, cascading to abstraction, his supple themes encircled the audience, ebbing and rippling like memory itself. Andrew Hill changed the mood entirely. Alternating grandiose chords with splintered fragments, studied walks with vehement splashes, pedantics, and lyricism, Hill's playing was a kaleidoscope of glimpses, pure stream-of-consciousness with no conclusions. The jagged tensions set up by Hill were

soon relieved by a wash of intense primary color. Randy Weston's powerful resonance, enhanced by a tireless left hand, wove dancing single-note lines through four selections including *Penny Packer Blues* and *Pam's Waltz*. Weston brought the house down.

Each set was long, and the crowd had thinned somewhat for the second round. The pianists appeared in the same order, and those who remained were rewarded. First Tapscott with his *Mother Ship*, another story straight from the heart, notes like tears revolving on a haunting melody. His *Niger's Theme* became a jazz ballet of twirls, runs, leaps, and glides. *I'll Let Nothin'*, Hill's next offering, pondered every disjointed chord with an air of deepening mystery. His constant hesitation waltz broke into wide open spaces, crowded up again. A pianist's pianist, he flashed through standards like *Over The Rainbow* with lightning reference, creating a brilliant metamorphosis. Underlying all of Weston's playing is the blues. He cast a spell on the audience which wouldn't let him go until he returned for an encore of his classic *Hi Fly*, a rendition that everyone undoubtedly whistled or hummed all the way home. —*elaine cohen*

PAT JOLLY

THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

THE GLASS HOUSE

NEW ORLEANS—Tourism means big business here, and accordingly the city's "Birthplace of Jazz" connection is hyped half to death. Ironically, though, few tourists ever hear of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band—a group whose unique accomplishment is the contemporization of classic New Orleans jazz, from a strictly inside perspective. Along with such venerated outfits as the Olympia and Onward Brass Bands, the Dozen maintain traditional brass and drum instrumentation (with the updated inclusion of baritone sax). Their aggressive danceability and close involvement with such neighborhood functions as street parades and jazz funerals are further links with the classic legacy. Where the Dozen diverge, though, is in their intricate arrangements, eclectic modern repertoire, and sophisticated solo technique. *When The Saints Go Marching In* is, for this band, merely a point of departure.

The Dozen perform every Monday night at the tiny but atmospheric Glass House. Festooned with Christmas lights all year long, the tavern's entire area is roughly 70 by 30 feet, with no bandstand or sound system. The Dozen play under dim lights against the rear wall, and by midnight the bar is usually packed solid. Hour-long sets segue from one tune to the next without comment or introduction, while the triple-timing "bug jumper" dancers grow increasingly inspired, at times "popping gators" on the floor.

Snare drummer Jenell "Chi-lite" Marshall started off this particular evening with a funky, uptempo parade beat which led the band into *Blackbird Special* (an original, not the Donald Byrd tune). Marshall and bass drummer Benny Jones provide much of the Dozen's gritty street energy. While both are hard hitters, neither displays the rest of the band's jazz finesse; there is little drum soloing, and no trading of fours.

Blackbird segued into Herbie Hancock's *Chameleon*, with a frantic baritone solo by Roger Lewis, who also works with Fats Domino. Hancock's tune was given a special New Orleans treatment with the implementation of a second-line rhythm. In strictly musical terms this often-bandied phrase refers to a split-second double accent after a measure's fourth beat, which kicks the music on into the first beat of the next measure. Tuba man Kirk Joseph took advantage of the churning possibilities thus presented to unleash some popping staccato bass lines.

Next came an uptempo workout which alternated stanzas of *Sweet Georgia Brown* with Miles Davis' *Dig*. Here, especially, the dexterity of the Dozen's "head charts" became apparent. The band tears through complex arrangements with funky nonchalance, recalling at various moments the JBs, Louis Jordan, Basie, Davie Bartholomew, or Lee Morgan. While sheet music is nowhere to be seen, these highly professional and original voicings are in fact meticulously rehearsed and memorized, under the direction of trumpeter/bandleader Greg Davis. By curious contrast the band's endings are at times surprisingly spacy; if a segue number fails to materialize, they simply trail off, unevenly.

A brisk treatment of *Fever* followed, and then, in honor of the upcoming Carnival season, came Professor Longhair's *Go To The Mardi Gras*. As on the original record, the melody line was whistled, but this time in semi-unison by all eight musicians. Other high points included a growling version of *Caravan*, *Night Train*, *Sidewinder*, *Kansas City*, Dave "Fatman" Williams' *Ate Up The Apple Tree*, the old folk song *Little Liza Jane* (popularized locally by a '50s r&b version), and an extended jam on *Blue Monk*. Trombonist Charles Joseph, second trumpeter Efrem Towns, and tenor man Kevin Harris were all given extended workouts. The set ended with the Dozen's own *Feet Can't Fail Me Now*, as red beans and rice were served, on the house, in true neighborly fashion.

Even by New Orleans' high standards, Monday at the Glass House is a memorable gig. The expert musicianship and raucous streetcorner ambiance—not to mention dancing which borders on possession—combine to make this a must on any local visit. Lately the Dirty Dozen have also been hitting the national circuit, and an LP is in the offing; one way or another, they're absolutely not to be missed. —*ben sandmel*

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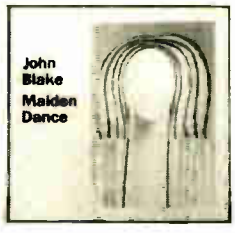

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continued from page 19

listening, I guess I would call it.
AL: Listening for recognizable events.
KJ: If they come to hear me, they want to hear my music, and if I come out with the attitude that none of it's mine, something's gonna go wrong. You can see how directly it leads, from improvising and not wanting to possess the music I improvise, to playing other people's music. Really, I've been feeling in the last few years, even while improvising, I *am* playing other people's music, or other music. It isn't mine.
AL: So this is the reason for getting involved not only in public performances of concertos, but also the LP of standards with Jack DeJohnette and Gary Peacock.
KJ: Yes. *Standards* was, believe it or not, the opening to the classical thing, like a stop-off in American Songwriterville, trying to pay back some of my debt to the kind of music I felt Gary and Jack and I had as a kind of tribal language that we all grew up with. We had a very serious dinner the night before we recorded. I prepared in advance of this dinner to talk about non-possessiveness, about how I didn't have any arrangements, how there was not going to be any idea of how to do these things. Just, "Do you like this song?" I had a list of songs, and we'd decide to try one, and almost without exception that was a take. Including what everyone thinks was made for the mass market—*God Bless The Child*. It was absolutely nothing except that bass octave, and then Jack started to play the thing, and that was it.
AL: When you're playing standards like that, the American popular song, do you hear the lyrics when you're playing?
KJ: Yes. That was the other thing I talked about that evening, although it was mainly for my benefit. I wasn't going to play a melody that was nothing but notes; I was going to play only melodies that I was familiar with verbally.
AL: So the lyrics are part of what you relate to . . .
KJ: Well, I thought these pieces have been played in trio contexts before but not in trio contexts with utter respect for the song above everything else—above how the solos are, above anything. Just respect for the song. So when we went in there the next day, I could tell we were all thinking the same thing. I would think of a song, and Jack might start singing the bridge and the lyrics and say, "Yeah, okay." The second volume has a ballad on it that I think—not trying to sound too identified with the record since it's mine—but I think it's the best melody playing by a trio of a ballad I've ever heard. We'll see. Most likely what I'll hear about it is, "He's singing too much on this." [*Laughs.*]
AL: Since so much of your creativity is concerned with *process* rather than the end result, how important is the piano to you, specifically? Is it just a tool that, if you could get to that source without the piano, you'd be willing to give up?
KJ: Well, I've created a history, you know? A kind of architecture that includes the piano, and I've created an audience who, no matter what I say about them at any time, wouldn't exist at this moment without my piano music. If I didn't feel responsibility for them, then the piano wouldn't be a necessary tool for anything—anyway, for getting into the state I spoke of previously. The other reason it's important is if I want to interpret other people's music, the piano is becoming more important than it was before. I have become a better pianist in the last year—probably three times better in the last year—than I was before by virtue of practicing and diligent discipline. But that doesn't mean I need the piano. Actually, my favorite instrument is probably the tabla drums.
AL: That's interesting. Why's that?
KJ: I just think that the tablas have everything in them that you need to make music. And nothing more. **db**

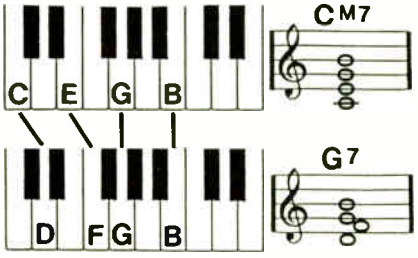
PRO SESSION

HOW TO smooth out chord motion—Part IV

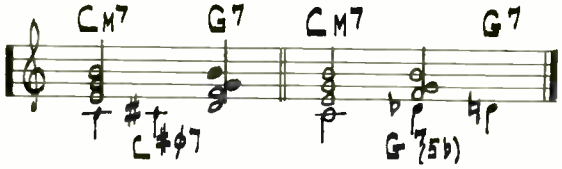
BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

__William Fowler__, composer/clinician/professor (University of Colorado, Denver) holds a PhD in Music Composition and is __db__'s Education Editor.

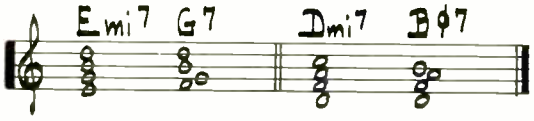
When chords change, the smoothest motion is the least motion, with individual notes either staying where they are or moving by step to the next note. The smoothest motion from C Maj. seventh to G seventh, for example, keeps B and G where they are while moving E up a half-step to F and C up a whole step to D:



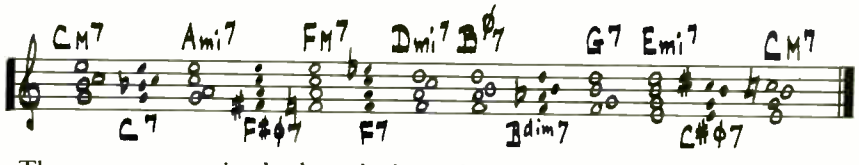
Whenever individual notes move by whole step from one chord to the next, the chromatic note inside the whole step can act as a passing tone to modify either the first or the second chord. The chromatic passing tone between C and D, for example, either transforms the C Maj. seventh into C# half-diminished seventh, which then goes on to G seventh, or alters the G seventh into G seventh flatted fifth, which then goes on to G seventh:



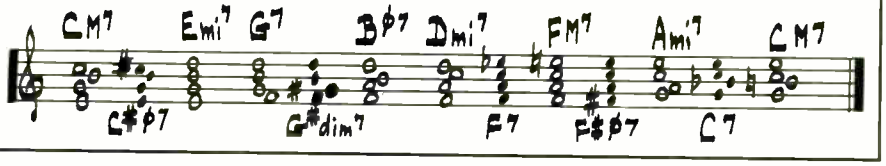
Since half-steps contain no inner chromatic notes, they cannot contribute chromatic passing tones. E min. seventh, for example, goes directly to G seventh, half-step E to F being the only motion. And D min. seventh goes directly to B half-diminished seventh, half-step B to C being the only motion:



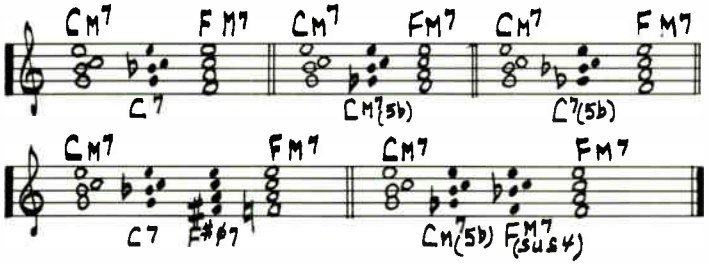
In the key of C, the only scale notes which form half-steps are E-F and B-C. Chromatic passing tones can therefore occur between C and D, between D and E, between F and G, between G and A, and between A and B, all whole steps. Here, then, are the chromatic possibilities in the key of C along a line of diatonic seventh chords whose roots descend by third: C A F D B G E C. In this progression only one note moves between successive chords—the seventh of one chord moves down a step to become the root of the next chord:



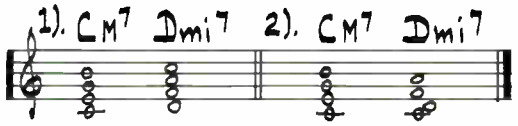
The same progression backwards shows the chromatic possibilities along a line of diatonic seventh chords whose roots ascend by third: C E G B D F A C. Here again, only one note moves—the root of one chord moves up a step to become the seventh of the next chord:



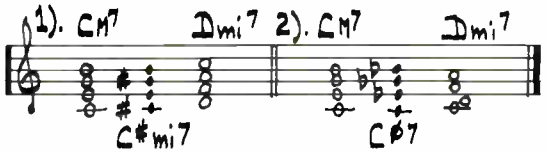
When chord roots move up by fourth—C F B E A D G C—both the fifth and the seventh of one chord move down by step to become the respective root and third of the next chord. One or both motions now are by whole step, consequently multiplying the possibilities for chromatic connection. Five separate chromatic progressions, for example, can connect C Maj. seventh and F Maj. seventh:



When chord roots move by second, all the notes in one chord can move by step in parallel motion to the notes in the next chord (part 1 of example below), or one note can stay where it is while the other three notes all move by step in parallel motion (part 2). Here is the C Maj. seventh to D min. seventh progression in both versions:

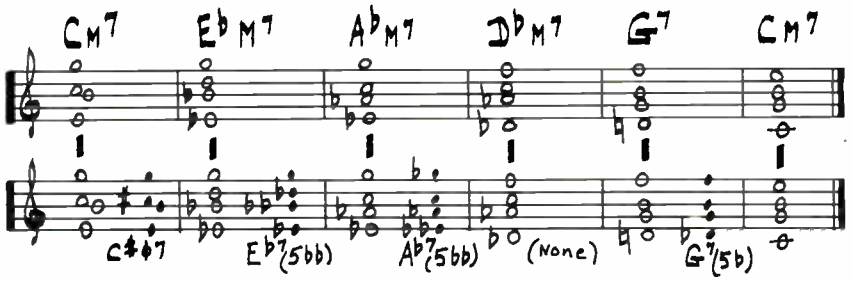


One might expect that there always would be more chromatic passing tone possibilities when all four notes move than when only three notes move. But in this particular progression, C Maj. seventh to D min. seventh, the four-note version moves two of its notes by half-step, E-F and B-C, leaving only two whole steps, C-D and G-A, to furnish chromatic passing tones. The three-note version, though, moves E-D, G-F, B-A, all of which are whole steps and thus can furnish three chromatic passing tones:



To explore the possibilities for chromatic connection between diatonic seventh chords in the key of C, refer to the progressions illustrated in Part III of this article (**db**, Feb. '84).

Seventh chord progressions need not stay in the same key to make their voices move by step. Here, for example, is a modulating progression first showing stepwise motion in direct voice leading, then showing chromatic passing tones inserted between chords:



As a final exercise, here is a progression of unrelated seventh chords first to voice in stepwise motion, then to explore for chromatic passing tones:

C Maj. 7 F#7 Ab7 F Maj. 7 B min. 7 Eb Maj. 7 G7 Db7 C Maj. 7

db

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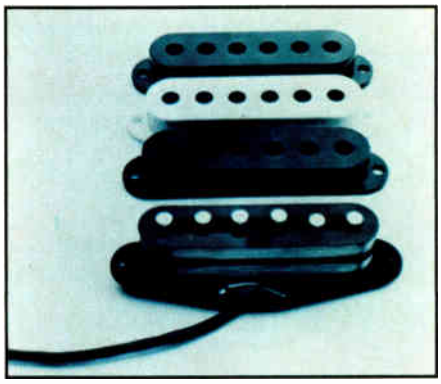

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The conversation lasted the afternoon, covering everything from their joint recruiting efforts to build one of the most successful band and orchestra programs in the nation, to the teamwork they employed five years ago to save that program from elimination. The day served to remind us there's no way to put a price on the value of the face-to-face relationship between the school service dealer and the music director.

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db "It sounds like you never miss, Jim..."

JK "As long as human beings are involved, anybody can make a mistake. What you do about it when you have a problem – that's what's important."

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JK "You just have to have a rapport and share a certain amount of trust, that's all."

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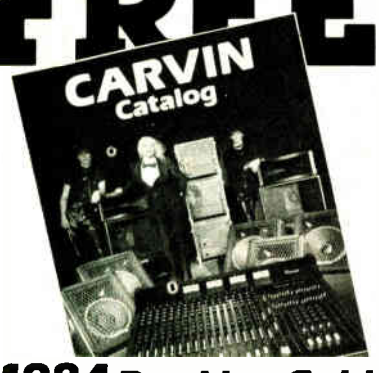

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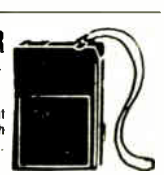

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BOOK REVIEWS

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: AN AMERICAN GENIUS by James Lincoln Collier (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1983, 383 pp., $19.95, hardcover).

The dilemma between artistry and show business is the animating thesis running throughout James Lincoln Collier's *Louis Armstrong: An American Genius*. It is a detailed, provocative, intellectually stimulating and skillfully written account—in fact, one of the most engrossing biographies of a jazz musician ever written. Show business biographies are inclined to be anecdotal, which usually means lively reading but a rather narrow perspective. Not so here. Collier avoids recycling familiar Armstrong stories, preferring instead to direct his inquiry into the social, racial, and sexual contexts in which Armstrong grew up.

Nearly a quarter of the book is devoted to Louis' childhood and adolescence—an extraordinary feat of deduction since the first scrap of surviving documentation that Armstrong even existed was his draft registration from 1918. Yet, Collier has managed to piece together a remarkably vivid and occasionally shocking picture of Armstrong's boyhood by looking into the known quantities of New Orleans history, demographics, social custom, class structure, and economics, and then casting a cautious eye toward Armstrong's own memoir of his early years. Collier uses a combination of reason, intuition, empathy, common sense, and imagination in dealing with the tangle of fact and fiction to suggest a chain of circumstance that leads to Chicago in the early '20s. "It is as if," he says at one point, "by looking at the doughnut we can guess what was in the hole."

His conclusions are convincing, as he takes us step-by-step across a complex path of unprovable probabilities. For example, based on known patterns in Louis' behavior as a famous man, Collier suggests that it was Armstrong who around 1917 sought out the favor of King Oliver, not the other way around. "Throughout his life Armstrong was attracted to strong, dominant men . . . all capable of advancing his career." For this protection, however, it was necessary, Collier believes, that Louis give up control over virtually every aspect of his life. His only sanctuary was the stage; there he did as he pleased.

But on-stage there was an even more coercive power confronting him—the cheers and love of the audience. "Armstrong was clearly a man afflicted with deep and well-entrenched insecurity, a sense of his own worthlessness so thoroughly fixed that he was never to shake it off, even after he had become one of the most famous men in the world. But he could quench that . . . assault on his self-respect by performing, standing up there . . . and playing and singing and mugging and soaking up the healing applause." So for reasons very clearly explained by Collier, Armstrong "sold out." But for all the pressures of managers, club owners, and record producers, it was in the final analysis *his* choice, no one elses'.

Collier, as in his earlier book, *The Making Of Jazz*, is unflinching in his view that great artists, not society, are accountable for their artistic and personal fates. This is more than a chronological biography, however. There is extensive and musically literate commentary covering a large body of Armstrong's work, with a particularly detailed accounting of the 1925-40 period. Collier's assessment of the Hot Five and Hot Seven sessions concurs with the virtual unanimity of jazz critics and historians: "The most important set of recordings of 20th century improvised music," he writes. Of the early big band period (1929-34), however, he is less generous with his praise. The set formulas and especially the use of high notes are particularly objectionable to him, although he agrees with Martin Williams on the singular merits of *Sweethearts On Parade*. He is hardest on the eclectic Decca output beginning in 1934 and continuing into the '40s, and in this view he agrees with conventional wisdom of long standing. In between conventional wisdom and Collier, however, lies Dan Morgenstern, who in the late '60s called for a reevaluation of this phase of Louis' career.

Collier leads off with a direct challenge of Morgenstern on the values of *Swing That Music*, a 1936 Armstrong record that collects into one performance just about all the Armstrong devices Collier loathes most. Yet, as we move deeper into his argument, we learn that he admires much that Morgenstern admires as well, i.e. *Struttin' With Some Barbeque* and *Ev'ntide*. Certainly, also, there are many performances of the period that Morgenstern would be reluctant to go the barricades over; at least, I suspect that's so. If true, Collier's differences with Morgenstern are not on basic aesthetic issues, only points of emphasis. In any case, lively debate makes for stimulating reading. And Collier's thoughtful, scholarly, and tough-minded biography is, for all its controversy, an intricate and absorbing portrait of an artist who often preferred to play the clown.

—john mcdonough

Standards: Then & Now

BY JOHN McDONOUGH

While it's probably premature to say that Linda Ronstadt has singlehandedly accomplished the restoration of the classic American popular song, there is no question that she has reasserted its enduring value to a market that doesn't often hear such music and may even be discovering it for the first time. It's amusing to think that while most of us familiar with the material find her album's title, *What's New*, gently ironic, there may be others for whom it is a literal truth.

The album's commercial success prompts one to think large thoughts about works of popular music that still speak powerfully to us nearly—in some cases—half-a-century after they were written. Such longevity doesn't surprise us in Mozart or even Stravinsky, no doubt because their original vision had less to do with second-guessing mass market preferences than giving form to their own. But popular songs, though they may embody melodic ingenuity surpassing Paganini or Rachmaninoff, are generally intended for the moment, not the ages. So how do we explain the attraction they apparently have for the best talents of the rock era? How do we explain Ronstadt's *What's New*, or Carly Simon's *Torch* LP of two years back, or just about any Leon Redbone album?

Before the coming of rock & roll, songs had been the foundation of American popular music. In the beginning they spread slowly through the culture by word of mouth and sheet music. The piano roll was the first system devised for the mechanical reproduction and mass distribution of a musical performance. That revolutionized everything. Soon after came records, radio, and movies, and suddenly songs were big business. Professionalism replaced the community sing.

After World War I the two basic strains that would dominate pop music through the late '50s had become institutionalized. Records, radio, and movies created a star system of genuinely remarkable singers—Al Jolson, Bing Crosby, Mildred Bailey, Fred Astaire, Ethel Waters, Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, and many others. Meanwhile, the publishing industry provided the economic underpinning for a separate constellation of creative talent that included the Gershwins, Berlin, Kern, Porter, Arlen, Rodgers, and Mercer. The singers needed writers to feed them a steady supply of material; the writers needed singers to bring life to their work. Singer and writer coexisted in a huge but fragile balance of musical ecology. It was a mutual dependency so delicate that the slightest shift in one would be mirrored in the other. But it flourished for decades, and the enormous energies that went into it yielded the enduring standards which are today, by common consent, classics. Songs for movies, for theater, bad songs, brilliant songs—they became the first authentic body of American popular culture to transcend the era of its genesis, to be taken seriously by a generation not tied to it by bonds of nostalgia.

BRIAN ARIS

Linda Ronstadt

It all came to an end in the '50s and '60s. Rock & roll and rhythm & blues singers didn't need songs. Like many jazz players, their roots were in the blues. And as with all jazz players, the material—be it blues or song form—was only a point of departure, never an end in itself. As the older generation of popular singers lost the young mass audience and retreated to tv specials and Las Vegas, fewer younger singers identified them as mentors—as Crosby had once seen Jolson, or Sinatra had once seen Crosby. And without new singers to lift new songs off the manuscript paper, fewer new writers came forward to set them down. Original screen musicals became a rarity after 1960. On Broadway, producers ran increasingly for the cover of revivals. As the numbers declined, so did the odds of producing a body of important popular music in the Tin Pan Alley tradition. It's really simple: a popular culture that doesn't value great songs won't get any.

With so many rock & roll singers on the scene circa the mid-'60s, serious song writers turned more and more to themselves as their own best performers. The singer-song writer (or the song writer-singer) was virtually unknown in the Tin Pan Alley days. They began to emerge in the first wave of rock & roll when Buddy Holly and Paul Anka began writing bubble gum tunes. But a far more serious and varied body of work came after the mid-'60s from such young writers as Bob Dylan, Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Jim Webb, Laura Nyro, Janis Ian, Dory Previn, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder, and—after their early simple rock vehicles—McCartney and Lennon. Unlike the great writers of the '20s and '30s, however, these artists tended to produce more for themselves than for others.

Singers who write are less inclined to incorporate other writers' work in their repertoire. And writers who sing are even less likely to do so, often for good reason—many are poets whose music is less a song than a personal statement. In an earlier era, the common practice was for a song to be recorded by many artists. The nature of post-Tin Pan Alley music has diminished this tradition considerably. The result is that a song may reach one audience—the audience that listens to Stevie Wonder, or Bob Dylan, or the Talking Heads—but not all audiences. Not the audience that listens to Mel Tormé, or Ella Fitzgerald, or Sarah Vaughan, or even Steve Lawrence. When such performers do take up a contemporary pop song, chances are good it will be either an embarrassment (remember when Sinatra did *LeRoy Brown*) or temporary (who does *Aquarius* or *You've Got A Friend* today?). Yet, on the other hand, it often takes a great singer to strip away the stylistic camouflage writers may wrap around their own best songs. It was Sinatra, Tormé, Tony Bennett, and others who revealed the true beauty in *Yesterday*, not the Beatles. McCartney and Lennon created it, but the great singers made it a standard that is worthy company to *The Man I Love* and *Body And Soul*.

So the pure singers, such as Linda Ronstadt—the ones who don't compose—in many ways are the final arbiters over what songs survive to become standards and which ones simply mark a point in time and memory. It's too early to even begin to consider which of the post-Tin Pan Alley songs will go on to become enduring classics—or even whether as a general body of work it will stand comparison with the best of the Gershwin/Cole Porter era. That will have to wait at least until the next century. But the success of Ronstadt's foray into the great music of our own century has revalidated its stature for a new audience generations removed from its beginnings. **db**

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