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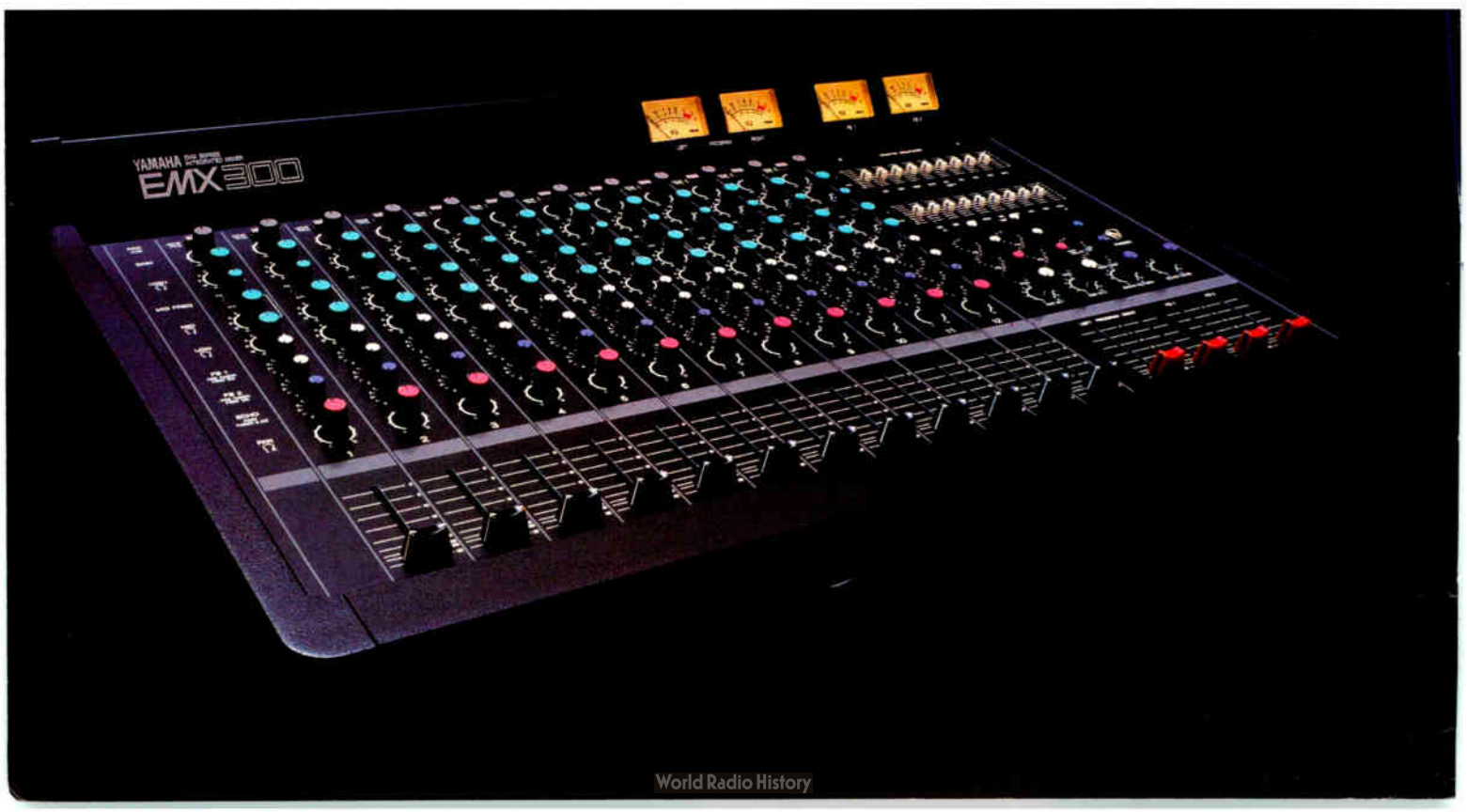

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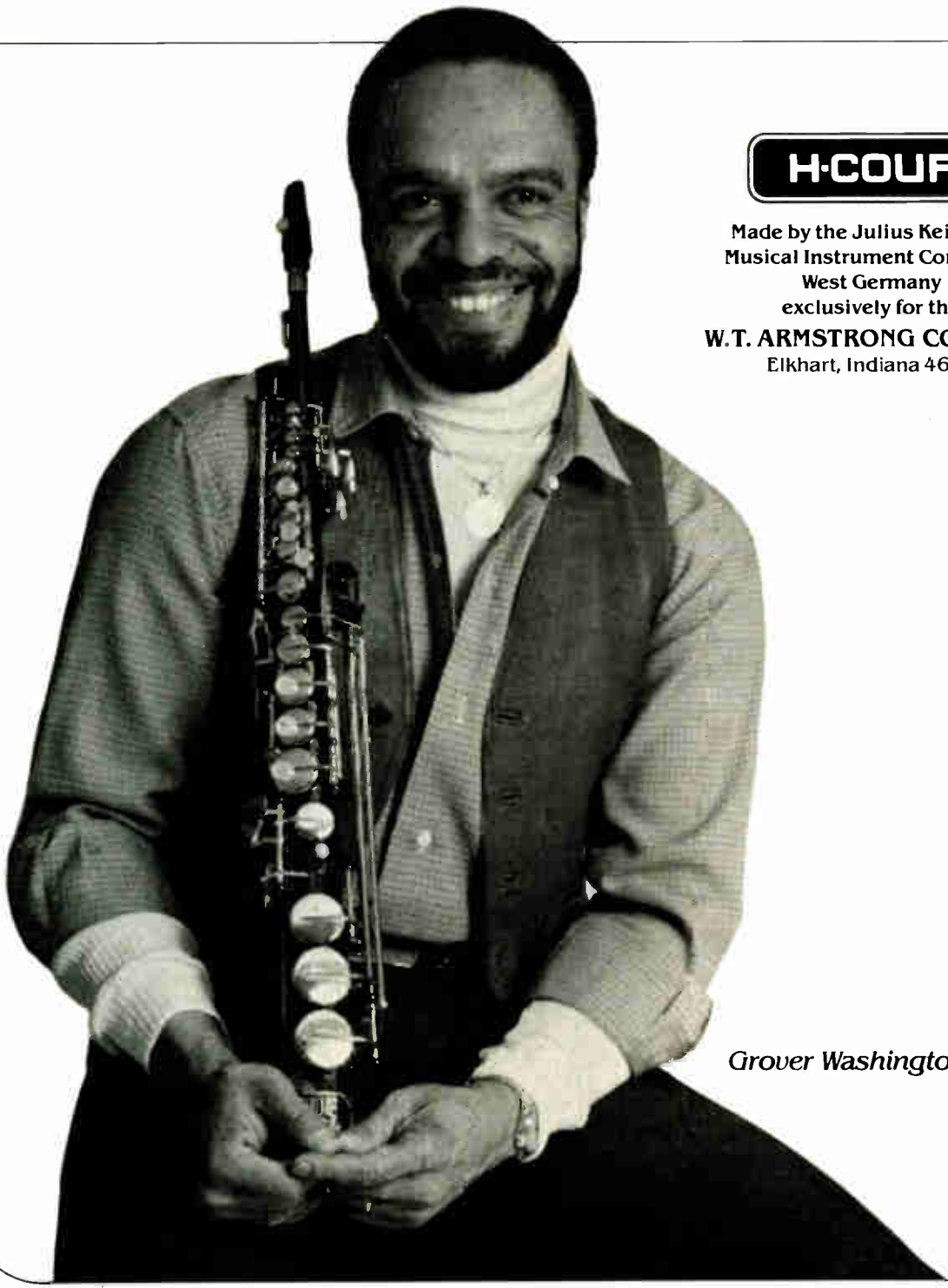

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ANN SUMMA

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Ernie Watts

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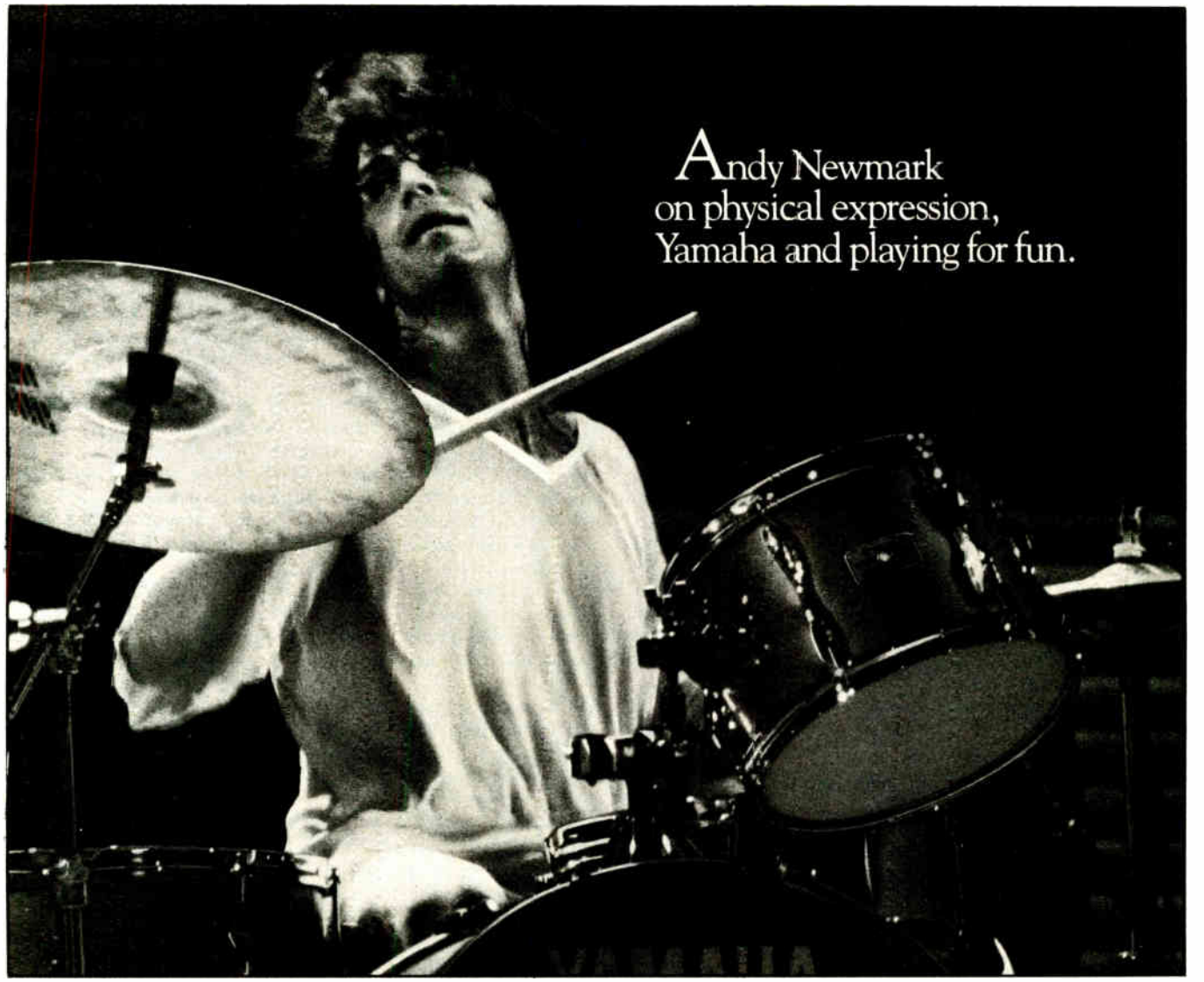

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YAMAHA

ON THE BEAT

BY ART LANGE

Critical expectations—part two.

Unlike that of the musician, whose music making is an inward impulse transformed into an expressive event based on varying aspects of theory, talent, intelligence, imagination, practical physical and instrumental considerations—and a touch of that elusive, mysterious creative component which might be labeled soul—the critic's response to music is mostly cerebral, based on individual perception, preparation, and previous experience. In the case of a largely improvised, spontaneously conceived music like jazz, there are no printed scores to follow, so the critic is likely to be reacting to something entirely new—or based, to some degree, on music with which the critic has some familiarity. Even then, however, the specific details of the music will be new, heard for the first time.

In order to put this new experience into a workable context for analysis and comparison, then, the critic often brings certain expectations to bear on the music. Some of these expectations are objective evaluations (such as aspects of instrumental ability), while the musician's clarity of purpose ("What is he/she trying to do?") and success ("How well is it being done?") involve more subjective criteria. To understand how a piece of music might fail to communicate its creator's intention, the critic has to formulate in his/her mind not only where the music is weak, but also determine what made it weak, and often this includes deciding how it might be improved. The danger inherent in this approach lies in formulating an ideal *in advance*, and then expecting (there's that word again) the music to fulfill not the musician's intention or even its own formal or expressive needs, but rather the critic's abstract demands.

Critics, like musicians, often grow comfortable with a particular style of music—usually one which evolved parallel to their own critical maturation—and tend to favor it above others. This is understandable and natural. However, when this familiarity and favoritism becomes rote acceptance or, worse, close-minded response, the critic's credibility is threatened. People do fall into ruts, and need to be challenged, surprised, or goaded out of their predictable thoughts and actions. For musicians, playing the same sort of music, however well, over a long period of time may lead to complacency and lack of invention. For critics, it means closing off their ears to new or alternative styles. Some may misguidedly define this as upholding time-tested standards, but to relate to any type of music as if it existed in a vacuum denies the possibility of reinvigorating the music with fresh blood and vitality.

When critics try to enforce rigid strictures on a living, breathing, flexible musical form, no one benefits, and factions rise up. The evolution of jazz, of course, from the turn of the century to the present day, is full of such factions—from the dixieland two-beat vs. four-beat controversy through the Swing vs. bop issue (which never seemed to bother open-minded musicians like Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, or Charlie Christian, to name just three) to the '60s "Is free music anti-jazz?" argument.

It's curious that, up until the '60s free music revolution, bop was largely considered to be the weirdest type of music around, still not palatable to a number of older critics. And now, in the '80s, mostly in reaction to even newer new music directions, some critics are championing bop as the Great Tradition, to be revered and not tampered with. They complain when musicians play Parker tunes but alter the chords (horrors!—but isn't that precisely how bop was invented?), or play against rather than on the changes, or use a personal, somewhat idiosyncratic style of phrasing outside of the bop mold (ever hear any of the early arguments against Monk?).

Actually, there's something to be said for such arguments: At what point does a formal music lose its identity and become something else—a hybrid or fusion, or a watered-down misrepresentation of its original style and structure? It's hard to say, but the crux of the matter is not whether Archie Shepp or Julius Hemphill or Richie Cole or Anthony Braxton is capable of playing "authentic" Charlie Parker-styled bebop, as that's not their intention. The problems arise when critics expect them to. **db**

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CHORDS & DISCORDS

Household beat

I would like to give my compliments to Howard Mandel for his excellent article on Andrew Cyrille (**db**, Aug. '84). It was informative and knowledgeable. I feel many percussionist/drummers can glean much advice from Cyrille, as he speaks from one of the most important schools—the one of experience. I also enjoyed when he touched on the spiritual quality of music, which is often ignored in much modern music today.

Keep up the good work, **down beat**; keep giving us beautiful articles on top drummers such as Cyrille, and your magazine will continue to be in my house.

Jerry Abraham — Atwater, CA

Honor acknowledged

Thank you very much—to win the **down beat** Lifetime Achievement Award (**db**, Aug. '84) was both a surprise and an honor. It has been a long time since the first **down beat** Critics Poll (1953) when I was voted the New Star award on piano, so this recognition of my efforts, on behalf of jazz and the musicians who devote their lives to creating it, is most gratifying and timely. I have finally found a satisfactory balance between my musical and non-musical activities.

I am playing and writing better than ever, so everything else seems to be falling into place.

There's much more work to be done, but I do thank you for honoring me for what I have done so far.

Billy Taylor — Riverdale, NY

Critical kudos

We would like to thank **down beat** and the participants in the 32nd annual International Critics Poll (**db**, Aug. '84) for voting *The Complete Blue Note Recordings Of Thelonious Monk* No. 1 Reissue of the Year and for placing Mosaic in a tie for third as Record Label of the Year.

It is especially gratifying and morally supportive to receive honors such as this and our Grammy nomination for the Monk set in our first, struggling year of operation. We hope to live up to the praise and positive response that our first release has garnered with more projects that would enhance the history of jazz and rescue unissued treasures.

Incidentally, lest your readers get frustrated looking for our sets, we should point out that, although a few specialty shops carry them, they are primarily available only through direct mail from us at 1341 Ocean Avenue, Suite 135, Santa Monica, CA 90401.

Michael Cuscuna — Mosaic Records
Charlie Lourie — Santa Monica, CA

It ain't so, Joe

Regarding the August '84 **db** interview with Josef Zawinul: with all due respect to his creativity with his keyboards, he presented quite a falsehood in saying that on the piano, "You hit a note, and it always sounds the same, just louder or softer." Well, he may have studied the piano for years, but he either should have studied a few more, or he never bothered to listen.

There is a multitude of colors and touches at the piano that can and should be used to create an aesthetic presentation. Granted, they are often subtle and not always easily discernable to the untrained ear, but this hardly means they do not exist. Most musicians have had the opportunity to hear a pleasing and an unpleasing tone at the piano. This in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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itself proves the point, and an artist simply works at tone production at the piano on a finer and more subtle level. An artist, having spent hundreds of hours practicing to better his touch and tone at the piano, can only laugh at Zawinul's statement, "touch and everything . . . it's all bullshit."

Thank you for your magazine, and I hope the above can be used to counter the misconception and revitalize beginning pianists that may have been dismayed by Zawinul's statements.

Randall Faber Ann Arbor, MI

Jewel in the rough

We are writing this letter on behalf of Robert Watson. He appreciates the attention given to his record *Jewel* (**db**, Aug. '84). Robert would like to especially bring to everyone's attention the fact that the record was recorded "live" at La Piana (Piano Factory), and the "murky" sound that reviewer Jon Balleras refers to is sometimes "inherent when recording live, on location."

Robert's new record *Beatitudes* (New Note KM11867) was recorded in Rudy Van Gelder's studio and includes slightly different arrangements of some of the same pieces that were on *Jewel*. The record is accentuated by the core of the musicians that were on the previous effort (Curtis Lundy on bass, Mulgrew Miller on piano), but Kenny Washington replaces Marvin "Smitty" Smith on drums.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Robert for being recognized once again in **down beat**'s annual International Critics Poll; he would like to thank you sincerely for giving him that deserved recognition.

Smooth Promotions Astoria, NY

TDWR

In your Profile of guitarist Jody Harris (**db**, July '84), he mentions the "unidentified" guitarist on Miles Davis' *On The Corner* LP. That guitarist is Dave Kreamer, and he should have been identified many years ago. The story goes that George Benson played a homemade tape of Dave for Miles over the phone (long distance—San Francisco to New York), and Miles sent Dave plane fare to NYC to record *On The Corner* with him.

The rest, unfortunately, is not history. Later Dave co-founded a band named Hermetic Circle with Mel Martin and George Marsh. The last time I heard Dave, he had a band named Quiet Fire kicking around the Bay Area clubs. Dave is still an original, technically masterful guitarist that people should definitely "identify"—just ask Benson, Miles, Dave Holland, etc.

M. Colborne El Sobrante, CA

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

NEWS

Newport fest turns 30 with style

One-half of the new Miles Davis Group at Newport '84: from left, Bob Berg, Darryl Jones, and Miles.

NEWPORT, RI—On the 30th anniversary of the first Newport Jazz Festival, spirits ran high in Fort Adams State Park in Newport Harbor among the approximately 12,000 fans that attended the two-day event. Apparently pleased with the crowds, the music, and the beautiful weather was fest producer George Wein, who along with JVC as sponsor, manages to keep the Newport tradition alive here. Even Elaine and Louis Lorillard, original co-producers of this venerable fest, were on hand to celebrate the special anniversary.

This year's lineup read somewhat differently from the 1954 program, with the exception of Dizzy Gillespie who also appeared 30 years go with an all-star quintet. This time around Diz was joined by fellow veterans Ron Carter, James Moody, Walter Davis Jr., and Louie Bellson. The other stand-out act was the Miles Davis Group, which featured guitarist John Scofield, bassist Darryl Jones, percussionist Steve Thornton, saxist Bob Berg, drummer Al Foster, and keyboardist Robert Irving.

Other acts included Michel Petrucianni in a trio setting with Elliot Zigmund and Palle Danielson, David Sanborn and band (Hiram Bullock, Larry Willis, Tom Barney), Flora Purim and Airto, Ray Charles, Stan Getz, Dave Brubeck, Ronald Shannon Jackson and the Decoding Society, and B. B. King, who wrapped things up by urging the crowd to sing, clap, and stomp along with his legendary blues band. A perfect grand finale which left the crowd wanting more.

Apparently there will be more, as George Wein announced that JVC will be joining him again as next year's sponsor. *—donna paul*

Ottawa festival comes of age

OTTAWA—Jazz in Canada's capital has come of age with the recent success of the fourth annual Ottawa Jazz Festival which this year saw more than 25,000 people attend 75 performances in 10 different locations throughout the city, making this seven-day event the largest freebee jazz festival in the country.

Focal point of the fest was the Astrolabe, an outdoor amphitheater perched high on the cliffs overlooking the Ottawa River, boasting one of the city's most spectacular views. The sights were matched only by the sounds as the stage hosted a succession of musicians who explored virtually every facet of jazz.

Montreal's Dave Turner/Ron DiLauro Sextet kicked off the events with a high-paced performance that marked them as a group to watch out for. Pianist Oliver Jones brought new life to old standards with his dazzling virtuosity and an elegance of phrasing that has made him a local favorite. Rob McConnell returned for his second year, this time using his charts to put a local big band through the paces, and the Original Crescent City Jazz Band mixed camp with vamp as they marched from the nearby Market with the jubilant spirit of Mardi Gras. Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition was a festival highlight, a powerful performance of the week's most adventurous music. With bassist Rufus Reid and the three-horn frontline of David Murray, John Purcell, and Howard Johnson, this is the multifaceted drummer's best edition yet.

Jazz took to the streets with outdoor performances in three new downtown locations this year. A film, workshop, and lecture series was also a new addition and featured everything from a screening of the 1943 film *Stormy Weather* to novelist Josef Skvorecky's enlightening talk on "Contemporary Jazz In Czechoslovakia," complete with a "blindfold test" that brought to light a performance by two Czech teenagers, Jan Hammer and Miroslav Vitous.

The weather, always a gamble at an outdoor event, held on until the weekend when rain canceled one performance, but last-minute site changes saved the evenings for Laurel Masse and the Great Guitars. By the final day the sun was back in glory for performances by Nana Vasconcelos and Egberto Gismonti who held audiences spellbound, and Sonny Rollins whose boundless energy and irresistible rhythm brought the festival to a soaring finish.

As a showcase for local, Canadian, American, and international artists, the 1984 Ottawa Jazz Festival was a success by all measures and, one hopes, a prelude of things to come. *—don j. lahey*

BLATANT SAXISM: *France's 50-member Urban Sax presented innovation and spectacle at Finland's Pori Jazz Festival this year. Led by Gilbert Artman in the best French avant garde tradition, the unit integrated their music with theatrical and choreographical elements relating to the physical town and concert area environments. FM headsets link players to central pulses and enable coordinated performing even in dispersed groups. Growing every year, Pori Jazz 1985 will stretch out to eight days as it celebrates its 20th anniversary.*

FEST SCENE

Autumn colors

The lineup for the 26th **Warsaw Jazz Jamboree** is impressive—Ray Charles, Cecil Taylor, Lester Bowie, Ornette Coleman, Anthony Braxton, Michel Petrucciani, United Jazz & Rock Ensemble, Enrico Rava, Arturo Sandoval, Thomasz Stanko, Zbigniew Namyslowski—and runs 10/25-28; contact the Polish Jazz Society, Mazowiecka 11, 00-052 Warsaw.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Up north, the second annual **Fond du Lac** (WI) **Jazz Festival** swings Marian College at the bottom of the lake 10/26-27; Fri. is Dixie-Fest night with Doc De Haven's Dixieland Band, and Sat.'s headliner is the Artie Shaw Band; details from JoAnn Ward at (414) 923-3010.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Way up north, a number of world-class jazzers will perform at **Peace Arts '84** in the High School of Commerce auditorium in Ottawa, Ontario; the fest runs thru 10/19 and includes performances by the Vienna Art Orchestra 10/14 and Abdullah Ibrahim/Sathima 10/15. □

Woody Herman toasted by alumni

BEVERLY, MA—When Woody Herman and his Hundredth Thundering Herd recently hit town to back Rosemary Clooney and Jack Jones for a fortnight, it seemed like the golden opportunity to heap encomiums of notes upon the septuagenarian Roadfather. So club-owner Sandy Berman gathered former forces of the Herds—some from afar, many from close at hand—and the jam began.

Well, not before a big barbecue and reception got everybody's tongues loosened and backs slapped, and seats in the circular North Shore Music Theater were, many of them, bought for $100 for scholarships to the Berklee College of Music in the name of illustrious departed Hermanites: saxophonists Serge Chaloff, Tom Anastas, Jimmy Derba, and Sammy Rabinowitz; trumpeter Bill Chase; and Bob Share, the late Berklee administrator.

Special invitees showed their stuff in spades: pianist Nat Pierce (Woody's "main man" for a decade) from L.A. once again pinned the rhythm section; tenor giants Al Cohn and Flip Phillips blew stalwart solo, duo, and trio with Jimmy Giuffre in a round robin that closed *Opus De Funk* and the evening. Early Herman bassist Chubby Jackson, up from Florida, teamed with Woody on a hi-jinks *Lemon Drop* that sounded like they'd sung it yesterday, not in 1941! Trombonist Phil Wilson played *Bijou* with the band; John LaPorta teamed with Pierce for his clarinet tribute to Jimmy Derba; Flip Phillips played a smooth and hip *Easy Living*; drummer Joe McDonald (now president of musicians Local 9-535) joined Pierce and Jackson for a Basie-ish blues. Cohn and Giuffre blew the latter's *Four Brothers* with the band (the tune just made the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1984, though originally recorded in 1947!).

HERB SNITZER

While Woody Herman (back to camera) directs his Herd, guest saxists (from left) Jimmy Giuffre, Al Cohn, and Flip Phillips wail.

And then there were jams aplenty, including trumpeters Bill Berry and Paul Fontaine; saxophonists Andy McGhee, Jimmy Mosher, and Gordon Brisker; bassist Chuck Andrus; trombonists Wilson and Don Doane; drummers MacDonald and Gene Roma; pianists Pierce and Dave McKenna; and guitarist Chuck Wayne (and Hy White, among those in the audience, who was the original guitarist on *Woodchopper's Ball* in 1939).

This "love-in" for Woody Herman was, as you'd expect, fun and hardhitting musically all the way.

—fred bouchard

POTPOURRI

Another score: *if* a movie ever gets made of the **Jacksons**' *Victory* tour, it'll come from NFL Films, the 23-year vid veteran of constant combat which has already made its mark in the music video scene . . . vid shorts: **Herbie Hancock**'s *Rockit* promo vid swept up seven final nominations in the "first annual" MTV Music Awards . . . meanwhile, be on the lookout for another CBS vid production, a **Miles Davis** profile wherein the erstwhile Prince of Darkness is warm and witty in interview, intercut with performance footage from his recent European tour . . . Hollywood reporter: at the *Purple Rain* premiere party, **Prince** (himself) was graced with the gift of a bible from and personally inscribed by Little Richard, who sez of the chart-topper, "He's me in this generation" . . . rumor mill has the fallen Miss A, **Vanessa Williams**, teamed up with The Q, Quincy Jones, in a record project . . . Police axe-man **Andy Summers** is doing a screenplay prior to joining Sting and Stewart in Dec. to work on the next Police LP; in the meantime, he's pushing *Bewitched*, the second Robert Fripp/Summers duo guitar album; this one, claims Andy, has a "dream side" and a "dance side" . . . **Shelly Manne** was recently honored at the second annual Jazz Pilgrimage in Hollywood's Ford Theatre . . . **Stevie Wonder** was the lucky recipient of the first production model of the Kurzweil 250 digital keyboard, the state-of-the-art music system that has been turning industry heads . . . an offer to play the Greek Theatre during the Olympics was the impetus behind **Herb Alpert**'s decision to re-form the Tijuana Brass, which did a mini three-week tour; thousands of Brass fans hope this is the start of something big . . . roomful of news: **Roomful Of Blues** has inked a two-record pact with Rounder; *Dressed Up To Get Messed Up* should be on the shelves soon; Roomful guitarist Ronnie Earl has left to join the Broadcasters; Duke Robillard is *not* rejoining the band, but the Eddie Van Halen situation rates a no comment at this time . . . in other record action, it's happy news from Blue Note: **Bruce Lundvall**'s move from Elektra/Asylum to Capitol/EMI raised some questions regarding the fate of Elektra Musician and the EMI Blue Note properties (Potpourri, Sep.) that now have partial answers; Capitol continues to negotiate for the Musician masters, and an ambitious Blue Note campaign kicks off in Jan. with the reissue of 20 classics and the release of five previously unreleased LPs from the vaults *plus* five newly recorded titles as the venerable label jumps back into the market . . . fresh air from the Windy City comes your way courtesy **Principally Jazz Productions** (helmed by local jazz impresario Linda Prince) with *The Real Bud Freeman* and Hal Russell's *Conserving NRG* available in LP and CD with a kicker from the NRG Ensemble—an avant garde jazz-rock vid, *Pontiac* . . . meanwhile, if audio tape is your bag, **Rapcity Tapes** (1249 Ashland Ave, St. Paul, MN 55104) offers nearly a hundred self-produced efforts and is willing to add more to their catalog (which is growing at the rate of five tapes a week); if you've got one to sell, or if you're looking for some new sounds to buy, drop 'em a line . . . back to vinyl: **Nonesuch Records** has been chosen by Meet The Composer Inc. to record eight commissioned works in the MTC/Orchestra Residencies Program; first up are John Harbison's *Ulysses' Bow* with Andre Previn conducting the Pittsburgh Symphony and Robert X. Rodriguez' *Oktoechos* with Eduardo Mata conducting the Dallas Symphony . . . nor'westerner: the **Composers And Improvisors Orchestra** (2202 NE 63rd, Seattle, WA 98115) has slated three gigs on their '84-85 calendar: the music of John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, and Billy Strayhorn, 11/18; Carla Bley with the CIO, 3/3/85; and new music by James Knapp, David Peterson, Julian Priester, Howard Schanzer, and Alan Youngblood, 5/12/85 . . . elsewhere in Washington (DC this time), the **U.S. Navy Band** offers a seven-part fall freebee concert series, every Wed. from 10/17-12/5 ('cept 11/21), in the Sail Loft, Building 112, Ninth & M SE, at 8 p.m.; details from (202) 433-2394 . . . more from the cap: the NEA has joined forces with the Japan/U.S. Friendship Commission to award five **U.S./Japan Artist Exchange Fellowships**, offering six-to-nine months of work in Japan to mid-career American artists; the NEA is currently accepting applications for the program for '85-86 from creative folk in any of the fine art fields; guidelines and applications from International Program Office, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC 20506 . . . kudos to part-time **dbers** and full-time PA Public Radio Assocs. **John Diliberto** and **Kimberly Haas** whose *Totally Wired: Artists In Electronic Sound* series won first place in the music division at the prestigious 20th anniversary Armstrong Awards Program . . . and brickbats to the thief in the night that cleaned out the **AACM** office in Chicago, just as they were preparing their 20th anniversary celebration; those instruments were for their tuition-free School of Music, and they can't run an office without equipment; a couple of benefits have helped, but more is needed to keep the commendable AACM programs afloat; donations of money, instruments, office equipment, and the like (all tax-deductible) for the nonprofit outfit could help make the 20th anniversary a real celebration; get in touch with 'em at (312) 752-2212 . . .

NEWS

MORE NEWS ON PAGE 60

Piano Jazz enters fifth season

COLUMBIA, SC—After four years of radio shows with 52 world-famous jazz pianists as guests, Marian McPartland would seem to have cornered the market on great jazz keyboardists. "Not at all," says the grande dame of jazz pianists. "We've barely scratched the surface." Indeed, the fifth season of *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz* kicked off with Dave Brubeck as guest and will feature a dozen others before the end of the year.

Each program features McPartland in performance and conversation with famous guest artists discussing their craft and career influences. The composer/teacher/pianist/host's breezy conversational style has earned her series accolades and awards, including the prestigious George Foster Peabody Award for '84, which cited McPartland's series as "entertaining, inventive, and often electric" with "warm and engaging interplay."

Piano Jazz is a production of the South Carolina Educational Radio Network and is made possible by a grant from Exxon. The weekly programs are available to all member NPR stations. Check your local stations during the week listed to hear: Joyce Collins (10/13-19), Art Hodes (10/20-26), Richard Rodney Bennett (10/27-11/2), George Wein (11/3-9), Clare Fischer (11/10-16), Roger Williams (11/17-23), Joanne Grauer (11/24-30), Peter Nero (12/1-7), Steve Kuhn (12/8-14), Makoto Ozone (12/15-21), Dardanelle (12/22-28), and James Williams (12/29-1/4/85).

—e. *condon whatey*

McPartland and Brubeck

INDUSTRY ACTION

A contest, show, and catalogs

Oberheim Electronics Inc. is sponsoring a world-wide "Patch Hunt" to encourage creative programming of new sounds on their popular OB-8 synthesizer; entry deadline has been extended to 10/31; entry forms/guidelines from Oberheim dealers or write the company at 2250 South Barrington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The second annual **Canadian Music Show** features exhibits of products and services, seminars, and concerts by some top national recording artists, as well as a first-day spotlight on mus. ed., 11/8-11 at the Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place, Toronto; more information is available from David Hazan at Norris Publications, (416) 485-8284.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The **Pro-Mark Corp.**, a world leader in drum sticks and related accessories, has been reacquired from Remo Inc. by Herb Brochstein, who founded the company in '57 and has served as its president continuously (Pro-Mark became a Remo subsidiary in '73). All the Pro-Mark management staff and factory personnel in Houston remain the same. A free catalog of Pro-Mark gear is available from the company at 10706 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Easy reading: **CB700**'s new 68-page catalog covers their whole line of marching, latin, professional, educational, and mallet percussion; get one from POB 1, Bloomfield, CT 06002 . . . **AKAI** has prepared a new catalog presenting their full ensemble of electronic products including new mixers, tape recorders, and keyboards; write POB 2344, Fort Worth, TX for yours . . . **Drums Unlimited Inc.**'s new *Percussion Products Catalog* lists thousands of in-stock instruments and accessories; its sister *Percussion Publications Catalog* covers the print end; info from 4928 Saint Elmor Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814 . . . the fall '84 catalog from **Cosmic Percussion** (via Latin Percussion) is their biggest yet—36 full-color pages of everything for the percussionist from complete sets to little effects; get yours from your sales rep or write CP c/o LP Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026. □

FINAL BAR

JACK MOOTZ

Frank Butler, Kansas City drummer who worked briefly with John Coltrane and Miles Davis (*Seven Steps To Heaven*) before settling in the L.A. area and playing with Harold Land, Jimmy Rowles, Terry Gibbs, Teddy Edwards, Gerald Wilson, and others, died July 24 in L.A. of cancer at age 56.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Esther Phillips, a noted early r&b singer whose hits included *Release Me* and *What A Diff'rence A Day Makes*, died Aug. 7 in Torrence, CA following a long illness. She was 48. Phillips first came to prominence as a vocalist in the Johnny Otis Show, and was acknowledged by the Beatles as an influence.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Percy Mayfield, r&b/blues-ballad singer/songwriter, died Aug. 11 in L.A. of a heart attack at age 63. He recorded many hits on his own in the '50s (*Please Send Me Someone To Love*, *What A Fool I Was*, et al., collected on Specialty's *Best Of . . .*) before Ray Charles signed him to a five-year pact to write exclusively for him (*Hit The Road Jack*, *Danger Zone*, *At The Club*, etc.).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Lenny Breau, one of the most technically accomplished and harmonically inventive of the finger-picking jazz guitarists, died Aug. 12 of unknown causes at his L.A. home. He was 43.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Isidore (Tuts) Washington, last surviving major New Orleans pianist of the '20s generation, died Aug. 5 of a heart attack while performing at the New Orleans World's Fair. He was 77. The local legend recorded his only LP just last year for Rounder.

SHERRY RAYN BARNETT

Willie Mae (Big Mama) Thornton, an influential blues singer whose recordings *Hound Dog* and *Ball And Chain* became signature tunes by, respectively, Elvis Presley and Janis Joplin, died July 25 in Los Angeles of a heart attack at age 57.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

John F. Mehegan, pianist/composer/educator, died Apr. 3 in Norwalk, CT at age 67. His four-volume *Jazz Improvisation* is one of the most widely used texts for teaching jazz piano. The self-taught musician was an assistant to Teddy Wilson at the Metropolitan Music School and later taught at Juilliard, Columbia U., U. of Bridgeport, and Yale. He recorded on Savoy and Columbia sessions with Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, Lionel Hampton, Slam Stewart, and Dinah Washington.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Howard DuLany, singer with the Gene Krupa Orchestra in '40 and '41, died Aug. 14 in West Palm Beach, FL of cancer at age 69.

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Konstantin Nosov, a leading Soviet jazz trumpeter, died June 30 in Sofia, Bulgaria of a heart attack at age 46.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Arrigo Polillo, a prominent Italian jazz author/critic/promoter/editor (*Musica Jazz*), died July 17 in Milan of a heart attack five days after his 65th birthday.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Robert Goffin, veteran jazz writer and author of *Aux Frontieres Du Jazz*, *Louis Armstrong: King Of Jazz*, *Jazz: From The Congo To The Metropolitan*, and other books, died June 27 at his home in Genval, Belgium at age 86.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Michael (Mickey) Coppola, saxophonist/big band leader, died Aug. 12 in Philadelphia at age 56.

PURDIE'S EVOLUTION

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Bernard "Pretty" Purdie

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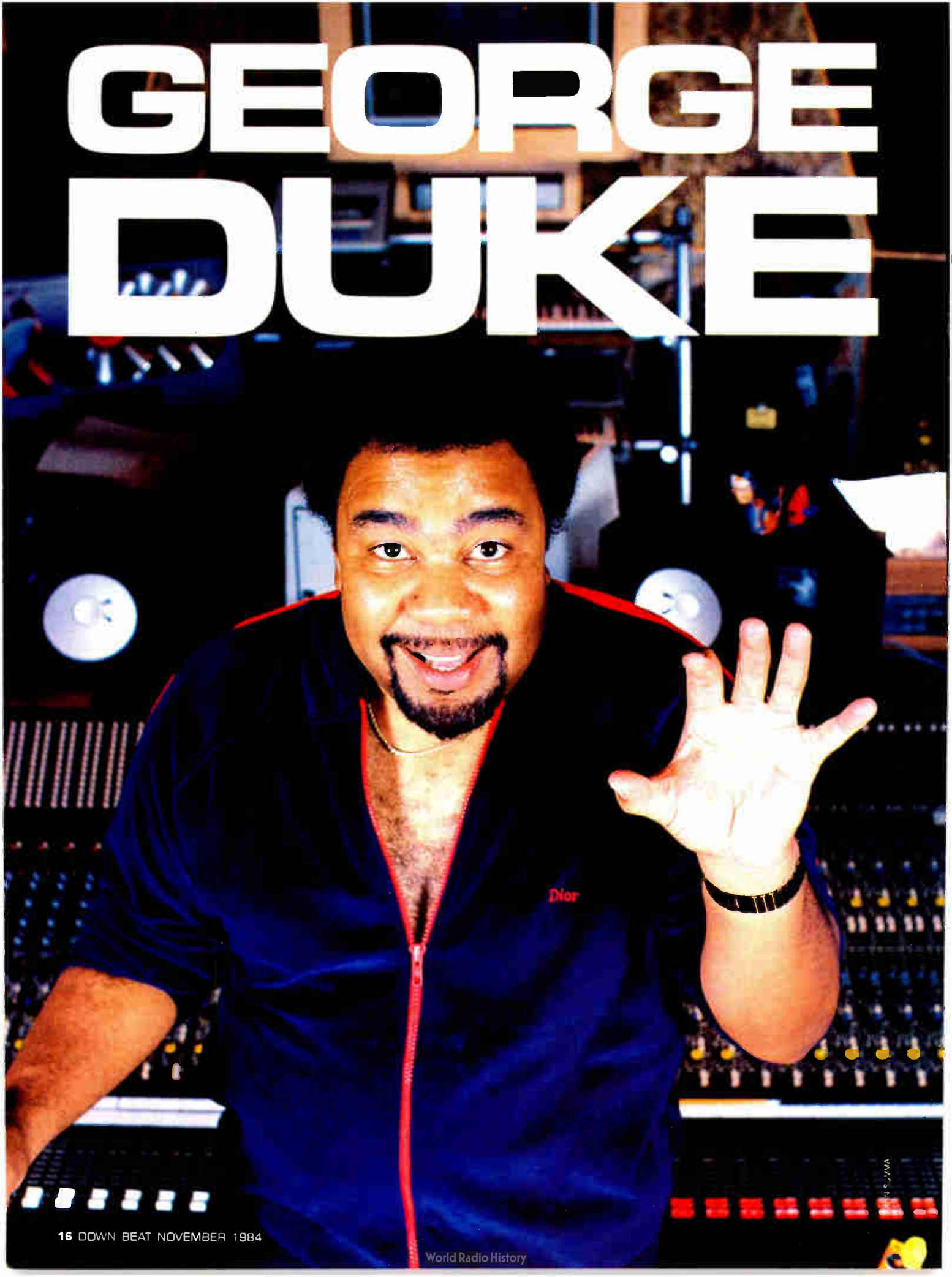
GEORGE DUKE



Dukin' Out The Hits

By Scott Yanow

To say that George Duke has had a diverse career would be an understatement. Born in San Rafael, CA on Jan. 12, 1946, he had an extensive formal musical education, starting with piano lessons at the age of seven and climaxing in a master's degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. While still in high school, Duke led his trio for a few years at the Half Note in San Francisco, and he later alternated college with a three-year period as leader of the house rhythm section at the Both/And club.

A six-month stint with Don Ellis' innovative orchestra in 1968 was a warmup for Duke's first big break, as keyboardist for the newly arrived Jean-Luc Ponty. Suddenly George Duke became a household name in jazz circles and began appearing on many record dates. Two years with Cannonball Adderley was sandwiched between two tours of duty with the eccentric Frank Zappa that opened George's ears to other styles of music. After Duke's rock-oriented quartet with Billy Cobham ran its course, his solo career began in earnest. To the surprise of many, George completely left jazz and fusion for r&b/funk starting in 1977. In recent times Duke's playing career has taken a backseat to his producing of pop acts, including Deniece Williams (*Let's Hear It For The Boy*), Jeffrey Osborne (*Stay With Me Tonight*), A Taste Of Honey (*Sukiyaki*), Sister Sledge, Philip Bailey, Rufus, Stephanie Mills, and quite a few others.

Duke's philosophy is that after success is achieved in a certain area of music, he prefers to move on to another field and continue learning, always avoiding categorization and stagnation. Although his goal today is to produce No. I hits for pop groups, this is no guarantee that five years from now he will be strictly a pop producer.

* * * * *

Scott Yanow: What convinced you to move away from fusion towards r&b and funk in 1977?

George Duke: There were several reasons. I was becoming disenchanted with the fusion scene. When fusion was first happening, it was the most interesting music I had heard in my life. It reached its peak with the Mahavishnu Orchestra and, of course, Return To Forever—they were the epitome of that music. But it seemed like after that everybody was copying each other and getting too technically oriented, playing so many notes and scales, that the feeling was going out of the music. Everybody was playing fast scales, and it just didn't interest me anymore. I wanted to play music that would reach a larger black audience and was a little simpler in nature. From the *Reach For It* album on, that was my goal. That album still had a lot of fusion in it, but with the advent of it becoming a gold record and becoming a huge black hit, well that was it. I had gotten interested in the Parliament/Funkadelic scene, and I said, "Man, this music is fun; it's so crazy." Fusion had gotten too serious anyway.

SY: Speaking of fun, what exactly is the Dukey stick?

GD: Alright, I'll clear this up once and for all. The Dukey stick is not a musical instrument; it is a plexiglass tube with lights in it that shoots off fire. I became very aware of putting on a show after *Reach For It* became a hit. I realized that you can't just go out on-stage with one song and get over to an audience that is predominately black and r&b oriented. I had to put on more of a show, learn how to dress a little differently, become a little more flamboyant on stage, get out from behind those keyboards. So I decided to come out with a gimmick, and the Dukey stick was it.

SY: What was your earliest experience producing records?

GD: All of the albums I did for MPS I essentially produced. I produced a record for a group called the Third Wave on MPS, but it never came out here; that was a long time ago. As far as people here know, the first album I ever produced of another artist was for Raul de Souza, the trombonist. I did two records for him, and that was a big learning experience. That was about 1976-77.

SY: You were well trained for playing piano, but where did you learn how to produce? Was it from watching other people produce your earlier records?

GD: Exactly. I used to watch Frank Zappa intensely. He knew how to control equalization, knew how to deal with limiters, and he knew the technical side of music. I also did sessions with Quincy Jones, and I'd watch how he dealt with musicians. Those two were like my mentors, the producers whom I try to emulate. A lot of producing has to do with psychology too, dealing with musicians who might be a little frail or maybe have an active ego. The ultimate goal is to make them feel relaxed so they can be creative. My philosophy of production is to try to make the best record I can for the artist, have it be successful in the marketplace, and give the artist something musically.

SY: Quincy Jones blazed a trail for your generation as far as being a jazz musician who gradually became a producer for pop groups.

GD: He was definitely a pioneer. Most of the better musicians are all jazz players anyway, including most of the studio players. I feel very fortunate that I came in through that school of music, not only studying a lot of classical music and composition but playing in night clubs six nights a week. I feel sorry for the people that don't go through that; it is such a valuable experience.

SY: After producing Raul de Souza's albums, was a demand created for you as a producer?

GD: Raul de Souza's *Sweet Lucy* did pretty well for a jazz record that only cost $15,000, including my fee. I went on to work with violinist Michael White, and then I wanted to branch out and do a vocalist. Eventually I connected with Dee Dee Bridgewater, an excellent singer. When I got the call, I saw this as an opportunity to move up. I think that one should be constantly renewing their goals, otherwise it's easy to get stagnant. I always want to find something else to do. Once you're successful at one thing, then it's good to move on to another challenge. I did Dee Dee's album and learned a lot, and then I worked with Flora Purim, an old friend. But the real turning point was when I worked with A Taste Of Honey.

SY: Is it vastly different working with a pop group than producing a jazz group?

GD: Yes, it's totally different. The artists look at music much differently. Flora Purim, though she would have liked to have had a commercially successful record at that time, did not have the same ambition that A Taste Of Honey had. Flora was more concerned with how it sounded musically while A Taste Of Honey had been coming off a platinum record. I appreciate both goals, and try to put them both together.

SY: Were you under a lot of pressure to come out with a hit record for A Taste Of Honey?

GD: Oh, unbelievable pressure. Originally Bobby Colomby called me to co-produce this album with him. All that I needed to do was act as musical director, work as an arranger, and make sure the group had its parts together. But on the first day

I'm at the studio, I get a phone call from Bobby. "I'm not coming," he says, "I'm bowing out of the project." Now looking back at it, I could have just croaked. But I said to myself, "This is my shot, my chance to go for it." What I should have done was reorganize everything, but I didn't do that, and we got lucky anyway, selling almost two million records. *Sukiyaki* was the third single off the record; it was amazing how well it did.

SY: So they forgave your inexperience.

GD: Yes, and I learned a great deal from them without them knowing about it. And once I had this No. 1 pop record out, my phones haven't stopped ringing. It's been ridiculous. Last year I did too much; I'm trying to cut back on what I produce.

SY: What are your strong and weak points as a producer?

GD: I try not to impose my own style on other people's records. There are producers who are great at picking songs but don't know technically what is going on, and there are producers who are vice versa. I am almost vice versa. I've tried to work with a wide variety of artists, and I'm getting better at picking songs. *Let's Hear It For The Boy* by Deniece Williams is a No. 1 record so I know I'm improving.

SY: Do you miss some of the spontaneity that was part of your earlier music?

GD: Yes. I think spontaneity is trying to creep back into pop music. I see that in Prince's music. I see it with what he did with Sheila Escovedo, who used to be in my band. I'm putting the fire back in my own music; I think it's time.

SY: Let's go back to your roots a bit. What is the earliest music that you remember hearing?

GD: Wow, the earliest record that made an impact on me was an old Woody Herman 78. I don't remember its title, but that thing had a great swing to it, and it turned me on to jazz at age four. A few years later I'd heard a lot of rhythm & blues, and my mother used to blast gospel music out every Sunday morning. One day I went into this little record store, and I told the clerk, "I'm looking for some jazz!" I didn't know who to ask for, so she handed me this record that had an interesting cover. I played it at home, and that did it for me. It was Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue*. It totally altered my concept of what music was about.

SY: How did you become interested in playing piano?

GD: That's easy. My mother took me to a Duke Ellington concert, and I saw this guy in a white suit directing the band. I told my mother, "I can do that!" I started taking lessons a few years later at age seven and continued until I was a junior at college, with different teachers along the way. The only reason that I stopped was that I decided that I wanted to be a jazz player even though I wasn't sure that I could make a living at it. I backed myself up by getting a teaching credential at school.

SY: What were your first groups like?

GD: Pretty good, in fact I have tapes of most of them. Eventually I want to put out a lot of early George Duke albums. I must have enough tapes for five or six volumes. I have some early stuff with Al Jarreau that's really great. I know that **down beat** readers would be very interested in it because he was really singing some straightahead stuff in those days. We did one record as a demo, but everyone said he was too jazz-oriented to sell records.

SY: Didn't you lead a rock group when you first started out?

GD: I never did like that group; it didn't satisfy me. I was more involved with a latin group, and then from that I started a little trio called the Jazz Co-op. We'd do Les McCann stuff. I also liked Ramsey Lewis quite a bit.

SY: How did the Half Note gig come about?

GD: I went in and auditioned with my trio, the owner liked us, and I played there for several years. That's where I met up with Al Jarreau. He was a social worker who used to sit in with us on Sunday afternoons. We generally didn't care for Sundays because dozens of "singers" got a chance to sit in with us—it was a drag—but he was great and soon became part of the group.

SY: How did you happen to take up the trombone?

GD: I was told by a teacher in the sixth grade that the piano was not an orchestral instrument and that I couldn't play it in the orchestra, so I took up cello. I still have a picture of me playing the cello. It was the worst experience I've ever had in my life. [*Laughter*] I'd hit the A string, and it would send chills up my spine. So after a year of that, I switched to baritone horn, and later in high school I played trombone in the school band. I continued it only because there was a scholarship available at the San Francisco Conservatory, and there were no trombonists trying out for it, so that was easy.

SY: Did you play any jazz on the trombone at all?

GD: Not much, but Frank Zappa found out I played it, and he made me use it in the movie *200 Motels*. That's the last time I played it.

SY: Have any thoughts about your first record, the one from 1966? I know you don't think too favorably of it [*The George Duke Quartet*].

GD: I have tapes of that band that are much better than that record. Going in the studio for the first time spooked me. I was trying to play like John Coltrane on the piano without knowing what I was doing. We sounded better live at the Half Note, which was a good gig for the trio. After a few years we began to alternate at the Both/And and the Jazz Workshop. We used to be the houseband for practically anyone who passed through town: Sam Rivers, Bobby Hutcherson, Frank Strozier, many singers. Working two weeks with Dexter Gordon, I really learned a lot about music. That was a great experience.

SY: Why did the trio eventually disband?

GD: I decided it was time to learn something else. The only reason that I ever leave any situation is to grow, and it seemed like the right time. I wanted to come to L.A. and work with some other people. I needed to bounce my ideas off someone else, so I decided to become a sideman for a while. I also

GEORGE DUKE'S EQUIPMENT

"I have had my own studio, Le Gonks West, for around five years," says George Duke. "Basically I use a 3M model 79 as my main deck. I master onto an Ampex analog, and my favorite tape is the Ampex 456. I use Bryston amps on the top and Hafler on the bottom of my big monitor system. I use Yamaha NS-10X for mixing the bulk of the recordings. The board is a modified Soundcraft which we mostly use for monitoring only. We have George Massenburg preamps, equalizers, and limiters for all of the recording that we do in this room. It's like a poor man's Massenburg board. I have a variety of other equipment including an EMT reverb unit that we call R2D2, a Dolby noise reduction rack, and an Eventide delay.

"As far as keyboards go, I have a Synclavier II; I use a Korg Poly 6 and a 61, Memorymoogs and Minimoogs, a Roland Jupiter 8 for the bass sounds, and a LinnDrum machine along with a Yamaha DX-7. I use whatever is new on the market that will fit in and enhance a particular recording. Last year I bought the Rolls Royce of acoustic pianos, a Bösendorfer, which I love a lot but don't get a chance to play enough."

GEORGE DUKE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT—Epic 38513
DREAM ON—Epic 37532
BRAZILIAN LOVE AFFAIR—Epic 36483
MASTER OF THE GAME—Epic 36263
FOLLOW THE RAINBOW—Epic 35701
DON'T LET GO—Epic 35636
REACH FOR IT—Epic 34883
FROM ME TO YOU—Epic 34469
THE 1976 SOLO KEYBOARD ALBUM—Epic 38208
FEEL—MPS/BASF MC25355
THE AURA WILL PREVAIL—Pausa 7042
I LOVE THE BLUES—Pausa 7070
SAVE THE COUNTRY—Pacific Jazz 10127
FACES IN REFLECTION—MPS/BASF 22018

with Frank Zappa

ROXY AND ELSEWHERE—Discreet 2DS2202
APOSTROPHE—Discreet DS2175
OVERNIGHT SENSATION—Discreet MS2149
WAKA JAWAKA—Bizarre/Reprise 2094
THE GRAND WAZOO—Bizarre/Reprise MS2093
CHUNGA'S REVENGE—Bazarre/Reprise 2030
200 MOTELS—United Artists S-9956

with Jean-Luc Ponty

JEAN-LUC PONTY EXPERIENCE—World Pacific 20168
LIVE AT DONTE'S—Blue Note 1102
KING KONG—United Artists LA 373
ELECTRIC CONNECTION—World Pacific 20156

with Cannonball Adderley

LOVERS—Fantasy 9505
BIG MAN—Fantasy 79006
PHENIX—Fantasy 79004
THE BLACK MESSIAH—Capitol SWBO-846

with Stanley Clarke

CLARKE/DUKE PROJECT 2—Epic 38934
CLARKE/DUKE PROJECT—Epic 36918
SCHOOL DAYS—Nemperor 439
JOURNEY TO LOVE—Nemperor 433

with Dee Dee Bridgewater

JUST FAMILY—Elektra GE-119

with Harry "Sweets" Edison

AFTER YOU'VE GONE—Concord CJ6
SOFT SHOE—Concord CJ3

with Billy Cobham

LIVE ON TOUR IN EUROPE—Atlantic 18194
CROSSWINDS—Atlantic 7300
LIFE AND TIMES—Atlantic 18166

ANN SUMMA

wanted to record more. I soon worked with Don Ellis.

SY: What did you think of Don Ellis' charts which used unusual time changes?

GD: It used to drive me crazy! I'd had a lot of big band experience, but the first night when I was just sitting in, he gave me a solo by myself in the middle of this crazy chart in some odd time, and he loved watching me struggle! We did one record, but it never came out.

SY: Was that your first experience with the electric piano?

GD: Yes, I didn't know what that thing was, but I was stuck playing it a bit.

SY: What was it about Jean-Luc Ponty's style that attracted you to him to the point that you pressured producer Dick Bock to let you play with him?

GD: He sounded like the Miles Davis of the violin. Ponty was unique, and I could tell that since he was coming to America, he was going to be a star. I knew what he was trying to do musically, and I knew that I could work well with him. So I got aggressive, and called Dick Bock of World Pacific everyday and told him that he can't hire another piano player. "I am the piano player for this gig," I said. "We know every Jean-Luc Ponty song, so do yourself a favor and hire me. Give me a shot." Dick heard our tapes and agreed. Jean-Luc and I had a lot of fun playing together. Dick Bock later pressured me to convince Jean-Luc to start playing rock clubs because of our high energy. We played this one rock club, and there was no piano there, just a little box with a silver top, and that's what I had to play. I made the best of it and eventually liked playing electric keyboards.

SY: How did you feel about rock music at this time?

GD: I liked Jimi Hendrix. I didn't know who Frank Zappa was. The first time I heard him on the radio I said, "He has a lot of talent, but he's so weird!"

SY: He sat in with you and Ponty once?

GD: Yes, at Thee Experience, a rock club. He played well, some blues stuff, but I was into jazz. A short time later Jean-Luc talked him into using me for their *King Kong* date. Zappa wanted Ponty for that session, and Jean-Luc wanted someone around who related to his music. Frank became impressed with my abilities and soon asked me to join his group. My first reaction was "Join *that* band?" After I was in the group, I used to look at pictures of the band and wonder why I was there. Later I understood: Zappa liked diversity.

SY: How did you like Frank Zappa's music initially?

GD: I liked the more intricate things, but when it came to the 1950s' rock & roll triplets, I told him I just couldn't play it. I got talked into it after a while, and eventually I saw the humor and diversity of his music. I was being too serious—after all I was a straitlaced black-tie jazz player. But through working with Frank, I found that one can have fun playing this music, and I don't have to stick to only one style. It opened my mind up. The problem was that I'd never worked with an established jazz act, and that was a goal of mine. So when I got the gig with Cannonball Adderley, well that really did it for me. I got my two years in with Cannonball, so when I went back with Frank, I could relax.

SY: You've said that you matured both musically and personally while with Cannonball. What were some of the things that you learned from him?

GD: I learned how to laugh. I also learned how to relax on-stage. I just couldn't relax with Zappa the first year; the rock scene was too new to me. But Cannonball had a really jovial style on-stage and was an incredible player. He wasn't out there to show off though; he was out there to have a good time. The biggest thing I learned was how to deal with people. And of course he knew everyone I idolized. You know, Sarah Vaughan, Joe Williams, Nancy Wilson. He used to talk about Miles Davis like he was a next-door neighbor. Even after I left to go back to Zappa, I still worked with Cannonball a bit.

SY: Like the record *Phenix*.

GD: Yes, I love that record. That was right before he died, a summation of his great life.

SY: So you enjoyed Zappa more the second time around?

GD: Yes, he hired Jean-Luc and the great trombonist Bruce Fowler, and it was very musical. But at first he hated that band because it was too serious. After a while though, the new players caught on to the spirit of the thing, and it was fun. By the time we were together a couple of years, it was an insane group.

SY: Is that when you started playing synthesizers?

GD: Yes, although I played it a bit in '71 with Cannonball. Frank suggested I play it a couple of years later, and I fooled around with it until I liked it. Jan Hammer was like *the* man on synthesizer at the time, so since he was playing a Minimoog, I decided to play an Arp so I could make my mark with a

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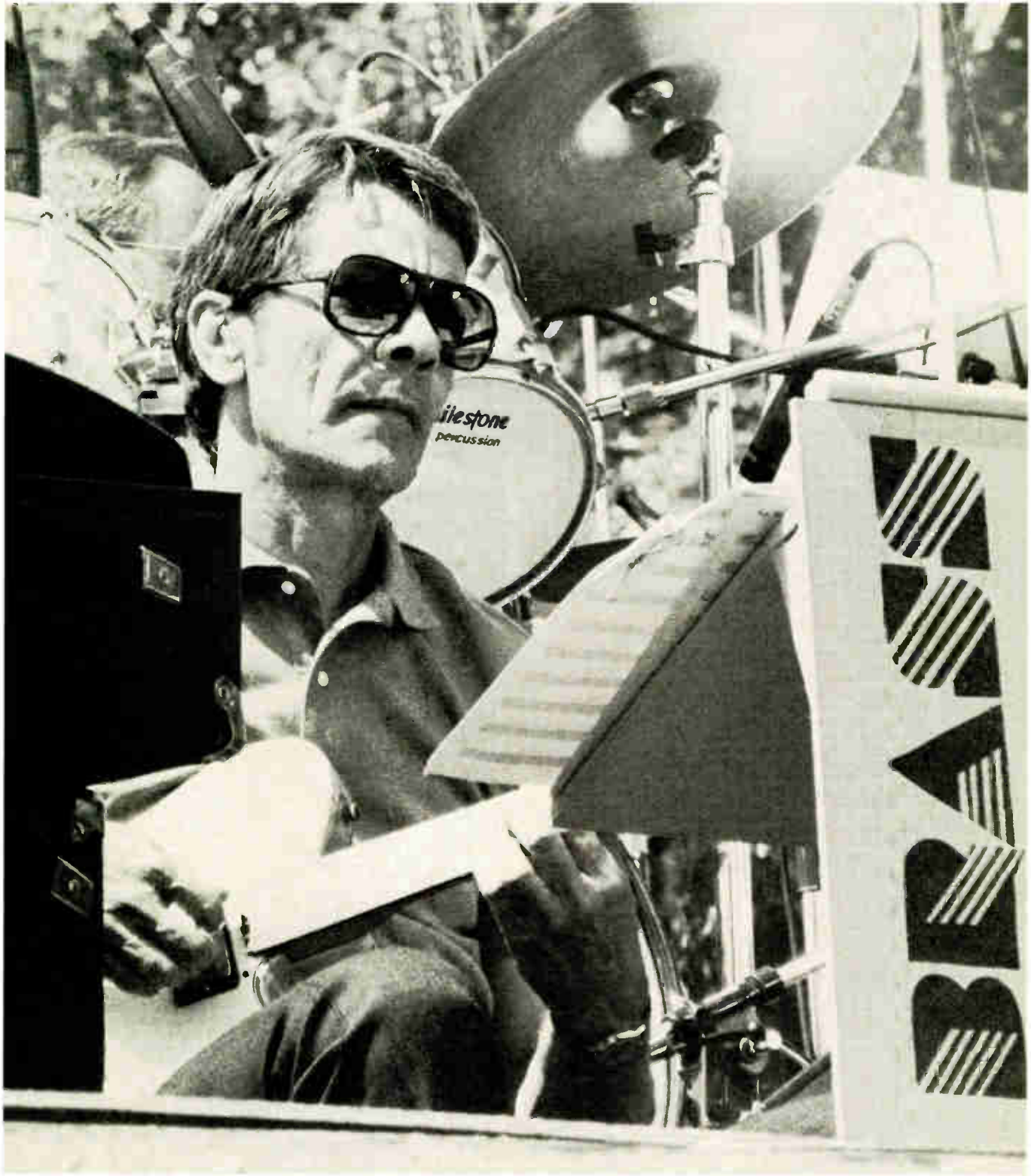


MARK MILLER

ED BICKERT

In A Mellow Tone

BY MARK MILLER

An hour before he would play a rare jingle date, a day before he would fly to California for appearances at the Concord Jazz Festival with Canadian tenor saxist Fraser MacPherson and Rob McConnell's Boss Brass, and a day *after* he had heard the latest on the local hotspot Bourbon Street's apparent slide into obscurity, Ed Bickert sat back on a bench

on the lobby of Toronto's McClear Place recording studios, talking calmly and smoking cigarettes.

As he recounted a 30-year career as Canada's premier jazz guitarist, the other musicians on the date arrived one by one. It began to have the look of a Boss Brass call. Nine of that band's members filed in—Jerry Toth, Ron Hughes, Bob Leonard, Rick Wilkins, Ian McDougall, Bob Livingston, Guido Basso, Steve Wallace, and Rob McConnell himself—along with three ringers, Vern Dorge, Ralph Bowen, and Bob McLaren.

Wilkins was the leader this time. The chart was in a Glenn Miller-ish vein that sent McConnell back to the car for his mutes. Bickert, meanwhile, had left his Telecaster at home—yes, the rock guitarist's instrument, from which Bickert draws some of the mellowest sounds in jazz—and instead had his hollow-body Gibson L5 out of the closet to play a little four-to-the-bar rhythm guitar.

It has been a quiet time for jazzmen and studio musicians alike in Toronto. Some of the other players at McClear Place were fairly bitter about the situation—about the economy, about the rise of the synthesizer and the demise of the working musician—but Bickert is not one to raise his voice on any subject. He speaks quietly and generally keeps his confidences; when he opens up, his comments are moderated by a dry, self-effacing sense of humor that softens any sharpness. He too feels the walls closing in, but Bickert, at 51, has had doors open internationally even as they seem to have been shutting at home.

It might not have worked out any better if he had planned it this way. But Bickert is no careerist. Other Toronto musicians would have made much more of any one of his accomplishments over the last dozen years—the association with Paul Desmond during the altoist's last years, the work with vibist Milt Jackson at home and abroad, the accumulation of good impressions that he has made backing other visiting jazzmen in Toronto, the unique harmonic concept that has inspired reverent talk among fellow guitarists the world around, the leading role that he has played in the Boss Brass' emergence of late, the various recordings that have culminated in a contract with the California label Concord Jazz. . . .

Instead, the guitarist has moved at his own pace. There's still something in Bickert of the young man who arrived in Toronto at the age of 19 fresh from the farming community of Vernon, British Columbia. It's not just the light drawl in a resonant voice; it's this more leisurely sense of the passing day, and these relatively modest horizons. Were it not for the greater haste of other musicians in Toronto with grander ambitions and lesser talent, and were it not for the probing questions of those who would have wished much more for him by now, he should be quite comfortable.

"Left to my own devices," he said, leaning back with legs crossed, "I like to relax. I do need some sort of push to get going."

* * *

When Edward Isaac Bickert, a country lad of 12, picked up his older brother's dobro for the first time, The Guitar, historically, was just coming out of a period of transition. The year was 1945. The electric guitar was an established fact, thanks to recordings a half-dozen years before by Charlie Christian, as was—incontrovertably—the instrument's potential was a solo voice in jazz. There was much for a young guitarist to absorb.

Life for a young guitarist in Vernon, however, was much simpler. The Bickert family had moved west from the province of Manitoba, where their youngest son was born in Hochfeld, near the U.S. border, on November 29, 1932. They established a small chicken ranch in the soil-rich Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, worked the orchards, and ran an old-time dance band for Saturday night functions up in the hills. His mother played piano, and his father was a fiddler. "We'd take up a collection," Bickert remembered of his first country gigs, "so we'd get $3, $4, $5 in change, each."

Whatever they played in the hills, there was a certain amount of jazz in the family's record collection at home. "A lot of it was big band music," Bickert recalled, "Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman. . . . And there were a few small groups, like Les Paul, who had a neat little group with a couple of guitars, piano, and bass, and the King Cole Trio, with Oscar Moore and then Irving Ashby—I was really taken with the way the guitar sounded in that group. As far as any *hard* jazz was concerned, there wasn't a lot available, certainly not on record, in my hometown."

His introduction to jazz, then, was to its most popular manifestations. Charlie Christian was one man whose influence did not extend to Vernon, or anywhere else in Canada for that matter. Django Reinhardt was another. A list of the guitarists whose styles did come to bear on his playing in the next 10 or 15 years would include Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, Johnny Smith, Kenny Burrell, Jim Hall, Herb Ellis, and Barney Kessel—the Christian line more or less, but without Christian.

There were a few other musicians in Vernon, Bickert acknowledged, "ex-professionals who'd come from somewhere else and had been involved in some jazz playing, or maybe dance bands of one sort or another—which is getting close, I suppose. The ones I met opened up my ears to new sounds and new ways of doing things." There were also other guitarists around, older men who traveled through the Okanagan Valley with dance bands out of Vancouver to the west and the Alberta resorts to the east. And there was the radio, specifically Jimmy Lyons' show from San Francisco.

Under these influences Bickert had matured as a musician by 1952 to the point where he could make the unusually bold step to Toronto. It took him a week in a '35 Chevy; at that, he might never move so quickly again.

Of the new kid in town, just 20, Bickert recalled, "I knew quite a few tunes"—the pop songs of the '30s and '40s that still constitute his repertoire today—"and I think I had quite a good 'time' feeling. Maybe better than I do now: playing the kind of music I'd been playing, my main function was to be a timekeeper—I didn't have that many hot licks down. And I didn't have that much experience, so it was just through meeting other musicians at jam sessions and such, that one thing led to another."

It didn't take very long. Initially he took a job in radio, as he had during his last year in Vernon, but by the end of the decade he was working for many of Toronto's most prominent jazz figures: trombonist Ron Collier and reedmen Norm Symonds, Moe Koffman, and Phil Nimmons. In the following years, though, the best of his generation went into the studios, playing first for radio and tv, and then for the fledgling Canadian recording industry. Bickert went with them, becoming the city's first-call guitarist. But the music began to change and his interest waned.

"I've very few connections with this kind of thing now," he observed from the McClear Place lobby. "If it happens that the people I work with in the jazz world have something in the studios, I might get in on it."

* * *

The news, now a day old, about Bourbon Street, was not good. Another policy change, the second over the summer months, had reduced Canada's most famous jazz room to just another Toronto cabaret. In its heyday, Bourbon Street had been Bickert's avenue to the international scene.

Through his years in the studios, he had kept his hand in with various Toronto jazz groups, flutist Moe Koffman's popular band foremost among them. He still plays in this group, one of two standing commitments on the Toronto scene, along with the Boss Brass. His own groups are highly informal, especially since his partner through the 1970s, bassist/pianist Don Thompson, took up with George Shearing in 1982.

Again, Bickert might not have planned this better: as the studio calls decreased in the mid-'70s, the invitations to play behind visiting soloists at Bourbon Street increased. The list over the years has been varied but formidable: altoists Paul Desmond and Lee Konitz,

MARK MILLER

ED BICKERT'S EQUIPMENT

Though he occasionally hefts a hollow-body Gibson L5, Ed Bickert's main instrument is a worn but durable Fender Telecaster, about 20 years old and modified with a humbucking pickup. He uses a Roland Cube 60 amplifier, citing portability as its basic attraction. His string sets mix Dean Markley, Ernie Ball, and other stock—light gauge on top, heavy gauge on the bottom. His picks are Fender medium.

As for the mellow sound he draws from the Fender Telecaster, "It's just a matter of cutting out some of the highs. And it's partly the way you play, too. I'm starting to think that's the case—that people who've been playing awhile seem to manage to get their own sound no matter what they're playing."

ED BICKERT SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

BYE BYE BABY—Concord Jazz 232
THE ED BICKERT 5 AT BOURBON STREET—Concord Jazz 216
I LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE TUNE—United Artists 747G
ED BICKERT—PM Records 010

with the Boss Brass

THE JAZZ ALBUM—Pausa 7031
BIG BAND JAZZ VOL. 1—Pausa 7140
BIG BAND JAZZ VOL. 2—Pausa 7141
PRESENT PERFECT—MPS 0068.249
TRIBUTE—Pausa 7106
LIVE IN DIGITAL—Dark Orchid 602-12018
ALL IN GOOD TIME—Palo Alto 8074

with Rob McConnell

MUTUAL STREET—Innovation 0009

with Don Thompson

DANCE TO THE LADY—Sackville 4010
ED BICKERT/DON THOMPSON—Sackville 4005

with Ruby Braff

RUBY BRAFF WITH THE ED BICKERT TRIO—Sackville 3022

with Frank Rosolino

THINKING ABOUT YOU—Sackville 2014

with Paul Desmond

PAUL DESMOND—Artists House 2
THE PAUL DESMOND QUARTET LIVE!—A&M Horizon 850
PURE DESMOND—CTI 6059

trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, cornetist Ruby Braff, flugeler Art Farmer, the late trombonist Frank Rosolino, the tenor/trumpet team of Scott Hamilton and Warren Vaché, vibists Milt Jackson and Red Norvo, and several others.

Recordings followed with Desmond, Rosolino, Braff, and Hamilton/Vaché. Desmond, who came out of semi-retirement on fellow guitarist Jim Hall's word of Bickert's harmonic sensitivity, took his entire Toronto rhythm section on the road for some of his final concert performances. Jackson, incredibly, got Bickert out as far as Japan in 1979.

By the Bourbon Street era, of course, the Bickert style was fully formed. It is not to diminish his solos, which are models of succinct melodicism, to suggest that the Bickert identity lies in the chords that he plays. They pulse with a soft glow as he *pulls* at them gently, a technique of plucking rather than strumming developed in the late '50s to meet the requirements of composer Norman Symonds, the Third Stream writer who employed Bickert in place of a pianist and then threw all sorts of odd, concert hall, keyboard harmony at him.

Bickert's note selection is impeccable, his hearing acute. (Said one Toronto musician recently, "Ed Bickert, man, he can hear the paint peel.") He has listened to pianists—to Bill Evans, he has said, and to Red Garland, early Herbie Hancock, and others—and he developed his unique harmonic approach intuitively, "just by experimenting on my own, trying to find the nice chords that you get on a piano, realizing that I don't have as many notes to work with, and picking out the important ones. I'm sure that someone who knows his theory and harmony could do this very nicely without much experimentation; they would know which notes would give you what sound. I don't know that, so I've got to do it my way, listening and trying to find a grip on the guitar. Someone who got me thinking about this was [the late] Lenny Breau, because he had that talent for finding a couple of really important notes just to *suggest* a chord."

Desmond was suitably amazed by his guitarist's gifts, and the two men played wonderfully literate jazz together. Looking back, Bickert most appreciated Desmond's encouragement—"just the fact that he enjoyed the way I was playing"—and his choice of tunes, those great pop songs "which were fine by me."

Jackson's funky elegance, on the other hand, brought the guitarist out of himself. Bickert apparently liked what was revealed. "If I could play the guitar the way Milt plays the vibes," he remarked, in a rare burst of enthusiasm, "I'd be pretty happy."

He caught himself. "Well, maybe not completely and forever, but for a lot of the time."

A day after his return from the West Coast, Bickert was looking a week ahead to another concert with Vancouver tenorman Fraser MacPherson, this one at the Edmonton festival known as Jazz City. Their Concord appearance together had gone well enough to be recorded, and that release, together with duet and sextet albums with Rob McConnell, will keep Bickert represented on the international market.

It's just as well. He doesn't get out there much in person, at least not on his own, although singer Rosemary Clooney had him in her ensemble recently at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, and he'll be traveling with Moe Koffman's quintet early next year when it tours the West with Dizzy Gillespie.

There are always work permit problems for a Canadian musician who wishes to work in the U.S., even a musician with Bickert's reputation. Moreover, he said, sounding a familiar refrain, "I'm not a self-starter. That's the main problem. I haven't done much to drum up some business for myself. I would certainly welcome any chance to play where people would enjoy the music, to play with some other musicians, to be working somewhere other than Toronto." Without knowing quite where, or how, to begin, he seems to be aware that changes may be in order at one level or another.

"At the moment, if I were going to do more on my own, it would be more of the same. That bothers me a bit. I'd like to get something a little different going. I'm not sure what, and it's an immediate concern because I'm supposed to do another record for Concord soon, and I don't want to do another one just like the last one. I don't know whether I should try to play with some different guys, or try to find some different material, or a different way of handling it. I've talked to Don Thompson about this. He thinks I should be playing something on records a little more modern than I have been. Which I can do, up to a point. . . . "

The Bickert fan, however, need not fear. "What for me might be a bit of a departure, may not sound that much different to the listener," the guitarist suggested.

"I haven't really heard that many of the newer guitar players. Some of the few that I've heard, who are more up to date, like John Scofield, I enjoy. Ralph Towner . . . I can't name too many. Some of it I enjoy; some of it I just appreciate. At the same time I don't think that I can start trying to play anything close to that, as far as being more modern, more sophisticated, or more assertive. That's partly because I don't have the background in harmony and such that some of the younger guys do. It's partly because I'm in that age bracket, I suppose, where you get settled into something. And it's partly my nature. I'm not an aggressve kind of person; the way I play's like that, too." **db**

Michael Shrieve

ECLECTIC DRUM DANCE

By Bill Milkowski

Rock fans are well acquainted with the *sound* of Michael Shrieve, even if they don't know his name. Former flower children grew up with him. They watched him at the Fillmore, went to Woodstock with him, and dug him at Altamont during his seven years as the driving force behind Santana.

Today's crop of rock listeners, those born around the time of Woodstock, know Shrieve through his recent involvement with an all-star lineup featuring guitarists Sammy Hagar and Neil Schon and bassist Kenny Aaronson. Then there's Shrieve's contributions to the Rolling Stones' *Emotional Rescue* and *Tattoo You*, as well as his recent work on Mick Jagger's solo album for Columbia and Roger Hodgson's (Supertramp) first solo album for A&M.

All these credentials are impressive enough, but hardly represent Shrieve's full scope as a drummer. The rock crowd would be surprised to hear the *other* side of this versatile, imaginative percussionist. Shrieve's instrumental collaborations with Klaus Schulze, one of the founding members of the German synthesizer group Tangerine Dream, and his own ambitious solo outings place him at the forefront of a new movement in blending technology and rhythm. His solo showcase, *In Suspect Terrain* (available as an import on the Swedish Day Eight Music label), is a triumph of man over machine—in this case, the LinnDrum.

"The challenge of a LinnDrum or any other drum computer," says Shrieve, "is to make it sound human, which I suppose sounds like a backward process. But going beyond the basic backbeat function and getting into the trickier stuff like left-handed snare drum rolls or real hip things between the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum—that's where the programming gets exciting for me. If you really take the time to get into details, you can get great nuance out of the Linn. You can get as expressive as you want and inject your own personality into the machine, which I feel I accomplished in this album."

In Suspect Terrain came about at the request of bassist Jonas Hellborg, currently of the new Mahavishnu Orchestra, who formed the Day Eight Music label a few years ago as an outlet for his own magnificent solo electric bass albums. Hellborg and Shrieve had met and established some common bonds while playing together in a trio with American expatriate pianist Michael Smith.

"Jonas asked me to do a percussion album for his label, and it's something I always wanted to do, so I seized the opportunity," he explains. "I got a hold of a LinnDrum, went into the Swedish forest for a week, and started programming it and learning it. And I just got into it, programming for about 16 hours a day straight through for about eight days. I think the best way to learn any instrument is to first dive in and just play, so I dove in and began pushing buttons until I was able to appreciate the nuance of the human feel section of the Linn. The result, especially on a piece like *Ratatouille*, is so complex and full of nuance that the people at Linn even had a hard time believing it was actually their product doing all that."

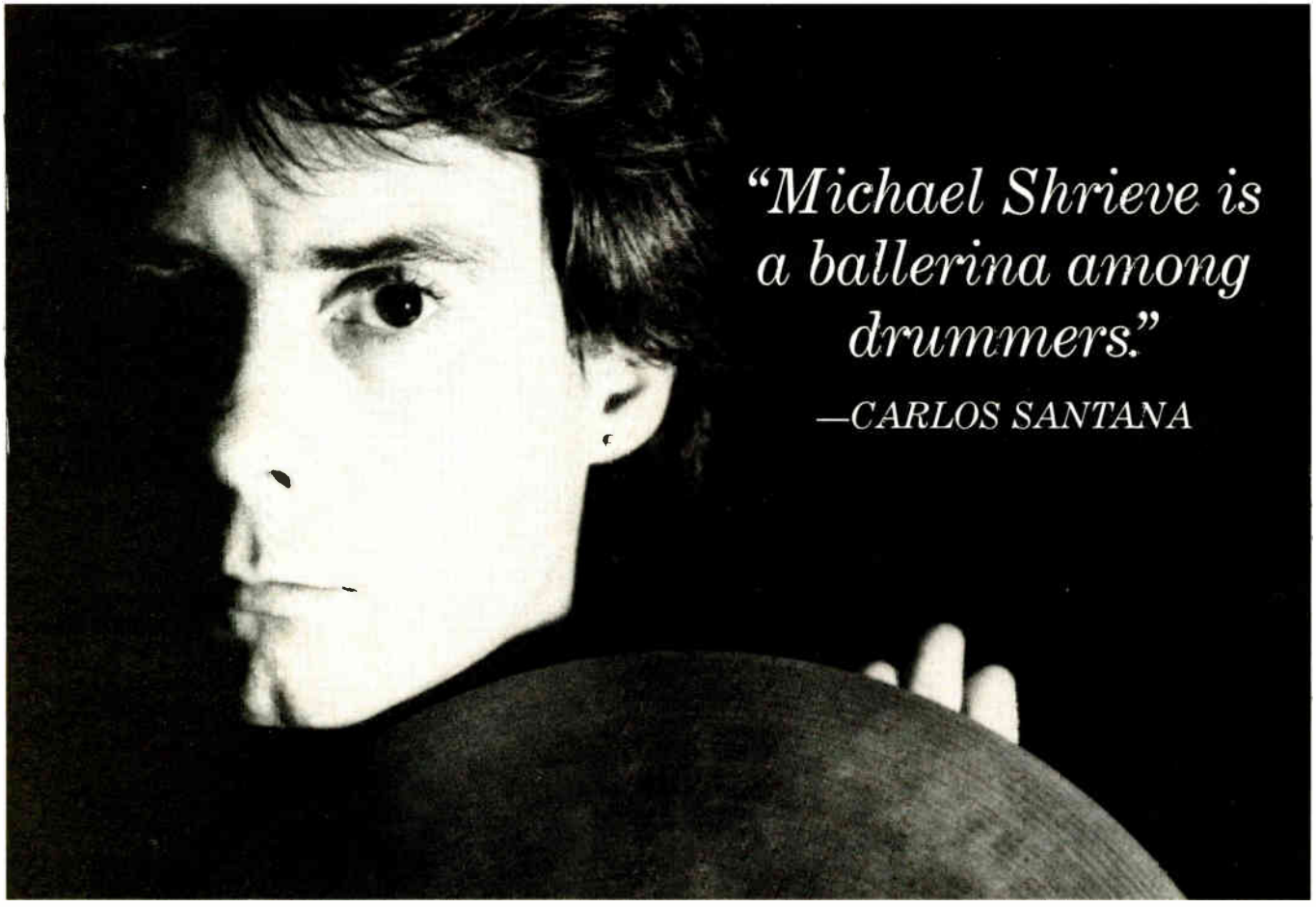
Ratatouille is a series of hi-hat, snare, and bass drum programs that integrates certain approaches to drumming as exemplified by three of Shrieve's favorite drummers—Tony Williams, Steve Gadd, and Dave Garibaldi. "I wanted to make a hip funk-jazz thing, and I ended up using about 30 different programs to get this one."

Riccochet is a thick, pulsating package of Burundi beats built up on Simmons drum overdubs. *Nightengale* employs bells, gongs, and cymbals for a zen-like melodic effect, and the title cut is an acoustic drum solo with Shrieve performing on a set of tuned orchestra tom-toms.

Oasis, which features Hellborg on bass and Shrieve playing a Yamaha DX-7 as well as the Linn, juxtaposes slow changes and a simple melody line on top of a fast rhythm. "I'm particularly fond of that sort of structure," says Shrieve. "Gil Evans did something like that on a piece called *Las Vegas Tango* from *The Individualism Of Gil Evans*, where Elvin Jones was playing a fast latin tempo and the changes went really slow on top."

The album begins and ends with a very short, very odd percussive piece that features Shrieve on an unusual instrument called the waterphone. Just as the name implies, it utilizes the sound of sloshing water to simulate the effect of an old washing machine. The instrument is made by a company in Sebastapol, California, and as Shrieve explains, "It's shaped like a flower vase and is made out of metal. Rising from the bottom along the sides are straight, narrow pieces of brass ranging from short to full length in a circular motion. The instrument is intended to be played with a violin or cello bow, and when water is poured inside it, it produces an eerie, spatial sound with all kinds of harmonics that ring out. So on this cut I just filled it up with water and played it like a shekere, then I overdubbed some LinnDrum parts and a real tom-tom part and just got a very African-sounding rhythm going."

Orangutan is another African-influenced piece played on balafons. "Somebody living next door to Jonas Hellborg happened to have this African marimba in their apartment, so I asked if I could take it to the studio one day. I had never played one before, but I wanted to have some wood on the album to balance out all the electronics and metal sounds already going on. So I began playing it and took to it instantly. I laid down a basic track, then a counter rhythm, then added a melody on top of that for a nice three-part improvisational piece that is far and away the most organic-sounding on the album."



Swamp is a techno-dirge somewhat reminiscent of Material, while *Interlock* is a Linn/Simmons approximation of a latin percussion ensemble that is not far removed from Shrieve's jams with old Santana cohorts Mingo Lewis and Chepito Areas. Shrieve overdubbed timbales fills on this one for an effective blend of acoustic and electric. "I wanted this cut to sound contemporary and on the cutting edge, yet I also wanted to retain the purity of the organic-sounding instruments," he explains.

In this respect, Shrieve's approach is similar to the production methods of Material's Bill Laswell, who strives to inject street-life energy into his projects (Herbie Hancock, Laurie Anderson, Mick Jagger) while retaining the integrity and purity of the ethnic instruments he mixes in. "Laswell is someone I admire," says Shrieve. "His method of combining ethnic stuff with the contemporary stuff is wonderful. He's able to work with an international group of musicians by networking in, bringing certain people together with other people who might otherwise never meet. That kind of work I find very exciting."

Shrieve adds that he's already approached Laswell about the possibility of them working together on remixing a solo album that he did for CBS just after leaving Santana. That project, which highlighted the synthesizer work of Patrick Gleeson, was shelved by CBS and remains in limbo to this day. "They turned it down in 1975 saying it was too ethnic and too electronic, which is ironic because that's what is really happening now. It could use some updating, which is where I think Bill could add a lot, but I think it would work perfectly today."

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Shrieve is busy working on a soundtrack for a documentary film by Dan Weaks called *One Day On Earth*. One other project that has recently been released is another album as a leader that features his guitarist brother Kevin and keyboard collaborator Schulze. This one, *Transfer Station Blue* (available in the states through Fortuna Records, POB 1116 Novato, CA 94947) is an extension of the work he's done in the past with Schulze. The album has reportedly been scoring well with the Vangelis/Philip Glass crowd and has been selling extraordinarily well in some of the finer book stores in major cities, like Rook's & Becords in San Francisco and Rizzoli's in New York, where ethereal electronic music albums are readily available.

"The album was actually recorded several years ago just after I had met Klaus through my involvement with the Go project with Stomu Yamashta [a landmark pop-jazz-rock fusion ensemble led by the Japanese keyboardist and featuring such luminaries as guitarist Al Di Meola, bassist Paul Jackson, and organist/vocalist Steve Windwood]. I had been interested in electronic music before I met Klaus, having listened to John Cage and Stockhausen and other things, but Klaus' music seemed to appeal to another sensibility in me than other electronic music did. It was soothing and calming to me. So after Go, I began a relationship with him where I'd fly over to Germany once a year and do something with him." Their collaboration has so far yielded four such albums.

"One of the initial reasons why I wanted to do my own album with Klaus," he explains, "was that I loved his music but didn't really like the drum sounds on his albums. I wanted to hear him with a tighter rhythm section, which I thought I could provide."

Forgoing the usual maze of major labels, Shrieve began pitching the tapes from those sessions to smaller labels but even met with resistance going that route. "Finally Ethan Edgecomb from Fortuna in San Francisco called to tell me how much he loved the music. He had heard it at a bookstore and decided that he wanted to put it out. Since then the record has sold out in many of the bookstores where it's being distributed. It even sells well in Japanese restaurants. People hear this music while they're eating their sushi, and they ask what it is. I've made sure that some of these restaurants have copies of the album on hand just for such a case," he says, adding, "It's really fascinating going from major record labels with their usual chain of command and bureaucracy to something more intimate where the artist can maintain personal contact over his product. I enjoy that."

Another project that demanded Shrieve's full-time attention a few years back was his pop group Novo Combo, which broke out of New York in 1979 then folded after two moderately successful albums. "We were popular around New York and Boston and a couple of other places, but the band never really broke nationally," he explains. "That band represented, to me, my entrance back into the mainstream of pop music after being out of it for a while. Recording albums in studios is one thing, but sometimes I feel the need to be out playing in front of people. So we put the group together and started playing just the small club circuit around New York. We were a really good live band—very fresh with lots of energy each night. Unlike my previous attempt at putting a rock band together, with Automatic Man back in '76, this band was not over-rehearsed. We just went out there and played, making mistakes and growing right in front of the people."

Those who think that Shrieve's career in music begins and ends with Santana better guess again. There's been much before and even more since. In fact, Michael says he had no intention of ever becoming a rock drummer at all.

"I really came from jazz and r&b music," he explains. "I grew up listening to a lot of James Brown and worked in a bunch of r&b bands around the Bay Area before I ever met up with Santana. I was very much into jazz then, and still am. When I was 15, I used to hang out the Both/And Club in San Francisco. I couldn't get in, but I'd stand outside the window and watch. I used to sneak in there to see John Coltrane. Once in a while I'd end up hiding in the bathroom where all the musicians changed. That's how I first met Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison when I was just a kid."

He continues, "I was even into Gene Krupa stuff when I was very young. Later I played in the San Mateo Junior College big band. I used to dream of becoming a big band drummer. Then I got into organ groups like Jimmy Smith's and Groove Holmes' and Jimmy McGriff's. I also dug Gene Ammons a lot. Man, I wanted to be a jazz drummer."

But along with that, Shrieve was also digging the new sounds of the burgeoning Bay Area psychedelic rock scene. He followed what bands like the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane were doing and, in fact, was invited to join the Jefferson Airplane when he was just 16 years old. But it was a jam session at the Fillmore with Stephen Stills, Al Kooper, and Mike Bloomfield that led to his fateful meeting with Santana.

"Some of the guys from the band were there that night, and they heard me. A couple of them came up to me later and told me that their drummer was leaving and that they were interested in me. A few weeks later I was in the studio with a jazz-rock band of my own, cutting a demo of electric arrangements of Ray Charles and Charles Lloyd tunes, and as I was walking in, I met those same guys from Santana. They said their drummer had split, so they invited me to play with them. I ended up staying all night and recording with them, then I joined up."

That initial meeting with Santana was Shrieve's introduction to latin music. Between leader Carlos Santana, rocker Greg Rollie, and drummer Shrieve, the band was a cultural melting pot that produced a free-flowing exchange of ideas and information. As Shrieve recalls, "They turned me on to latin music, and I turned them on to jazz. I turned Carlos on to Miles Davis and John Coltrane and all that. And he in turn turned me onto Gabor Szabo and Chico Hamilton, who later became a very big influence on me in terms of cymbal work. It was an interesting mix, and it just whetted my appetite for more. Later I became extremely interested in Brazilian music, and I've been expanding my tastes and horizons ever since."

By remaining open to music of other cultures, Shrieve has been able to tap into the colors and harmonies of Oriental music through his association with Stomu Yamashta, the intricacies of Germanic classical music through his many collaborations with Klaus Schulze, the power and glory of heavy metal through his brief stints with guitar slingers Schon and Hagar, and the sheer exhilaration of spontaneous improvisation through his ongoing involvement with the likes of Jonas Hellborg and Michael Smith. He's enjoying it all and is still hungry to explore even more.

"I'm always interested in trying different things," he says, "and recently I've had a desire to step out from behind the drums and just relate to people as the person I am. So I'm now planning a series of college lecture tours, which is something I've never done before. My idea is to do a workshop with the LinnDrum and the Simmons drums, and answer the questions of both musicians and non-musicians alike. It's an opportunity for them to get some insights from someone who's been in the business for 20 years. And for me it represents yet another of the personal challenges I keep setting up for myself, just trying to see what I can do." **db**

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

MICHAEL SHRIEVE'S EQUIPMENT

Michael Shrieve's equipment is basically Tama/Paiste. His Superstar custom white-gloss outfit includes 8×10, 8×12, and 9×13 rack toms, 16×16 and 16×18 floor toms, and a 14×24 bass drum; the snare is a Ludwig 400, 5½×14. Hardware is all Titan except for a Yamaha FP 910 bass drum pedal with a Duplex wood beater. His Paiste cymbal array includes 15-inch Rude hi-hats, 16- and 18-inch Rude crashes (mounted left), a 22-inch 2001 ride (mounted right) alongside a 17-inch Rude crash. Extras mixed in include a Latin Percussion 14-inch Tito Puente model brass timbale, an LP cowbell, and Simmons SDS-5 drum pads. The Simmons head and his LinnDrum reside behind his throne. Other gear includes a MXR 1500 digital delay model 190 and LP's Claw microphone mounting system. Stickly speaking, it's Regal Tip 5A's; heads, all Remo—coated Ambassadors on snare (and sometimes tom bottoms); clear Ambassadors on tom batters, CS's on the tom bottoms; a CS on the bass drum batter, with a clear Ambassador up-front. And he's a fan of the Pro Caddy Drum Rug from Mechanical Musical Instruments. Other than that, when Michael records at home, he uses a TEAC 80-8 eight-track recorder with a TASCAM M-50 mixing board. He has JBL 4311 control monitors, a Yamaha R-1000 digital reverb, and the MXR 1500. His keyboard is a Yamaha DX-7; the LinnDrum is the 3.1 software model.

MICHAEL SHRIEVE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

TRANSFER STATION BLUE—Fortuna 023
IN SUSPECT TERRAIN—Day Eight Music 005

with Santana

SANTANA—Columbia 9781
ABRAXAS—Columbia 30130
WOODSTOCK—Cotillion SD3-500
SANTANA III—Columbia 30595
CARAVANSERAI—Columbia 31610
WELCOME—Columbia 32445
GREATEST HITS—Columbia 33050
LOTUS—CBS/Sony 81047/48/49
BARBOLETTA—Columbia 33135

with the Rolling Stones

EMOTIONAL RESCUE—Rolling Stones 16015
TATTOO YOU—Rolling Stones 16052

with Michael Smith/Jonas Hellborg

ALL OUR STEPS—Day Eight Music 002

with Hagar/Schon/Aaronson/Shrieve

THROUGH THE FIRE—Geffen 4023

with Stomu Yamashta

GO—Island 9387
GO LIVE IN PARIS—Island 2-10
GO TOO—Arista 4138
THE TEMPEST SOUNDTRACK—Casablanca 7269

with Klaus Schulze

RICHARD WAHNFRIED—Innovative Communications 80006
TRANSFER—Innovative Communications 80014
TIME ACTOR—Innovative Communications 80031
AUDENTITY—Innovative Communications 80025-26

with Novo Combo

NOVO COMBO—Polygram 1-6331
THE ANIMATED GENERATION—Polygram 1-6356

with Automatic Man

AUTOMATIC MAN—Island 9397

with Roger Hodgson

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM—A&M 5004

ERNIE WATTS

Watts Happening

By Zan Stewart

"I'm more comfortable being a sideman than a leader," says the multi-talented multi-reed artist Ernie Watts. "I'm not Mr. Entertainment or Mr. Energy, so for my personality, for my emotional makeup, the supporting role of studio work is the best."

Lucky thing, too, because Ernie Watts is one of Southern California's first-call reed players, a man who is in continual demand to provide everything from background parts to solos for movie and tv soundtracks, record dates, commercials and the like. Since arriving in Los Angeles in 1968, Watts has performed thousands of times on everything from tenor saxophone to bass flute to saxophone synthesizer, and with such notables as Cannonball Adderley, the Rolling Stones, Quincy Jones, Oliver Nelson, J. J. Johnson, Lee Ritenour, Lalo Schifrin, and Barbra Streisand. His film credits include *Tootsie* and *Grease*, and among his tv stints are *Fame*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Cagney And Lacey*, and his slot as a regular member of Doc Severinsen's orchestra on *The Tonight Show*.

ANN SUMMA

And while the 39-year-old Watts, who won a Grammy for Best Instrumental Performance in 1982 for his *Chariots Of Fire* LP, wanted to be a jazz artist first and foremost, and certainly didn't envision a career as a studio musician when he was learning to play, he's more than happy with his fortuitous turn of fate.

Relaxing over a Hansen's soda in his modest home in the rural L.A. suburb of Tujunga, Watts admits matter-of-factly, "I like doing the studio work. I don't feel I'm a jazz artist who's selling out by doing what I do, though I still love to play jazz. Make no mistake about that. I just happen to like variety, and in the studios I've met and played with just about everybody, from Cannonball to Monk to Oliver Nelson to Clark Terry to Frank Zappa to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. I've had an incredible wealth of musical experiences, and I feel very lucky to have played with so many greats."

Watts' musical roots were planted on the East Coast. Born October 23, 1945, the soft-spoken saxman moved from his native Norfolk, VA to Detroit, where his father was a Chrysler Corporation employee. When Chrysler opened a plant in Wilmington, DE, the Watts family settled there, and at 13, young Ernie had his first musical instrument.

"It all happened as sort of a fluke," he recollects with a sheepish grin. "I was with a friend in this music education class, and there were instruments available. I wanted to play trombone, but they were all gone. There was a tenor and a baritone, however, and because I was bigger than my friend, I got the bari. About a year later the school obtained an alto, and I switched to the smaller horn."

Watts liked to practice, and found it a good release. "I was kind of a loner, not exceptionally gregarious," he states, "so I spent a lot of time practicing and enjoying it. My folks didn't have to push me at it." This natural inclination towards discipline was rewarded when the youthful reed player won a scholarship to the Wilmington Music School and also placed first in several solo contests on clarinet, playing the French classical repertoire.

Serendipity was responsible for Watts' introduction to jazz. He lived in a row house in Wilmington, where the walls of one home were adjacent to those of the next. One of the neighbors was a jazz fan. "He'd play Cannonball, Jackie McLean, Coltrane, Miles, people like that," Watts remembers fondly, "so I used to hear all that stuff through the wall. Later, when I got to know this fellow, I'd go over and listen with him. Then he started loaning me records, and I began improvising along with them." Blowing with records was the ideal vehicle for Watts' jazz evolution: there was little, if any, instrumental music of quality on the AM airwaves of the early '50s ("Just things like the odd Earl Bostic side") so records provided a marvelous method of schooling for the budding talent.

Of all the people Watts heard on record, John Coltrane had the most profound effect, and Trane's playing helped

steer the neophyte toward a career as an improviser. "I heard a lot of the great people play on record, but when I heard Coltrane on Miles' *Kind Of Blue*, it was totally different. I said to myself, 'Wow, I want to do that.' So I started buying Coltrane records."

The most influential saxophonist of the '60s became, and remains, Watt's primary model and source of inspiration. "In my mind," Watts states, opening his hands wide and gesturing to emphasize his words, "Coltrane was probably the best saxophonist who ever lived, including Mule and the other great classicists. He was a remarkable player physically, not to mention his harmonic innovations, such as playing Major over minor, or juxtaposing different scales and harmonies over standard chords. The way he heard the chords and the notes in the chords, it was amazing. And he mastered playing upper partial triads, the extensions that are the upper part of the harmonic overtone series. He was said to have practiced constantly, which is about the only way you could obtain those phenomenal results."

It also through study of Coltrane's music that Ernie arrived at what he considers the pinnacle of musical expression: an individual style. As much as he was enamored with the majesty of Trane, Watts didn't want to copy him. "My first serious goal was to be a great saxophonist, but I didn't want to be the next Trane. I wanted to be an individual. I did want what I did to be different, to be unique. I wanted my own concept, my own voice. I didn't want to take other people's licks and put them together my way, which is what a lot of players do.

"The essence of being a jazz musician is being creative, and I see creativity as something that hasn't been done before. I'm happy to say that in the last three or four years, I feel I have come into my own. I have my own sound and my own style, but they've taken a long time to develop. And to be sure, the results I'm getting now are certainly aided by having the right instrument and the right mouthpiece/reed setup.

"I don't play like others for one reason—because I'm not a competitive person. That sort of puts me out of the saxophonistic race, you know, out of trying to play better or faster or play more licks, that kind of thing. I don't have that 'I'll get you, Buddy,' that old cutting session attitude."

* * *

This non-competitive stance has evolved, the congenial Watts asserts, because he's had the opportunity of playing with so many of the greats. This good fortune started early. For instance, while in high school, the reedman sat in for a few tunes with Count Basie's band. "I was at a concert, and during the break I talked to Frank Wess about reeds and mouthpieces. Then it turned out that Marshall Royal got sick, and I asked Frank if I could play a few tunes. He said, 'Sure,' so there I was, sitting in the sax section with Frank Wess and Frank Foster and Charlie Fowlkes, Thad Jones was in the trumpets. It was quite an experience for a kid."

A **down beat** scholarship landed Watts at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and after a year-and-a-half's study under people like Herb Pomeroy and Ray Santisi, the golden-toned tenorman left in 1966 for a tour with Buddy Rich's band, a stint that ended because of a disagreement over how fast a ballad should be played. "I love Buddy," Watts wastes no time in saying, "but he really is

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ANN SUMMA

ERNIE WATTS' EQUIPMENT

Ernie Watts' equipment list is mostly a Selmer story; he plays Selmer sopranino, alto, tenor, and baritone saxes, and a Selmer clarinet and bass clarinet. "Selmers are really the overall best to play," he says. "The pitch is the best, they're made the best; they're quality instruments."

His other axes include a Buescher bass saxophone, a Yamaha soprano sax, a Yamaha piccolo, an open-hole Powell C flute with a low B footjoint ("I like the open-hole because I can put more air through the instrument, and it plays better in tune"), a Loree oboe and english horn, plus bass flute, alto flute, and recorders of unknown brand, and, of course, the saxophone synthesizer custom-built by Bill Perkins.

For alto, a Lawton nine-star mouthpiece holds a medium-hard La Voz reed; on tenor, it's a very wide custom-made Otto Link, about a No. 13, with a Brilhart Fibercane soft reed. His soprano sports a Runyon No. 9 mouthpiece with a Rico 3½ reed.

ERNIE WATTS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

CHARIOTS OF FIRE—Qwest 3637
LOOK IN YOUR HEART—Elektra 6-E 285
PLANET LOVE—Pacific Jazz 20155
THE WONDER BAG—Vault 9011

with Richard "Groove" Holmes

COME TOGETHER—Pacific Jazz 20171

with Karma

CELEBRATION—A&M 713
FOR EVERYBODY—A&M 723

with Randy Newman

TROUBLE IN PARADISE—Warner Bros. 23755-1

with Rufus and Chaka Khan

STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY—Warner Bros. 23679-1

with Ambrosia

180—Warner Bros. 3368

with Lee Ritenour

FRIENDSHIP—Elektra 17044E
LEE RITENOUR & FRIENDSHIP—JVC VIDC-3
RIT IN RIO—JVC 6312
FIRST COURSE—Epic 33947
GENTLE THOUGHTS—JVC VIDC-1
FEEL THE NIGHT—Elektra 6-E192
CAPTAIN FINGERS—Epic 34426
CAPTAIN'S JOURNEY—Elektra 6-E136
ON THE LINE—JVC VIDC-5
BANDED TOGETHER—Elektra 960358-4

with the Blackbyrds

CITY LIFE—Fantasy 9490
ACTION—Fantasy 9535
CORNBREAD, EARL AND ME—Fantasy 9483

with Donald Byrd

125TH STREET NEW YORK CITY—Elektra 6E247

with Cannonball Adderley

THE BLACK MESSIAH—Capitol 846

with Thelonious Monk

MONK'S BLUES—Columbia 9806

with Gerald Wilson

ETERNAL EQUINOX—Pacific Jazz 20160
JESSICA—Trend 531
LOMELIN—Discovery 833

with J. J. Johnson

CONCEPTS IN BLUE—Pablo Today 2312-123

with George Cables

CABLES VISION—Contemporary 14001

with Freddie Hubbard

BUNDLE OF JOY—Columbia 34902

with the Rolling Stones

STILL LIFE—Rolling Stones 39114

with Michel Colombier

OLD FOOL BACK ON EARTH—Columbia C2X-38211

with Quincy Jones

THE DUDE—A&M 3721

with Frank Zappa

GRAND WAZOO—Bizarre/Reprise 2093

with Sergio Mendes

CONFETTI—A&M SP1984

with the Yellowjackets

YELLOWJACKETS—Warner Bros. 3573

RECORD REVIEWS

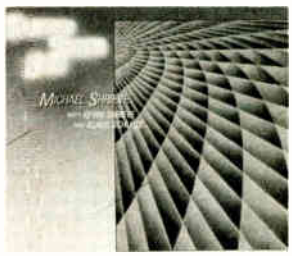
★★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★ GOOD ★★ FAIR ★ POOR

HERBIE HANCOCK

SOUND-SYSTEM—Columbia 39478: *HARDROCK; METAL BEAT; KARABALI; JUNKU; PEOPLE ARE CHANGING; SOUND-SYSTEM.*

Personnel: *Hancock, Fairlight CMI, Rhodes Chroma, Apple IIe, Yamaha DX-7, EMU 4060 digital keyboard, Memorymoog, clavinet, piano; Bill Laswell, bass, DMX (cuts 1, 2, 4, 6); D. ST., turntables (1, 2, 6); Nicky Skopelitis (1), Henry Kaiser (1, 2), guitar; Daniel Ponce, bata, shekere, bells (1, 3); Anton Fier, Simmons, Synare electronic drums, sound plates, cuica, TR-808, wood block, percussion (1, 2, 5, 6); Rob Stevens, XMD, Praxis processing (1, 4); Will Alexander, Fairlight CMI programming (1-3, 6); Wayne Shorter, Lyricon (2), soprano saxophone (3); Foday Musa Suso, doussn'gouni, balaphone (1), kora, kalimba (4, 6); Aiyb Dieng, talking drum, chantan, bells (4, 6); Bernard Fowler, vocals (2, 5); Toshinori Kondo, speaker (2), trumpet (6); Hamid Drake, cymbals (3, 6).*

★ ★ ★ ★



Herbie is back with the scratch & funk formula that helped him regain his street edge last year with *Future Shock*. But this is more than just *Rockit II*. He's thrown in a wide variety of ethnic colors and tonalities and tempered the funk with some subtlety and nuance to make for a more substantial musical statement.

It's as if Hancock and Material ringleader Bill Laswell, who co-produced both last year's album and this one, were looking for the perfect blend of hooks to achieve maximum crossover potential. There's something for everybody, at least on one cut, and all the parts fall neatly into place without calling undue attention.

Nicky Skopelitis' mind-boggling guitar solo on *Hardrock* (which basically inverts the simple melodic hook from *Rockit*) is bound to catch the Eddie Van Halen crowd off guard. Grand Mixer D. ST.'s turntable virtuosity on that same tune, the title cut, and *Metal Beat* will keep Herbie in good standing with break dancers, rappers, and other members of the hip-hop culture. Foday Musa Suso's wonderful kora and kalimba work on *Karabali* should appeal to fans of Third World/one world music. Aiyb Dieng's expressive talking drum on *Junku* goes after the growing hordes of King Sunny Ade followers. Bernard Fowler's wrenching vocals on the soulful *People Are Changing* may draw fans from the Peabo Bryson camp. Daniel Ponce's spicey bata workouts on *Hardrock* and *Karabali* could hit home with the salsa community. And Herbie's cascading keyboard playing on *Junku* and *Karabali* lends some jazz credibility to the overall proceedings.

Laswell and Hancock have cleverly mixed idioms, throwing ethnic acoustic instruments in with the Fairlights and Simmons. The resulting sound offers the same old bombastic thrills, but undercut with subtle fills. The colors and textures of Suso's doussn'gouni and balaphone on *Metal Beat* make an otherwise one-note throw-down seem somehow worthwhile. Dieng's talking drum has the same effect on the raucous title cut.

Though staunch jazz purists may not approach this album without proper innoculation, they might be pleasantly surprised by the *Maiden Voyage* changes on *Karabali*, a vehicle for brilliant acoustic piano soloing by Hancock, and Wayne Shorter's breathtaking soprano sax.

Aging r&b fans may be put off by all this cold-blooded technology, but they should be warmed by the soulful feelings of *People Are Changing*, a moving anthem that sounds as if it came right out of the Gamble & Huff stable (in fact, it's reminiscent of the Philly Sound hit *Backstabbers*).

This is an infinitely more memorable album than *Future Shock*. It should sell at least as well as that wildly successful LP—if Hancock and company come up with an equally inventive video for MTV. *—bill milkowski*

CATHERINE/ESCOUDE/ LOCKWOOD

TRIO—Gramavision 8403: *CHANGEMENT D'AVIS; BROKEN DOLL; BALLADE POUR ALISON; TANGANIKA; PAINT POT; EYES DON'T SMILE; COTE JARDIN; SEPTEMBER TRIP; LIKE AN ANGEL.*

Personnel: *Philip Catherine, Christian Escoude, acoustic guitars; Didier Lockwood, acoustic violins, violectra.*

★ ★ ★ ★

Philip Catherine, Christian Escoude, and Didier Lockwood are among the leading lights of Parisian jazz. Guitarists Catherine and Escoude are perhaps best known for their string encounters with Larry Coryell and John McLaughlin respectively; violinist Lockwood was granted blessing by divine countryman Stephane Grappelli some time ago.

Their trio record is an auspicious debut. Each of the three musicians evidences impressive technical skills, producing similar strains of musical legerdemain. The guitar work is mostly graceful and felicitious, seldom stilted or rococo. Clearly inspired by Django Reinhardt, Catherine and the gypsy Escoude seem pledged to eliciting smiles from listeners with sparkling runs. Lockwood, too, comports himself with convincing style, poised at some happy spot between jazz and classical.

All of the record's songs are pleasing—coherent songs, not merely frames on which improvisations sprawl. Lockwood's *Like An Angel* satisfies with its vaguely pious violin and recurring melodic cycle, even though the piece lacks the tension Mahavishnu John and Jerry Goodman would have made implicit. The zestful *Paint Pot*, also composed by Lockwood, is akin to wildly emptying cans of garish paints in an all-white room (see album jacket photograph). Escoude's *Eyes Don't Smile* and *Ballade Pour Alison* express a nervous contemplation, almost existing in the same emotional zone as Django's *Nuages*. Catherine's finger-popping *Changement D'Avis* goes well with cordials on the terrace, and his *Cote Jardin* encourages thoughts of tender moments.

There's little fire present in the grooves of the record, but the trio's subtle, unaffected swinging and deceptively quiet emotionalism make for rewarding listening. *—frank-john hadley*

AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS

THE CIRCLE OF TIME—Black Saint 0078: *LOUISVILLE; PLOWED FIELDS; DO YOU WANNA BE SAVED?; CHRISTINE; THE CLOCK; THE CIRCLE OF TIME.*

Personnel: *Myers, piano, vocal (cuts 2,3,6), organ (3), harmonica (2); Don Pate, bass; Thurman Barker, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ½

Here is the gifted Myers' fourth album, which includes two of the very best pieces she's done, and takes important steps in revealing her unique personality. She spent the early years of her career playing organ and piano,

singing, and arranging with gospel and blues artists, Gene Ammons, the AACM big band, and most remarkably, the all-stars that she and drummer Ajaramu led in Chicago when soul-funk-organ combos were the rage. Those were hot little bands, usually with sidemen like Kalaparush, Henry Threadgill, Anthony Braxton, and Art Ensemblers; in all these highly extroverted contexts she primarily left the impression of high versatility within many styles, from stride to free. She began choosing more intimate settings in the '70s, and it was then that the inherent problems and personal solutions in her art became apparent. So often, it used to seem that she was willing to be subsumed by the given styles themselves—yet at other times, as in early performances of pieces like *Plowed Fields*, originality overwhelmed versatility, and a distinctive, appealingly lyrical sensibility clearly emerged.

The tendency on this album is to one-chord modal music, and much of Myers' playing in *Do You Wanna*, *Christine*, and *The Circle* reflects back the fashions of the early '60s, albeit with differences. The long, gospelish *Christine* exists somewhere between Ramsey Lewis and McCoy Tyner, and comes the nearest of these works to a conventional, though good, performance. *Do You Wanna* is in her own gospel vein, with lyrics and a passage of organ color in the middle. *The Circle* is almost a gospel piece, too, but the theme is a pun, with a whimsically mocking vocal and lyrics in English and Italian. *The Clock* is not one-chord; after the intro, cymbals take the music into free territory and a dramatic bass solo that compresses considerable territory into a brief space. So does the piano solo, which begins in outside lines that sound natural as breathing and somehow slips into a perverted stride, then uptempo, long lines of spattered notes over a disturbance of percussion.

The best possible introduction to Amina Claudine Myers is *Plowed Fields*, here. The marvelous melody is sweet and freely moving, played/sung rubato over sensitively harmonious, colorist accompaniment. Her lyrics are fragrantly wistful, faintly surreal like the blues; altogether, the performance conveys the pastoral quality that is her most intimate characteristic. For in place of tension, she offers line and simple decoration; moreover, the evocative qualities of *Plowed Fields* are completely effortless and disarming. By way of contrast, hear her reverent solo setting of the same melody, retitled *Going Home*, in *Poems For Piano* (Sweet Earth 1005), her best record so far. At heart, Myers is an interpreter, an imaginative decorator, re-orchestrator, at her best with substantial material like this song.

Louisville is very different, an outstanding, hard-driving uptempo bop solo. Or is it so different? Whereas bop is ipso facto a dazzling idiom, the distinguishing feature of most of *Louisville* is the great naturalness of Myers' improvised lines, the wonderful joining and flow of phrases—and, too, there is her frequent theme recall, sometimes in reharmonized disguise, sometimes verbatim in bridge passages. In this, as in so much of her art in recent years, there is a sense of certainty that the performance must be this way and no other. It should be added that though the

leader is in the foreground almost throughout the album, the dependable Thurman Barker and Don Pate accompany with much empathy and ingenious skill. —*john litweiler*

ARCHIE SHEPP

THE GOOD LIFE—Varrick 005: *MOOSE THE MOOCHE; STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY; THE GOOD LIFE; JORDU; MAMA ROSE; UNE PETITE SURPRISE.* **Personnel:** *Shepp, tenor, soprano saxophone, vocal (cut 3); Kenny Werner, piano; Avery Sharp, bass; Marvin Smith, drums.*

★ ★ ½

The bittersweet ritual of the late-night "good life" that jazz people know too well is what Shepp is trying to evoke on this eclectic exploration, but the concept is stronger than the execution. Shepp does successfully unite tunes from several different eras with his historically savvy style—Swing, bebop, hard-bop, Coltrane/Elvin mainstream, and the late-night ballad itself—and imbeds some clever allusions along the way, as well. "The good life hides all the sadness you feel," sings Shepp, in an untrained but rich basso on the title ballad, wryly dedicated to Sonny Stitt, that much lamented apostle of the good life himself. The same double-edged irony is carried by Shepp's garbled quote of *Makin' Whoopee* on *Moose The Mooche*. But in the actual playing, the magic just isn't there.

For most of the album's six tunes, Sharp, Werner, and Smith—all better-than-solid rhythm players individually—sound like three guys running for the same train from different directions. Shepp is his usual out-of-tune (sharp), fumble-fingered, mannered, swashbuckling self, minus the dazzling inspiration that has overshadowed his technical liabilities elsewhere. Though it's often been said in his defense that Shepp's playing isn't about notes, but rather speech, on *Stompin' At The Savoy* he sounds more like a slurring, mumbling drunk than an articulator of black tradition. (Perhaps this is the point? Always hard to tell with Shepp, who has a poetic as well as a literal agenda. Even so, *Savoy* isn't funny enough to be a joke, nor clever enough to warrant a replay. Given that his soprano noodling on *Mama Rose*, particularly the pointless quote of *When The Saints. . .*, is also rather uninspired,

Breath Units

Saxophone ensembles (quartets, quintets, and the like) are a 20th century development, with roots in the unaccompanied wind ensembles going back at least as far as Handel. Reeds flocking together makes perfect sense. Blending ranges, from soprano to baritone, allows contrapuntal relationships in rainbow colors, and even provides correlatives to the missing rhythm section. Arrangers can point horns individually or severally, solo or in tandem, to alter an ensemble's density. A "breath unit" can exploit the full vocabulary of the saxophone—dynamic contrasts, split tones, and harmonics—exulting in the sonic properties of the instrument. But the presence of such exploration does not rule out sudden emergence of a Johnny Hodges vibrato, Ben Webster's commanding growl, or like echoes of horn sections past. Tradition remains fair game even for the most unconventional breath unit.

Anthony Braxton's *New York Fall '74* (Arista 4032) included a piece for four reeds, whose players (sans David Murray) now form the core of the World Saxophone Quartet. The redirected thrust of Braxton's composing (along with that of Roscoe Mitchell) has provided a contemporary momentum, and as a result the saxophone quartet is approaching the status of an established format, as ensembles proliferate internationally. They nevertheless practice related, if far-reaching, strategies, and technical mastery is second nature for each of the units under review.

The **Position Alpha Saxophone Quintet**, represented by *Don't Bring Your Dog!* (Dragon 50), calls Sweden home by way of the Dada Zone. Doubling on such devices as musictube, train whistle, fishaphone, and duck call (added to the full family of saxophones), the reedmen of Alpha are confirmed eclectics. Applying an aesthetic of dramatic contrast, they burlesque Monk's *Well, You Needn't* with a poem in Swedish and the ol' showbiz shuffle. They rag Mingus' *Jelly Roll* with exaggerated syncopations; zestfully cover an African pop song; play "oompah" (*Fisk 3*); and even trespass on the World Saxophone Quartet with a boppish lope, *Everybody's Got A Hungry Dog To Feed*. Mostly arranged by Mats Eklöf, their smorgasbord program is advanced by pungent horns in and out of tight ensembles. Disciplined unisons and counterlines bump against a let's-run-amuck attitude that suggests a scaled-down Willem Breuker Kollektief (from the not-too-distant Netherlands). I have one favorite arresting touch of color: a hit-and-run *harmonica* that creates wacky imbalance in the most unexpected places.

Blowing in from France is **Le Quatour de Saxophones**' *Mad-Sax 2* (CY 733 613). The uniqueness of this driving unit results from sparing use of electronics and percussive detail. Edge is all and texture foremost in the unit's jack-in-the-box compositions bristling with creative scoring: *Satellite*'s "violin"-pitched voicings; *Chaudimage*'s polite Monteverdian dance section; and *Ararc*'s hucklebucking '50s tenor that eventually sucks the other horns into a jukebox vortex. The group also favors more than the usual number of a cappella parts. On several pieces Roscoe Mitchell's influence is audible in the angularly staccato notated lines. But he is far from the only point of reference. The *Mad-Sax* bunch are omnivores who have seemingly taken in *everything*.

Also from France, ***Quatour Gabriel Pierné Avec Jean Claude Fohrenbach*** (Cara 008), live in a different world aesthetically from their countrymen, not to mention the Swedes—a world devoid of thumping expressionism and broad humor. The Piernés distribute ensemble weight equally, favoring a classical approach with roots in Glazunov and Villa-Lobos. Their *tres* urbane *Trois Conversations* is a musical *My Dinner With Andre* with close harmony impressionism a la Maurice Ravel, an unalloyed example of program music—pert, alert, and light as a souffle. But the Fohrenbach compositions of the second side are jazzier, riskier. On *French Brothers*, a playful reworking of the Woody Herman sound, a phlegmatic soprano saxophone "sneezes" into the intervals of the circuitous line before animated interplay among horns. The standout, Fohrenbach's *Arabesque Et Beret Basque*, features a rhapsodic, ever revolving head and laconically lyrical tenor part; the unfolding performance briefly flirts with tonal freedom, as close as this quartet comes to *Mad-Sax*.

On *Rova Plays Lacy* (Black Saint 0076) the West Coast-based **Rova Saxophone Quartet** performs seven of the sopranoist's compositions, mostly arranged by Larry Ochs. Of all the ensembles discussed, Rova has the most remarkable compatibility as co-improvisers ("co" stands for collective). Unlike the players of *Mad-Sax*, who solo (however wildly) within presumably controlled ("notated") situations, the Rovas have worked often without a net, and it shows. Lacy's repetitive rhyming structures—or are they the thinnest of nets?—facilitate loose yet connected interaction on the part of the quartet. The idiosyncratic rhythms, from which inevitable melodies unwind, reinforce a discipline that produces parcels of concision. Punning on *The Throes*, soloists take turns hurling themselves into the baritone's vari-tempo vamp to the chattering of fellow horns. The Rovas literally sputter, hover, and whir their way through *Beeline*, still true to the contours of Lacy's quirky head. *Rova Plays Lacy* is easily the most jesting, dynamic, and concise project that the group has waxed.

Rova's impact lies in its members' improvisational accord, but the **World Saxophone Quartet** draws power from the distinctive identities of its soloists. *Live In Zurich* (Black Saint 0077) shows to what degree this unit has formalized its approach over five albums. Unmistakably American in tone, the program encompasses three previously recorded songs (including two trademark shorts) and five new, characteristically marvelous, Julius Hemphill originals: each draws more or less upon bebop, blues, and other roots. For example, *My First Winter* places David Murray's tenor in an Ellingtonian ballad. But WSQ settings rarely are so clear-cut. More usual is the oblique *Stick*, cacaphony and all, swaggering and strutting like a distracted marching band with one eye on the evil crowd; or the sad, Tex-Mex *ranchera* feel of the *Bordertown* theme. Overall, though, newcomers are directed to *W.S.Q.* (Black Saint 0046), a more popping, emotion-packed summation of band strengths.

Breath units are not short on options these days. The reconstructed roots of WSQ; the channeled abandon of Rova; the Gallic good taste of the Piernés; the decorous delirium of *Mad-Sax*; or the pies tucked into saxophones humor of Alpha, only hint how the saxophone quartet might next evolve. Let it breathe!

—*peter kostakis*

I'd say that boredom, not the muse of poesy, was the unfortunate guest at this session.)

Kenny Werner's solos, on the other hand, run like cool, clear water, and his Swing and stride intro to *Savoy* is well wrought. Which brings up an odd contradiction: Why is Shepp the only player who gets to take things out? With the exception of *Jordu*, where a sense of equality and sputtering free improvisation begins to develop between Shepp and the always sensitive and creative Marvin Smith, the rhythm section is straight-arrow throughout. That imbalance, plus the saxophonist's lack of inspiration and an abominably warbly, "in yo' face" recording quality, conspire to make this a mediocre, academic footnote rather than the compelling poem it might have been.

—paul de barros

RUBÉN BLADES

BUSCANDO AMERICA—Elektra 9 60352-1: *DECISIONES; "GDBD"; DESAPARICIONES; TODOS VUELVEN; CAMINOS VERDES; EL PADRE ANTONIO Y EL MONAGUILLO ANDRES; BUSCANDO AMERICA.*

Personnel: *Blades, vocals, acoustic guitar, maracas, coros; Mike Vinas, electric, acoustic guitar, bass, coros; Oscar Hernandez, electric, acoustic pianos; Eddie Montalvo, tumbadoras, percussion, coros; Louis Rivera, bongos, percussion, coros; Ralph Irizarry, timbales, percussion; Ricardo Marrero, vibraphone, synthesizer, percussion, coros; Ray Adams, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

MAKING HISTORY—Mango 9770: *DI EAGLE AN' DI BEAR; WAT ABOUT DI WORKIN' CLAAS?; DI GREAT INSOHRECKSHAN; MAKING HISTORY; REGGAE FI RADNI; REGGAE FI DADA; NEW CRAAS MASSAHKAH.*

Personnel: *Johnson, vocals; Dennis Bovell, bass; Richard Stevens, drums; John Kpiaye, guitar; Paget King, keyboards; Nick Straker, synthesizer; Patrick Tenyue, trumpet; Henry Tenyue, trombone; Geoffrey Scantlebury, Tony Utah, Everald Forrest, percussion.*

★ ★ ★ ★

They're both songwriters, intent on exposing society's sores; they're both singers, though only Rubén Blades has a vocalist's voice—Linton Kwesi Johnson projects his poetry meaningfully, but with little tonal range. They both front musically accomplished bands and both seek crossover audiences. But neither LKJ, the Jamaican-born social critic whose political activity stretches from Great Britain to the Caribbean, nor Blades, the Panamanian-born heart-throb from New York whose career with Ray Baretto, the Fania All-Stars, and Willie Colon has been eclipsed by Harvard Law School, suggests the least compromise. Both quality-conscious folk artists, secure in their traditions and hip to the business, believe reaching new listeners means moving on.

So Blades' slices of straight life—from Nuevo

Yoriqua to Centrally Dictated America—are sung in Spanish; all but *Caminos Verdes* (*Green Highways*) are printed bilingually, and your high school cognates will suffice after a quick review. Anyway, his witty delivery carries the significance of details caricaturing ex-virgins, plainclothes "security" men, their victims, and exiles everywhere, while his band Seis del Solar provides the sound and beat. As Blades shifts perspective on his people, so the band adjusts its background, from the doo-wop introducing street-wise *Decisions* to ritual hand drums under the deadpan "*GBDB*", an enforcer's stream-of-consciousness morning before work. There's Brazilian pop sophistication (*Caminos*), Palmieri/Tjader-influenced salsa (*Everyone Returns*), church organ over a reggae beat (*Disappearances*), upbeat though reflective latin-pop (the title track, with a thematic nod to Paul Simon), and *El Padre*, a sad but unsentimental narrative song. Throughout, the tunes are melodious and the rhythms entirely danceable. Blades establishes rapport through the speakers as though he was on-stage at the Village Gate and you were amid the enthusiastic mob.

Johnson also speaks directly to the listener, with a rhythmic patois that's steeped in sarcasm and irony. "Di eagle an di bear have people livin' in fear of impendin' nuclear warfare/But as a matter o' fact, believe it or not, di people don't care if it's imminent or not," he scoffs, while synths sweep and growl, and the rhythm section taps forward under a warning horn riff. *Wat About Di Workin' Claas?* is recited over a slick, swinging arrangement; throughout side one the Dub Band adds welcome depth to the compositions framing LKJ's messages. Side two, with bitter raps about the deaths of Guyanese politico Walter Rodney, the poet's father, and 13 blacks at the Sweet 16 party of a South London girl, is less playful but equally affecting. I return to side one for its stop times, its guitar and keyboard solos, the menacing decorative touches, and Johnson's deep, but not didactic, analysis. He's a great example of an agit-prop artist who actually rallies adherents with a joyful noise, and his optimism, which doesn't blink from cold reality, can make music lovers feel good about making history.

—howard mandel

MICHAEL SHRIEVE

TRANSFER STATION BLUE—Fortuna 023: *Communiqué; "Approach Spiral"; Nucleotide; Transfer Station Blue; View From The Window.* **Personnel:** *Shrieve, drums, timbales, Simmons electronic drums; Klaus Schulze, Yamaha CS-80, Fairlight CMI, GDS synthesizer, PPG Wave 2.3; Kevin Shrieve, guitars, electric piano; Will Lee, bass; Sammy Figueroa, congas; Hiram Bullock, guitar.*

★ ★

There's a small handful of drummers in rock & roll who have elevated themselves beyond metronomic timekeeping and four-on-the-floor pounding. Mike Shrieve is one, a drummer who probably looked more towards Art Blakey and Max Roach for early influences than Ringo Starr. He powered early Santana albums, including the drum showcase *Soul Sacrifice*, and then went on to a variety of projects. In the '80s he's split time with the anonymous corporate rock of Novo Combo and the electronic excursions of German synthesizer player Klaus Schulze. This recording comes from the latter collaboration.

Transfer Station Blue is a calculated mutation on Shrieve's part that has ugly implications with its post-production doctoring. The bulk of this recording is clearly generated by Schulze and sounds like it could be out-takes from the synthesist's *Trancefer* or *Audentity* sessions on which Shrieve played. Apparently Shrieve took the tapes and reprocessed them in a very hackneyed manner.

The opening track is pleasant enough: *Communiqué* is typical Schulze construction with a drum machine rhythm driving relentlessly while droning string textures careen and phase through in slow Doppler motions. Using Schulze's electronic canvas, Shrieve paints in punctuations, accents, and shades. His timbales and Simmons drums ping-pong through the stereo space.

Turn the record over and you have *Communiqué* once again, albeit re-mixed, as *Transfer Station Blue*. But now Shrieve has included funk interludes, with New York session players Bullock, Figueroa, and Lee. It's like taking a Coltrane Quartet track and interpolating bridges by Spyro Gyra. Kevin Shrieve is especially lost on both pieces, as if he walked in on a jam and didn't know any of the tunes.

Shrieve and Schulze have proven to be a strong team on previous outings, with Shrieve giving dynamics and spontaneity to Schulze's meticulously orchestrated sonic roller-coasters. But after listening to *Transfer Station Blue*, I wonder if Shrieve isn't just an opportunistic follower rather than the dedicated explorer. It's sad that Schulze's first domestic release in seven years is mutilated with a dull butcher blade. At least it's not under his own name.

—john diliberto

ROLAND HANNA

THE NEW YORK JAZZ QUARTET IN CHICAGO—Bee Hive 7013: *Four The Hard Way; Wisteria; Raise A Ruckus; H & T Blues; Ain't Nothin' New; You Don't Know What Love Is.* **Personnel:** *Hanna, piano; Frank Wess, tenor saxohone, flute; George Mraz, bass; Ben Riley, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

THIS MUST BE LOVE—Audiophile 157: *Orange Funk; This Can't Be Love; It's A Small World; The Interloper; It Never Entered My Mind; Thou Swell; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; Dancing On The Ceiling; My Romance.* **Personnel:** *Hanna, piano; Mraz, bass; Riley, drums.*

★ ★ ★

Although ostensibly the leader on both of these albums, Roland Hanna seems to be more of a group player than a self-delegated frontman; and this is by no means intended as a put-down. On the contrary, it is indeed a pleasure to hear from a pianist who is truly a whole musician, one who thinks and responds in manners that are beneficial to the unit at hand,

and not just to himself.

The quartet album is the better of the two, and not only because of the vital ingredient added by the presence of reedman Frank Wess. It is better quite simply because of the difference in production concepts. When Hanna originally recorded the trio set in 1978 for a Japanese label, the idea advanced was that he should do an all-Richard Rodgers program; however, the pianist wisely urged that he should also be allowed to include a few of his own compositions, i.e., *Orange Funk*, *It's A Small World*, and *The Interloper*. In all honesty, though, it doesn't really make all that much difference, for what we have here is just a mildly swinging, albeit highly professional, runthrough of both familiar and familiar-sounding material—quite acceptable for hip jazz piano lounges, but not necessarily durable for repeated turns of your very own table.

Of another cloth entirely is the 1981 offering by the full quartet, an organization that, in its unity of purpose and fulfillment thereof, comes close to justifying its rather exclusive title. Significantly, of the six selections performed, five are clearly jazz-oriented originals and the last, *You Don't Know . . .*, is a superior blues-tinged ballad from the early '40s. And not only do Hanna and the rhythm team respond more favorably to this fresher material, but the addition of Wess' vibrant sound and swing spurs them on even further. —*jack sohmer*

HAL RUSSELL/ MARS WILLIAMS

EFTSOONS—Nessa 24: *Carnal Concupiscence; Is This Virginia?; A Sync/Sync Stat Nux Pro Lixthux; Odoriferous Flambeaus Of The Paranymphs; N, SSS, EEE (Return); Eftsoons; Noise Command: Blast 1.*

Personnel: *Russell, C melody saxophone, cornet, drums, vibraharp, toy horns; Williams, tenor saxophone, slide whistles, bells, newspapers.*

★ ★ ★

RICH CORPOLONGO/ JOE DALEY

SONIC BLAST—Coda 2001: *Verbal Hash; Cantus Firmus; Cyclic Lament; Opposing Forces; Roller Coaster; Pipe Organ Odyssey; Hooray! School's Out!.*

Personnel: *Corpolongo, alto saxophone; Daley, tenor saxophone.*

★ ★ ★

These Chicago-bred saxophone duos operate within the context of total improvisation with widely disparate results. Hal Russell and Mars Williams are uncompromising exponents of post-Ayler free music; in his liner notes, John Zorn refers to Williams as "a cult figure." The extensive mainstream credentials of Rich Corpolongo and Joe Daley are evident despite their experiments with electronics and open-ended forms. Still, the programs have the same general strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths center about the saxophonists' fluency within their respective stylistic orientations. Russell and Williams incorporate reed manipulations and overblowing techniques with the raw, gutty intensity associated with Zorn. Corpolongo and Daley's labyrinthine sense of counterpoint and refined filigrees have antecedents in Warne Marsh and Lee Konitz' dialogs. Most importantly, the saxophonists consistently prod their own abilities and those of their respective partner, as evidenced by the unrelenting drive of Russell and Williams, and the frequent, sudden changes in direction taken by Corpolongo and Daley.

Both programs suffer from pedestrian, even gratuitous, use of auxilary sound sources. The Maestro Woodwind Sound System and Corpolongo's Echo-Plex undermines the sophistication of the altoist's interaction with Daley; except for the self-descriptive *Pipe Organ Odyssey*, it is implemented as little more than a reverb unit. Likewise, Russell and Williams' use of toy horn, newspaper, and "lots of other stuff" is distracting in apposition to ideas that could hold water as solo statements; throughout the album, their playing begs for a more evocative

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syntax than these sources can deliver.

Given the obvious intention to document an encounter in unflinching terms, Russell and Williams' program succeeds where Corpolongo and Daley's does not. The latter duo, however, has more potential for future growth, once they have either dispensed with the machinery or mastered it. Russell and Williams have said their piece; Corpolongo and Daley have yet to hit their stride. —*bill shoemaker*

QUINCY JONES

THE BIRTH OF A BAND—EmArcy 818 177-1: *Tuxedo Junction; The Midnight Sun Will Never Set; A Change Of Pace; Moanin'; Happy Faces; Along Came Betty; I Remember Clifford; Whisper Not; The Gypsy; Tickle Toe; The Birth Of A Band; Lester Leaps In; Ghana; Caravan; Everybody's Blues; Cherokee; Air Mail Special; They Say It's Wonderful; Chant Of The Weed; I Never Has Seen Snow; Eesom.*

Personnel: *Jones, leader, arranger (cuts 1-6, 8, 11); Nat Pierce (7), Melba Liston (9), Al Cohn (10, 17, 18), Ernie Wilkins (12, 13, 15, 16), Bill Potts (14, 20, 21), Ralph Burns (19), arranger; collective instrumentalists including Harry "Sweets" Edison, Ernie Royal, Joe Wilder, Clark Terry, Joe Newman, Jimmy Maxwell, Art Farmer, Lee Morgan, Nick Travis, Lennie Johnson, trumpet; Billy Byers, Jimmy Cleveland, Urbie Green, Tom Mitchell, Quentin Jackson, Melba Liston, Frank Rehak, trombone; Phil Woods, Jerome Richardson, Budd Johnson, Sam "The Man" Taylor, Danny Bank, Sahib Shihab, Frank Wess, Benny Golson, Zoot Sims, Porter Kilbert, reeds; Julius Watkins, french horn; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Les Spann, guitar, flute; Moe Weschler, Patti Brown, piano; Milt Hinton, Buddy Catlett, bass; Osie Johnson, Sam Woodyard, Charli Persip, Don Lamond, drums; Jimmy Crawford, percussion.*

★ ★ ★ ½

The producer of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* was once the subject of an article entitled "How To Lose A Big Band Without Really Trying" (**db**, April 26, 1962). That's probably the last time Quincy Jones had to talk about losses. In 1959, when he signed with Mercury Records and led the sessions documented by this two-record set (all reissued material except *The Midnight Sun Will Never Set*), his ill-fated experiences with the Harold Arlen blues opera *Free And Easy* (Jones took an all-star big band to Europe, the show folded, and he lost a lot of money trying to keep the band working) and his golden touch with the Grammy awards folks and the public were still in the future.

The band, however, warmly recalled the past while being solidly in step with the times. Jones' arrangements and those of his contemporaries relied on tried-and-true Swing Era techniques—an autonomous rhythm section (frequently including rhythm guitar), reeds-vs.-brass interplay, explosive tutti passages, and a cohesive, rolling rhythmic momentum. It wasn't an innovative band, but it boasted good soloists, a clean, uncluttered sound, and a certain sparkle in Jones' voicings. Watkins' french horn in the ensemble added a nice lushness. Flute and piccolo on top and muted brass produced distinct colors—nothing harsh, everything cozy.

These performances stand up well after 25 years, especially *Moanin'*, with its call-and-response motif and happy Terry flugelhorn solo, and the title cut, a flagwaver featuring Sims and Richardson trading tenor licks. Among the non-Jones charts, Potts' version of *Caravan*, with an exotic flute intro and a fine Cleveland solo, and Wilkins' smooth version of *Cherokee* are typical of how the arrangers and band freshened oft-heard tunes. The lead trumpet work is sterling throughout.

At the time of these sessions, Jones had already composed and arranged an album for the Basie band (*One More Time* on Roulette). It was a natural association, given the Basieish tenor of these performances and the future collaboration of Jones and Basie. It is a measure of Jones' talent that he can collaborate with a Basie, a Lena Horne (in her one-woman show), and a Michael Jackson and touch so many pulses. He was in touch with the jazz mainstream in 1959. That was a good place to be, evidently. —*owen cordle*

STRING TRIO OF NEW YORK

REBIRTH OF A FEELING—Black Saint 0068: *Open Up; Karottenkopf; Ephemera Trilogy; Penguins An' Other Strange Birds; Utility Grey.*

Personnel: *Billy Bang, violin; James Emery, guitar, soprano guitar; John Lindberg, bass.*

★ ★ ★ ★

QUARTET MUSIC

OCEAN PARK—Nine Winds 0113: *Lorena; Improvisation; Blood Of The Rose; New Life For Lease; Windword; A Piece Of A Thing.*

Personnel: *Jeff Gauthier, violin; Nels Cline, acoustic guitars, bass recorder, Kenyan guitar; Eric von Essen, bass; Alex Cline, percussion.*

★ ★ ★

Doubtless it is by now a very moldy chestnut: the cultural contrasts represented by East Coast and West. And I hesitate in particular to resurrect something like the New York versus Los Angeles post-bop/Cool School dichotomy. But this pair of records tempts me beyond all resistance.

It is true that there are striking similarities between *Rebirth Of A Feeling* and *Ocean Park*. Both feature chamber ensembles constituted primarily of violin, guitar, and string bass—Quartet Music adding, very importantly, a panoply of percussion instruments. Both the String Trio Of New York and Quartet Music are mildly avant garde or at least experimental, but neither group rejects the past. They draw on a number of established musical vocabularies, including classical, folk, country, jazz—Swing, bop, and beyond—and Eastern music. The choice of acoustic rather than electronic instruments further proclaims allegiance to tradition, and even with regard to tonality the groups are similar: loosely tonal, they often cleave to a melodic line, but have no scruples

about modulating suddenly out of key or abandoning tonality for modality or even atonality.

All this commonality notwithstanding, the differences between the bands are compelling and, I think, born of cultural geography. Whereas the Trio's music is dark, gritty, austere, menacingly introspective, intensely concentrated, and finally not a little sly, the Quartet from California is bright, its music polished, abundant with glitter, blithely outgoing, and innocent of irony. The Trio's aesthetic is urban and embodies much of the city's depth of experience, its excitement as well as its neurosis, sophistication, and melancholy. Quartet Music, in contrast, really *is* born of an ocean park. Redolent of sun and the Pacific, it plumbs no depths, and its excitement is in an energy that invites us to take it for granted.

Rebirth Of A Feeling commences with James Emery's *Open Up*, which is anything but open. Tightly structured motifs run like iron through this composition in which thick atonal polyphony—Ornette Coleman-style—alternates with poker-faced Swing licks. Billy Bang's violin does most to set the moods here: country fiddle to Joe Venuti jazz to sliding passages that sound a lot like moments from Prokofiev's *First Violin Concerto*. A lot of range but, characteristically, it is all vibratoless and usually executed in thin, dry tones produced by bowing near the instrument's bridge.

All but one of the other compositions on this album take their cue from *Open Up* and are marked by the same concern for structure, the same emotional intensity—a concentration rather than a variety of feeling. *Utility Grey*, for instance, generates enough urban grit to intimidate any listener. Only in Bang's *Karottenkopf* does the intensity turn lyrical. Modal harmonies predominate, and the slightly out-of-tune country fiddling summons up images of the Old rather than the New World. Emery's guitar insinuates from time to time heartbreaking fragments of full arpeggios, and from the violinist there are wisps of something like ballroom music—heard through a closed door. As to melody, I have not heard anything so pretty since Monk's *'Round Midnight*.

Quartet Music plays with consummate skill and, at least on the first side of *Ocean Park*, displays impressive powers of invention. The prettiest piece is the first, *Lorena*, which spins a melodic line that Chick Corea might have written: soaring, simple, graceful, driven by the merest intimation of a latin beat. *Improvisation* impressively exploits timbre and texture, especially through Alex Cline's armory of percussion instruments. But I find this over-reliance on palette less interesting here, in relative isolation, than when it is heard in the context of more fully developed harmonic structures. For this reason, *Blood Of The Rose* is more appealing than the first two cuts. All the color is here, but the piece also has shape, a series of dramatic episodes built around percussive cadences.

Unfortunately, the album's second side quickly exhausts the possibilities of such episodic structure. Tunes are less interesting here, and Alex Cline, whose subtle mastery of a wealth of percussion effects so enlivens side one, becomes on this side a kind of low-energy rock drummer and punctuates bar after bar with any number of crash cymbal blows.

In all, *Ocean Park*—at least half of it—dispenses more immediate pleasure than *Rebirth Of A Feeling*, but I can't escape concluding that what Quartet Music does is not as important. The String Trio Of New York plays harder music—harder for the listener. But it speaks of more experience, from greater depth, and with a feeling for form that threatens to endure. —*alan axelrod*

ROBERT QUINE/ FRED MAHER

BASIC—Editions EG 36: *PICKUP; BLUFFER; FALA; STRAY; SUMMER STORM; '65; BANDAGE BAIT; DARK PLACE; DESPAIR; VILLAGE.*
Personnel: *Quine, guitars, bass; Maher, drum programs.*

★ ★ ★ ½

Robert Quine and Fred Maher are the utility men of New York's avant-new wave, punk-funk scenes. They provide the right groove and distinctive guitar for the occasion, including sessions with Material, Richard Hell, Lou Reed, Massacre, and the Golden Palominos. Left to their own devices, Maher and Quine have derived a unique recording that shows the roots of their various synthesis.

Basic is an apt name because structurally these pieces are simple. Maher programs a groove and lets it rumble unimpeded while Quine chimes in with repetitive rhythm patterns. However, it's not the rhythms that make this record succeed, but what's happening beneath and between them. Multi-tracking his guitars, Quine orchestrates in cinemascope. While Maher's electronic rhythms roll on relentlessly, Quine defines the inner rhythms with slow, droning textures, casual picking, and exuberant slides.

Pickup has the desert plains feel of a Hugo Montenegro score with lazy, detuned guitar slides playing off Quine's laconic leads. He's casual to the point of off-handedness, yet there's an intensity and conciseness to his playing born from his new wave days. The double-speed rhythm of *Bluffer* elicits a restrained feedback rave-up, while *Despair* plays out an acid-blues against a Frippertronic drone and electro-beat.

Quine is obviously a scholar of the electric guitar, often merging several divergent styles within a single piece. But when he does it, they don't sound divergent at all. Blues, country & western, psychedelia, minimalist loops, and slide guitar course through *Basic* in a synchronous guitar carnival.

Maher's drum programming is the one basic problem that doesn't get solved on *Basic*. His rhythm machines are imaginatively programmed, but they're left on automatic pilot. There's no strong sense of interaction between the musicians and often, as on *Village*, the juggernaut rhythms pound some beautifully languid tunes into bruised submission. Sometimes it seems like Quine's off painting landscapes while Maher is steamrolling the highways through them. But even this can't subvert the cinematic journeys of *Basic*.
—*john diliberto*

OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLES

Swing Reincarnate

Far from reflecting the fragility of rare wine, recorded jazz can quite easily travel from one place to another without losing any of its initial qualities or value. It can be shuffled around endlessly from one reissue label to another and, given proper state-of-the-art handling, it will suffer in no way for its democratic distribution among the masses. In short, one need not be a member of a privileged class in order to share in the same delights that one's father or grandfather did—and with the same immortal mistress, to boot.

This month we offer but a tip-of-the-iceberg sampling of some recent reissues and first time releases of older music by a variety of different European and American labels. Heading the list, as he must in any discussion of Swing Era jazzmen, is **Coleman Hawkins**, one of whose most recent posthumous releases is *The Hawk Talks* (Jasmine 1031). This is a track-for-track repressing of the long out-of-print Decca 8127, and as such is highly welcome. Discographically sandwiched in between some highly charged combo dates of 1952 and '53, these commercially oriented studio sessions, though tamer than what we might choose, nevertheless provide us with a more complete picture of the veteran tenorman's position during this crucial period in his career. Surely some of the material he recorded for these dates was beneath him, but somehow he managed to invest such overly romantic movie themes as *Spellbound*, *Ruby*, and *Amber* with an interest and meaning wholly disproportionate to their actual worth.

Though not usually credited as such, one of Hawkins' earliest disciples was **Harry Carney**, a lifetime mainstay of the Duke Ellington Orchestra and himself an inspirational turning point in the careers of many other baritone saxmen. On *Harry Carney: Rare Dates Without The Duke—1944/1949* (Raretone 5011-FC), the big-toned paragon not only encounters his own master, Hawkins, on an all-star sax section date from 1944, but the virtuoso altoist, Tab Smith, and the bright young tenorman, Don Byas, as well. Though this classic session consisted of only four titles of 12-inch 78 rpm length (*On The Sunny Side Of The Street*, *Three Little Words*, *Battle Of The Saxes*, and *Louise*), there is so much memorable improvisation on it that it actually seems longer than it is. Two of the other 78 sessions reproduced in their entirety on this well-crafted LP are those under the names of Harry Carney's Big Eight and Timme Rosenkrantz.

However much Hawkins may have thrived on the lifelong challenge, there was really no way that he could have predicted the rapid growth and popularity of ***Don Byas***. By 1945 Byas had become not only the most modern tenorman around in terms of bop harmonic structures, but also one with a ballad conception and tone the equal of Hawkins'. On Black & Blue 33.003, you can hear prime mid-'40s Byas in small combo settings along with such other stellar contributing sidemen as trumpeters Buck Clayton and Joe Thomas and pianist Johnny Guarnieri. Those who are familiar with the double album of some years back, *Don Byas/ Savoy Jam Party* (Savoy 2213), will definitely want this one also.

There was once a time when **Roy Eldridge** was considered, along with Bunny Berigan, to be one of the two most inventive trumpet players of the Swing Era. In 1940, when the live sessions that comprise *Roy Eldridge At Jerry Newman's* (Xanadu 186) were recorded, the then-29-year-old 52nd Street star was the hottest thing around. On these sometimes double- and even triple-take performances, Roy is incandescence personified, and as he soars higher and higher, he appears not in the least fazed by the comparatively earthbound playing of his sessionmates, among whom are altoman Willie Smith, tenorman Herbie Fields and, somewhat surprisingly, as drummer, writer George T. Simon.

Though without a doubt the sole player of interest on the Xanadu, Roy enjoys the benefit of stalwart accompaniment on *Rare Broadcasts* (Duke 1010) and at least one comparable giant in the figure of Ben Webster. In April 1953 the still-respected jazz pace-setter was fronting a good mainstream rhythm section (pianist Dick Wellstood, bassist Slam Stewart, and drummer Zutty Singleton) at a midtown New York club named Lou Terrazzi's. A complete broadcast by this group occupies most of the space on this LP, but the ringer is the album closer: two tracks—*The Goof And I* and *Undecided*—which were dubbed from a 1960 Steve Allen tv show and which feature Roy with Webster and trombonist Kai Winding.

Ben Webster also appears in both better fidelity and at greater length on *Bill Harris And Friends* (Fantasy OJC-083) and *The Exciting Gene Krupa* (Verve 2594). The former offers, in addition to the saxophonist's lushly swinging contributions, a rare opportunity to hear Harris ply his emotive minimalist specialties in a setting far removed from the 1957 Woody Herman band. Out of the seven tracks, each of the primary soloists—Harris, Webster, and pianist Jimmy Rowles—receives an uninterrupted cut to himself, the most outstanding being Harris' almost Pee Wee Russell-like version of *It Might As Well Be Spring* and Webster's X-rated fantasia on *Where Are You?* Both of these hornmen, along with trumpeter Charlie Shavers, pianist Teddy Wilson, and bassist Ray Brown, also pop up for a slightly less intimate show on the Krupa LP. Eight of the 10 tracks are performed by this group, while the remaining two have Shavers teaming up with the impeccable Willie Smith for a seeming tribute to the old John Kirby Sextet.

One of the most vibrant trumpeters and vocalists to follow the inspiration of Louis Armstrong was an irresistibly infectious sprite called ***Hot Lips Page***. Though his entry on Foxy 9005/9006 does offer 31 titles of relatively rare material from the period of 1942-53, there is no indication of that fact anywhere on the double-fold, plain white album cover. There is, however, a paper insert in one of the pockets

that provides most of the necessary track-by-track data. The music, as variable in quality as it was in intent at the time, must speak for itself, but since there is so little of Page around now, you might want to try locating this elusive item.

Of another cast entirely is Pumpkin 115, a cohesive grouping of two never-before-released broadcasts featuring trombonist **Jack Teagarden**. Side one presents, from the best available surviving tape, *Today Show* performances by a late 1961 regrouping of some of the still-viable originators of a type of jazz once—and still—called "Chicago Style": cornetist Jimmy McPartland, clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, tenorman Bud Freeman, pianist Joe Sullivan, guitarist Eddie Condon, bassist Bob Haggart, drummer Gene Krupa and, of course, Teagarden himself. Though Condon was the nominal leader and organizer for this promo spot for the forthcoming hourlong tv special, *Chicago And All That Jazz*, it was, quite expectedly, the hornmen who attracted the most interest. Side two is an even rarer collation of 1947 airchecks from Jack's sustaining show on New York's WHN, which featured the trombonist/singer with a competent mainstream sextet including trumpeter Max Kaminsky and clarinetist Peanuts Hucko. All in all, the best moments come from Pee Wee, Bud, and Jack.

—jack sohmer

LESTER YOUNG

THE HISTORICAL PREZ—Everybody's 3002: *Tickle Toe; Taxi War Dance; Benny's Bugle; Ain't Misbehavin'; My, What A Fry; I Found A New Baby; One O'Clock Jump; K.C. Stride; Jazz Me Blues; Dinah; Blue Room Jump; Tush; Call Me Darling; Ain't It The Truth; Jumpin' At The Woodside.*

Personnel: *Young, tenor saxophone; Shad Collins (cuts 1, 2), Paul Campbell (3), Ed Lewis, Joe Newman, Harry Edison, Al Killian, trumpet; Dicky Wells, Ted Donnelly, Eli Robinson, Lewis Taylor, trombone; Bumps Meyer (3), Earl Warren, Rudy Rutherford, Jack Washington, Jimmy Powell, saxophones; Jimmy Rowles (3), Count Basie, piano; John Collins (1, 2), Freddie Green, guitar; Nick Fenton (1, 2), Red Callender (3), Rodney Richardson, bass; Doc West (1, 2), Lee Young (3), Jo Jones, Shadow Wilson, drums; Thelma Carpenter (13), vocal.*

★★★★★

The band Lester Young left Count Basie to form in 1940 has become one of the most nagging black holes in the history of jazz. Nagging because, aside from a single Victor session backing a singer, it went entirely unrecorded at a time when the tenor giant's stark originality and clarity of design and structure were at their summit. It seems he just fell through the cracks: too futuristic to attract jazz' fledgling but still tradition-minded documentarians (Norman Granz wouldn't come along for another two years), and too iconoclastic to interest the commercial recording industry.

These rediscovered broadcasts give us a peek—just a peek—at what was missed. And it's marvelous: a composite of tranquility and intensity, movement and repose, in which only Young could find resolution and balance. Working within the framework of the familiar Basie showcases, his dry, frosted tenor sound is as pure as you'll ever hear it on the old Basie Deccas and Columbias. It glides, skids, and cuts in unexpected direction. And when it lingers on an odd, misbegotten, orphaned note for an extra beat or two, it seems to stand motionless, caught in the Catch-22 of Young's broken-field rhythmic momentum.

Aside from Lester, John Collins demonstrates as good a mastery of Charlie Christian's guitar style as any I've heard as early as 1940 on the two cuts by Young's band. The only track by the Lester and his brother Lee's group, *Benny's Bugle*, is all Prez.

The balance of the LP provides fresh material from early 1944, when Young rejoined Basie's big band. Although Buddy Tate, Harry Edison (electrifying on *Blue Room Jump*), Dicky Wells, and others all play invigorating work, Lester is the central focus of things. This was a slicker, more hard-driving Swing band than the loose, simple small-group-in-big-

band-form of the late '30s. And Lester's suspended-in-time attack creates some startling and fascinating contrasts within such rapid-fire Basie charts as *My, What A Fry* and *I Found A New Baby*. The band rips ahead as Young pauses, muses, digresses, teases and does some ripping of his own as well.

It's the mid-tempo pieces that create the most favorable atmosphere for Lester's best work. *K.C. Stride* is a Young masterpiece of slurred phrasing and chewed notes woven into totally intoxicating rhythmic patterns. And side one ends with an extended *One O'Clock Jump* in which Lester settles in for four booting romps through the blues after the sax ensemble. Whatever the tempo or the arrangement, though, this is Lester Young still in the prime of his powers, both with Basie and on his own. Albums like this come along too seldom. When they happen, they're to be celebrated. And this is a find. —*john mcdonough*

FRED LIPSIUS

DISTANT LOVER(S)—ITI 014: *You Sparkle; Dreaming Of Your Love; Blue Funk; Something For R.J.; A Look At My Heart; Distant Lover(s).*

Personnel: *Lipsius, alto saxophone; Larry Willis, piano; George Mraz, bass; Al Foster, drums.*

★ ★ ½

JIMMY MOSHER

SATYRIC HORN—ITI 015: *Bolivia; No Boundaries; Peau Douce; Bud Powell; Pagliacci; The Bad And The Beautiful; J.M. To C.M.; This Nearly Was Mine.*

Personnel: *Mosher, alto saxophone, flute; Mick Goodrick, guitar; Tom Ranier, piano; Joel Dibartolo, bass; Peter Donald, drums.*

★ ★

The question has been asked many times before, and particularly over the last 25 years, a time when the jazz world not only opened its doors to a plethora of divergent futuristic alternatives, but also welcomed a return to earlier, time-proven basics. The question, of course, has to do with the prognosis for bebop's lasting vitality in the decades to come. Has it now really reached a stylistic dead-end, becoming in effect a Mobius strip of self-perpetuating hand-me-down licks and patterns? Do its parameters, as codified and perfected during the '40s and '50s, no longer offer the internal potential for continual growth and expansion as was first so widely believed? Or has it become, in these times of confused, scurrying values, merely one more wayside marker in the passage of jazz history, something to be cherished not for its current relevance but only as a reminder of its earlier achievements?

If the two records at hand are any indication of bebop's lasting promise being fulfilled by the younger musicians of today, then the answer would have to be a resounding "nay." Fortunately, however, that music's continued viability and hope for the future does not have

to rest with the merely competent players. We do have other, brighter, young talents on the scene who bring to their art not only the same advanced technical skills that are today's commonplace, but also an intensity of creative involvement, an emotional commitment that even repeated listenings to these two albums failed to reveal.

Lipsius, formerly of *Blood, Sweat & Tears*, and Mosher are each respectable altomen, both presumably excellent in section work and neither a totally unrewarding soloist. But what is wrong with their records? Both albums seem sincere in their production; both avoid obvious commercial ploys; and both avail themselves of some of the more popular sessionmen around. The answer, quite simply, is that they are dull, unimaginative, and almost wholly lacking in the visceral appeal that constitutes bebop at its best. True, Lipsius has the advantage of a more driving rhythm section, and that does help him play a bit more convincingly than Mosher, whose own team summons up visions of some local club-date guys working an off-night for short bread with an attitude of "Why bother? Nobody's listening anyway."

If you remember, some 500 years ago, the poet Villon asked "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" Well, if you look to the mountaintops where the sun shines most brightly, you will see them. They are still there.

—jack sohmer

CRITICS' CHOICE

Art Lange

NEW RELEASE: Tommy Flanagan, *Thelonica* (Enja). Masterful pianism put to the task of six rare moods from the Monk canon, plus two takes of Flanagan's sensitive title homage.
OLD FAVORITE: Dexter Gordon, *Long Tall Dexter* (Savoy). Early '45-47 sides with a touch more r&b spunk than one might expect, aided by all-star (Bud, Max, Blakey, Dameron) accompaniment.
RARA AVIS: Earl Bostic, *Sax "O" Boogie* (Oldie Blues). A Dutch reissue of hard-to-find, tough-to-beat, state-of-the-art, late '40s squealing sax instrumentals and jive tunes (*Hot Sauce Boss* is positively surrealistic).
SCENE: The satisfyingly curious combo of Lockjaw Davis and Cleanhead Vinson brought bop back to its funkier roots, at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago.

Charles Doherty

NEW RELEASE: Bob Marley & The Wailers, *Legend* (Island). Purists may cringe at this "best of" package of the reggae king's '70s/'80s material, but the 14 cuts running nearly an hour offer true value.
OLD FAVORITE: Prince Lasha & Sonny Simmons, *The Cry!* (Contemporary). Flute and alto duel with pioneering double basses and drums in a happy program of compact, tasty gems.
RARA AVIS: Jackie McLean, *New And Old Gospel* (Blue Note). Two master blasters (Ornette Coleman on trumpet throughout) and stellar rhythm run the gamut of emotions from joy to sorrow. When will someone reissue this classic?
SCENE: The Wisconsin northwoods burned from the bebop corner of the world when the Alto Madness of Richie Cole swung the Holiday Acres resort in Rhinelander.

Peter Kostakis

NEW RELEASE: Art Hodes, *South Side Memories* (Sackville). These piano reworkings of Jelly Roll Morton, Kid Ory, Clarence Williams, and others—like the living treasure who made them—will never go out of style.
OLD FAVORITE: Dudu Pukwana & Spear, *In the Townships* (Virgin). Two other shouting horns joined the late South African altoist (1973) in gospelly tribalist exhilaration; as effective for an instant high as a Praetorius motet.
RARA AVIS: New York Contemporary Five, *Consequences* (Fontana). Don Cherry, John Tchicai, and Archie Shepp circa 1963: the overpowering front line turns in an angularly inventive grind; newly available thanks to Nippon.
SCENE: In front of Marshall Field's, tenor sax and conga yubba dub the Flintstones' theme; while at Wieboldt's, two 'bones and an alto fuss over *Chameleon*: notes found on Chicago sidewalks.

Bill Shoemaker

NEW RELEASE: Jay McShann, *Just A Lucky So And So* (Sackville). The legendary Kansas City pianist proves himself to be an endearing vocalist in a program of mellow, soulfully rendered standards.
OLD FAVORITE: George Lewis, *Homage To Charles Parker* (Black Saint). Until the trombonist records his computer music, the ethereal *Homage* and the sinewy *Blues* remains his finest integration of electronic and acoustic instruments.
RARA AVIS: Karl Berger, *Karl Berger* (ESP). Playful, effervescent music in the vein of Don Cherry's Blue Note suites; a reminder that the director of the Creative Music Studio is a top-drawer vibraharpist.
SCENE: Pianist Ran Blake's Ivesian-roller-coaster-ride recomposition of *The Stars And Stripes Forever* during a mostly Monk program, at One Step Down (Washington, DC).

RECORD REVIEWS

BUNNY BRUNEL

IVANHOE—Inner City 1162: *Ivanhoe; Going Home; Dede; Latin; Magic Player; Song For Wayne; As My Brother; Nani.*

Personnel: *Brunel, electric, acoustic bass (cut 2), fuzz bass (1); Chick Corea, Minimoog (4), Rhodes electric piano (2); Herbie Hancock, piano (3); Kei Akagi, Rhodes electric piano (3); Ken Shima (1, 3), Daniel Goyone (5, 7), keyboards; Stanley Clarke (1), piccolo bass; Michael O'Neill (2, 3), Bernard Torrelli (5, 7), guitar; Nani Villa Brunel, vocals, percussion; Tony Williams (1, 8), Tom Brechtlein (2-4, 6), Jean Paul Ceccarelli (5, 7), drums; Don Alias (2), Laudir de Oliveira (2, 4), percussion; Bill Watrous, (5-7), trombone; Joe Farrell (5, 7), tenor, soprano saxophone; Steve Kujala (5, 7), tenor saxophone; Al Vizzutti (5, 7), trumpet.*

★ ★ ★

Bunny Brunel is a strong new bass player, but it's Stanley Clarke whose piccolo bass solo opens this album. *Ivanhoe* seems to represent a dream come true for Brunel; it finds him playing with the star-status Corea, Hancock, Williams, Farrell, Watrous—European biggies as well. To a large extent he's in their debt.

Cuts like *Ivanhoe* and *Latin* are fairly hot jazz-rock numbers, but right out of the latter day Return To Forever mold. *Magic Player* could easily have been influenced by that same group's *Musicmagic* period. And to top it all off, the lighter *Going Home* features the Flora Purim-like voice and writing talents of the leader's wife, Nani Villa Brunel. It's a capsule review of the American fusion movement—or a serious case of deja vu—one of the two.

Beyond the second generation comparisons, there is decidedly some good play on this record. Joe Farrell and Bill Watrous get cracks at *Song For Wayne*, probably an etude to Mr. Shorter, and their horn work is impeccable. Brunel himself shows considerable chops, and the percussion is working in the right direction at all times. Portions of the disc were taped in France, but there's a definite Rio bias.

It may take another album or two before Brunel can be pressed into writing more from an individual perspective; this material could've been written by any number of young Corea/Hancock-influenced musicians. It's good, well-schooled stuff, but a little typical. Now's the time to break new ground. —*robert henschen*

WAXING ON

'Bones Tones

JACK TEAGARDEN: *Tribute To Teagarden (Pausa 9026)* ★ ★ ★ ½
FRANK ROSOLINO: *The Rosolino Connection (Affinity III)* ★ ★ ★ ★
J. J. JOHNSON/AL GREY: *Things Are Getting Better All The Time (Pablo Today 2312-141)* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
J. J. JOHNSON/KAI WINDING/BENNY GREEN: *Trombone By Three (Prestige OJC 091)* ★ ★ ★
FIVE-A-SLIDE *(Audiophile 180)* ★ ★ ½
THE BRASS CONNECTION: *A New Look (Innovation 005G)* ★ ★
JOHN WILLIAMS & COMPANY: *Play The Music Of Harold Arlen (Discovery 891)* ★ ★ ★ ★
MARK LEVINE: *Concepts (Concord Jazz 234)* ★ ★
CRAIG HARRIS: *Black Bone (Soul Note 1055)* ★ ★ ½
GARRETT LIST & THE A-1 BAND: *Fire & Ice (Lovely 1201)* ★ ★ ★ ★
HENNING BERG/ANDREAS GENSCHEL: *At The 5th Köln Jazz Haus Festival 1982 (Jazz Haus Musik 13 ST)* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
JOHN RAPSON: *Deeba Dah-Bwee (Nine Winds 0112)* ★ ★ ★
JON ENGLISH/CANDACE NATVIG: *Triptych (1750 Arch 1797)* ★ ½
PHILL NIBLOCK: *Nothin To Look At Just A Record (India Navigation 3026)* ★ ★ ½

Sackbuts, 'bones, tailgates—call them what you will: trombones have been around so long they have accrued nearly as many names as practitioners. First seen during the 1400s as the cylindrical, small-belled sackbut (*saquebote*, Old French for "push-pull"), the slide trombone has evolved surprisingly little throughout the centuries. The last major physical alteration was the addition of valves—first piston, then rotary (or thumb) valves for lowering the pitch of bass trombone—by the late 1800s.

In the world of jazz, the trombone has proved more a bastion of conservatism than a flail for modernism—at least until the last decade. The sounds that can be coaxed from a B♭ tenor trombone range emotionally from stirring war alarums to soothing lullabies, and we run that gamut through this baker's-dozen-plus-one of recent releases. The order of the day is more chronological than alphabetical: we start with players who emerged early on (Teagarden in the '30s, the next three in the '50s), then a few older-guard multi-'bone groups, five new cats, and the last two concentrating on contemporary textural excursions.

Jack Teagarden, unquestionably the granddaddy on his big, buttery horn, plays and sings with burry, smeary warmth and full, rich tone on each of these 12 standards, apparently selected from Capitol dates of '56 and '58, and reminds us just how much music our forebears could pack onto a three-minute 78 rpm. This is more of a showcase than a tribute; Big T's easy grace and infectious good heart imbue every track. Teagarden rides right over full orchestra on ensembles, leads the 'bone pack on *Peg O' My Heart*, blends in with a dixie sextet (high marks for pianist Don Ewell), and lays on some stunning cadenzas. You can wallow in his idiosyncratic vocals ("ohs" inserted into *Stars Fell On Alabama*, "zing a zong" on *Someday You'll Be Sorry*), and potent full-throttle playing all the way on *Sheik Of Araby*, where he sings intro and coda, and plays muted and open choruses in a slick arrangement. The record gives off a glow as golden as a triple-plated Conn.

Frank Rosolino's set, recorded between the two Teagarden dates, shows him in an intimate context in marked contrast to his rapid-fire barn-burning days with Kenton, but still not with the genial gregariousness of Teagarden. The Ros 'bone is throaty but quite articulate, with a certain wry candor on muted standards *I May Be Wrong* and *Things We Did Last Summer*, wide open and robust on his own uptempo *Frieda* and *My Deluxe*, showing dynamic variety and the odd, lyric moment. Sonny Clark's witty, dryly poised single-note piano lines often tightrope to the honors (*Doxy*, *Deluxe*), while the ideal rhythm team of old Kenton buddy Stan Levey on drums and big-bottomed, sure-footed Wilfred Middlebrooks on bass complete the picture of relaxed confidence and good times. This British remastering is clearly superior to most original Bethlehems; neither bothers with timings.

The **J. J. Johnson/Kai Winding/Bennie Green** small band sides make the third reissue of these Prestige and New Jazz 78s, here in the original packaging the Japanese have revived and Original Jazz Classics has dusted off: three vulturous, beetle-browed 'bonists by cartoonist Don Martin. J.J.'s four tunes are brightened by crisp trumpet spots from Kenny Dorham, bombs by Max Roach, and round robins with muscular Sonny Rollins. It's fun to compare structures and textures with famed Miles Davis Nonet, also with Johnson, John Lewis, and Roach. Lewis' *Elysses* is *Rouge* on the Nonet date five weeks earlier (4/22/49); here it's faster and cleaner, if not hipper (check Dorham's solo versus Davis'). Winding's septet (10/51) has bigger sound, longer tracks, Kai sounding more legato and sweeter than his future partner Johnson. Tenorman Brew Moore blows insinuating and smooth, bari Gerry Mulligan rough and ready, but despite some great jagged piano from George Wallington (where is he now?) and machine-gunning rims from Roy Haynes, the rhythm sounds like it's swimming in molasses. The Green sides are jolly and heavy, with good turns by Green and baritonist Rudy Williams on *Flowing River*, and hot chops from Lockjaw Davis. The label listings are the accurate ones. I hear no improvements on the sound, a little lumpy, but these period pieces in the emergence of trombonist/leaders are worthy of note.

What a party **J. J. Johnson** and **Al Grey** had on their unique '84 meeting! From the muted minor seconds on a frantic *Soft Winds*, this winsome twosome tears it up with fine fettle and stinging nettle, through Basie, Ellington, Richard Rodgers, and Adderley gems. Fours abound, signs of companionability, comfort, and joy. And why not be happy, with Ray Brown, Mickey Roker, and Kenny Barron right on it? Dave Carey adds congas or vibes only at the right moments, like *Boy Meets Horn*, a rare bit of Ellingtonia in a splendid Johnson arrangement that cools Rex Stewart's hot feature. Grey plays lots of peppery plunger, Johnson blows fair and clear-browed, while Brown fills out the bass clef incomparably. Only a boogaloo that ends the album stuck out like a sore thumb, and I got used to that; the rest is of a piece, and is a piece of work indeed. This is a masterful encounter, and a credit to the memory of Count Basie, with whom both worked.

Most British mainstream jazz is unabashedly adulatory, modeling itself after the American originals, and this fivesome of 'bonebearers—***Five-A-Slide*** are Roy Williams, Pete Strange, Campbell Burnap, John Beecham, Jim Shepherd—attempt nothing more than pleasant, unpretentious covers of material that might have been done in the '50s by J & K, Urbie Green, or Basie—nothing so exotic as Kenton. But I had to chide myself into appreciating these blokes: though slightly unkempt and hopelessly dated as these stock-type charts are, the performance has a certain charm and whimsy to it. If the voicings are ragged at times, rugby-rough and jostling, the soloists are often game and disarmingly sharp, especially Williams and Strange. The rhythm section has a sort of Morris Dance hop to it that never swings seriously, despite some tasty piano from Australian Collin Bates. A genial roughhouse, over a hodgepodge of charts from Kid

RECORD REVIEWS

Ory's *Muskrat Ramble* to Parker's *Yardbird Suite*, with thoughtful sleepers thrown in, like Johnny Mandel's *Low Life*, a bouncer not heard since Bud Shank met Bob Brookmeyer (Pacific Jazz, vintage 1955).

A rather glib band of Canadians playing standards with bursts of flair and pomp, **The Brass Connection** would seem to model itself on Rob McConnell's truly Boss Brass section work, though less creative and accomplished. There's much striving for notes for their own sake by lead trombone Ian McDougall, and a superior rhythm team in Don Thompson's clear piano and Lorne Lofsky's silky, Bickert-y guitar, and both easily outstrip the lusty 'bones for solo power. The Kenton legacy shows here entrenched though, ironically, two Bill Holman commissions are as willful as they are skillful: *Someday My Prince Will Come* is a little wooden with time shifts, but *My Shining Hour* has some stirring contrapuntal moments and a smooth unison line. Often the blend emerges more pat and tame than it need be, but when they're on, like *Mood Indigo* as a jolly samba, they can sound fairly convincing.

Amazing how the two previous imports are in many ways much more dated than this 1957 reissue of the dozen bright little charts on Harold Arlen tunes that **John** (*Star Wars*, Boston Pops) **Williams** pulled off with a small band of mostly Kenton grads. Williams handles 'bones and saxes individually and collectively much to the point yet with a very personal touch: crisp, straightforward contrapuntal lines, tight clean voicings, a few fine short solos, especially among the trombones (Milt Bernhardt, Bob Enevoldsen). For momentum, credit Williams' own lilting piano: touching intro to the title tune *Here's What I'm Here For*, galloping chords on *Hit The Road To Dreamland*, the fleet bridge on *Old Black Magic* do more than justice to his own three-minute wonders and pay a handsome, timeless tribute to one of our finest composers.

Concepts is really an arranger's reminiscence album, as **Mark Levine** offers tidy compositions based on notions out of Blue Note Horace Silver and Miles Davis, with tenorist Chuck Clark at his best in the Wayne Shorter role. As such, the album is pleasantly derivative of sturdy traditions. Levine, however, is a better arranger than trombonist: his sound is throaty and choked, with no sustains or really full tones. Instead of seeking lines to blow on his excellent choices of Monk's *Ask Me Now* and Freddie Hubbard's *Up Jumped Spring*, Levine struggles to make the changes double-time. A lackluster *Skylark* and ponderous *Jitterbug Waltz* are both played in a sad minor, instead of the bright Major key both Carmichael and Fats Waller intended.

Here's a curious album from **Craig Harris**, **db** Critics Poll '84 TDWR winner. Harris pens plenty of catchy rhythmic vamps and has a rather fresh, untutored sense of form, but he conveys little sense of melody to me as yet, either in writing or blowing. I prefer his playing on David *Murray's Steps*. Here he's bumptious, buzzy, aggressive, and certainly distinctive, and his oblique, against-the-grain ideas make a foil for tenorist George Adams, always a brilliant performer who can squeeze lyric juices out of dry lemons. Tributes to Ed Blackwell and Jimi Hendrix are hard to resist, however, and I suspect that this strange album—indubitably a fusion of ancient and modern black music—may grown on me in time.

In another conceptually intriguing debut, trombonist **Garrett List and the A-1 Band** string out a set of minute musical conceits that vacillate dizzily between mad, scrabbling bop parodies (*Oleo/Tune Up*, the latter correctly attributed to Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, not Miles Davis) and cabaret numbers that smack of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya with military tattoos by Ronald Shannon Jackson. At the high end: perdition on a pedal point as *Fire & Ice* intriguingly sets the apocalyptic Robert Frost poem, with trumpeter Yousuf Yancy as ice and List as fire. Low end: a quasi-Miles pastiche of ominous crescendi, snippets of *Lullaby Of The Leaves* and a '50s Davis break chorus—embarrassingly ragged and puerile. The last few make up for all: haunting settings of vital dada poet Blaise Cendrars' incandescent lines and *Sweetness*, an ineffably lovely poem by Byard Lancaster, whose alto parallels soaring synthesizer parabolas, and the riveting voice of Genie Sherman, whose sinuous, sibilant messages are those of purest conviction throughout the album. Fascinating and highly uneven—that's life!

Spirited and spunky, the trombone/drum duo of **Henning Berg** and **Andreas Genschel**, about whom I know nothing except their connection with Globe Unity Orchestra, take the raw bones of melody and rhythm and weave a delightful, ever varied counterpoint. No great technician, Berg achieves quite a musical breadth of tone and texture from his horn; witness the shifting expressiveness he brings to the two-bar fanfare kernels that are Wayne Shorter's *Witch Hunt* and Duke Ellington's *In A Mellotone*: marvelous. They choose and pace tunes well, both standard and modern; a patch-paste of Brooke Bowman's *East Of The Sun* and Dollar Brand's dirge-like *Wedding* indulge neither in interminable experiments nor intrasigent originality, but rather recraft melodies judiciously to make heated, raw, pleasurable music throughout. It's evident that they have not rehearsed the material into limp submission, either, but simply let it flow and pop and rumble ad lib and ad hoc before an appreciative lively audience at the Fifth Köln Jazz Haus Festival (11/82).

John Rapson's brawny, bumptious rambunctious date doubles twangy electric bass with gritty 'bone a lot, gets some Tynerish cluster chords and Tayloresque splashes from pianist Wayne Peet, dogged vs. airy tempos from the rhythm team, and a rather understated front line from saxist Vinny Golia and trumpeter Bill Hartley, who defer to the leader. Rapson plays with a gruff humor, a lot with plunger mute that he growls and rips, especially on his dirty blues feature, *Shelton's Sweetime*. His *Lament For Earache D*, largely a duo with Alex Cline's substantial mallets and

spinning on the rims, gets into some coloristic subtones and multiphonics, and employs "little instruments" from the band. As brassy and bold as this California sextet comes on (defying the sterotypical "West Coast Cool"), they do end the more boisterous numbers quietly—a surprise in lower case. Definitely jazz for jocks and other jolly jumpers.

The last two are really outside/inside, experimental albums that feature trombonists whose affinity for long, drawn tones suggest Tibetan alphorns and that welcoming yawp (sometimes, seductive yawn) of infinity. **Jon English** and **Candace Natvig**, sonic flower children, recorded their pure, pristine Gothic music in a rural German church. The music's monastic detachment and childlike naivete wear thin and dreary after a spell, a score for Ingmar Bergman's ennui. The stasis sounds holy, yet I sense no extended concepts, continuity, or direction. Natvig's voice/violin piece combines angelic polyphony and slightly unhinged Sacred Harp; it is wild yet strangely consonant, with Meredith Monk howls over a Pygmy singsong. English plays a breathy slow-toned piece alone and a fluttery job with tape; their one encounter is a loose set playing with sonic combinations. All but the first I found detached, "serious," and unlistenable.

Phill Niblock's long monotones for trombone pairs and threesomes sound at first like trance music, but they get under your skin with teeth-grinding dissonances and bracingly buzzing tensions after a while. There are foghorn drones, a Sikorsky skyride, eye-crossing wasp swarms, and a mosquito nightmare. Background music for backyard bug-zappers. One might long for a little melody to go with all that squiggly line and unrelieved texture, but no. Both these latter two albums are experimental game-playing; Niblock is more methodical and somehow better at it. Trombonists are James Fulkerson (twice) and Jon English; they probably had to check their fillings after this session. *—fred bouchard*

NEW RELEASES

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

PABLO

Frank Foster/Frank Wess, reed tandem returns in quintet configuration, TWO FOR THE BLUES. **Joe Turner**, last of the blues shouters w/ brand spankin' new program of old fashioned blues, KANSAS CITY HERE I COME. **Buddy DeFranco**, clarinet keeper of the flame fans the fires w/ a hot quintet, MR. LUCKY. **Joe Pass**, new solo guitar recital from one of the masters, LIVE AT LONG BEACH COLLEGE. **Zoot Sims**, classic tenorman plays classic themes by Johnny Mandel, QUIETLY THERE.

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RECORD REVIEWS

MUSE

Sonny Stitt, alongside some formidable peers the late alto/tenor great gives us THE LAST STITT SESSIONS VOL. 2. **Woody Shaw**, first ('65) recordings of the young trumpeter w/ outstanding cohorts, IN THE BEGINNING. **Bobby Pierce**, '72 session for the organist/vocalist plus Pat Martino, ex-Mingus tenor Bobby Jones, etc., PIERCING.

PAUSA

Benny Goodman, mostly '47 (one from '54) performances by the clarinet King of Swing, TRIOS (& ONE DUET). **Various Artists**, three different groups of Ducal design, from '45 and '52, comprising THE ELLINGTONIANS. **Freddie Slack**, '40s-50s boogie woogie stylist and his orch. inc. vocalist Ella Mae Morse, BEHIND THE EIGHT BEAT. **Supersax**, reissue of the ornithological multi-sax tentet's second LP, SALT PEANUTS. **Four Freshman**, standards and more, harmonized to perfection, by the singers AND FIVE GUITARS.

SACKVILLE

Jay McShann, some surprising standards sound soulful in McShann's hands, I'M JUST A LUCKY SO AND SO. **Art Hodes**, veteran blues pianist romps and sighs through a sackful of SOUTH SIDE MEMORIES. **Humphrey Lyttelton**, British trad trumpeter travels to the provinces for a tasty quintet set, IN CANADA.

PATHE MARCONI

Earl Hines, 10 varieties of solo piano, vintage 1965, from Fatha's PARIS SESSION. **Bill Coleman**, expatriate Swing trumpeter waxes 16 sides w/ French collaborators, PARIS 1935-37. **Philippe Brun**, French trumpeter in various combos inc. Jack Hylton, Django Reinhardt, Stephane Grappelli, and Pierre Reverdy, 1930-38. **Garnet Clark/Teddy Weatherford/Garland Wilson**, separate tracks of solo piano from mid-'30s Paris, PIANO & SWING. **Slide Hampton**, slippery tromboner w/ '69 quartet (Joachim Kuhn, NHØP, Philly Joe Jones), THE FABULOUS. **Sammy Price/Emmett Berry**, '56 barrelhouse and blues date w/ a Swing tint from the pianist and trumpeter, BOOGIE WOOGIE A LA PARISIENNE. **Alix Combelle**, French tenor found in several groups (some inc. Django), 1937-40.

CRI

David Stock, self-stated "jazz fan" pens three alchemic comps, TRIPLE PLAY, SCAT, and THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE. **Tod Machover**, works for live performers and computer-generated sound, LIGHT and SOFT MORNING, CITY! **Alexei Haleff**, solo piano pieces played by Leo Smit, SONATA FOR PIANO, NOTES OF THANKS, and GIFTS AND SEMBLANCES. **Arnold Schönberg/Stephan Wolpe**, the former's expressionistic (1909) monodrama ERWARTUNG, and the latter's legendary, little-heard 1956 SYMPHONY. **William Schuman**, two early ('47 and '49) works for dance from one of America's outstanding composers, JUDITH and NIGHT JOURNEY. **John Powell**, two large-scale solo piano works (1905 and '07) from a neglected Southern composer, SONATA PSY-

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NEW ITEMS

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RECORD REVIEWS

CHOLOGIQUE and VARIATIONS AND DOUBLE FUGUE ON A THEME OF F.C. HAHR. **George Anthell**, the "bad boy" of American music with a '20s solo piano work based on Max Ernst sketches, LA FEMME 100 TETES.

ANTILLES

Heath Bros., Percy, Jimmy, and Tootie reunited w/ Stanley Cowell, Slide Hampton, and Joe Kennedy form BROTHERS & OTHERS. **Steve Khan**, guitarist's '83 quartet w/ Anthony Jackson, Steve Jordan, Manolo Badrena, CASA LOCO. **Elements**, rhythm-led electric quartet play self-penned program, FORWARD MOTION.

INDEPENDENTS

Jimmy McGriff, organist fronts sax-heavy nine-piece band in soulful cookers, from Fantasy Records, SKYWALK. **Ivan Conti**, drummer from Azymuth brings Brazilian beat up north, from Fantasy, THE HUMAN FACTOR. **Charles Schwartz**, wrote a jazz symphony aided by Jon Hendricks, Jon Faddis, Kenny Burrell, Sonny Fortune, and the Philharmonia Virtuosi of NY, from Inner City Records, SOLO BROTHERS. **Jabula**, seven-piece African band abetted by guest horns and percussionists, from Inner City, JABULA WITH ME. **Guy Fasciani**, melodic, "listenable" piano trio settings (plus strings), from Inner City, THE STEINWAY CAPER. **Don Sickler**, trumpeter/arranger, w/ Jimmy Heath, Cedar Walton, Ron Carter, Billy Higgins, from Uptown Records, recreate THE MUSIC OF KENNY DORHAM. **Pepper Adams**, bari blower shares quintet front line w/ trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, from Uptown, LIVE AT FAT TUESDAYS.

Anthony Braxton, first all-sopranino solo album documenting, via Sound Aspects Records, COMPOSITION 113. **Paul Chasman/Roger Hadley**, acoustic guitar/percussion duet waxes w/ oriental overtones, from Grassroots Records, SO BE IT. **James Newton Howard**, with fellow synthesists David Paich and Steve Porcaro, plus a pair of Porcaro percussionists, from Sheffield Lab Records, & FRIENDS. **Pandit Ravi Shankar**, digital recording of raga improvisations by the master sitarist, from Oriental Records, THE GENIUS OF. . . . **Phast Phreddie & Thee Precisions**, looney rock-heavy r&b jive by youthful L.A. practitioners, from Martian Records, LIMBO. **Maurice John Vaughn**, eight stripped-down-to-the-basics samples of blues, from Reecy Records, GENERIC BLUES ALBUM. **Vanessa Davis Band**, hard-rocking Chicago club sounds w/ r&b roots, from Spectra Records, FAST FORWARD.

John Von Ohlen/Steve Allee, lead 18 of Indianapolis' best swingers, from Mopro Records, LIVE. **Mark Masters**, directs *his* Jazz Composers Orchestra in eight Kenton-oriented charts, from SeaBreeze Records, EARLY START. **Gordon Brisker**, West Coast reedman fronts sextet inc. Tom Harrell's trumpet and a synth, from SeaBreeze, CORNERSTONE. **Hemet H.S. Jazz Band**, "deebee"-winning big band, class of '82, from AM-PM Records, TIME AFTER TIME. **Joe Diamond**, Ohio saxist waxes w/ a quartet in debut on disc, from August Records, ORNITHOLOGY. **Ernie Krivda/Kenny Davis**, hard-bopping quintet from down Cleveland way, from North Coast Jazz Records, FIRESIDE SESSIONS.

Doug Lofstrom, orchestral pieces from a jazz/pop/classical viewpoint, from Little Miracles Records, MUSIC. . . . **Daniel Janke**, eight Canadians offer music from West Africa and the Yukon, from Scratch Records, DANIEL JANKE. **Mark Holen**, multi-percussionist leads quintet (plus occ. added perc.) in original world music, from Zambomba Records, ZAMBOMBA. **Allegheny Jazz Quartet**, '84 digital swing things w/ guest vocalist Maxine Sullivan, from Jump Records, ON TOUR. **Joe Coughlin**, Canadian vocalist vocalizes standards and a few new tunes, from Innovation Records, SECOND DEBUT. **Songbook**, acoustic quartet presents pastoral pieces, from Spring Song Music, SONGBOOK.

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BLINDFOLD TEST

John Carter

By LEONARD FEATHER


MARC WEBER

As the statistics show (he finally made it to first place in this year's **db** Critics Poll), John Carter has attracted a growing audience as the most influential recent force on clarinet, an instrument to which he now devotes himself exclusively.

This recognition has arrived belatedly, for Carter is now 55. He was born in Fort Worth, TX, just six months before the birth in that city of one of his early associates, Ornette Coleman.

A scholastic prodigy, Carter graduated from high school at 15 and from college at 19; he attended Lincoln U. (MO), North Texas St., and in 1956 earned his master's degree in music education at the U. of Colorado.

Arriving in Los Angeles in 1960, he aspired to become a studio musician (he played all the saxes, flute, and oboe), but soon saw that this was the wrong direction for him and resumed a teaching career he had begun in Fort Worth. He spent 20 years in the L.A. school system, but during that time enjoyed an ongoing playing association with trumpeter Bobby Bradford. Since January 1983, Carter, flutist James Newton, saxophonist Charles Owens, and tubist/bassist Red Callender have been teaching at their own private Wind College.

This was Carter's first Blindfold Test. He was given no information about the records played; he chose not to use the star rating system.

1 ANTHONY BRAXTON. *SIDE ONE, CUT THREE (from CREATIVE ORCHESTRA MUSIC 1976, Arista). Braxton, composer, clarinet; Leo Smith, trumpet; George Lewis, trombone; Jan Faddis, piccolo trumpet.*

Well, first of all, a very unusual record! The legitimate concert band march thing at the beginning kind of got me off—an interesting idea, interesting writing. When I write, I always think of making a setting for the improvisation. The writing and the ideas of the soloists, who were very modern players, didn't quite come together in my mind. I wasn't sure if the very static accompaniment let them get out there as much as they wanted to. I thought I heard a little Perry Robinson in the clarinet player, then I wasn't sure. I don't think I could rate this piece of music; it was an interesting format for improvisation.

2 EDDIE DANIELS. *GOOD MORNING BAHIA (from MORNING THUNDER, Columbia). Daniels, clarinet, alto saxophone; E. Stratta, composer; Jorge Dalto, keyboards; Anthony Jackson, electric bass; Steve Gadd, drums.*

Very nice, very infectious, very alive. Nice format laid out for the solos—competent musicians. The clarinet player was outstanding. I liked that piece very much—beautiful music. Eddie Daniels came to my mind; the tone quality sounded like him in some places, didn't in others. The intonation of the group was very good; the rhythm section was very competent, the alto solo was very good. I'd have to give this a very fine rating.

3 ART TATUM/BUDDY DE FRANCO. *THIS CAN'T BE LOVE (from THE TATUM GROUP MASTERPIECES, Pablo). Tatum, piano; De Franco, clarinet; Bill Douglass, drums; Red Callender, bass.*

Whew! That was bad! Yeah! That was really mean! I thought that was Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman, and Krupa, but then . . . the brushwork sounded like Gene Krupa. But the piano player . . . hmm. And there were places where that didn't sound like Goodman. Well, it was very good music; I enjoyed that very much. Who's that monster piano player who died in 1956? Red Callender played with him, too. I'll be ashamed if I can't get this. I never heard him in person, but I heard so many of his records. It's classic music. It swings, gets to you right away; it feels good.

LF: Well, I'll take you out of your misery. It was Art Tatum and Buddy De Franco.

JC: De Franco—yeah! You know, I didn't think Buddy would have been old enough to have played back there with Tatum; I figured that to have been recorded in the late '40s, early '50s . . .

LF: No, it was made a year or two before Tatum died.

JC: Is that right? Well, it's very nice music.

4 DUKE ELLINGTON. *CLARINET MELODRAMA (from ELLINGTON SHOWCASE, Capitol). Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet, composer. Rec. 1955.*

Well, I tried my best to make that Jimmy Hamilton, but it would have to have been the Ellington orchestra, and I couldn't make it the Ellington orchestra. The clarinet player gets a good sound, a very full, rich, well-centered kind of sound, very well in tune. It seemed to be all written material, and I couldn't hear areas of improvisation. The technology in the recording didn't seem to be as good as we're used to, so maybe it was a few years ago. I heard echo in some places and not in others, and in some places I felt the band was probably in tune, but the technology itself was hampering that.

5 PERRY ROBINSON. *FEUD (from THE TRAVELER, Chiaroscuro). Robinson, clarinet; Hilly Dolganes, piano.*

Wish there had been more playing. There was a laying out of the materials to work from; I would like to have heard the players more, to try and get a handle on it. This music reminds me of Chicago, for some reason. I think the piece could have been extended so the listener could get a little more into what the musicians meant; I didn't get a good grasp of what was intended.

6 BENNY GOODMAN. *CLARINET A LA KING (from CLARINET A LA KING, Epic). Goodman, clarinet, Eddie Sauter, composer, arranger; Sid Catlett, drums. Rec. 1941.*

That's very interesting writing. Obviously from the big band period, it was well recorded, and the intonation was very good. I think that was Artie Shaw; it sounded like his playing to me—the composition, the arrangement was really nice. I have to go back a long way to try to decipher through his big band music. The writing sounded a little beyond that of the regular Big Band Era, ahead of its time. I wonder if I could hear that again.

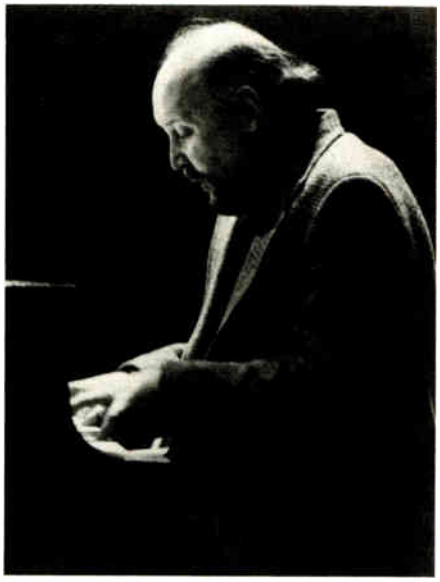
[*Later*] No, I don't think that's Shaw at all—sounds like Goodman, and the period of the Carnegie Hall concert. The writing threw me off. The band sounds very good—everyone's hitting. It sounded very Gene Krupa-ish there in some places. Goodman made a tremendous contribution to American music, and gave opportunities to so many musicians who have gone on to make fine contributions themselves. **db**

PROFILE

Larry Vuckovich

Bebop and Balkan riffs stroll hand-in-hand in this pianist's unique brand of '80s "fusion."

BY ROBIN TOLLESON



It might seem odd to label 47-year-old Larry Vuckovich a fusion artist, but in the truest sense of the word, the former Art Tatum/Bud Powell disciple fits the title well. "Fusion, in the real meaning of the word, is very logical, spiritual, healthy, and intellectual," the Kotor, Yugoslavia-born pianist says. "All the great religions say the same thing—that people should get together and solve problems with their heads instead of violence. They're suggesting fusion, love, everybody getting to know all the ethnic groups and learning from them. So when it's done right, music like that is real. A person with musical talent is going to play that much better if he has a world consciousness, a universal consciousness."

Vuckovich displays his world musical consciousness, combining bebop, blues, and his native Balkan folk music on three records as leader, proof positive of the passion that has led the likes of Jon Hendricks, Vince Guaraldi, Philly Joe Jones, and Dexter Gordon to tour with Larry at the piano. They also bear out his strength as a band organizer, leader, and guiding musical force.

"I try to look for the cats that really understand the history first," the amiable Vuckovich explains. "I like guys who are inventive, but who really know what swing means—and play it as loose as possible—guys who have a strong bebop background. Because if they have the contemporary thing on top of that, then the whole thing's going to sound better. Styles to me really don't mean that much. It's a matter of inventiveness, and the ability to make it not sound like a formula."

Blue Balkan (Inner City 1096) is heavily influenced by the folk music of the Balkan region, and features the interplay of Bobby Hutcherson on vibes and marimba and Eric Golub on violin. "Bobby is one of the great musicians of the day, and he's well-rounded," says Vuckovich. "He can play bebop and blues. He's a contemporary player, but the reason he's stronger than a lot of contemporary players is his background. He's got more music that he went through. And Eric played with just the right flavor. It wasn't just some guy playing Middle-Eastern scales. He brought the heart into it. When I called him about doing the record, he happened to be studying Balkan music, getting into gypsy stuff and all that. That's wild, huh?"

In 1982 Vuckovich released *City Sounds, Village Voices* (Palo Alto 8012), more bebop than Balkan, featuring trumpeter Tom Harrell, saxmen Jerome Richardson and Charles McPherson, Ray Drummond on bass, and Eddie Marshall on drums. The record earned five stars in a **down beat** review. The pianist's 1984 release, *Cast Your Fate* (Palo Alto 8042), is another different step, described by the *Oakland Tribune*'s Larry Kelp as ". . . giving an artistic flair to the traditional cocktail piano style. In the past such names as Erroll Garner, Dave Brubeck . . . Vince Guaraldi . . . Ahmad Jamal . . . have taken the form and elevated it beyond easy listening. Vuckovich is the latest master, giving equal weight to melodic beauty and improvisation, with an accent on bop and latin rhythms."

"*Cast Your Fate* is not as complicated an album as *Blue Balkan*, but the feeling is good," says Vuckovich. "I wanted to do something that had some latin flavor, and something that was standard in America also—kind of North American/South American impressions." The pianist uses young Dutch bassist Hein Van de Geyn, Gaylord Birch on drums, Kenneth Nash on percussion, and three songs are sung by Jon Hendricks, who nearly 20 years ago employed Larry as his personal accompanist.

Vuckovich began playing piano in Yugoslavia at the age of six. His mother played, and Larry was drawn to the folk music of his country. "Music was close to me," he says. "I particularly liked when I heard the Eastern scales. I felt close to it." The Vuckovich family moved to San Francisco shortly after World War II. "There's no question I'm glad we came to America," says the pianist. "Even though I like classical music and other things, the first time I heard jazz on the radio there, for me that was the thing. It really is your own personal expression."

As a teenager Larry began exploring San Francisco's then-flourishing jazz scene. He remembers sitting in at a club once when Eric Dolphy walked in and began blowing *I Got Rhythm*. He recalls seeing Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry get tossed from another club for taking things too far out. And he remembers meeting Vince Guaraldi at the Blackhawk and being immediately drawn to his playing. "The guy had a warm feeling for music, man. There's no question that he did."

The late Guaraldi took Vuckovich on as his only student. (The title track of Vuckovich's new album is one of Guaraldi's best known compositions, *Cast Your Fate To The Wind*.) Vuckovich recalls listening to a lot of new records at Guaraldi's house. "Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Bill Evans was coming out, and we would discuss it. Vince liked Hampton Hawes. He said one time, 'You and I are just about the only cats around here that play with feeling like Hampton.' He wasn't bashful to say certain things."

Vuckovich's admiration for Tatum and Powell has not diminished through the years. "Art Tatum played his own style, real advanced harmonies and adventurous explorations of rhythm," says Vuckovich. "He would be going in and out, back and forth, and would always wind up on 'one.' That was exciting to listen to, but then the more I started listening to the cat, I heard that the stuff he played was very logical. There was inventiveness and warmth.

"Everyone learned from Art Tatum," he continues. "But then what Bud Powell did was play Charlie Parker on the piano. Charlie Parker's rhythmic lines are rooted in Swing and jazz. The elasticity of that, the flying kind of thing, the shifting of phrases and stuff so all the notes aren't played evenly, the different bebop off-beat accents—that's what got me about Bud Powell. His lines would

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

dance. Imagine somebody playing the same lines with mallets. They would sound a little more percussive, and the notes not be all the same weight. It gave it that feeling of dance with the sense of dynamics."

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in music from San Francisco State University (studying with saxophonist John Handy, among others), Larry left San Francisco with Jon Hendricks in 1965. They toured Europe, the United States, and Canada, playing festivals and clubs, doing the 1966 Monterey Jazz Festival with the Booker Ervin/Elvin Jones Quartet. "Elvin was flowing like a big river," says Vuckovich. "It was fantastic." Larry stayed in Europe for the better part of five years, working as house pianist at Munich's Domicile Club, touring and recording with Philly Joe Jones and performing with artists like Dexter Gordon, Slide Hampton, Clifford Jordan, Neils-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, and Dave Holland.

He returned to San Francisco in 1970, and Larry was called by Guaraldi to work in his two-piano group, which featured trumpeter Tom Harrell. Hendricks again hired Vuckovich for his *Evolution Of The Blues* stage show for two years, and the pianist worked frequently at the Bay Area's now-defunct jazz spot Keystone Korner, with artists like Leon Thomas, Charles McPherson, Bobby Hutcherson, Buddy Tate, Eddie Henderson, and Hadley Caliman.

The thing that comes across most while watching Vuckovich play, whether it's in front of 50 people in a posh San Francisco piano bar or 5,000 at the Nuremberg Jazz East-West festival, is his enthusiasm for playing and desire to make every musical moment count. "When you're soloing, you try for the emotion and feeling to happen spontaneously," he says. "Everybody uses their mind when they play, but it's got to be done so that it sounds as natural as possible. When the stuff is really right, it just happens. Sometimes you think of different things to do, but when you're really concentrating when you play, you let the spirit take over.

"When I'm listening to jazz, I'm listening for the feeling, and I'm trying to tune in to that guy's vibes. Is the spirit good? Is it uplifting? Humorous? Interesting? So many records you hear, people are trying to be impressive intellectually, doing different kinds of harmonies. And it sounds dry after a while. They get praise for contemporary playing, but when you really listen hard, that's a one-dimensional player. The best contemporary players are the ones who have more of a universal consciousness. I don't care how complicated it sounds or if it's on a certain standard, if that rounded feeling is not there, I get bored.

"Of the younger piano players, one guy that has the traditional feeling plus more things happening is Mulgrew Miller. He can play melodic lines. A lot of guys can play long lines, but if you break them down, it's just patterns, one block of fours after another. It's interesting to a point, but the real lyrical melodic lines—like the way Barry Harris can play, Tommy Flanagan, McCoy Tyner, and Bill Evans—that comes from the heart, from inspiration. The best players are tuned into something fine. Art Tatum had to be tuned into something to play so loose and rip off anything he could think of. The great players are really channels for something." **db**

CAUGHT

STANLEY JORDAN

VILLAGE VANGUARD

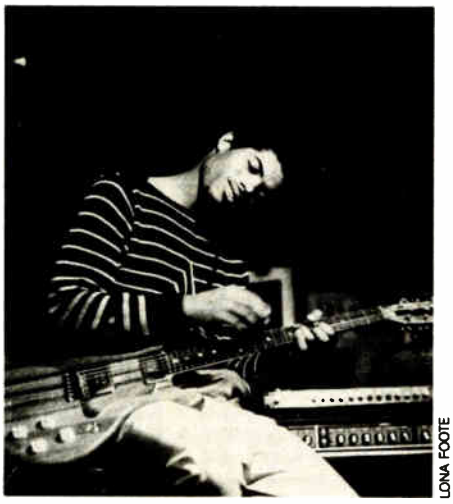
NEW YORK—At age 24 Stanley Jordan finds himself in the singular position of fashioning and mastering a new technique for jazz guitar. Earlier this year at the Kool Jazz Festival here, Jordan made an impromptu appearance as the opening act for Wynton Marsalis and Maynard Ferguson. Demonstrating a style that utilizes both hands on the fretboard, tapping out full-fingered arpeggios and chordal configurations instead of conventional strumming, plucking, or picking, Jordan's pianistic approach lent itself perfectly to his unaccompanied, self-contained performance. Within 15 minutes he nailed down a following.

His first high-visibility, weeklong engagement in this city, auspiciously booked at the Village Vanguard, supported the initial impression he made at Kool—he is a major talent. It also provided evidence that Jordan is most comfortable working as a solo artist, that within a group setting his conception and execution does not always mesh with that of his bandmates.

The night I saw him, before he was joined by the trio of pianist Onaje Alan Gumbs, bassist Anthony Cox, and drummer Jeff Watts, Jordan showcased a thoroughly powerful reading of Monk's *'Round Midnight*, imbuing it with rich, dark stylings that heightened the tune's inherent drama. Both hands flew up and down the guitar neck, contrasting complex passages of ascending and descending lines with fat, block chords that emphasized texture as well as melody. His control of dynamics was especially satisfying.

In his next selection, *Eleanor Rigby*, Jordan imaginatively distilled the haunt and meter of the strings on the Beatle's record and introduced to his rendition a jumble of ethereal figures that functioned similarly. When played behind the stated melody (which he filigreed with shimmering harmonics), the counterpoint waxed surreal. Coming from a lone guitarist, it seemed an improbable—and affecting—version of the song.

Once the other players settled on-stage with Jordan, the guitarist shied away from making bold statements. Relying on solos more conventionally crafted than those he had voiced unaccompanied, Jordan's bluesy inflections often recalled George Benson or Wes Montgomery. Except for an arresting duet with Gumbs on *People In Love*, where the pianist's phrasing and mood evoked Bill



LONA FOOTE

Evans and the guitarist comped and soloed sensitively, Jordan did not favor the same pioneering use of his formidable technique he had proudly displayed earlier.

The answer could be that within the group context Jordan sees a different role for himself, imposing checks on his own enthusiasm and sense of adventure for the sake of maintaining group unity, balance, and integrity. More likely, and this explanation offers the kind of promise we can all hold our breath for, he has not yet figured out, at age 24, with limited stage and studio experience, how to fully integrate and realize his wholly original vision. Stay tuned. Something tells me he will. —*jeff levenson*

ALBERT KING

VENETIAN ROOM/FAIRMONT HOTEL

DALLAS—Opulence and the blues make strange bedfellows. This ritzy dinner-music room, normally the domain of cheesy hotel bands and contemptible crooners, recently began a summer jazz series to attract locals from around the Dallas area. Albert King put in his week with a new band fresh from the Northsea Jazz Festival in Holland. It's safe to say that the Venetian Room never swung so hard, rocked so loud, or felt so blue.

In keeping with the high class ambiance, Albert and company came decked out in tuxedoes with matching red satin bow ties and cumberbunds. It was a far cry from Albert's funkier haunts like Antone's in Dallas or the Lone Star Cafe in Manhattan, where hordes of bluespower freaks down shots of Jack and howl like dogs every time the Great One bends a string.

Rather than going for the jugular vein, as Albert Collins does with piercing, trebley Telecaster sound, Albert King creates a warmer sound. But he is by no means any less ferocious. Nobody can bend a string with more sheer force and bite than Albert. Ask Stevie Ray Vaughan or Billy Gibbons or any of the dozens of Texas guitar slingers who idolize the man. And if you want to know where Jimi Hendrix got his blues-inflected Strat sound from, you needn't look any farther than Albert. B. B. King may have the vibrato, but Albert's got the string action. His guitar is rarely in tune, yet he can miraculously bend and squeeze the right note out every time. His command over Lucy (his guitar) is astonishing.

Albert's six-piece backup was as good a band as he's ever fielded. They could lay down a scorching groove, as they did on a jumped-up version of Buddy Miles' *Them Changes*, or drop in subtle fills with great finesse, as on a subdued version of *Kansas City*. Bassist Gus Thornton, drummer Dave Jefferson, and pianist Johnny Johnson, a Basie-styled economical player, kept the rhythm cooking on a low flame. Organist Larry Bradford, trombonist Ed Earley, and gutsy tenor saxophonist Ron Lewis proved to be exciting soloists, when they got the chance.

But the show was clearly focused on Albert's string-bending power. He doesn't grimace much, unlike B. B., and he doesn't move around much on-stage, which is hardly true of Albert Collins. He just stands there with his patented Gibson Flying V and makes the thing sigh. This evening Albert seemed to be putting a lot of care and concentration into his vocals. His rich falsetto pleas on Ray Charles' *Outskirts Of Town* hit home with this crowd. And his mournful rendition of Elmore James' *The Sky's Crying* was delivered with more conviction and control than he's exercised over his singing in years.

He's shed some 30 pounds, but he's as strong and formidable as ever. And this band pushes him more than any other he's had in recent memory.

—*bill milkowski*

JAZZ COALITION CONCERT SERIES

1369/OLD CAMBRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

CAMBRIDGE, MA—The Jazz Coalition rebounded from a fallow year with a wel-

STEPHEN DEJESUS

From left, guitarist Joe Morris, drummer Laurence Cook, bassist Sebastian Steinberg.

come welter of modest yet intriguing concerts on their own in the newly redone churches around Harvard Square and in dual efforts with the 1369 Club in Inman Square to polish off a fat fiscal year matching grant of $10,000 from the MA Council of Arts and Humanities.

German bassist Peter Kowald and guitarist Joe Morris played solo/duos; Jerry Gonzalez and Gene Golden came up from New York to jam percussion with highly spiced Afro-salsa combo Rice & Beans; alto wizard Lee Konitz and pianist Harold Danko teamed two nights in steamy duo; Mali balafon-plunker Yaya Diallo joined with percussionists Syd Smart and Samm Bennett. The last night, showcasing the B.I.G. (Boston Improvisers' Group), featured two solos (Billy Bang's violin and Lowell Davidson's aluminum double-bass) and two trios (Joe Morris with drummer Laurence Cook and bassist Sebastian Steinberg, and trumpeter Raphé Malik with Smart and bassist William Parker).

Danko and Konitz fit temperamentally hand-in-glove; the pianist's ethereally shifting harmonies and gentle swing let Konitz heft each note and dance each beat, pivoting in unexpected directions. Wherever he turns seems right, and his uncertain vulnerability makes you cheer each step. One surprising set included *Just Friends*, a *Body And Soul* cut of a piece, Danko's dionysiac *Wild As Springtime*, a Chick Corea tribute to Monk called *Hairy Canary*, Chopin's *E Minor Prelude* uptempo, *Cherokee* reflectively, *Ezz-thetic* expansively, and Danko's exquisitely lilting *Spinning Waltz*.

Morris opened the B.I.G. closer, his guitar pinging trebly like a lanky mandolin (another of his axes) on brief ostinato figures that deepen with variation and repetition, taking on new layers of meaning cross-fired by Steinberg's rock-like bass and Cook's web of intrigue on tambourine, cymbal-sticks, and snare thuds (on cloth). At least one critic has called Morris' music "aural pointillism," an apt comment: as you back off from the spare strum and line and the "tight, simple" structures, you gain gradual perspective on a rich, quilted fabric. Morris, not one to whip out his considerable technique, is clearly seeking new approaches and a lucid cohesiveness of presentation, but it takes work for the listener to plumb it out of the biting, saxphrased lead lines.

Bang's violin sculpted airy sonatine genis, spun off an endless succession of ideas both pretty and clever; he was brilliant, cherubic, inspirational. His free improvisations incorporate smears and loose intonation; appropriate and even desirable in the African tradition, they seemed out of sorts, even satirical, when applied to the standard ballad *Lover Man*, somehow deserving a sweeter homage. Yet Bang made me get up and bravo his closing meditation on Butch Warren's *We're In It For The Music*.

Raphé Malik has a clear, full trumpet sound and a broad, playful conception, not characteristics one ordinarily associates with avant garde style, though he has worked years with Cecil Taylor. His horn spews fire yet remains whole, like the phoenix. This trio played one long composition with quite a bit of written material played uptempo. I'd have preferred more editing (more pieces, textures, tempos), but Malik is playing assuredly and brightly, and Parker and Smart understood and encouraged him.

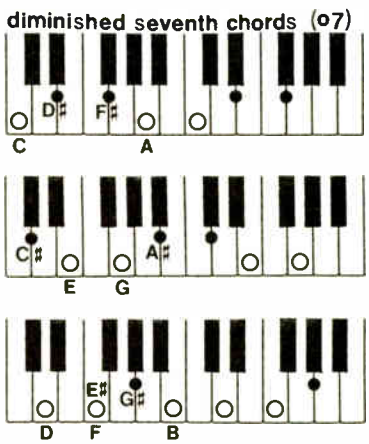
Lowell Davidson's ears are so big that his expressive needs spill over from piano to performing on bass and drums as well. His rapt exercises in sonics on a specially constructed aluminum bass sounded more electric than acoustic (growling hollowly from an air duct), and he has the unerring grasp of how to make you hear him. I prefer his taut, insistent small-kit drumming or, better yet, his spidery, encompassing piano (remember his '67 ESP Disk debut?). —*fred bouchard*

PRO SESSION

HOW TO handle diminished seventh chords

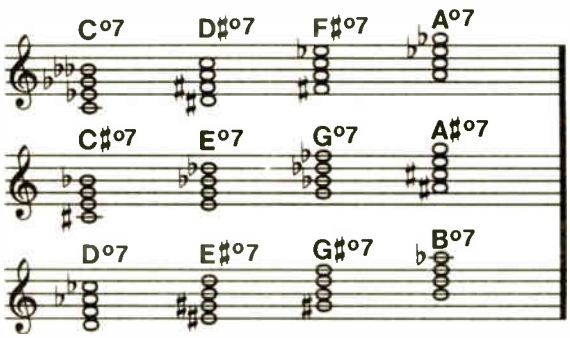
BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

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



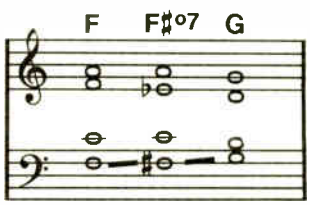
In the condensed keyboard display at right, each set of four consecutive circles and dots shows one of the 12 diminished seventh chords. The first keyboard shows the four diminished seventh chords whose roots are C, D♯, F♯, and A; the second keyboard shows another four whose roots are C♯, E, G, and A♯; and the third keyboard shows the remaining four, those whose roots are D, E♯ (F), G♯, and B.

In notation, these 12 diminished seventh chords stack up in minor thirds as follows:



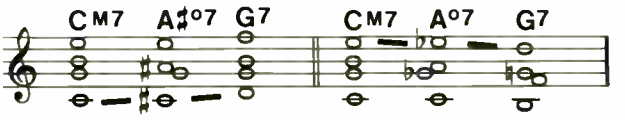
As can be seen in the examples, each diminished seventh chord contains two tritones: one from root up to fifth; the other from third up to seventh. These most energetic of intervals contribute harmonic thrust whenever a diminished seventh occurs along a chord progression. In short, diminished seventh chords add energy to harmony.

Whenever a voice moves by whole step between two chords, the chromatic note in the middle of that whole step can be part of a diminished seventh which connects those two chords. In the example at right, for instance, the bass note F in the F chord moves by whole step to become the bass note G in the G chord. And the bass note F♯ becomes part of the F♯°7 chord, which connects the F and G chords:

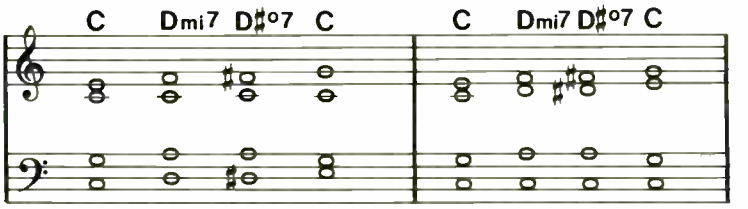


Whenever more than one voice can move by whole step from one chord to another, more than one diminished seventh can connect the two chords. In C Maj. 7 to G7 progression, for example, either C or E can move by whole step to D. Either C♯ or E♭ therefore can be part of a connecting diminished seventh chord, as shown

by the heavy lines in the following example:

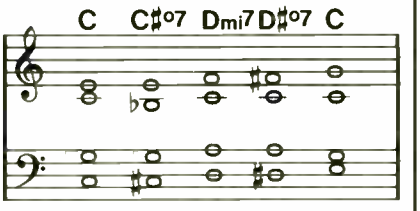


Any chromatic melody note offers an opportunity for a diminished seventh to connect two chords. Here are two versions of a common melodic phrase which uses D♯°7 to connect D min. 7 and C:



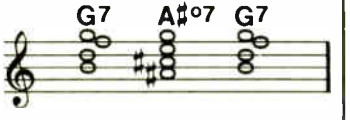
Played as shown—C, D min. 7, D♯°7, C—this progression harmonizes the first four melodic notes of *I'll Walk Alone*, *Melancholy Baby*, *I Left My Heart In San Francisco*, *Love In Bloom*, *The Waltz You Saved For Me*, *Girl Of My Dreams*, *Dixie Melody*, and dozens of other tunes. Played backwards—C, D♯°7, D min. 7, C—the same progression harmonizes the first few notes of *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, *Beautiful Ohio*, *Song Of India*, *Moon Of Manakoora*, *Basin St. Blues*, *Birth Of The Blues*, and many other melodies.

When C♯°7 is added to the same progression as a connection between C and D min. 7, a rising chromatic bass moves from C in the bass to E in the bass:



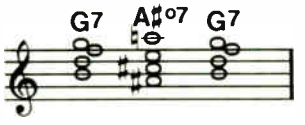
This progression harmonizes the first melodic segment in *Makin' Whoopee*, *Memories Of You*, and *Liza*, and harmonizes the second melodic segment of *Birth Of The Blues*, right after the first four notes.

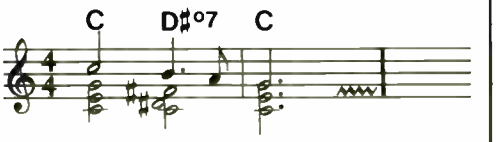
Inserting a diminished seventh chord between two repeated chords of another type enlivens the harmony. Harmonic energy increases, for example, when A♯°7 appears between two G7 chords:



Melodic segments made from notes in each successive chord will fit such progressions. Against the above G7-A♯°7-G7 progression, for example, melodic notes G-G-G, F-E-F, D-C♯-D, B-A♯-B or D-E-F, F-E-D, D-C♯-B, B-C♯-D, G-A♯-B, B-A♯-G and G-E-G, F-C-F, D-G-D, B-G-B, and so on all derive from successive chords and thus fit the progression.

In addition, diminished seventh chords sometimes harmonize melody notes which are not part of the chord. These non-harmonic melody notes sound attractive when they replace some chord note and lie a whole step above that replaced note. In the two examples below, melody note A natural replaces chord note G in the A♯°7 chord, while melody note B replaces chord note A in the D♯°7 chord:





The melodies of both *Makin' Whoopee* and *Birth Of The Blues* further demonstrate

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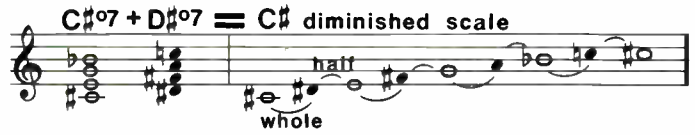
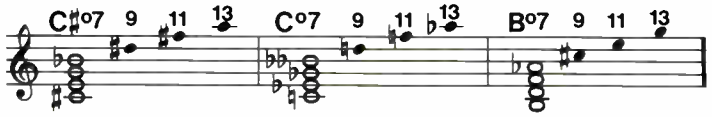
the appeal of non-harmonic notes lying a whole step above the notes they replace in diminished seventh chords.

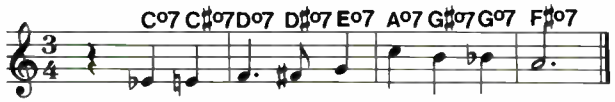
The four non-harmonic replacement notes and the four actual chord notes in a diminished seventh together make up the eight-note scale commonly used to improvise melody against a diminished seventh chord. In this scale, which is nothing more than the notes of two diminished seventh chords a whole step apart, whole steps alternate with half-steps, as shown by the large and small arcs in the example:



The non-harmonic notes in any given diminished scale make ideal diminished seventh chord extensions—ninths, IIths, and 13ths. Here are three different diminished seventh chords and non-harmonic notes from each of their scales shown as added ninths, added IIths, and added 13ths. Adding one or more of these particular extensions will intensify the harmonic energy of each chord:



The remaining and rarest use of diminished seventh chords is simply to harmonize ascending or descending chromatic melody segments with parallel diminished seventh chords:



db

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Sax attack

Let's have more from the Sax Doctor (**db**, Pro Sessions, July '84). Being a free-lance repair technician myself, I am constantly amazed at the number of players who don't know the basics of horn maintenance and repairs. The information from the Sax Doctor, Emilio Lyons, is a real service to these people.

A knowledgeable customer will put the sloppy or incompetent repairman out of business, and will appreciate the talents and ethics of a pro like Emilio, and the many other exceptional technicians (like myself, I hope), who have nothing to fear from the scrutiny of our clients.

PS: I've been reading **db** for years; wouldn't miss it!

Glen A. Sargent — Camden, ME

Hot for Tapscott

I can't recall reading a **down beat** review that was as stunningly misinformed as Alan Axelrod's crude hatchet job on *The Tapscott Sessions, Vols. 1, 2 & 3* on Nimbus Records (Waxing On, **db**, June '84).

Please, here is a man who for over 25 years has labored in obscurity to perfect his musical vision. I own *Volumes 1* and *2* of this series and have seen Tapscott a number of times here in Los Angeles. His music is beautiful and entirely uncliched.

down beat could do all new music fans a favor in the future by having someone review this music who at least understands it.

Judith Lillard — Los Angeles

CITY JAZZLINES

ATLANTA: Jazz Forum Hotline (404) 288-8822
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS: Jazzline (020) 267764
BALTIMORE: Left Bank Jazz Society Jazzline (301) 945-2266
BOSTON: Jazzline (617) 262-1300
BUFFALO: Jazz Society Jazzline (716) 875-3397
CHICAGO: Jazz Institute of Chicago Hotline (312) 666-1881
CINCINNATI: WNOP Jazzline (606) 581-6873
CLEVELAND: NE OH Jazz Society Jazzline (216) 421-2266
COLUMBUS, OH: Jazzline (614) 965-9229
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LOS ANGELES: Jazz Guide (213) 879-5546
MIAMI: Jazz Hotline (305) 382-3938
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NEW YORK: Jazzline (212) 463-0200
ORLANDO, FL: Jazz Alliance Hotline (305) 788-2327
OTTAWA, CANADA: Jazzline (613) 232-7755
PHILADELPHIA: Jazz Society (215) 876-0761
PHOENIX: Hotline (602) 254-4545
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RICHMOND, VA: Jazz Society (804) 321-1972
SAN FRANCISCO: Jazzline (415) 521-9336; Bay Area Jazz Society (415) 540-6345 ex. 172
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TUCSON: Jazz Society Hotline (602) 623-2463
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WASHINGTON, DC: Trad Line (202) 532-8723

different sound.

SY: Tell me about the two records you did in 1974 with Sweets Edison. They are certainly a bit unusual for your discography.

GD: I got a call from Ray Brown; we used to do dates together with Quincy Jones. He asked if I wanted to play with Harry "Sweets" Edison and Herb Ellis. I said sure, it'll be a change. I had a great time; they're great players. It gave me something different to do, a new outlet. I'm sort of a dual personality, musically speaking. I have my commercial side, which earns me a living, and I love it, and I have another side that needs to be fulfilled, that is not quite commercial. So I did those dates for the love of it. I'd like to record some more stuff with Ray Brown and those guys, and really record it well.

SY: In 1975 you teamed up with Billy Cobham in a very rock-oriented group.

GD: Yes, I decided to leave Frank at that time. Just the other day he called me up again to ask if I wanted to go on the road with him again. I have too many commitments, but he's a great guy. Anyway I'd decided to try something on my own, and I always got along well with Billy. We made one record, and I have another record in the can from that group. That band was better than the record that was released. After a while I decided that I wanted to do more vocal music, so we eventually broke up that group.

In 1979 when the music business was going down a bit, I decided to make my record producing into an alternate career, something I could do till I was 90—another challenge, another goal.

SY: How would you describe the music that you've been playing during the past year with Stanley Clarke?

GD: What we do is have fun. He came to the same realization that I did, although a little later than me. When we did the first Clarke/Duke Project record, he stopped one day and complained, "We're having too much fun in here!" He eventually came around to not taking the music over-seriously. He's a great musician and has such a presence. I've learned a lot from him. We play sort of a funny r&b music with rock elements. I love playing with him. It was a small group that we took on tour, but we sounded like a big electric band. We tried to do something different for our albums. We figured out that everyone would expect us to do a fusion-jazz record, so we decided to surprise people and play pop music. *Sweet Baby*, a pop ballad, is the biggest record I ever had on my own.

SY: How about your future goals?

GD: I'll be doing a lot of touring after I make my next record. I'm serious about becoming an artist again because I've been behind the scenes for a while. I want to play again. Now that I have a Synclavier, it'll be easier to finish my opera. I have a lot of things happening that go far beyond making No. 1 pop albums. I want to go back to Brazil and do another Brazilian record. I want to record my opera, and I want to do a jazz record just for fun. In fact Joe Sample and I have been talking about doing a record together.

SY: Are there any musicians who you'd like to record with whom you haven't played with in the past?

GD: Miles Davis! He taught me how to play, even though I didn't know him personally. His records taught me what music is all about. I went to see him at the Hollywood Bowl recently, and afterwards Stanley Clarke and I ran into Miles at a restaurant. Stanley said to him, "Hey, when are we gonna do a record together?" Miles said jokingly, "Okay, but we can't use him," pointing to me, "'cause he's too funky!" [*Laughter*] It's a little joke of course, but I would really love to record with him.

SY: Is there anything you'd like to add?

GD: Yes, I'd like to say that as a young musician I found **down beat** to be invaluable. I used to read everything in it. It was a very strong asset to my career, and I'm glad it is around. **db**

PRO SHOP

MUSIC and SOUND PRODUCTS

PERCUSSION SHOP

Pearl's Zebra Stripe Drum Set

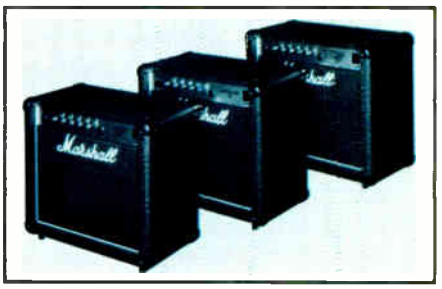
Put a little bite on your skins with the striking new Safari Series drums from PEARL INTERNATIONAL INC. (Nashville, TN). The den includes three species: Zebra Stripe, Tiger Stripe, and Crimson Tiger Stripe. Not an animal lover? Then check out the other two custom finishes: Ichiban (sunrise) and AVH Stripe (vertical black and white stripes). Round out the setup with Pearl's "wild" CX-600 cymbals.

BRASS LAND

Conn's Doc Severinsen 1000B Trumpet

New from C.G. CONN LTD. (Elkhart, IN) is the Doc Severinsen 1000B trumpet, a student-priced instrument that incorporates many features usually found only in pro models. Designed by *The Tonight Show* maestro (and Conn veep of product development), the 1000B offers a rose-brass bell with bell wire construction, adjustable first and third slides for positive tuning, and inner slides of nickle. Pistons are chamfered top and bottom, and hand-lapped for precision fit. Phosphorous-bronze valve springs are designed for fast, positive locking; valve stems are corrosion-resistant and gold-annodized. The 1000B comes complete with a 7C mouthpiece and deluxe, wood-shell case.

SOUND GEAR



Marshall's 20-Watt Combo Amps

Three new solid-state combo amps from MARSHALL (England) are now available stateside via UNICORD (Westbury, NY). The 5002 Lead, 5302 Keyboard, and 5502 Bass models each contain a 10-inch Celestion speaker and deliver 20-watts in a single-channel configuration with master volume controls. The treble, bass, and middle tone controls on each amp have been optimized for their specific application. This specialization, combined in a compact, lightweight package, makes the Marshall Combos ideal for practice, recording, or club use.

GUITAR FAMILY

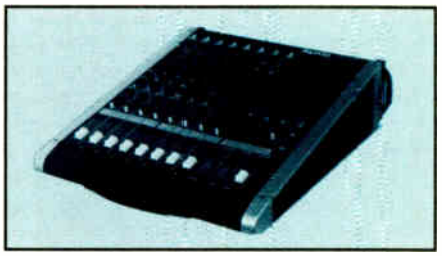
Washburn's Custom FV-30 and B-70

As part of a special artist endorsement deal, Quiet Rioters Carlos Cavazo and Rudy Sarzo commissioned WASHBURN (Buffalo Grove, IL) to construct custom axes for the rockers, and they're now available in a limited edition to the public. Cavazo's FV-30 Flying V guitar comes in two color schemes and is outfitted with three fully encapsulated pickups for a wide range of tonalities from crunching heavy metal to a delicate, rhythmic single-coil sound. Sarzo's B-70 bass features a solid ash body in a black finish, with a full-scale, three-piece maple neck, ebony fingerboard, and 22 jumbo nickle-silver frets; a unique rotary switch allows either in- or out-of-phase playing, with a choice of one or both pickups. Both axes can be ordered with or without tremolo.

KEYBOARD COUNTRY

Roland MIDI Mother MKB-300

The MKB-1000 and MKB-300 MIDI Mother keyboards, recently unveiled by the ROLANDCORP US (Los Angeles) help combine the feel and dynamic expressiveness of traditional instrumentals with the limitless possibilities of electronic music. Both keyboards are master or "mother" keyboards—the MKB-1000 has 88 wooden, piano-action keys; the MKB-300 offers lighter, faster action with 76 plastic keys. Both send dynamic, velocity information through their MIDI outputs, allowing the user to change a wide variety of settings on any of the "slaved" sound sources in the MIDI chain, including: patch change info (up to 128 programs in eight band banks); key transposition (digitally displayed); keyboard split points (variable, and also digitally displayed); MIDI channel assignment (on both upper and lower portions of the keyboard); mode change (dual, split, or whole); and modulation depth, rise time, bender, soft pedal, and damper pedal.



RAMSA's WR-S208 Portable Mixer

RAMSA (via PANASONIC, Secaucus, NJ) recently introduced three new stereo mixer consoles designed to fill the needs of a wide range of sound environments. Models WR-S208, WR-S212, and WR-S216 have eight, 12, and 16 inputs respectively. All models can be used with a variety of input sources; two channels on each have stereo inputs for both line and phono inputs; mono inputs are electronically balanced for mic and line inputs. Each console has three send circuits—a pre-fader foldback circuit, a post-fader effect send, and a switchable pre-/post-fader send for either foldback monitoring or effects. Each board has three main outputs, which are selectable. All mic inputs incorporate 48-volt phantom power supply. A three-band equalizer allows precise adjustment of all input signals. The extensive monitoring system capabilities feature 12-point LED bar graphs—three on the WR-S208, four on the other two models. **db**

not much on ballads. Don Priestrup had written a lovely version of *Alfie*, and every night it got faster and faster until it became a fox trot. So I turned around one night and said to Buddy, 'Well, if we're going to play it this fast, I'd rather not play it,' and he said, 'Well, you've got two weeks.' So I worked out my two weeks and came to Los Angeles."

The West won out over the East as the new home for Watts, and well that it did. "I knew people in both towns," he relates, "but I picked L.A. because it seemed like a better place to live. I don't particularly like New York. I like a place where you can see distance. I like the feeling of space.

"Then when I got here, I found out more people knew me than I expected. I first started subbing for [saxophonist] Bill Green, then [trumpeter] Bobby Bryant introduced me to Al Lapin, the contractor for NBC. I was subbing for [altoist] Gabe Baltazar when Al asked me to go on staff, so I was on NBC staff the last two or three years it existed. Then at the same time, *The Tonight Show* was coming out two or three times a year for two-to-three weeks at a time. Doc Severinsen, who knew me from Buddy's band, because he and Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon came by often to hear Buddy, asked me to join *The Tonight Show* band, and I've been a permanent member since 1972."

While Watts admits he was looking for another band job after he left Rich ("I still had dreams of working with someone like Miles"), the lucrative arena of the studios soon captivated him. But he kept the fires of his jazz career burning, working with Gerald Wilson's big band, Bobby Bryant's orchestra (which backed Thelonious Monk at the Monterey Jazz Festival), guitarist Lee Ritenour's fusion ensembles, and leading various incarnations of his own quartet. To this day he remains in charge of a small band, a unit spotlighting his original compositions and the talents of pianist Billy Childs, bassist Joel DiBartolo (a *Tonight Show* associate), and drummer Bob Leatherbarrow.

But he isn't pursuing regular night club work for this outstanding band. "I played some of the clubs out here every week for years," he notes with disenchantment, "but people just didn't come out. Friends would say they'd be there, but there were far more nights with five people in the house than there were with crowds jammed to the walls. That's discouraging. I got to the point where I didn't want to play, especially after putting in a hectic day in the studios.

"I've come to believe that it's better for me to work intermittently, so I'm involved with the Cameron Agency, a management company, and Willard Alexander's firm. They're booking me onto college campuses to conduct master classes and seminars. I also have some arrangements of my tunes which I can play with a college band or orchestra. I like the idea of playing in small theaters, like the ones you find at schools. At least there you know the people come to hear you play, not like in a bar, where there's the constant rap of people on the make or musicians' criticizing your playing. The rudest people to musicians are musicians."

When Watts appears, either for that occasional local night club date, or at a concert, he'll more often than not drag out his special pride and joy, the saxophone synthesizer, which was devised by reed artist Bill Perkins, himself a longtime veteran of West Coast clubs and studios. "Bill and I were talking about how to acquire some of the sounds and color possibilities of a synthesizer, without having to spend 20 years becoming piano technicians. So Bill came up with the idea of wiring each key on the horn to an electro-magnetic switch. Then we got together with Jim Cooper, who used to build for Oberheim, and he figured out how to interface the saxophone with the computer in the synthesizer.

"So what happens is that the saxophone goes directly into the synthesizer. The wires from each key are hooked into one big cable which goes into the synthesizer; its microprocessor has been fed information which tells it the saxophone keyboard is the piano keyboard. Thus, it automatically transposes, and suddenly you have all these wonderful functions available. The possibilities are truly endless."

Watts will probably use the synthesizer on his next Qwest album, a long overdue follow-up to his Grammy-winning *Chariots Of Fire*. (That last album was cut in the middle of his 1981 fall tour with the Rolling Stones, and Watts can be seen, wailing heartily on his tenor saxophone, in *Let's Spend The Night Together*, a film shot live at various Stones' concerts.) "I haven't made the record," he says, "because I don't know what I want to record. I don't want to do another cover record, that's for sure. It's difficult to come up with a commercially marketable album that's musically relevant. But I'm working on it."

Watts spends his free time at the home he shares with Debby Cain, whom he met on the Stones tour. They like to work in the garden ("We've got some great tasting vegetables growing out there"), watch tv, take care of their numerous animals, and concentrate on living spiritually. "Mainly, I'm just interested in being as good as I can be as a person. That's why I think I was meant to be a sideman rather than a leader . . . to be a helper, to give in that way." **db**

continued from page 14

HANS GRUBER

TEUTONIC BOP: *Nearly 200 students recently gathered at the second International Jazz Workshop in Tübingen, West Germany, for master classes in theory, improv, and group playing, plus evening concerts. The score-and-more all-star faculty included (back row, from left) John Leisenring, Ron McClure, Birger Sulsbruck, George Bouchard, David Baker; (front row) Mike Shannon, Slide Hampton, Fred Braden, Howard Roberts, Steve Erquiaga, Bobby Watson, Phil Degreg, Adam Nussbaum, Hal Galper, Todd Coolman, Jim McNeely, Sigi Busch; and (not pictured) Jamey Aebersold, Jerry Coker, Art Farmer, Ed Soph, and John McNeil. "I'm amazed at how the high the average level [of musicianship] is here," commented Baker, as McNeely noted that the English was better than in Connecticut.*

HYOU VIELZ

MONGO SALSA: *Fiesta De Salsa, West Germany's first-ever salsa fest, enthralled more than 4,000 at the Tanzbrunnen in Köln. Highlights included the Mongo Santamaria (pictured) Latin Band and Tito Puente & His Salsa Band.*

BRIAN MCMILLEN

NO SPACE IN THIS PLACE: *NYC's Lenox Chalet recently sited a once-in-a-lifetime UFO, Sun Ra and his 100-piece Cosmo Symphonic Omniverse Arkestra; surrounding his core band with a string section and a greatly expanded reed section, Sun Ra wanted to gather "these musicians together and play something they've never been able to play before . . . a journey to far places, music from the celestial connection." Pictured from left are . . . oh, forget it.*

MUS. ED. REPORT

Pay for play

The 1984 Percussive Arts Society **Ludwig Symposium Scholarship** was awarded to Susan Powell, a 13-year-old percussionist from Casper, WY . . . meanwhile, don't forget the **PAS International Convention** is set for 11/1-4 in Ann Arbor, MI; details from PAS, POB 697, Urbana, IL 61801.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The **International Art Of Jazz Inc.** (at SUNY/Stony Brook) recently announced their '84 scholarship winners; $500 awards went to trumpeters Judd Danby (from Wading River, NY) and Michael Henderson (Amityville, NY), drummer Ray Holmes (West Hempstead, NY), and saxophonist Michael Weisberger (Setauket, NY); $100 special recognition awards were granted to pianists Linda Scott (Lindenhurst, NY), Scott Treibitz (Levittown, NY), and Peter Schneider (Seaford, NY), trumpeter Adam Henry (Malverne, NY), and drummer Jerome Smith Jr. (Hempstead, NY).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Palo Alto Records, *Keyboard*, and the National Assn. of Jazz Educators have announced the recipients of four **Bill Evans Jazz Piano Scholarships**; the winners include Ron Ward, 26 years old, from Berkeley, CA ($1,000); John Seppala, 22, Allston, MA ($1,000); Kevin Zoernig, 26, Santa Fe, NM ($500); and Mark Lebrun, 23, Dallas ($500).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Elsewhere, the **Los Angeles Chapter of NARAS** has awarded scholarships to three students in the Commercial Music Dept. of the L.A. Valley College: Rob Kyle (flute, tenor sax), Early McCallister (bari sax), and Sal Panelli (trumpet, flugelhorn).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Grace Notes: Grammy-winner **Rob McConnell** has added the 1984 International Arranger's Award to his honors, courtesy of the Dick Grove School of Music (L.A.); the award came complete with scholarship to be given in McConnell's name . . . **Douglas Walter**, a second-degree jazz major at William Paterson College (Wayne, NJ) won the '84 Concert Artists Guild Award; he is the first mallet percussionist to ever win the honor, which was established in '52 . . . **Dr. Billy Taylor** recently shared his musical genius in an L.A. workshop with 50 students representing members of McDonald's All-American High School Jazz Band and various local high schools; the workshop was taped and edited for use by h.s. band directors; also available from the Big Mac is their Black History Through Music Curriculum Kit designed to teach music history to students from kindergarten thru h.s.; details from Frank Gihan at McDonald's, (312) 887-3429 . . . video cassettes of **Remo's Hands-On Clinics**, featuring Louie Bellson and other notable sticksters clinicizing on PTS and other Remo gear, are now available for dealer use and educational purposes; $20 in either Beta or VHS; contact Rick Drumm at Remo Inc., 12804 Raymer St., North Hollywood, CA 91605 . . . get the beat from **Dial-A-Drum**, a recorded lesson for the rhythm-minded; (516) 292-0838. □

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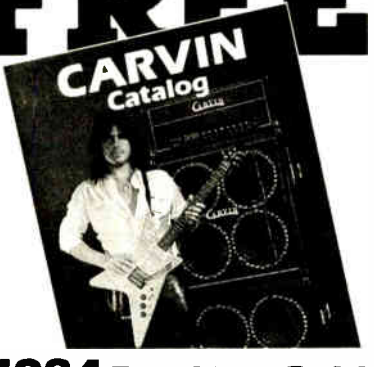

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A Musician Critiques Critics

BY DAVID LIEBMAN

I admit it! Having a musician writing about critics is asking for trouble. However, I feel that certain things should be pointed out every so often. Nothing new, but it needs to be said.

My thoughts are not all negative concerning critics. The functions of illuminating the public, sorting out the obvious trash, and making suggestions as to how the art is to be perceived are all necessary. And as an artist, there's another positive element which I personally appreciate. I remember reading a review of one of my records. In giving his impressions of one composition, the critic pointed to images that I had never realized. This represents to me an important way by which an artist grows: his mental images should continue to expand via any means possible—even by a review! I was grateful for the reviewer's help in gaining more understanding of myself.

Another aspect which I have found fascinating is that of the reviewer placing the work into its historical context. He informs as to the antecedents of the style and its main exponents. In short, the critic gives an historical evolution of what by now is an established art form with a legacy. These facets of the art of criticism are all well and good. Also, it is the bare minimum for which a writer could justifiably be paid for.

In fact, it is all well and good that the music business exists in all its manifest forms: promotion people, pressing companies, radio stations, record companies, and so on. However, the musicians who make it all possible have to be able to make a decent living in order to continue creating. Can I assume that most readers will agree that the state of affairs is a bit out of proportion in this respect? Some musicians are doing very well, while most can't make out at all. Wouldn't a more equal situation create increased artistic vitality as well as its accompanying business spin off? I feel the situation could be more equitable if the critics were aware of the direct affect they have on our livelihoods.

Why should I as a musician care if I'm insulted as an artist; my sincerity and judgment questioned; my life's work categorized under some broad, possibly inaccurate classification, and then the door locked with the key thrown away? Let me tell you how such criticism affects us.

GERARD FUTRICK

David Liebman

A jazz musician must travel to earn a living. Japan and Europe have been main areas of performing for several decades now. Festivals and concerts take place much more often there than in the U.S. (a big reason for this is government support and state-run radio). Promoters and record producers are greatly influenced by the media, both here and abroad. (This article is not restricted to American critics; some of the worst journalism is overseas.) Reviews definitely affect our ability to work in these contexts. A negative review or consistently ignoring a musician's work means he doesn't get gigs! Is this because the artist is really not good or because they're not current, new, or "hot"?

What goes up must come down. A new, "hot" item will be old next year. This is to be expected. However, that "item" (i.e. musician) must still continue to earn a living and feel some self-esteem from his work. Self-respect is essential to everyone's well-being, especially true for the artist.

The reviewer's dilemma is one of context. Nothing is all positive or negative. It's the proper placement of criticism in its musical perspective that should be utilized to a greater extent. The idea is to educate the public towards what to listen for, so they can judge music more intelligently. This is the intellectual underpinning of criticism, alongside its other functions mentioned earlier.

The critic should make it clear why the artist is good or bad based on considerations such as accurate historical and stylistical categorization; the overall evolution of the artist; the views of the artist towards his work (when available on albums and in interviews); influences that may or may not be apparent; precedence for the work; etc. Also, has the critic heard the artist live and on record, so a full view of what a jazz musician is about can be discerned?

But above all, there must be respect for the individual's work by the reviewer. He should feel that there is value in the artist's work and that it needs to be communicated. If he hears nothing that he feels is positive, then why not pass on it? Being totally negative is of no value to the public, musician, or critic, unless the critic feels that there are deep philosophical, sociological, or psychological questions that must be brought out. If it's that serious, the negativism has a point. Otherwise, why bother?

I have had good and bad reviews,and with the negative ones, I have agreed on occasion with the reviewer. I have also had no reviews for long periods, for whatever reasons. I am totally convinced that critics and reviewers have a symbiotic relationship and are naturally adversaries. But the critics, and more importantly the publications themselves, should be aware of the effects of the media upon the art itself. Writers should not be hired for enthusiasm only, but upon experience and proven in-depth opinions.

It seems to me that most critics are/were musicians themselves. To be sure, you don't go into jazz for love of money. But I wonder how many critics are frustrated musicians with less than average talent, and in some strange psychological manner are venting their artistic impulses when reviewing. Do they wish they were on the bandstand or that the music sounded like *they* would play it (if they could)? These are unanswerable questions, but it makes you wonder about some of the scathing language or indifferent attitudes exhibited by some critics.

Ultimately it's up to the public to exert their influence through letters and consumer power. But even more importantly, a reader must realize the obvious: he/she is reading the opinion of one individual only; the critic's feelings are not to serve as a substitute for forming one's own opinion. The reader should be aware of the use of sensationalism and instant acclaim of the new for the sake of newness. Unfounded negative criticism works as a detriment to the valuable attributes jazz has to offer: the results of cooperation, respect, and love for a highly personal form of self-expression. **db**

Saxophonist David Liebman has performed with Miles Davis and Elvin Jones in addition to leading his own bands. His most recent album is Solo *(P.M. Records).*

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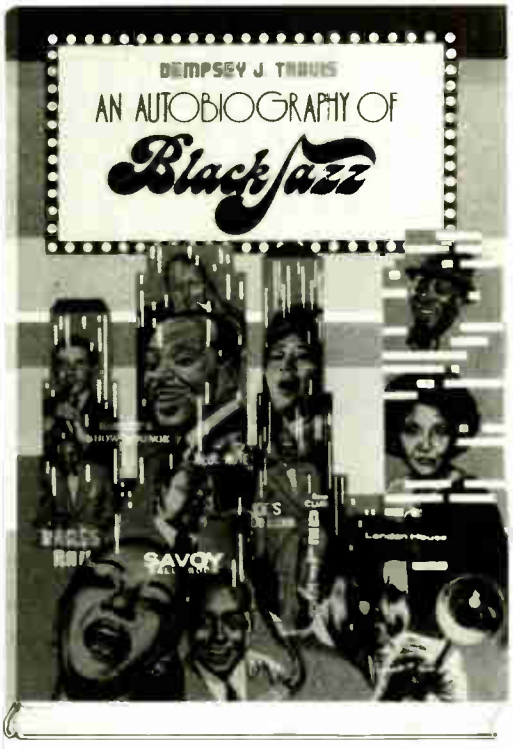

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