

PROFILE: Bill Nelson

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down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

Stanley Jordan

THE MAGIC TOUCH



Joe Jackson

SOPHISTICATED POP

Paul Motian

DRUM LEGACY

Paul Winter

ONE-WORLD MUSIC

AD LIB:
The 1932
Stereo
Mystery



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FEATURES

16 STANLEY JORDAN: THE MAN WITH THE MAGIC TOUCH

Now that the initial awe and disbelief have settled behind him, the innovative guitarist is digging in for his next assault on audiences and the charts. Gene Santoro tells us what's on tap.

20 JOE JACKSON'S SOPHISTICATED POP

Far from his previous role as purveyor of preppy punk-rock, this songwriter's political and humanistic concerns have him pegged as the thinking man's pop star, as Bill Milkowski learns.

23 POETRY IN MOTIAN

Paul Motian's place in drum history is secure—he was one-third of the classic trio with Bill Evans and Scott LaFaro. But the lyrical percussionist's eyes are on the future, as he tells Howard Mandel.

26 PAUL WINTER: ONE WORLD MUSIC

Rejecting his "Father of the New Age" tag, the saxophonist prefers to focus his musical attention on questions of ecology, world peace, and audience involvement. Michael Bourne reveals the details.

DEPARTMENTS

6 **On The Beat**, by Art Lange.

10 **Chords & Discords**

11 **News**

14 **Riffs**

30 **Record Reviews:** James Newton; Jimi Hendrix; Linton Kwesi Johnson; Christopher Hollyday; Jon Faddis; Cecil Taylor; Uncaged Melodies (John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, Tone Road Ramblers, Joel Chadabe, Ron Kuivila, Nicolas Collins, Charles Amirkhanian, Elodie Lauten, David Borden); Paquito D'Rivera; Claudio Roditi; Benny Carter; Old Wine, New Bottles (A Drop In The Atlantic Ocean: Eddie Condon, John Coltrane, Tony Fruscella, Ray Charles, Coleman Hawkins/Milt Jackson, Freddie Hubbard); Waxing On: Self-Produced Artists (Borbetomagus, Cool And The Clones, Nat Dixon, The Fringe, Joel Futterman, Vinny Golia, Gonz, Gunter Hampel, William Hooker, Scott Robinson, John Shaw, Allen Youngblood).

43 **Blindfold Test:** Ernie Watts, by Leonard Feather.

44 **Profile:** Bill Nelson, by John Diliberto; Melvin Sparks, by Kevin Whitehead.

48 **Caught:** Composers In Red Sneakers/Lyle Mays, by Fred Bouchard; Les Paul, by Bill Milkowski.

50 **Book Reviews:** *Chuck Stewart's Jazz Files*, by W. Patrick Hinely; *Every Day, The Story Of Joe Williams*, by Chip Deffaa.

54 **Pro Session:** "Joe Jackson: Live And In The Studio," by David Kerstenbaum (with Bill Milkowski).

58 **Pro Shop**

59 **Ad Lib:** "The 1932 Stereo Mystery," by John McDonough.

61 **City Jazzlines**

62 **Auditions:** Student talent deserving recognition.

Cover photograph of Stanley Jordan by Andy Freeberg; Joe Jackson by Laura Levine.

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Joe Jackson

EBET ROBERTS



Paul Motian

MITCHELL SEIDEL



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Melvin Sparks

MITCHELL SEIDEL

down beat

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ow, in retrospect, his life seems such stuff as dreams are made of. Trained as a classical pianist from the age of six, taking up guitar not long afterwards, Stanley Jordan abandoned keyboard for fretboard at age 11, when he heard Jimi Hendrix. By age 15 he had mastered traditional fingerpicking styles and a variety of tunings; a year later, after immersing himself in Art Tatum and Wes Montgomery, he began working with the two-handed technique and straight-fourths tuning that allow him to play pianistic lines on guitar solely by tapping the strings. By 1983 the then-24-year-old had begun touring his music—with its radical implications for guitarists—around the small-club circuit in the Midwest, sleeping on friend's floors and couches; late that fall he brought his act and his self-produced first album, *Touch Sensitive*, to New York's musician's Mecca, 48th Street. Literally: while Stanley strutted his stuff on the sidewalk, doing tunes by Miles and Monk, the Beatles and Led Zeppelin, and himself, a weightlifter pal warded off hasslers and disbursed records at \$6.98 a pop.

Spring and summer of '84 found word on the axewunder getting out, via both the musicians' grapevine and a few journalists, and the buzz built to such an extent that *Kool Jazz Festival* honcho George Wein booked Stanley to open for Wynton Marsalis' Avery Fisher Hall performance. A sold-out week at the Vanguard, a triumphant appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival, loads of press, and a contract with the revitalized Blue Note (Bruce Lundvall had been turned onto Stanley prior to his departure from Elektra/Musician) followed; in January 1985, Jordan's debut album on Blue Note, *Magic Touch*, was released and shot to the top of the jazz charts, where it stayed for 30 weeks, crossing over to the pop charts in the process as well. No matter how you cut it, Stanley Jordan had clearly arrived.

Not without some doubts and cavils to cut back at him, however. Overzealous guitar freaks fastened on his prodigious technique while all-too-often losing touch with its musicality; jazz critics complained of fluffed notes and an overly pop-ish feel; the general public sometimes seemed to hang on him the novelty act label he'd dreaded. But as he flew around the country showcasing his wares in the aftermath of his first successes, Stanley quietly yet insistently made the point over and over, musically and verbally—listen to the music.

Which his new release—on the Manhattan, rather than the Blue Note, label—seeks to underscore, consisting as it does entirely of Stanley's own compositions. While at the time of this interview the actual music for the LP was still in early pre-production, Stanley's remarks provide a clear sense of his direction on the project. He also takes the chance to look back and ahead, to try to put his music, his technique, his stardom, and himself—and the reactions to them—into the kind of perspective developed from his odyssey. Here, then, is Stanley Jordan.

Gene Santoro: How do you deal with the pressures of your success—the can-you-top-this syndrome—now that you're making another record?

Stanley Jordan: Well, I don't really feel like *Magic Touch* is going to be that hard to top. To tell you the truth, I wasn't real satisfied with it artistically. I mean, I felt it was a good coming-

Stanley Jordan: The Man With The Magic Touch

out album and it was solid, and I still enjoy listening to it. But I don't really feel that my best music is represented by it. There are a lot of reasons for that. I guess at the time we did the album, what I was working on in my life wasn't guitar; it was more of a general thing, because the pieces of my life were falling into place. I finally had a comfortable place to live, I was with my family, and I was finally starting to gig regularly, to where I could see a month ahead. So those things were all coming together, plus I had months and months of unfinished business—people I owed money to, that kind of thing. So a lot was going on, which was one of the reasons I didn't get heavily into composing for that album. I just wanted to take the common denominator of where I was at and *present* it. And also, I think I'm one of those people who works better without a producer. Nothing against Al [Di Meola, who produced *Magic Touch*] or anything, but because I didn't feel comfortable with the idea of having a producer on the sessions I don't feel like I was as creative as I could have been.

GS: What made you uncomfortable, the division of labor? Didn't your ideas mesh?

SJ: Well, it wasn't so much that, because that happens anyway; that's part of the dynamic of people working together. But without trying to analyze it, I feel the most comfortable when I'm at home, on my own; I feel like the music really comes out then. The other thing is that, for those sessions, there wasn't really a whole lot of time to do the things that we went in there to do. There were a lot of things I wanted to play around with. For example, *Eleanor Rigby*: I played the whole thing solo guitar, and then we went back and overdubbed the percussion. That was an experiment, but see, I like to do things *over* and *over* until I get them the way I want them. So even though I had this idea that I wanted each song to be a complete performance, I was willing to play 'em again and again and again until I got really good performances; but there just wasn't time to do that the way I wanted to, which was because of the budget. We had just enough to get in there, get the stuff down, and get out, so I think we did well, considering what we had to work with. I'm proud of how it came out, but I also feel that a lot of my best stuff didn't get on there.

GS: Your new LP is on Manhattan rather than Blue Note. Does that signify a difference in musical concept?

SJ: The main difference with this new album is that I'm going to be doing more of my own compositions—that's really where the focus is right now, on the compositions. And I'm going to be concentrating on making the guitar stronger. It's just that I think people will hear the way I hear a little more because it is going to be my own compositions. Also, I'm doing more with electronic instruments. That's always been an interest of mine, and whenever I start seriously thinking about composing I get interested in doing more with electronic instruments, because when I compose I think of sounds that aren't always like traditional instruments. So I need a bigger palette, y'know, like an orchestral palette, to create from. And with Blue Note I can't get the budget I need to use the high-tech equipment I need to do the album. So that's the reason behind the switch to Manhattan. But I would hope that this album will be heard by people who didn't hear *Magic Touch*. It's not like, 'Wow, I need my audience to be much much bigger,' because my audience is already big enough. As many people as I ever hoped would

hear me have already heard me. And that's really a good feeling, because it leaves me free just to create. It's like, once you've made your introductions, said, 'Hi, how're ya doin',' life just unfolds from there.

GS: Thirty weeks on the jazz charts is a pretty heavy intro.

SJ: The technique definitely helped that. What I'm trying to do right now is not be so narrow in my thinking about technique, because I don't want to be associated only with tapping on the neck. My goal is for technique to be the means to an end, and to live and learn more techniques that are appropriate to whatever the music calls for. I'm doing more things with different techniques now, just saying, 'Okay, here's a guitar, what are all the different ways I can use it for musical expression?'

GS: You've been concerned about being stereotyped as a novelty act because of your technique. Are you doing anything to get around that kind of reaction?

SJ: I'm not really going out of my way to get around it, because I feel like if the music's there, then it's there, so all the time I'd have to spend *proving* it I could spend just making the music. Then it's up to people to either hear it or not. Maybe some people *only* care about the technique, or maybe some people just don't like my music. After all, we've all got different tastes; there's an old saying, 'If *everybody* likes you, you ain't shit.' [laughs] My attitude is, just keep playing and don't worry about it. My own attention isn't on the technique anyway; I've been playing this way for 10 years, so I don't even think of it as anything *strange* anymore. It's very special and dear to me, of course, and my latest thing is that I want people to understand it better, how to do it, because it's done a lot for my music and I'm sure it could help other people too. That's why I'm working on an instructional book for 21st Century Music Productions. I've just finished the rough draft now. It'll have an introduction by Al Di Meola, 'cause he definitely steered me the right way to this company—they really care about the music and want to get it out from the musician's point of view, instead of just putting out a songbook or a tape of licks.

What's special about a book is that it can show a side of the creativity that doesn't come out on an album or a video or whatever, because you get to have more of the spiritual side of it. You can say, 'These are the things that I feel when I'm making music,' or, 'This is the real source of my best music, when I try to reach down to the depths of what I have in my soul,' the things you have to confront to get to that. It's important to say those things because it's so easy to miss the point, especially when you're young, 'cause in a way you're spending more time *learning* to play the music than you are really *playing*. It's like a baby has to think about, 'Well, how do these people talk?' But once he starts getting the hang of it the emphasis becomes, 'What am I gonna say?' A lot of teaching materials are so clinical, so much on the surface, that you can get easily distracted by that. [mimics] 'Here's a five-step way to playing 300 pick strokes per minute.' [laughs]

See, I'm telling people that your number-one instrument isn't the guitar, it's *you*; so your warmup stuff is really about getting your self into the right frame of mind. It's not like you look at the guitar and see five voicings you want to play. Sometimes that can happen, but I think most people find their best stuff comes from within, and then they've got to *find* the

voicings to say it. So a lot of the exercises have to do with searching for the inner source and staying connected to it. Start with that, simplify your music totally. People say, 'I can't improvise.' *Sure* you can improvise. Improvise one note per minute at first, then try five—know what I mean? Connect with that creativity first, then gradually build the music back up; and if you lose it, simplify again. That way you get into the feel of not only playing the stuff perfectly but experiencing it right. If you play something perfectly but your mind was distracted that counts as a mistake.

GS: Have you worked out any of the difficulties inherent in your technique, like the problems with dynamic range and bends and so on?

SJ: Yeah, I've learned a lot about the technique from the *human* point of view as well as from the guitar point of view. A lot of that is from my work with Ibanez; they've been very supportive and creative about trying different things with guitars, so we made some discoveries that have definitely helped. But the main thing I've discovered is just listening to it and being more aware of the sound, playing from the sound itself, because the sound guides the touch and everything else. Take the problem with dynamics: that's not so much a *problem*

as it is just that what feels comfortable is already close to the top of the range—there's still plenty of range there. And so what you have to do is turn up the volume and then play very sensitively; that opens up the whole range. It's something that takes more practicing, because it's sort of like walking on rice paper [*laughs*]—make a mistake and *blam*. But it sure builds your sensitivity up quick.

GS: What kind of things have you been working on with Ibanez?

SJ: A lot of it's been the neck. Using the graphite neck has basically solved that problem—that stuff doesn't warp on you. It's a shame, really, 'cause I love the sound of wood, but if you really want the neck to be accurate within the tolerances I need you're better off with a strong material like graphite. Another thing is different types of bridges, with different factors that influence the sound and the ease of the technique relating to the strings. What seems to be a good combination is a flexible bridge and nut so the strings can move around—after all, tapping is bending, so you want to be able to do that with a certain amount of ease and expression. If you put real thin strings on there to get that, you lose sound fidelity, for example, so you've got to find a balance. It's not just a question of what's better for the technique; it's more like understanding how these different things all *affect* the technique, so then you can go about getting what you need. Take Michael Hedges; his use of the technique is very different from mine, it involves *broad* gestures, *sweeping* dynamics and rhythms, so he needs those really heavy strings. For my use I need strings that are very easy to slide around on and bend, because I have a very precise and articulated technique.

GS: Playing with other musicians was something else that presented some difficulties for you at the early stages.

SJ: Yeah. See, with *Magic Touch* the idea was that it was going to be half solo and half group stuff. That worked out, but the collaborations were mainly for the album—let's get together and do these sessions. And at the same time I was flying around the country doing all these gigs, so I only had so much time, and I wound up collaborating with the other musicians *only* for the recording. Whereas now I just want to play with people just to play, to get more of the experience and education, more of the interaction. Out of that will come whatever the album will be.

GS: How does working with other people affect your playing?

SJ: One thing is that, obviously, when you play with other people you don't need to play so many different parts, so it's easier in that respect. But then again, listening—*really* listening—and playing at the same time is kind of tricky; it's easy to think that you're doing it when you're not. But there's nothing like the inspiration of being part of something. When you have to create it all yourself it's a great challenge—and there's something very pure and elegant about listening to the music of one mind, how that mind shapes and directs its thought—but there's nothing like getting people to play together. Especially now, when one person can do more and more because of electronics, I think that people are wondering what in music is going to be taken over by machines and what is going to be left to people. So *now* is the time for people to reaffirm the human side of music, realize it's not just about what sounds we can make, because we can make *any* sound. Now that we can do that, we have to face the fact that music is not just about mathematical permutations and combinations—it's about the experience of *doing* it. Like playing the guitar—there's a physical yoga to it, it just feels good to play. And that's a lot of the reason I play.

GS: How do you find that feel differs from a live to a studio context?

SJ: I think I'm going to adapt more this time to using the studio, because I'm more interested in working the stuff out as a composer. What I was presenting with *Magic Touch* was more the guitar and the sound, and I wanted to put it in a familiar context. But now I'm working on my own musical sounds; the guitar's definitely going to be there, but there'll be more



PAUL ROBICHAU

STANLEY JORDAN'S EQUIPMENT

Stanley Jordan uses Ibanez guitars. He's also got a Roland GR-700 synth, which he finds useful as a compositional tool. His Ibanez synths, he feels, track well enough to be used in performance. His strings are standard light-gauge (high E is .010) Ernie Balls. He occasionally still uses a Roland Jazz Chorus amp, but currently favors his German-made Engl with its 12-inch speaker; it has tubes in the output and preamp sections, for tube overdrive, but incorporates solid-state components for its memory, which allows up to eight preset panel settings. "That way," he smiles, "when I want to shift to a different style or technique, I can just hit the preset for a different volume or tonal level. But it's the sound that makes the amp for me, clean and creamy—just beautiful." Although he's dropped his use of chorusing effects, he's just gotten a new shipment of effects from Ibanez. "I love delays, with that loop, but I'm trying to plan stuff out so I'm not just picking up, learning, and discarding a new piece of gear every month."

STANLEY JORDAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

MAGIC TOUCH—Blue Note 85101
TOUCH SENSITIVE—Tangent 1001

with Various Artists

ONE NIGHT WITH BLUE NOTE: PRE-SERVED—Blue Note 85117



ANDY FREEBERG

emphasis on the compositions. I'm sure I'll be using guitar synth and MIDI, for instance, for coloring at least. I'm more like a constructor now, I'm building music. Although that's a tricky metaphor; some parts are like building, like with an erector set or blocks, but sometimes it's more like mixing liquids or colors.

GS: Jazz fans were among the first to tumble to your music; what kind of things will you be offering them with the new album's different approach?

SJ: Well, the music's going to be constructed, but the elements aren't only going to be polished and controlled. I like that bit of rawness and spontaneity too, so I would never make it sound like I ran the album through the sifter 20 times or something [laughs]. But all the electronic sounds have fascinated me for a long time, since I studied at Princeton; to me it's all just open territory for making music, so I'm not trying to decide what's valid or what's proper. I think it's *all* beautiful. I think you have to have respect for traditional instruments, because it's not *just* about sound. [mimics] 'I can sound like Chuck Mangione's trumpet, so we don't need *him* anymore.' [laughs] That's ridiculous, y'know. But I'll give you an example of something electronic I'm *really* interested in—new methods of timbre synthesis. The one I'm most fascinated by is granular synthesis, founded by people such as Iannis Xenakis. The idea is basically that you take the sound, break it down into these grains of sound, brief tones, and to keep things theoretically simple you assume that each grain has the same time interval. So what you vary is the frequency and amplitude of the grains. Theoretically you can create any sound that way, because there's a limit to what the ear can hear—I've heard estimates range between 800 and 1400 pitches. If you can granulate that, and have a synthesizer that can synthesize those pitches, and have the right kind of parameter control, you can make incredible effects happen. For example, you know how the normal decay of a sound goes, how it sort of shrinks, shrivels up, and then it's gone. With granular synthesis you can *evaporate* a sound, because you can pull out different frequencies at different times and different rates. It's just one example of a little thing, but I *hear* like that, and I would like to be able to work with it.

GS: How are you approaching writing the new material?

SJ: There's all kinds of things I do. It just depends on the song,

you know; they get comfortable different ways. Sometimes I'll hear a sound in my head and develop it. Sometimes I'll have some sort of concept, like with granular synthesis and evaporation, and I'll think, 'How would it sound to evaporate this or that? How does a reverse evaporation sound?' Sometimes I'll just have a feeling from a strong experience, and before I even hear a note I'll say, 'I want to make this into music.' Sometimes I'll think of a person and all the feelings and ideas I have about that person. So sometimes it comes from *within* the music, *within* the sounds, and other times it comes from something else that I'm trying to find sounds to express. Sometimes I have to be very still and quiet for a long time to do that.

GS: What are you thinking about when you're actually playing, then?

SJ: What I'm trying to do is make a song coherent, focus in on its essence, or at least *an* essence that I'm going to use in this performance. It doesn't have to be something you can describe in words or with a reference, like, 'This song reminds me of the day. . . .' Instead it's like, 'The sounds from this song that really seem to do it for me are these and these, so I'm going to try to base whatever I do on those parts.' So I'm trying to follow an emotional line. It's like if you're writing a play, and you have the pacing and the drama, times when it's funny, maybe long sections of suspense. That kind of timing and orchestration of emotions is what I make it all funnel up to on the highest level. To create I'm drawing from the elements of style: harmony, texture, dynamics, all those things. But instead of thinking about those like, 'Music is divided into these categories,' I'm trying to think about them as different angles of getting at what I want. Maybe this time I'll get at it through dynamics, maybe there's a chord that says it another time. A lot of times—especially when I feel like I'm going good—I'm thinking mainly about rhythm. The phrases that come into my mind well up as gestures, or as emotions, or as rhythms. Then it gets more specific—what notes will I use?

GS: How do you hold on to that mental state after doing passes time after time in the studio?

SJ: You do have to pace yourself; sometimes it's good to leave one song and go on to another one. That's the kind of thing I think I can handle better on my own. When there's a producer in there, he's got his own ideas about when it's time to move on and so forth; but those kind of mechanics really burned me out on *Magic Touch*. There were times when we went over a song again and again when it just wasn't happening, where I really needed a break from it; then there were times, like on *Freddie Freeloader*, where the general feeling of the musicians is that the take on the album is *almost* a good one. That was the first take that was good enough to be on the album, and then the one *after* that was more creative, because we *really* started cooking, but it had a lot of mistakes. Maybe another take or two after that one would've been the better take, but we didn't have the time to get to it, you know. I mean, it's hard; I don't know if I really want to be a producer [laughs].

GS: Is there any music you find yourself going back to again and again to listen for inspiration?

SJ: Wes, man, Wes Montgomery. When I first heard Wes I really needed him. Everybody I was listening to at the time treated jazz like it was rock played three times as fast [laughs]. It was such a sigh of relief to hear living evidence in sound that you can create as much excitement as anything with subtlety. That double-album of stuff from the *Half Note*—I think most or all of it was recorded live, he's playing with Wynton Kelly—I love it. He had great technique but he didn't have to show it off all the time; he could really charm you with the sound coming out of his guitar. I think that's the kind of thing I overlooked when I was younger and getting into fusion. Me and my buddies wanted to express something deeper, to get deeper and deeper into it, but to us the only way to do it was *more*, play *faster*. That *is* part of it, but it's only the means to an end. When you're trying to create depth, complexity is sometimes a part of it, but the goal is *depth*, and sometimes you can create it better through simplicity.

db

By Bill Milkowski



Joe Jackson's SOPHISTICATED POP

I didn't want to know about Joe Jackson back in 1978. The hit single from his debut album, *Look Sharp*, dominated AM radio dials in both England and the States. Everywhere you turned it was "Is she really going out with him?"

I didn't care who she was going out with. Juvenile fluff, I harumphed. I had better things to do with my time than to concern myself with the adolescent angst of some brat from across the Atlantic. I lumped him with that nervous-looking, knock-kneed, bespectacled geek who dared take the name of Elvis as his moniker—that other Brit singer/songwriter who was all the rage at the time. And I quickly dismissed the both of them as pop stars—an odious tag to a jazz snob, which is precisely what I was back in 1978 at the ripe old age of 24.

And besides, I was deeply immersed in my Louis Jordan phase at the time. If it didn't jump, swing, or jive, I didn't want to know about it.

Fast forward to 1981. The snarling, cynical young man who had followed up his debut with more "spiv rock" in 1980 (*I'm The Man*) and a reggae-influenced album (*Beat Crazy*) later that year pulls a complete surprise on everyone by releasing *Jumpin' Jive*, his self-produced tribute to the likes of Louis Jordan and Cab Calloway.

Hmmmm... maybe there's more to this lad than I gave him credit for, I thought. And, of course, there was, as Jackson went on to confirm with 1982's *Night And Day*, which made Joe a mass appeal AOR star on the strength of his Grammy-nominated single, *Steppin' Out*. And with that LP he gained newfound respect as a composer of alternately witty and sensitive songs, more sophisticated and worldly-wise than your average punk-rocker. Critics suddenly dubbed him "a New Age Ellington," whatever that means.

Jackson took a stab at soundtracks in 1983, scoring the ill-fated *Mike's Murder*. And in 1984 he released *Body And Soul*, his most pure and personal statement to date. Recorded in a stone-and-wood hall of an ancient Masonic Lodge in Manhattan that had normally been used for classical recordings, this introspective album with its moody Blue Note-ish cover art and liner notes was a direct expression of emotion rather than the detached, ironic observation that marked much of his earlier work.

Jackson went for a clean, dry sound on *Body And Soul*. The band played live and each instrument was close-mic'ed in the studio, recorded on a 3M 32-track digital with solos and overdubs punched in later. That experiment with the live rhythm section worked well, yet he was only scratching the surface. *Body And Soul* was just the tip of the iceberg and would

EBET ROBERTS

eventually lead to his idea for *Big World*—to record an entire album live with no overdubs or re-takes or doctoring in the studio. In other words, a session where what you hear is what you get.

And with a live audience on hand for two shows a night over three consecutive nights at the Roundabout Theater in Manhattan, Jackson was inspired to a fever pitch. He pushed himself and he pushed the band, performing at a level of intensity and sincerity that simply could not be attained in the studio alone with headphones on.

"It's very hard to be inspired in a room by yourself with a few cables lying around," says Joe. "I think I've always performed better in front of an audience, and to finally capture that on record is great. That's all we were going for, really—just trying to capture the *real thing*, better. We were using technology to present reality in a more honest and more exciting way."

Which goes totally against the grain of current rock recording methods that rely on 32 or 48 tracks, with massive overdubbing and sampling effects created strictly in the studio. Though Jackson's direct-to-two-track process is a throwback to bygone days, he's quick to point out that he's no curmudgeon when it comes to the advent of high-tech.

"I'm not making a brave stand against the advance of technology with this album. I think technology is important. It's here to stay, I know that. To ignore that is to say, 'If you were meant to fly, you'd have wings.' I really have no problems with people making records with all the high technology at their disposal. What I have a problem with is when *everyone* does it that way; when records all start to sound the same—very contrived and sterile, starting off with a drum machine, building it up piece by piece, spending months and millions of dollars.

"I mean, people are paying fortunes to have Jellybean [Benitez] or one of those guys remix their records," he adds with a laugh. "It just seems all a little out of proportion. The producers and engineers are becoming the big stars. But I don't see the point of piling fantastic production on top of a mediocre song or a mediocre piece of music. There's so many brilliantly produced mediocre records out there. So getting back to the reasons why we did this live direct-to-two-track, I feel it's a very honest statement. I want people to know, even if they don't like it, that it's a real performance and that no one's had his voice electronically altered to sound in tune. The drums haven't been triggered by drum machines but were actually played by a drummer, and that kind of thing. It's sort of like truth-in-advertising."

* * *
With 15 songs and nearly as many different musical styles to choose from, *Big World* is easily Joe Jackson's



GARY GREEN

most eclectic album yet. Check out this musical menu: *Wild West* (folkish rock), *Right And Wrong* (foreboding funk), *Big World* (Middle Eastern pop), *The Jet Set* ('50s-styled twang), *We Can't Live Together* (soulful lament), *Survival* (blazing rock), *Fifty Dollar Love Affair* (sleazoid schmaltz a la Tom Waits), *Tango Atlantico* (tongue-in-cheek tango music), *Forty Years* (lilting waltz), *Soul Kiss* (honky tonk soul), *Tonight And Forever* (more uptempo hard rock), *Shanghai Sky* (cinematic Chinese-inspired ode).

It's a potpourri of sound, an aural travelog traversing the globe. As Joe explains, "I think my music is a mixture of a lot of different things because I am by nature, I think, a traveller and by nature pretty cosmopolitan. So I think that not really having a very strong style of my own, it's more a question of... I hope that I at least have a reasonably unique way of mixing styles together."

And if the musical modes don't grab you, the lyrics just might. Certainly, Jackson's social and political awareness songs like *Right And Wrong* (an indictment of the Great Communicator), *Tango Atlantico* (an indictment of England's involvement in the Falklands War), *Survival* (an indictment of greedy hedonists), and *The Jet Set* (an indictment of insensitive tourists) are bound to provoke some thought, if not debate. "I guess I like to

try and do my little bit to stimulate people's minds, you know? Open them up a little bit," he offers with a smirk.

Jackson's "question authority" stance also goes against the grain of today's norm in pop lyrics, which (with few exceptions) deals heavily with such burning issues as: 1) Where's the party? 2) Is there a party going on over there? 3) How can I get that guy/girl to come home with me after the party?

Rather than addressing carnal concerns or worrying about whether or not she's really going out with him, Jackson plays the role of bemused tour guide on *Big World*, commenting on how the very nature of travel allows one to step outside his or her own particular, nationalistic view of the world through an interaction with exotic cultures, customs, and musics. It's a theme he seems quite preoccupied with these days.

"Some people go through life basically only being really interested in what's happening in their own backyard. I could never understand that," he begins. "I always wanted to travel. I always was very curious about what was going on in the rest of the world. As a kid, I used to like reading atlases, just looking at maps. I always thought there was a real romance to travel, but I could never afford to—not until my first album came out and all of a sudden A&M flew me to the

States to do a press conference. I've always thought, if there's been anything I've gained from having the success I've had, definitely the ability to travel has been the best thing."

Travel seems to put Joe in an existential frame of mind, which comes across on tunes like *Shanghai Sky* and (*It's A*) *Big World*. "That old cliché of 'Travel broadens the mind' is very true, I think. Like, for instance, I'm English and I live in America, which gives me a very objective view of each country. I think travel tends to promote open-mindedness, which is really important—to at least attempt to understand other cultures and other ways of looking at things. Because the world is getting pretty dangerous these days, and a lot of the problems are caused by the people in power being inflexible and not well-informed and not really understanding the other guy's point of view. So it's important to avoid being narrow-minded, and listening to the music of other cultures is not a bad start.

"I mean, it stands to reason, if you open up to the music of a different culture, perhaps you'll open up to its customs as well. For instance, I just recently bought a record of Israeli pop music that's really interesting. It's a great record, and now I'm a little more open to and interested in their culture, having heard their music. And someone who listens to some African music for the first time and really loves it, maybe he will become interested in what's happening over there, or maybe he'll become a little less biased. It helps, I think.

"You know, there's always an argument about what music can actually accomplish socially or politically. I've always been very dubious about that in some ways. But certainly I think that music can represent a culture very strongly. And it can represent ways of looking at things. And that kind of exchange of ideas is important."

Currently, Joe has been listening to a lot of Middle Eastern music (which comes across on the title cut to *Big World*) and to Chinese flute music (which rubbed off on *Shanghai Sky*). "I spent five weeks in Japan last year and I met this guy there who introduced me to some Chinese flute music. There seemed to be a certain feeling in some of this music which was kind of melancholy and yet happy at the same time. And I wanted to try and capture that feeling on *Shanghai Sky*. I associate that feeling with dreaming about distant exotic places and at the same time being disappointed that you can't go to all of them; and when you get there, the idea that you had turns out to be different from the reality of the place—just kind of happy and sad at the same time."

And Jackson went through a heavy salsa music phase while still living in England, before moving to New York City in 1983. "I remember discovering

this record in London years ago called *Salsa Live*, which was the Fania All-Stars doing a big concert at Madison Square Garden. And this record knocked me out. I played it over and over again, trying to work out what these guys were doing. And it wasn't until years later when I came to New York that I actually went to see this music live. It was just such a tremendous, inspiring thing to me."

His interest in salsa led to a friendship with Rubén Blades, the popular poet



JOE JACKSON'S EQUIPMENT

Normally Joe Jackson uses whatever acoustic piano is available in the clubs and concert halls where he performs. However, for the Roundabout Theater gig that resulted in his LP *Big World*, he used a Yamaha electric piano modified by David Kerstenbaum (see page 54).

JOE JACKSON SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

BIG WORLD—A&M 6021
 BODY AND SOUL—A&M 5000
 MIKE'S MURDER—A&M 4931
 NIGHT AND DAY—A&M 4906
 JUMPIN' JIVE—A&M 3271
 BEAT CRAZY—A&M 3241
 I'M THE MAN—A&M 3221
 LOOK SHARP!—A&M 3187

with Various Artists

THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL NOW—A&M 6600

laureate of salsa whose *Buscando America* was a big crossover hit in 1984. Jackson played piano on one cut from Blades' followup LP on Elektra, *Escenas*.

Jackson also delved into jazz to a degree with his involvement in the Hal Willner-produced Thelonious Monk tribute album, *That's The Way I Feel Now*. Joe played piano and arranged a session of *Round Midnight* with 17 musicians playing live in the studio. "It's not often that I get an opportunity to do an arrangement of something that's a little outside of what I might normally do," he offers. "And I think it turned out pretty good. I'm quite proud of that session. I think the arrangement works."

Of the influence of Monk on his music, Jackson says, "Monk? Not a big influence. I like the humor in his playing. And he wrote so many great tunes as well. It's funny, the thing about Monk's tunes is they're so strong that when you try to improvise on them it's really hard to get away from the tune. I listened to that album recently, and I noticed that my

piano solo is just lots of bits of the tune all over the place—'cause it's so haunting, you know? I often think that when people play Monk tunes that his tunes are always stronger than whatever comes after them, in terms of improvisation, which I guess is the ultimate compliment to a composer."

What lies ahead for this master of mix-and-match? He ain't saying, though he coyly admits that an all-instrumental album is already in the works. Could it be straightahead? Might it be fusion? Possibly polka, juju, salsa, or gamelan music? Any or all of the above could be true with the chameleonic Mr. Jackson.

Regardless of what Joe ultimately comes up with, he'll probably be misunderstood, as he has been by a number of critics over the years, including Leonard Feather, who trashed his *Jumpin' Jive* album.

"I did that album because no one else seemed to be doing it," he offers in his own defense. "It really started when I was very sick, for months, and I was listening to Louis Jordan. I had split up my first band, I didn't really know what to do next. So I thought, 'What the hell, I don't have to do another album just yet. Why not do something just for the fun of it?' So I got a band together. I thought at first we'd just do a few gigs, maybe do an EP or something. And it just snowballed until we did an album and A&M put it out. Next thing I knew we were doing a British tour and then an American tour. And that album seems to be pretty popular still. A lot of people come up to me and tell me they like it.

"Of course, we got a certain amount of flack for doing that album," he confides. "I don't remember if **down beat** slagged us off or not. It's quite likely, I don't know. I know Leonard Feather took an extreme disliking to it. He really slagged us. He started going on about how Louis Jordan did his last gig in front of only 30 people, just before he died—like it was my fault or something! And here I am trying to turn people on to his music! I don't understand.

"I wasn't trying to copy him. I can't do it the same way as he did it. I know it's not as good. But what the hell—it's fun! I mean, it's great stuff, you know?"

I do indeed. Seems like I have a lot more in common with this upstart Brit than I ever dreamed I might have back in 1978. I dug his tribute to Jordan. I respected his arrangement of *Round Midnight* on the Monk tribute album. And I admire his attempt to preserve the honesty and energy of a band performance on *Big World*.

I like this guy Joe Jackson. From time to time I even go back and enjoy his old rock albums that I refused to listen to in my stuffier days. I wonder—"Is she really going out with him?" **db**

EBET ROBERTS

Drummer Paul Motian, like many a jazz player, lives in the eternal present. "When there were bohemians, I was a bohemian; when there were beatniks, I was a beatnik; when you were a hippie, I was a hippie; when you were a yippie, I was a yippie! I've been through the whole thing, and even before there were bohemians, there was something else—I don't know what it was—and I was that," he laughs dryly but enthusiastically, comfortable in his Upper West Side of Manhattan apartment, hoping perhaps that his yuppie days are coming so he can decide whether or not to buy his soon-to-be-a-condo rooms with a view. The piano Keith Jarrett grew up on fills Motian's living space, along with a partially set-up drum kit, some stereo equipment he's unhappy with, several healthy plants, records, sheet music, and well-worn, friendly furniture. One acquires things, even living in the moment. Maybe what's surprising to Motian, now that he thinks about it, is the extent of his past.

It's been an amazingly brief but music-filled three decades since Motian made his first record—"with a band made up of Bob Dorough, the piano player, a bass player named Al Cotton, trumpeter Warren Fitzgerald, Hal Stein, a sax player, and Bob, uh, Newman, I think, tenor player, in summer of '55, for Progressive Records, in New York and New Jersey"—not long after his Navy discharge. Could it have been so long ago he met the pianist Bill Evans, worked with him behind clarinetists Tony Scott and Jerry Wald, travelled with Oscar Pettiford's big band, drummed with everybody at Birdland, at Small's Paradise, and the Cafe Bohemia, formed the trio with Evans and Scott LaFaro, joined the Jazz Composers Guild's October Revolution, played in Arlo Guthrie's, Charles Lloyd's, Paul Bley's, and Keith Jarrett's groups, sparked Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra and Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill*, began composing and recording, first for ECM and lately for Soul Note, too, under his own name, fronting his own combos, all the while maintaining his own highly poetic sound? *Can't* be; check how open, alert, and at the breaking point his most recent albums—*It Should've Happened A Long Time Ago* with guitarist Bill Frisell and tenorist Joe Lovano, and *Jack Of Clubs*, with saxist Jim Pepper and bassist Ed Schuller added to the trio—are. Taste and momentum have long been Motian's long suit; his love of music and the beat—"I was

talking to Dewey Redman," Motian mentions, "and he said it's like a blessing and a curse at the same time"—goes back to his childhood.

"I was born in Philadelphia, and grew up in Providence, Rhode Island; my parents moved there when I was one or two years old." Both his folks were Armenians born in Turkey; his father was much older than his mother, and had been hired by her father to travel to Havana—where she'd gone from the Middle East—marry her, and bring her to the States, where their union was supposed to be annulled. Instead, it took. Besides his swarthinness, Motian retains his ancestry by calling his publishing company Yazgol Music, after his grandmother. "They spoke Armenian and Turkish at home, but the language I know is a mixture of both; I can only speak it with people from the same province as my parents.

"I heard Armenian music, Arabic music, Egyptian, Turkish, all on 78s, on a wind-up phonograph when I was a kid. I like the Turkish stuff, it seems to be more earthy, have more bottom. But what got me started playing . . . ?

"Actually," he shrugs, "I started on guitar, but it didn't go. I signed up on the street with a cat recruiting kids to take lessons; I was attracted because I liked cowboy movies—the guy puts his guitar around his neck, strums, sings—that looks like fun, I thought, I want to do that. But when I went to the class, here were 10 or 15 kids with guitars across their laps—Hawaiian guitars, right? I was real disappointed. I split, took the guitar home, put a rope around it, put it around my neck, took the metal bridge off it, and just started strumming. That was the end of *that*.

"The drum thing started because there was a drummer in the neighborhood and I used to hang out with his brother, who was my age. This drummer was a little older, like 20, and when he played people used to gather in the street on his stoop to listen. I got into that. I used to go over there a lot, and I liked what I heard. I *really* liked it, and before you knew it I was taking lessons with this guy. I was about 12. Then I found a more legitimate teacher, then another one, and just grew from that.

"I played in the school band, starting around seventh grade, and in high school played in the marching band. Also, they had a dance band and I got into that—two or three trumpets, a couple of trombones. I got out of high school in '49, started

Poetry in Motian

By Howard Mandel



MITCHELL SEIDEL

gigging around Providence in bars, playin' tunes. I got involved with a band that toured New England, playing stock arrangements, Glenn Miller stuff, Dorseys, yeah; and they used to have big bands come to the theaters in those days. I caught Count Basie and Duke Ellington and Jimmie Lunceford, Gene Krupa—I used to go backstage for autographs."

These were the days of critical disputes over the merits of bebop vs. dixieland; Paul recalls hearing a Charlie Parker record in '48 or '49. "I didn't know what was happening, but it sounded good to me. It was different—interesting and exciting. And I heard Symphony Sid's radio program from Birdland, sent away for 78 rpm records with Max Roach, Bud Powell. I still didn't know about the construction of music, but it had me, it grabbed me. I remember driving down to New York one time: the smoked-filled rooms—I was 16 or so—Birdland was packed, went across the street and saw Dizzy Gillespie with his big band opposite George Shearing's quintet with Denzil Best. It was great.

"I went into the Navy because the Korean War was happening, and I found out if you joined the Navy you could go to music school, in Washington, D.C. I missed out on the school because I got sick, and when I got out of the hospital they shipped me out, so I spent a couple years going back and forth from the Mediterranean—but playin' in the band. And coming out, I stayed in New York. I was in Brooklyn. That's the start of my professional playing. I was already 24 or 25.

"There used to be a lot of sessions in New York," Motian continues. "There were chances to play. At the Open Door, near where NYU is now, they had sessions during the week, and on the weekends Monk or Bird. One night Arthur Taylor didn't show up, and Bob Reisner, who was running the sessions, said, 'Go get your drums, you can play with Thelonious.' I ran home, got the drums, ran back, played with Thelonious, and he gave me \$10 at the end of the night. I was the happiest guy in the world. Fantastic.

"In those days I was out every night looking for places to play, and I found them. I met Bill Evans around that time, out on an audition for Jerry Wald—he had a big band for a while, then a sextet—I found out about at the musicians' union. Bill was also auditioning. We hit it off right away, both got the gig, and went on the road. Then Bill and I hooked up with Tony Scott, and hooked up with Don Elliott. We did some records with him—and with Jimmy Knepper, Milt Hinton, Henry Grimes, Sahib Shihab. There's one of me and Bill and Scott LaFaro playing with Tony Scott that's never been released. And Lennie Tristano's record company just put out a record that Henry and I did with Lennie back then. . . .

"I learned so much from all of that, man. I worked a lot with Lennie, actually; one time we played the Half Note for 10 weeks. Think about that today—10 weeks in the same club? He kept me, but he used a different bass player every week: Paul Chambers, Teddy Kotick, Peter Ind, Jimmy Garrison, Henry Grimes, Whitey Mitchell, Red Mitchell. They all played differently, of course, but I loved all those people, and I never thought about making any adjustments for any of them. I just played what was happening.

"So Bill and I stayed close; we used to play every day in his place, which was tiny. This is before his first record, before he played with Miles. We'd play tunes, or he'd write a tune. I told you about my first record; I think the second one was either Bill's trio, *New Conception*, or a George Russell record where we played *All About Rosie*. Yeah, that; I think Bill's trio with Kotick was the third record I did. I listen to some of those records now, and I'm really proud to have been part of them.

"I saw someone the other day who I recognized from years ago, I don't know his name, and he said, 'Oh, yeah, I remember you—you were the house drummer at Birdland.' I didn't remember it like that. I worked some gigs there. But when he said that, I realized I played there a lot. With Bill Evans opposite Basie—what a night that was—oh, man! I

played there with Mose Allison, with Oscar Pettiford, with Chris Connor, with Zoot Sims, with Sonny Rollins once. I got to play with Coltrane in there, because Elvin was late. In those days Pee Wee Marquette, the doorman, used to say, 'We don't want no lulls between bands—no lulls, no lulls.' Elvin's late; Pee Wee says, 'Paul, will you play with John?' Oh, no. I can't, I don't want to play with John. They talked me into it. That was a real challenge. I remember thinking, 'I don't want to sound like Elvin.' And he was so strong, his *presence* was so strong, it was hard not to sound like that."

Did Motian sit down and try to determine what he *wanted* to play to make himself distinctive and original? Or did he just sit and play it?

"Yeah, just played," he recalls. "At times it seemed hard; I had a hard time getting with Scott LaFaro at the very beginning, 'cause I wasn't used to the way he played—they said in those days, 'This guy sounds like a guitar player.' We didn't click right away, it wasn't like, 'Ah, magic!' Personally we were good friends; remember, he hadn't been playing that long, either, just a couple years at that point. It took a little time, but we hooked up, hooked up good. We each made adjustments, maybe, but we didn't talk about it. We didn't even rehearse much. Playin', okay, but rehearsals, no."

Hearing the Evans trio's records today, one may become aware of their narrative detail—what subtly nuanced stories these three told—and the reorganization of the piano trio into a more equal unit.

"We knew we were doing something that was different, new, good, and valid," Motian testifies. "It was like three people being one voice instead of a piano with bass and drums accompaniment. We talked about that. And at the end of our Vanguard gig, when we recorded, we were talking about how we really reached a peak, we've got to be sure we work more, play more. But Scott died that Fourth of July weekend, the same year. Bill stopped playing for a while, I took some other gigs. Around that time things started changing in New York. Albert Ayler was here, Paul Bley, the Jazz Composers Guild started—I wanted to be a part of that. And stuff with Bill seemed at a standstill. We were doing the same stuff over and over. I quit Bill, in California, when we were on the road.

"I'll never forgive myself for that, but at the time I couldn't make it anymore. We were at Shelly Manne's club, with Chuck Israels. The first night was great. The second night was a little not so great, and the third night. . . . Everyone was telling me I was too loud, so I played softer and softer until I felt like I wasn't even playing. I got pissed and I quit. Bill said, 'Please, don't do this.' But I paid my own way back to New York. What a horrible thing to do. If anyone ever did that to me now. . . . Anyway, in New York I got back into the scene. I was in a band in the Village with Paul Bley, John Gilmore, Albert Ayler, and Gary Peacock. We made two, five dollars a night."

Didn't time explode in the mid-'60s? Sure, but Motian simply kept his fingers on the intangible pulse. As he explains his method now, "I'm discovering the music as I do it. Playing a couple of nights ago, in Frankfurt, with Dewey, Charlie Haden, and Baikida Carroll, I did some technical things on the drum set I'd never done before, and I realized it at the



THE TRIO: Scott LaFaro, Bill Evans, and Paul Motian.



HYOU VIELZ

PAUL MOTIAN'S EQUIPMENT

"I love my drums," says Paul Motian. "This is an old Slingerland set I bought piece-by-piece, and I've had these drums at least 20 years. There's a 20-inch bass drum, two toms—9 x 13 and 10 x 14—a 16 x 16 floor tom, and an old Slingerland metal snare which might have been one of the first they made. I use Paiste cymbals except for this one A. Zildjian I've had for 30 years—it's a 20-inch Sizzle. Paiste tried to imitate it for me and came up with something that's close but not quite it. I'm surprised this one still sounds so good after beating on it for so long. My Paiste hi-hat's a 15-inch Formula 602, extra heavy duty. I have a 22-inch Dark Ride. Usually that's it, but I have a chinese-type Paiste I use sometimes too.

"The sticks I like are Drummer's World MW-1's—all wood. I don't like that plastic tip stuff. I like the sound of wood on the cymbal—they are 3A's. Vic Firth makes something close.

"I used to carry all this extra stuff around—bells, gongs, soundmakers, dumbek—but now I play a cymbal and tell myself it's a string of bells. I think about the sounds I want, and if I think about it long enough and hard enough it'll happen. I'll get that sound. Well, at least I can work with it.

"Sonor's been good to me: when I need a special set for recording, they often help me get one. So on a lot of my records I'm credited as playing Sonor drums."

PAUL MOTIAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

JACK OF CLUBS—Soul Note 1124
IT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO—ECM 1283
THE STORY OF MARYAM—Soul Note 1074
PSALM—ECM 1222
LE VOYAGE—ECM 1138
DANCE—ECM 1108
TRIBUTE—ECM 1048
CONCEPTION VESSEL—ECM 1028

with Keith Jarrett

THE SURVIVOR'S SUITE—ECM 1085
EYES OF THE HEART—ECM T-1150
SHADES—Impulse 9322
MYSTERIES—Impulse 9315
BOP-BE—MCA/Impulse 29048
BYABLU—MCA/Impulse 29047
DEATH AND THE FLOWER—MCA/Impulse 29046
TREASURE ISLAND—MCA/Impulse 29045
FORT YAWUH—Impulse 9240
EL JUCIO (THE JUDGEMENT)—Atlantic 1673
BIRTH—Atlantic 1612
THE MOURNING OF A STAR—Atlantic 1596
SOMEWHERE BEFORE—Atlantic 8808
EXPECTATIONS—Columbia 31580
LIFE BETWEEN THE EXIT SIGNS—Vortex 2006

with Bill Frisell

RAMBLER—ECM 1287

with Bill Evans

TRIO '64—Verve 68578
HOW MY HEART SINGS—Riverside 9473
MOON BEAMS—Riverside 9428
MORE FROM THE VANGUARD—Milestone 9125
WALTZ FOR DEBBY—Riverside 9399
SUNDAY AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Original Jazz Classics 140
EXPLORATIONS—Original Jazz Classics 037
PORTRAIT IN JAZZ—Original Jazz Classics 068
NEW JAZZ CONCEPTIONS—Original Jazz Classics 025

with Charlie Haden

THE BALLAD OF THE FALLEN—ECM 1248
CLOSENESS—A&M Horizon 11
LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA—Impulse 9183

with Paul Bley

FRAGMENTS—ECM Iba
TURNING POINT—IAI 373841

with Carla Bley

TROPIC APPETITES—Walt 1

with Tim Berne

SONGS AND RITUALS IN REAL TIME—Empire 60K-2
THE ANCESTORS—Soul Note 1061
MUTANT VARIATIONS—Soul Note 1091

moment or just after. The discovery as you do it, that's what turns me on. I don't know what I'm going to do when I go out there, nothing is pre-planned. I'm hoping I'm going to turn myself on, and that's going to turn the drum solo or playing on, and it's going to turn itself on, and make me do something even better, make me grow.

"You ask about my characteristics; well, I would say I have a sound. I do have a sound that's me, that's my sound, and 90 percent of the time I can get that sound on any drum set. It's the tuning, and I don't have any preset about it, I'm just using my ears. Each drum has a different tonality, and I use my ears to get that which is pleasing to me and my ears. That's my sound—plus the cymbal I've been playing on for 30 years or so."

Keith Jarrett was the next leader to benefit from Motian's sound, from his first LP as a trio leader (*Life Between The Exit Signs*, with Haden, too, on Vortex) to his last with a quintet (*Mysteries*, with Redman and Guilherme Franco, on ABC/Impulse), including such high marks as *The Survivors' Suite* (on ECM). Though Paul did night club work for bread during the lean rock-impact years ("A waiter at the Vanguard asked me one night, 'Paul would you work with the Beatles?' and I said, 'Hell no, are you kidding me, man?') he didn't exactly suffer. Due to a connection with Alan Arkin's bass-playing brother Bob, Motian backed Arlo Guthrie at Woodstock and on the road, alternating weekends between the folkly and Jarrett's associate Charles Lloyd. These were literally riotous times, which one can recapture by digging out Charlie Haden's *Liberation Music Orchestra*; there, under a red and black banner held by Haden and arranger Carla Bley, stands Paul, between clarinetist Perry Robinson and trombonist Roswell Rudd, among Gato Barbieri, Don Cherry, Mike Mantler, Bob Northern, Howard Johnson, Andrew Cyrille, and guitarist Sam Brown. Motian knows just where he was on the nights Bobby Kennedy was murdered and Martin Luther King Jr. was shot dead, during the Chicago Democratic convention of '68 and other calamitous events.

"But as far as the political thing goes, I don't consider myself knowledgeable enough. I'm into the music. The politics were Charlie's stuff; I don't say I don't agree with it, 'cause I'm more on his side than any other." Maybe Motian just happened to be around to cut *For A Free Portugal* for Haden's *Closeness* album of duets, but titles such as *American Indian: Song Of Sitting Bull*, *Inspiration From A Vietnamese Lullaby*, and versions of Ornette Coleman's *War Orphans* and Haden's *Song For Che* on Motian's own early ECM recordings suggest his political consciousness was no source of shame.

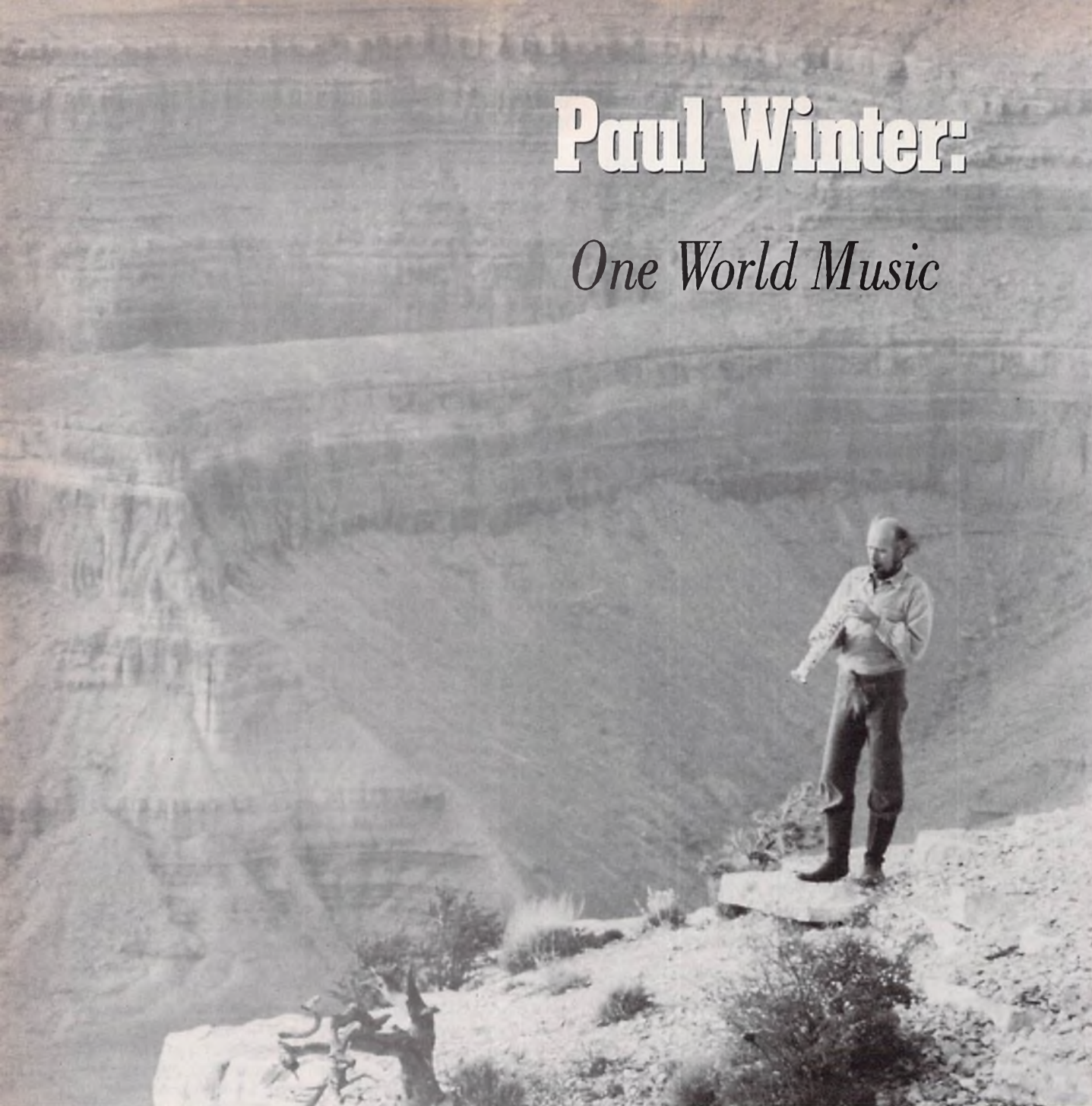
Working with Jarrett—"That sort of disintegrated; it was inevitable we would break up"—Motian had met Manfred Eicher and Thomas Stowsand (today, his European agent) of ECM—"On our first Europe tour, they were like roadies." His sound must have appealed to Eicher; certainly Motian's brush work, his crisp stick patterns, and his emphasis on the higher surfaces (rather than the bass drum) of the traps has been well served by ECM's studio and engineers. "ECM offered me a record. I was still with Keith, but I was writing; my first record, *Conception Vessel*, had different people playing different things—Keith for one track, a trio with Sam Brown and Charlie, another track with Leroy Jenkins, Charlie, and Becky Friend.

"Then Sam Brown told me about another guitarist, Paul Metzke, whom he liked; why don't we try something with two guitarists? I thought that was a good idea, I wanted to do that, that was *Tribute*. By then Keith's thing was over; the Tin Palace, on the Bowery, was happening, there were a lot of new people I hadn't heard around, and I didn't know who I wanted, so I started going out, listening. I heard people I liked and talked to them; some were willing, some weren't. I liked Charles Brackeen, his playing, so we got together, and David

CONTINUED ON PAGE 57

Paul Winter:

One World Music



GORDON ANDERSON

By Michael Bourne

Music is infinitely flexible," said Paul Winter. "You can shape it any way you want."

Often the shape is determined by the space where the music is played. For the Winter Consort, the jazz/classical/folk omni-ensemble its namesake has fronted since 1967, the space is sometimes the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, the world's biggest gothic structure. There's something so wonderful about sound resounding around all that stone, especially when Winter plays his soprano sax all alone. Winter often records there; the Consort performs there three or four times a year, usually to celebrate the seasons. "Carnival at the

Cathedral," just before Mardi Gras, offered the Consort, joined by the Brazilian samba band Pe de Boi, the New Orleans street band On The Lam, and friends from the audience—including singer Odetta and Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

Winter and Yevtushenko performed together last year at Carnegie Hall, but Winter plays as often outdoors as indoors. One place where he loves to play is at his farm in Connecticut, near Litchfield. Another is near Yevtushenko's birthplace around Lake Baykal in Siberia. And then there's what some have called the "Cathedral of the Earth"—the Grand Canyon—where Winter and mu-



MITCHELL SEIDEL

JUST FRIENDS: Winter and Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

sical friends have often journeyed, making music along the river. Winter's new video, *Canyon Consort*, chronicles such a journey last year.

Winter's feeling for the earth (and the creatures thereupon) is elemental in his music. He's become somewhat renowned for making music with whales and wolves. (One highlight of his concerts is his calling upon the audience to howl like wolves—and they do, enraptured.) Yet he's somewhat disheartened that the media seems interested more in his novelty or only in the causes that surround his music—his recordings of whale and wolf and bird songs, his performing at the U.N. for World Environment Day in 1984, his working for peace with Russia through music—than with his music itself.

"It's so much more intriguing for journalists to talk about wolves and whales or going to Russia, but these are just things we're enthused about, that happen to be reflected in the music. Most pop music is based on people's enthusiasm for their lovers. It's really no different to be enthused about the Grand Canyon. What I'm most interested in is the music itself."

Winter's music, his fusion of jazz and classical music with Brazilian and other World Musics, is beyond category—or it was until the phrase "New Age" came along. Now he's shelved with the musicians of Windham Hill and others—and he's sometimes even called "Father of the New Age." Winter won't answer to that title.

"'New Age' is a marketing term. I don't feel like the granddaddy of that music at all. That some of that music is acoustic is coincidental. Acoustic instruments have been around for several hundred years. What's more interesting to me is that there are a lot of small independent labels (similar to Winter's own

Living Music Records), and people are taking the responsibility of getting their own songs out there. The spirit of cooperation that happens among the little labels is wonderful. We've been very friendly with the Windham Hill people. I want to encourage all this entreprenuring, real alternatives to the big record companies. I think it's great that a much wider variety of music is getting out in the world. That's really healthy. Ecology thrives on diversity."

So what, then, does Paul Winter call his music? "When I get pushed by people to answer that, I tell them it's Contemporary Contrapuntal Connecticut Country Consort Music."

It was in Pennsylvania, not Connecticut, that Winter first walked his musical path. He was born into a musical family in 1939, in Altoona. "There was a whole family heritage." Winter's grandfather was, at 17, the youngest bandleader of the Civil War; later, he opened the Winter Music Store, biggest in central Pennsylvania. His father's cousins were a traveling vaudeville troupe, the Noss Jollity Company. "There were seven of them, and they'd play a whole variety of instruments—seven mandolins, seven trumpets, seven trombones. They played the first saxophones in America—seven of them—in the 1880s. There was lore all around the family!"

Winter, at age five, first played the drums. "The earliest hit I remember getting from music was when my folks took me to a Shrine dance and I stood all night behind the band watching the drummer, Henry Hammond, doing all these things with his hands and his feet. I was blown away. I remember the feeling at those events, the feeling that where music was played was where people had a good time. I think that's motivated me all my life."

He was six when he auditioned for the school orchestra. "I played too loud and didn't make it. My folks thought it was time to shift to another instrument." He shifted to the piano and "a wonderful old-fashioned teacher named Alma Leighty." He studied piano ("totally classical") the next 12 years, but already at age seven he wanted something else. "I started clarinet with an equally wonderful teacher named John Monti. He's had experience with jazz. He'd play jazz licks and bluesy things and I'd love it. For all the years I was in Altoona, until I was 17, I had these two teachers, these two musical streams—kind of the Apollonian and Dionysian sides of the music."

While still only a child, Winter performed at community events. His sister Diane played piano. Paul, the town prodigy, played clarinet and saxophone. "I loved playing, but I didn't like the role of being the wonderful young boy all the older ladies made a big fuss about. I didn't want to be the star. What I came to

love more, what gave me a path where I exercised my musical enthusiasms, was being in bands."

Winter's career as a soloist ended at age 12 when he formed his first band, "a little German band. We played oom-pah music and told jokes. We played fraternal organizations, the state reformatory, churches, and it was great playing with the other kids, being just one of the players. That buzz you get being in an ensemble thrilled me more than standing out in front and playing a solo."

Other bands followed: a Dixieland group, then a dance band called the Silver Liners. Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and even ("believe it or not") Guy Lombardo were inspirations. Later, a



MITCHELL SEIDEL

PAUL WINTER'S EQUIPMENT

"In the mid-'70s," Paul Winter said, "we travelled with a tractor-trailer full of instruments, a barnful of percussion, keyboards, foot pedals, a sound system, all that madness, and a sarrusophone!" Winter simplified the sound of the Consort around the end of the '70s—nowadays usually Eugene Friesen's cello, Paul Halley's piano or organ (a portable in the Grand Canyon, the massive pipes at St. John the Divine), sometimes a guitar, often another wind (John Clark on french horn, Paul McCandless on english horn, or Steve Silverstein on flutes), and percussion (Glen Velez on handmade frame drums and/or Ted Moore on a "super-set" of surdos and timpani). Whenever possible, they play acoustically, without a sound system. Winter himself mostly plays soprano sax. "I didn't give up the alto sax," Winter said, "but near the end of the '70s a couple of things convinced me to focus on the soprano. One was playing outdoors—it carries, it's also easier to carry, and it cuts through better." He plays a Selmer Mark VI soprano with a Selmer D hard-rubber mouthpiece and Rico Royal #5 reeds. When he returns to the alto, it's a Selmer Mark VI alto with a Selmer C Double-star hard-rubber mouthpiece and Rico Royal #5 reeds—"and I still have a 1910 Quinones contrabass sarrusophone!"

PAUL WINTER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

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 CALLINGS—Living Music 1
 COMMON GROUND—A&M 4698
 EARTH DANCE—A&M 4653
 SOMETHING IN THE WIND—A&M 4207
 THE WINTER CONSORT—A&M 4170
 RIO—CBS 9115

All the Living Music albums are being distributed to record stores or are available, along with Winter's other albums, from Living Music Records, 65 G Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA 94965. Winter's video from the Grand Canyon, *Canyon Consort*, is available at video stores or from Living Music Records.



JOHN LYDDON

CRUISIN' DOWN THE RIVER: Winter and cohorts serenade the Grand Canyon's Colorado River.

high school girlfriend introduced him to the music of Stan Kenton. One of the regular stops of the big bands was up the mountain in Carrolltown; there, Winter heard Goodman, Kenton, and Billy May, among others—but he never thought he'd become a real working musician himself. "There was never any thought that I was going to be a musician. Music was just something you did, like physics and Boy Scouts and 50 other things. I thought I'd be a lawyer."

He nonetheless became fascinated with jazz. While a teenager, he enrolled in Culver Military Academy. "Horses were my other great passion, and at Culver I got to ride horses and play jazz. It was heaven. I started reading *down beat* around that time. I remember reading the story of Bird's death in 1954. I remember when Clifford Brown and Richie Powell were killed on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. I saw the glass from the accident. I knew all about those guys but I didn't know their music yet. They were distant, legendary figures."

After he enrolled in college at Northwestern, Winter finally encountered some jazz legends. "I didn't give a damn about academics. Northwestern was near Chicago, where I could hear jazz. Dick Whitsell became my mentor for bebop. We went to these clubs and heard Miles with Trane, Horace Silver, Mulligan, Getz, and the guys who lived in Chicago, Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt. That was a real halcyon era in jazz."

Winter started a dance band, with Whitsell on trumpet, that became his Jazz Sextet. (Others in the band were Les Rout, baritone sax; Warren Bernhardt, piano; Richard Evans, bass; Harold Jones, drums.) "We'd play fraternity dances and play straight jazz and get away with it. We entered this competition our senior year and won a recording contract. John Hammond was one of the judges. That was the spring of 1961 and I was already registered in law school, but we decided to take a year off. For years

I'd been corresponding with jazz fans in Poland, the Soviet Union, other Eastern bloc countries. I met them through 'Jazz Lift.' You'd send records behind the Iron Curtain and get amazing letters back. I'd never met anyone as passionate as that, as I was, about jazz." Winter wrote to the State Department and, with the help of some professors, suggested an itinerary for the Sextet to tour the Soviet Union. "They wrote back and sent us to Latin America for six months."

John Hammond produced the Sextet's first recording for Columbia, but it was released only in Brazil during the tour. "The tour was an enormous success, the longest they'd ever sent out—161 concerts in 23 countries—but we came back to nothing. The State Department didn't meet us or acknowledge us. We'd been promised a gig at Birdland. That fell through. We recorded *Jazz Meets The Bossa Nova* and that was the end of the band." Evans joined Ahmad Jamal, Jones joined Basie's band, Rout returned to school, and the others, disillusioned, settled in New York. Only one gig, at last, resulted from the tour. They played for the Kennedys at the White House.

"Then the headlines went out all over the country: 'Jackie Digs Jazz!' On the strength of that we got our first cross-country tour of jazz clubs." Only more disillusionment was to follow. While the band wanted to play bop, their record was a minor hit and the audience wanted bossa nova. Also, the band hated playing clubs and being "essentially liquor salesmen." Winter fronted four more albums for Columbia in the next two years: *Jazz Premier Washington* (with some of the tracks from the unreleased session), *Jazz Meets The Folk Song*, and two other Brazilian albums, *The Sound Of Ipanema* with Carlos Lyra and *Rio* with Roberto Menescal, Luiz Eca, and Luiz Bonfá.

* * *
"Those were amazing years. So much happened so fast." Although he resented being categorized as a bossa nova

player, Winter returned again and again to Brazil, and was again and again inspired. "I wanted to move into a broader realm of music and have a different kind of band, a different sound. I heard gentle music for the first time in Brazil. In all the bop years all the music I loved was loud. We even played ballads loud. In Brazil it was like I was discovering the feminine dimension in my life for the first time. I fell in love with the classical guitar. I wanted a group based on guitar instead of piano and that had gentler horns. You can't hear a classical guitar when somebody's blowing on the drums, so it involved a whole new kind of percussion. It was the influence of Brazil that was at the root of the Consort. I wanted a versatile kind of ensemble that could be a forum for all the music that I loved and that would embrace my roots in both jazz and classical music. I'd always loved cello and english horn, and I wondered what it would be like if those instruments were played with the kind of personal voice and soul that jazz players played with. Out of those feelings in 1967 came the Consort."

The Winter Consort eventually included some of the best young "chamber-jazz" players, especially cellist David Darling and the four musicians who later became Oregon (Ralph Towner, guitar; Paul McCandless, reeds; Glen Moore, bass; Collin Walcott, sitar and percussion). Together with Winter they were creating a new music and re-discovering some old music. They'd improvise on classical themes, play impressionistic jazz and Brazilian and African music, and often they'd improvise totally. "In the early days of the Consort we never rehearsed. We never had a place to rehearse, so we experimented on stage. I've always regarded the Consort as a garden in which you plant seeds—all these instruments and new pieces, seeds of melodies and rhythms—and see what grows."

Winter's also sowing seeds via his "The Living Music Village"—weeklong summer workshops at his farm. "No Musical Experience Is Required" reads the ad. Winter first considered the idea after doing workshops in music-making and whale-watching in 1977 in Baja. "All we'd do all day is make music and watch whales, and the effect of being in that environment was extraordinary. People started coming out of their respective closets and freely expressing their songs, their stories, their dreams, their struggles, everything. It was as if everyone became like children, unfettered in their singing of the song of their life. It was clear to me that nature was a place for opening up these expressions. It's not about virtuosity. It's about tapping the basic instincts for expression everyone has. Humans have an abundance of it, but most of us don't use it because you

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56



JAMES NEWTON

THE AFRICAN FLOWER—Blue Note 85109: *BLACK AND TAN FANTASY; VIRGIN JUNGLE; STRANGE FEELING; FLEURETTE AFRICAINE (THE AFRICAN FLOWER); COTTON TAIL; SOPHISTICATED LADY; PASSION FLOWER.*

Personnel: Newton, flute; John Blake, violin; Olu Dara, cornet; Arthur Blythe, alto saxophone; Sir Roland Hanna, piano; Jay Hoggard, vibraphone; Rick Rozie, bass; Billy Hart, drums; Pheeroan Aklafl, drums, taval, talking drum; Anthony Brown, maracas, finger cymbals; Milt Grayson, vocal.

★★★★★

This set of Ellington and Strayhorn compositions is the most profound and satisfying exercise in creative memory in memory. It's Joycean in its complexity: rife with meaningful allusions to the past, and daring but logical stylistic and timbral juxtapositions. Yet there's no sense of arty affectation.

Consider Newton's heady recasting of 1927's *Black And Tan Fantasy*. It begins on fairly familiar turf, with funereal piano and tom-tom tattoos, and with Dara's Bubber bubbling under a clean flute line. (The flute/cornet marriage—like clanky vibes and searing alto elsewhere—recall Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*, another left-of-center Blue Note classic.) For the B strain, Rick Rozie slips into jaunty walk-time, and Newton responds with a slippery rephrasing of the melody: no narrow-minded revivalism here. Olu's captivating mute solo's halfway between Miley horn-talk and Miles' pressurized restraint. James' blue shrieks evoke Rahsaan Roland Kirk—who investigated dormant styles before it became fashionable—just as Ellington echoed earlier formalist Jelly Roll Morton, by ending *Fantasy* with a satiric borrowing from Chopin's *Funeral March*. (Morton quoted from same on 1926's *Dead Man Blues*.)

In under six minutes, *Black And Tan Fantasy* refers to about every jazz style except bop and Third Stream—and Newton gets to those later. His fetchingly brisk *Cotton Tail* could pass for one of Bird's *I Got Rhythm* variants. The gait is right up Blythe's alley; his spitfire solo recalls Paul Gonsalves' marathon wails. (Like Duke, Newton places soloists in comfortable yet stimulating contexts.)

The two Strayhorn settings hint a Schönberg influence—harmony's enriched by a tangle of shifting colors—yet the focus is squarely on exquisite melody. *Strange Feeling's* haunting line is etched in granite by baritone Milt Grayson (who sang with less thunder on Duke's 1961 version). *Passion Flower's* the lone selection that suffers by comparisons: Blythe's nasal reading can't touch Hodges'.

Like Duke, flutist Newton uses Third World sonorities to fuel his own creativity; his rustling tone on *Fleurette Africain* and a solo *Sophisticated Lady* attains shakuhachi purity. Arranger Newton uses Duke's music much the same way. He draws on a pool of players, never appearing all together, to achieve Ellingtonian textural richness. Like Duke, he never forsakes Afro-American roots. (John Blake sows the blues here like Abdul Wadud.) Like Duke, Newton weaves a web of interrelationships—from ragtime to no-time—that reminds us how broad and deep the jazz tradition runs.

—kevin whitehead



JIMI HENDRIX

JIMI PLAYS MONTEREY—Reprise 25358-1: *KILLING FLOOR; FOXEY LADY; LIKE A ROLLING STONE; ROCK ME BABY; HEY JOE; CAN YOU SEE ME; THE WIND CRIES MARY; PURPLE HAZE; WILD THING.*

Personnel: Hendrix, guitar, vocals; Mitch Mitchell, drums; Noel Redding, bass.

★★★★½

Jimi had a lot to prove on this day, June 18, 1967. His first single release, *Hey Joe*, was already a hit in London but few stateside had heard it. And few outside New York's Greenwich Village had heard of *him*, for that matter. Perhaps feeling a bit guilty about scoring his first success overseas, he offered to the crowd of 50,000: "It's no big story about . . . we couldn't make it here so we go over to England, and America doesn't like us . . . you know, our feet's too big and we got fat mattresses and we wear golden underwear. It ain't no scene like that, brother. It's so groovy to come back here and really get a chance to really play!"

Hendrix and the Experience charged out of the gate like a runaway railroad train on a souped-up version of Howlin' Wolf's *Killing Floor*, the manic feedback strictly under control. He dove right into an intense, quadruple-time version of B. B. King's *Rock Me Baby*. And he killed the crowd with his eye-popping finale, the historic flaming-Strat rendition of *Hey Joe*. The Grateful Dead had to follow that act. Tough luck, guys.

As an historic event and a piece of rock legend, Jimi Hendrix's performance at Monterey is important. As a record, it's uneven. He seems to rush through his tunes—*Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze* in particular—and his guitar is frequently out of tune. Part of Hendrix's brilliance was his command over the studio, his ability to play the studio as an instrument. Live, he's best when he stretches out in a loose, bluesy format, as he does successfully and

incredibly in the far superior live LP, *The Jimi Hendrix Concerts* (Reprise 22306-1), released in 1982. There's nothing on *Monterey* to compare with Jimi's take-your-time C sharp blues on *Bleeding Heart*, his soulful rendition of *Hear My Train A Comin'*, or the great liberties he takes with such trademark tunes as *Little Wing*, *Fire*, and a 10-minute version of *Stone Free* from that 1982 compilation of concert material culled from 1968-70. And as far as inspired expression goes, nothing stands up to his searing, heartfelt solo on *Red House*.

But as a piece of memorabilia to add to your Hendrix archives—whether you caught him the first time around or are just now experiencing him through exposure to such modern day Hendrix disciples as Stevie Ray Vaughan or Yngwie Malmsteen—this album is a must. So forget about the technical glitches and muffed solo on *The Wind Cries Mary*, the sloppy version of *Foxy Lady*, the so-so performance on *Purple Haze*. Check this album out for historical purposes, if that sort of thing interests you. But for a more confident, daring guitar hero in full stride, check out either *Hendrix In The West* or *The Jimi Hendrix Concerts*.

—bill milkowski



LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

IN CONCERT WITH THE DUB BAND—Shanachie 43034/5: *FIVE NIGHTS OF BLEEDING; DREAD BEAT AN' BLOOD; INTRO; ALL WI DOIN IS DEFENDIN'; IT DREAD INNA INGLAN; MAN FREE; WANT FI GOH RAVE; IT NOH FUNNY; FORCES OF VICTORY; INDEPENDENT INTAVENSHAN; REGGAE FI PEACH; DI BLACK PETTY BOOSHWAH; NEW CRAAS MASSAHKAH; REALITY POEM; WAT ABOUT DI WORKIN CLAAS?; DI GREAT INSOHRECKSHAN; MAKING HISTORY.*

Personnel: Johnson, voice; Bruce Smith, drums; Dennis Bovell, bass; Patrick Tenyue, trumpet; Buttons Tenyue, trombone; Paget King, keyboards; Nick Straker, synthesizer; John Kpiaye, Francis Cuffy, guitar; Geoffrey Scantlebury, percussion.

★★★★★

Americans commonly perceive reggae music as minor key paeans to Jah Rastafari on the one-beat, funky polkas from Jamaica whose rigidity is the opposite of jazz. Like most stereotypes, this plays roughly with the truth. Reggae, like rock, belongs to many periods and styles that stand apart from one another, such as rocksteady, roots, lovers rock, and D.J. Linton Kwesi Johnson, a 33-year-old British

poet transplanted from Jamaica, has been a potent force for the artistic expansion of reggae since *Dread Beat An' Blood* (Heartbeat 01) was released in 1978. Ardently political in tone, his work thrives on a synthesis of sound that stretches reggae conventions.

Johnson's fluid brand of dread lacks innocence. His poetry graphically and uncompromisingly exposes the treatment of West Indian blacks in British society. In practice, this means lamenting street warfare (*Five Nights*), celebrating release from prison (*Man Free*), and eulogizing fallen heroes (*Reggae Fi Peach*), among other subjects. The poetic medium is everyday British-Jamaican patois ("him said . . .") spoken in a smooth rhythmic monotone. LKJ credits the bass line in reggae with influencing how he writes. His brooding yet sincerely strong voice almost becomes a

bass line itself, carrying the cadence in the words and the echo of the rhymes.

Kurt Weill and Hanns Eisler would be proud of how Johnson matches the insistently danceable music of the Dub Band to his activist message. *In Concert* contains come-alive electric settings of his words, instead of mere polemics set to music. Pop tunes jubilant as Steel Pulse, another exponent of *British* reggae, depict the plight of second generation West Indian youths (*Want Fi Goh Rave*). *Di Black Petty Booshwah* is musical comedy in miniature: its farcical horn arrangements and ringing African guitars slyly rebuking those who "side with oppressor when the going gets rough." Elsewhere, brass calypsonian riffs and a defiant trombone solo express remembrance for a political martyr (*Reggae Fi Peach*).

In Concert surveys tracks from four previous

LKJ albums. Some of the updates have new twists: *Five Nights* and *New Craas*, for example, are effectively scaled down to recitations without music. But every selection benefits from an immediacy of sound and a hot remix that places longtime LKJ-collaborator Dennis Bovell's bass palpably upfront. True to constructional precepts of the leader, bass figures virtually "conduct" the Dub Band.

This summing up and consolidation of LKJ's recording history includes arrangements not associated with reggae but characteristic of Johnson: reggae set to a march beat (*Forces Of Victory*) and reggae in swingtime (*Workin' Class*). The latter, the longest cut on the program at six minutes, comes complete with walking bass, steady ride cymbal (albeit alongside jittery reggae-accented snare), blue-tinged jazz guitar in bent notes and oc-



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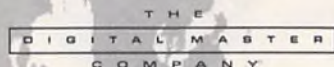
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taves, and a lipshaker of a tailgating trombone solo. On an earlier LP, *Bass Culture* (Mango 9605), LKJ experimented with a Beat recitation accompanied by a scale-running saxophone. But his best work is "in the pocket," a specialty of the ultra-tight Dub Band—which also stands out in liberal "dub" features and staunch fills and solos.

In Concert has an abbreviated playtime for a two-record set, just over one hour of music. The inclusion of a lyric sheet as well as occasional footnotes regarding the references to British life would have offered welcome advantages to unfamiliar listeners. (No LKJ recording issued in the U.S. carries printed lyrics, although three volumes of his poetry have been published.) Yet, the excellence of the music easily neutralizes all objections. Whether or not you have firsthand experience with political anger or throwing up barricades, *In Concert* will not stop moving you. LKJ is reggae's cutting edge.

—peter kostakis

CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY

TREATY—Jazzbeat 101: *FOCUS; THIS TIME THE DREAM'S ON ME; BEE'S FLAT; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA; BOP BOP; GONE WITH THE WIND; CONFIRMATION; TREATY OF JAZZ.*

Personnel: Hollyday, alto saxophone; John Medeski, piano; Nat Reeves, bass; Ron Savage, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

This bright and sassy date comes from another tall, lanky Hollyday lad from Norwood, MA. Kid brother Chris follows with his perky alto the precocious debut on wax of elder brother Richard on trumpet. Where Richard had led his own club date and record session by 16, Chris has done likewise by 14. No copycat, Chris goes alone to the front line (Richard beefed up his with ex-Blakey sax stalwart Bill Pierce) and with a cooking, working combo of his youthful peers (Richard employed the top Boston rhythm team of bassist John Lockwood and drummer Alan Dawson.)

Documenting players at a young age is like taking photos for the family album: the kids telescope their growing years so amazingly that it makes you feel like you're not getting so old yourself. Tape recordings and record albums, albeit homegrown, not only provide personal tracking of accomplishments, but may even provide service to musical posterity. I heard Chris play the 1369, an amiable Cambridge stronghold, only six months after this side was recorded at Air Sound (with Richard as producer), and he'd fleshed out his tone and grown an inch-and-a-half.

Here the younger Hollyday does justice to bop classics by Gillespie and Parker, covers one of my favorite melodies by pianist/composer James Williams (*Focus*), and contributes two thoughtful if sketchy blues (a 16- and a 12-bar) of his own (another departure from big brother, who recorded all bop-era gems). *Bop Bop* juxtaposes eccentric pairs of eighth notes with an all-out bridge (ping-pong volley and barrage), and *Treaty* glowers spookily. Standards fare less well: youngsters are often tentative on the changes of basic repertoire

such as *Dream* and *Wind*, rather limp treatments both. Throughout, Hollyday sounds cheerful and confident; his bright voice pipes with little vibrato or weight as yet, but with an ingenuous, clear-eyed verve. There is obviously much more to come. His bandmates carry the ball bravely; especially delightful is the 21-year-old pianist Medeski. Score another one for the Hollyday clan. —fred bouchard



JON FADDIS

LEGACY—Concord Jazz 291: *WEST END BLUES; LITTLE JAZZ; NIGHT IN TUNISIA; INSTIGATOR; THINGS TO COME; A CHILD IS BORN; LI'L DARLIN'; WHISPER NOT.*

Personnel: Faddis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Harold Land, tenor saxophone (cuts 2-5, 7, 8); Kenny Barron, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Mel Lewis, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

The liner notes are by Dizzy Gillespie; the musical notes are by Jon Faddis. Gillespie calls the album "terrifying" and says, "Jon has been liberated." The terrifying part is Faddis' control of his horns, especially their upper register, which will knock your antennas off. The liberated part is his own identity apart from Gillespie imitation.

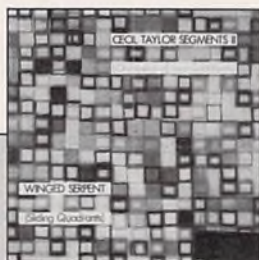
Faddis arrives at Faddis via the bravura trumpet line—Louis Armstrong to Roy Eldridge to Gillespie. *West End Blues* is a brilliant creative re-creation of Armstrong, including his annunciatory trumpet intro, a rocking slow beat, super-high singing held notes, and improvisation totally in character. Eldridge's *Little Jazz* brings on Faddis' tribute-laden raspy, shouting tone, arching long notes, and high notes whistling one at a time. Next comes Gillespie, whose influence dominates *Night In Tunisia*, Faddis' *Instigator* (shades of *Salt Peanuts*), and *Things To Come*. Faddis' explosive phrasing and dazzling audacity could be young Dizzy, but still Faddis shows something of his own.

Faddis switches to flugelhorn and reveals a lot of his own thinking on *A Child Is Born*. He takes his time and hangs on boppish harmonic choices—very melodic. Brown's bass steps up the stairs behind Faddis on the melody. Nice. *Li'l Darlin'* is almost all ensemble work except for Faddis' short bluesy solo. *Whisper Not* features warm muted bop trumpet.

Throughout this record, the rhythm section (and Land, when he is present) sticks to the ensemble character of the music. There are no particularly knockout charts (*Night*, arranged by Faddis and Marty Sheller, is best), but most of the time you do feel that this is a *band*. In the

solo department, Land gets off the ground every time with swirling lines that combine pop and post-bop developments. Barron's piano playing is never barren. His clean, budding phrases always build. Brown and Lewis contribute the kind of creative professionalism that has been their forte since the early days.

—owen cordle



CECIL TAYLOR

WINGED SERPENT (SLIDING QUADRANTS)—

Soul Note 1090: *TAHT*; *WOMB WATERS SCENT OF THE BURNING ARMADILLO SHELL*; *CUN-UN-UN-UN-AN*; *WINGED SERPENT*.

Personnel: Taylor, piano, voice; Enrico Rava, Tomasz Stanko, trumpet, voice; Jimmy Lyons,

alto saxophone, voice; Frank Wright, tenor saxophone, voice; John Tchicai, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet, voice; Gunter Hampel, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, voice; Karen Borca, bassoon, voice; William Parker, bass, voice; Rashied Bakr, drums, voice; Andre Martinez, drums, percussion, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

Critics worldwide will invoke the name of the classic *Unit Structures* (and thus the sacred name of Blue Note) as a benchmark and precedent for Cecil Taylor's daring orchestra recording, *Winged Serpent* (*Sliding Quadrants*), citing similarities in phraseologies, voicings, etc. However, it would be equally proper, if not more pertinent, to refer to the elasticity of more recent Unit recordings (particularly those issued on the New World and hat Hut labels) and the quiet lyricism and ritualistic vocalizing Taylor has forwarded on such recent solo programs as *Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly!* (Pausa 7108) and *Garden* (hat Hut 1993/94) as parameters for discussing this bracing release.

Certainly, *Unit Structures* and *Winged Serpent* are recognizably the work of the same artist, yet the 20-year-old work seems muted, almost hermetic in contrast to the bare-wire emotionalism Taylor elicits from an international all-star aggregation. The staccato vamp

that lynchpins *Taht* would take on a Bartokian hue if rendered politely, but the thick, buzzing reeds, screaming trumpets, and pummeling rhythm section gives the material the urgency of a Mingus holler. *Womb* unravels from a chiselled, bittersweet line into a sprawling yet biting collective improvisation before a surprising, concluding downshift to lovesick balladic gestures featuring Taylor and Jimmy Lyons; though this element of surprise is planned, it retains the semi-tangible, seemingly unstructured, aspect of romanticism.

There is very little of a down-side to Taylor's recent development as presented in this context. The vocalizing *Cun-Un-Un-Un-An* is a matter of taste, yet the postscript-like instrumental material, without Taylor's usual extended development, seems tacked-on. There is a latent poignancy in the title piece that is glossed over in favor of its merits as a blowing vehicle, but the work of Taylor and Enrico Rava is ample compensation.

The biggest structural problem, however, is the time constraints of a single disc. This is 1986; Taylor is no longer an artistic pariah or an economic liability—he is quite the opposite. Perhaps more than structure, his art is about duration, and to render it faithfully, and fully, he deserves, and has earned the right to, a multi-disc documentation of his orchestral work.

—bill shoemaker



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RECORD REVIEWS

Uncaged Melodies

Silence and noise: concepts that had little to do with Western music before the 20th century. Then along came John Cage ruining it for everybody. Few icons in avant garde music loom larger than Cage. His concepts of sound, chance composition, new instruments, and new perspectives on performance have altered the way we experience and create music. Cage de-mystified the composer while simultaneously placing music on the scale of cosmic chance and confluence. He is one of the few artists whose philosophies have had more impact than his music. Nowhere has his inspiration found more disciples than in the experimental music of the 1960s and '70s, and if these recordings are any gauge, the 1980s as well.

As this recent recording, *Etudes Boreales/Ryoanji* (Mode 1/2) indicates, **John Cage** himself continues to refine his concepts in the 1980s. The *Etudes*, composed by chance operations, using star charts and the *I Ching*, the ancient book of Chinese oracles, are severe works of glaring white sound on a canvas of deepest black. Michael Pugliese's piano rendition uses the instrument in a percussive manner, played mostly on the inside with mallets, hammers, etc. He extracts harsh blocks of sound that burst holes in the air like explosions. Cellist Frances-Marie Utti plays her instrument more conventionally on *Etudes Boreales For Cello Solo*, sketching lines in an abstract connect-the-dots game, which isn't too far from Cage's compositional methods. Their duet version is comparatively restrained, as they try to maintain the silent spaces of Cage's black field. *Ryoanji* is considerably easier listening, though no less an austere work. Cage's concept of meditation is like Chinese water torture, with a percussive thud arriving at regular, but uneven intervals, punctuating the soprano glissandos of Isabelle Ganz. Singing against a backing tape of herself, Ganz' parallel lines follow each other like a jet stream. Typical of Cage. *Ryoanji* works on many levels, contemplative and provocative at the same time.

Chance, meditation, and improvisation are the subtexts of *Etudes* and *Ryoanji*, and they inform many of the following nine recordings. Two recent albums by **Pauline Oliveros**, *The Wanderer* (Lovely Music 1902) and *The Well & The Gentle* (hat Art 2020), grow out of her "Sonic Meditation" works. Cage wants to separate himself from the musical process, but Oliveros wants to become one with process and performance. Intuitive understanding of sound and mood is required for *The Well*. With a call into the darkness by Oliveros' accordion, she assembles the new music ensemble Relache around her like voices on the wind. They ebb and flow in a psychic maelstrom, Barbara Noska's soprano voice trilling to Stephen Marcucci's saxophone. Percussion, flute, piano, cello, and accordions circle in cen-



John Cage

tered improvisation that recalls the Art Ensemble of Chicago's *People In Sorrow* as much as anything by Cage. Elsewhere on this two-record set are extended solo works by Oliveros playing her accordion and voice in a large, empty stone waterwell, layering long sustained lines with the lengthy natural reverb of the wells.

Oliveros, however, can also be cathartic. The title track of *The Wanderer*, is performed with the 27-piece Springfield Accordion Orchestra. That's right, 22 accordions and five percussionists! After a languid opening section that establishes the textural richness of the accordion, Oliveros launches into a swinging dance segment with a maze of time signatures that find a central pulse among the pumping accordions and odd percussive colors. *The Wanderer* belies the accordion's polka reputation and is guaranteed to make Lawrence Welk choke on his bubbles.

The **Tone Road Ramblers** couldn't be further from Oliveros in orientation. Their tradition isn't meditative or communal, but an outgrowth of serialism, distilled through Cagian chance music and improvisation. A cooperative of academic composer/performers, the Ramblers have an intellectual distance that make these works cool, but not foreboding. Like Oliveros, they have a collective approach to sound on their self-titled debut (TR 001). Morgan Powell's *Fine Tuning* is a sensitive duet between trumpeter Ray Sasaki and clarinetist David Sasaki over an exotic bed of chimes and percussion. Both *Dancing Hands* by Michael Udow and *Duet*

V by Powell explore sustained resonances, although *Dancing* becomes spry and even danceable, in an abstract sense, of course.

Cage uses the *I Ching* to eliminate the ego from his music. Composer **Joel Chadabe's** *I Ching* is a computer program on *Settings For Spirituals* (Lovely Music 1302). Chadabe recorded Irene Oliver singing traditional spirituals, then processed the performance through a computer program to follow her voice and "generate the settings accordingly." The settings are restrained, simple ring modulation effects, ghosting, and odd reverberations. *Heav'n Heav'n* has a curious synthi-pop sound with its electronic water-drip rhythm. But *Settings* sounds like a technological parlor trick, and a wrong turn for the usually interesting Chadabe.

Subversion of technology and preconceptions has been a central theme of Cage's work, from his infamous '433" to his *Cartridge Music*. **Ron Kuivilla** takes this subversion to inspired extremes on *Fidelity*. The title itself is a play on high-fidelity, which this collection of distorted technological alienation pieces is not. Imagine a Cuisinart sent through an overdriven echo unit with a broken Casio VL-Tone rhythm and you've got an idea of Kuivilla's mutant sensibilities. *Ti Intends . . . (Frames)* uses a speech synthesizer that is speechless, or at least has a serious impediment with droning scrawls of garbled sound. Fortunately, these aren't merely intellectual exercises, but riveting, confrontational assaults that question the uses of technology.

Nicolas Collins is an occasional collaborator of Kuivilla's and their shared perspective is apparent on his *Let The State Make The Selection* (Lovely Music 1712). He uses electric guitars in reverse, with pick-ups driving the strings, extensive feedback, and computers as a force of disorganization. *A Letter From My Uncle* lets a computer select program sources for the pick-ups such as tapes, noise generators, and voices. The players fret the guitar strings, cutting their vibrations on and off. It starts out like a car on a winter morning and ends like the aftermath of an accident. *Vaya Con Dios* makes political hay interpolating Ronald Reagan's voice and the Andrews Sisters into an ominous, pulsing electronic field. It recalls Cage's *Imaginary Landscapes* for radios, although Cage never tried to put a specific message across like Collins. It is frightening music that supplants Kuivilla's humor with acidic sarcasm.

The elements of sound-text that emerge in Collins' *Let The State Make The Selection* can be traced to Cage's *The Wonderful Widow Of Eighteen Springs* of 1942 in which he used the text of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* in mutated fashion. Sound-text, elements of which are found in Laurie Anderson's work as well as hip-hop/rap/scratch music, has emerged as an important wing of experimental music in the last 10 years. Sound-text is a way for writers who aren't musicians to communicate in a manner that's more compelling than a reading. It uses words as sound, musical

constructs, and especially rhythm.

Such is the case with **Charles Amirkhah-nian**. His recent album, *Mental Radio* (CRI 523), follows his earlier *Lexical Music* (1750 Arch 1779), but loses the trail after the first piece. Amirkhahian often multi-tracks his own voice, speaking tongue-twisting staccato phrases that generate their own rhythm, momentum, and often hilarious juxtapositions like "Do Dog Do-Do" on *Dot Bunch*. On many tracks he uses rhythm machines, possibly trying to assimilate the drive of hip-hop, but his programming is unimaginative and the recording flat. If you're going to use rhythm machines, then kick ass with them. Amirkhahian is just too restrained, more the beat poet talking over bongos than the urban hipster. Amirkhahian toys with technology on *Dog Of Stravinsky*, processing a dog's bark through a computer keyboard, but it is a tiresome exercise. Unlike Collins, Kuivila, and Cage (there's a tongue-twister for you), he has little to say about the misuse of technology.

Elodie Lauten is also working with computers and voices, but her *The Death Of Don Juan* (Cat Collectors 713) is an ambitious disappointment. Lauten's two previous recordings distilled her expansive keyboard work through minimalist sensibilities, but *The Death Of Don Juan* is a reach she couldn't make. The quirky keyboard arrangements, cyclical phrasing, and odd voicings are still there, but they're muddled by Lauten's operatic pretensions. The libretto, ostensibly a psychological rendering of the Don Juan myth, is laden with murky meanings. "I am your death; your death am I," the singer intones. It's possible that Lauten meant the voices to be off-key, but I don't think so. Everything about *Don Juan* is lugubrious and distended, swathed in reverb and delays. The initially pretty harpsichord cycles of the *Overture* are beaten into the ground. The instrumental passages of *Vision* and *Duel* hold some interest, but a surfeit of ideas, a lack of development, and an amateurish performance makes for a flaccid *Don Juan*.

Finally, we come to the most significant and certainly the most influential new music trend of the last 25 years: minimalism. Superficially, Cage's influence appears distant, but his concern for evolving processes and the removal of the ego, in this case virtuoso performers, paved the way for this cyclical music. **David Borden** is a gifted, but little known composer who has released a scant four albums in 13 years. *Anatidae* (Cuneiform RUNE 4) continues his 10-part *The Continuing Story Of Counterpoint* series with numbers 2, 3, and 5. *Parts 6 and 9* appear on *Music For Amplified Keyboard Instruments* (Red 002). As their titles suggest, these are contrapuntal works with the inner drive of minimalism powering them through their elaborate electronic lines. *Part 3* in particular provides an enveloping maze of web-like synthesizer lines that cross and ornament each other. The refracted mirror images frame Rebecca Armstrong singing the names of Borden's favorite contrapuntal

composers. *Part 5* is held back by David Van Tieghem's overly busy and over-mixed percussion, but *Part 2*, with only Nurit Tilles and Edmund Niemann on acoustic pianos, unveils the elegant simplicity of Borden's writing, and another debt to Cage.

Cage's greatest legacy will not be one of influence, but of inspiration: the sense that anything is possible in music. Composers

like Borden are far removed from Cage's egoless ideal, yet they must acknowledge the potential that Cage revealed (Borden also has a C-A-G-E series of works). Even in failure, these composers are riding the demons let loose by Cage's Pandora's box. (These recordings are available through New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.) —*john diliberto*

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RECORD REVIEWS



PAQUITO D'RIVERA

EXPLOSION—Columbia 40156: *JUST KIDDING*; *SONG TO MY SON*; *SERESTA*; *MAMBO INN*; *THE MONSTER AND THE FLOWER*; *CHRISTMAS WITHOUT YOU*; *CHEKERESON*; *THE LADY AND THE TRAMP*

Personnel: D'Rivera, alto saxophone, clarinet (cuts 3, 8); Claudio Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn, valve trombone; Howard Levy, harmonica; Michel Camilo, piano, Yamaha DX7; Daniel Freiberg, Yamaha DX7; Lincoln Goines, Sergio Brandao, electric bass; Portinho, drums, percussion; Steve Gadd, drums; Sammy Figueroa, congas, percussion; Jose Neto, acoustic guitar, percussion; Isidro Bobadillas, Dominican tambora; Raymond Perez, guido; string section (2, 3, 6).

★ ★ ★ ★

CLAUDIO RODITI

CLAUDIO!—Uptown 27.27: *KARIOKA*; *CAN'T HELP LOVIN' DAT MAN*; *NEFERTITI*; *THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE*; *LAMENT*; *MY ROMANCE*

Personnel: Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Slide Hampton, trombone; Howard Kimbo, tenor saxophone; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Rufus Reid, acoustic bass; Akira Tana, drums; Steve Sacks, synthesizer (cuts 3, 5).

★ ★ ★

Although *The Old Man And The Sea* might not be the best book that Ernest Hemingway ever wrote, his tale of the Cuban fisherman concentrates the best elements of his work: the concise style, the flow of the narrative line, the theme of grace under pressure. In a similar way, *Just Kidding*—the first tune on Paquito D'Rivera's latest album—might not be his best composition, but it's a neat summary of what makes his music so effective. The head merges bebop, latin, and funk beneath an angular riff-melody. The rhythm is hot, churning, and complex. D'Rivera tosses off *Salt Peanuts* to introduce his solo, then constructs a long, curving staircase from a sequence of jagged steps. After reaching a dizzying height, he tumbles down and begins to build again. Pianist Michel Camilo rises up to meet him with a joyous, two-handed solo. Then the focus shifts to the drums before the horns rush back in with the theme.

The blazing energy of the tune is irresistible, and the various stylistic elements fit together seamlessly. The rest of the album, though, does not quite live up to the fiery promise of its beginning. D'Rivera indulges his romanticism on the next tune, *Song To My Son*, a ballad that he recorded previously on *Paquito Blowin'*

(Columbia 37374). This new version features an unimaginative string arrangement that tends to dilute rather than enhance the emotion of D'Rivera's playing. Unfortunately, he brings the strings back two more times: on *Seresta*, a feature for his fluid clarinet, and the overripe *Christmas Without You*.

The potent latin rhythms of *Mambo Inn* and *The Monster And The Flower* are better vehicles for the altoist, who plays rapid, intricate solos with impossible ease and precision. It's hard not to admire a musician who has so much technique and such a big heart. *The Lady And The Tramp* closes the album triumphantly. D'Rivera arranged his boppish melody for a trio of clarinet, valve trombone, and harmonica—a wonderfully Ellingtonian color combination. The tune itself is not especially striking, but the clarinet solo is: a series

of long, swooping strokes that unites Benny with Bird.

The Brazilian trumpeter Claudio Roditi, a mainstay of D'Rivera's band since 1983, is pushed somewhat into the background on *Explosion*. Although his playing is important to the ensemble work, he gets only four brief solos (two on valve trombone). His recent album *Claudio!*, his second as a leader, is a better showcase for his talents. It's basically a straight-ahead blowing date, but the arrangements (by Roditi and Don Sickler) are thoughtful and the players mesh well. Away from the extroverted D'Rivera, Roditi leans toward Miles, playing open, spacious lines and reaching for his Harmon mute. His ideas aren't very memorable, however, and Slide Hampton steals the show. Roditi is primarily a catalyst, and it's a role he handles well. —jim roberts

CRITICS' CHOICE

Art Lange

NEW RELEASE: Duke Ellington, 1943, Vol. 1 & 2 (Circle). The first two of nine prospective volumes of World Broadcast transcriptions includes outtakes, false starts, gems, and warts; a valuable look into the studio workings of jazz' greatest composer, intensified by the stunning soloists (Johnny Hodges, Rex Stewart, Jimmy Hamilton, Tricky Sam Nanton).

OLD FAVORITE: Charles Mingus, *Wonderland* (United Artists). Not Mingus' most cathartic band, perhaps, but this live '62 date teams the compatible tandem of John Handy and Booker Ervin on some of Mingus' most romantic settings—*Nostalgia In Times Square*, indeed.

RARA AVIS: Peter Maxwell Davies, *Renaissance & Baroque Realisations* (Unicorn-Kanchana). Original pieces by Bach, Purcell, Dunstable, and anonymous Scottish motets revamped into austere tone poems, jittery '20s fox trots, tricky tangos, and abstract atonal environments.

SCENE: *Ornette: Made In America*, a film by Shirley Clarke, is a quirky and complex correlative to the music of one of jazz' most inspired and inspiring innovators—as seen at the Public Theatre in New York.

Bill Milkowski

NEW RELEASE: Perri, *Celebrate!* (Zebra/MCA). Four soulful sisters from Los Angeles singing four-part gospel-type vocalese harmony on a couple of Pat Metheny tunes. Manhattan Transfer meets the Clark Sisters.

OLD FAVORITE: Funkadelic, *One Nation Under A Groove* (Warner Bros.). Strictly on-the-one. Plus you get the mind-numbing psycho-electric guitar of Mike Hampton on the defiant *Who Says A Funk Band Can't Play Rock?!* and the classic *Maggot Brain*. Hampton is, sadly, an unsung guitar hero.

RARA AVIS: Zazou Bikaye, *Mr. Manager* (Pow Wow Records). French synth and computer whiz Hector Zazou teams up with vocalist Bony Bikaye from Zaire for some fresh-sounding Euro-Afro dance music. Truly transcultural.

SCENE: Showcase at the Bretton Hotel (a musician's residence in Manhattan) for multi-instrumentalist Arthur Rhames. This amazing young man, who plays mainly in the streets, went from piano to alto to guitar with equal conviction; McCoy, Coltrane, McLaughlin/Hendrix are obvious influences. Somebody sign this cat!

Fred Bouchard

NEW RELEASE: George Adams/Don Pullen Quartet, *Live At The Village Vanguard* (Black Saint). Another stellar, vital date from this fixed constellation; playing from the hip, for the hip, the band pleases most with a Monk tribute and a Mingus gem.

OLD FAVORITE: Charles Mingus, *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* (Impulse). Dances from bar one to the finish 40 minutes later. Fabulous pacing and instrumentation; spanish guitar licks from Jay Berliner and incandescent alto from Charlie Mariano show that Mingus always inspired cats to play over their heads.

RARA AVIS: Roland Hanna, *Gift From The Magi* (West 54). Solo piano requires the right atmosphere, but can register indelible beauty. This LP takes me on a trip of such exquisite grandeur and poignance that it never fails to bring a tear.

SCENE: Paquito D'Rivera and Claudio Roditi, both coming off of smoking new releases (for Columbia and Uptown, respectively), teamed for some exceptionally tasty and energetic salsa at Jonathan Swift's in Cambridge, MA—and what a trip to watch the local drummers falling out at Portinho's every shifting accent.

RECORD REVIEWS



BENNY CARTER

A GENTLEMAN AND HIS MUSIC—Concord Jazz 285: *SOMETIMES I'M HAPPY*; *A KISS FROM YOU*; *BLUES FOR GEORGE*; *THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE*; *LOVER MAN*; *IDAHO*.

Personnel: Carter, alto saxophone; Joe Wilder, trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Ed Bickert, electric guitar; Gene Harris, piano; John Clayton, bass; Jimmie Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

In these pages, over the years, Benny Carter's probably collected more stars than the Mt. Palomar Observatory. How does he do it? Like Stephane Grappelli and damned few others, he's continued to grow as an artist since hitting nominal retirement age. Carter was 78 when these sides were cut last summer, but his alto work's never been more pointedly concise, his

tone more razor-sharp.

His instincts have stayed sharp, too. The way he was able to whip this international/inter-generational unit into shape in a mere day may seem a miracle. They'd performed at the Concord Jazz Fest just the night before, hours after holding their only rehearsal. Yet five of six cuts here are first takes.

Still, Carter's experienced and savvy enough to know there are practical short-cuts to miracles. It doesn't hurt that he sticks mostly to the mainstreamers' shared repertoire of standards and blues, or that he's surrounded by seasoned or well-versed performers. Joe Wilder's probably senior man on most of his record dates, even if he is 15 years Carter's junior. Veteran of big bands, studios, and symphony concerts, Joe like Benny betrays an instinctive grasp of proper deportment. He knows exactly how much fire to stoke up—fanning glowing embers on *Lover Man*, radiating tropical warmth on *Kiss*—without ever threatening to burn out of control.

It doesn't hurt that Canada's Bickert is cast here in Freddie Green's role, either. He reinforces an otherwise solid rhythm section, facilitating a monstrous sense of swing that lets this septet rock like a big band. Hear, for example, the socking *Thing's Ain't*, where Ed steps out with an appropriately bluesy solo. (But then he even plays blues in *Idaho*.)

The pungent clarity of Carter's playing sways

the impressionable Hamilton away from his notorious Ben-dencies. Here, Scott blots up the altoist's style instead—except on Carter's latin ballad *Kiss*, where he can't resist breathy Websterisms. Sympatico saxophonists go a long way toward establishing a definite ensemble style. So does Harris' blues-soaked yet ebullient pianism. He gives nearly every number a happy cast.

Scrutinized so, the quick cohesion of this sportive unit may not seem miraculous after all. But what about the enduring creativity of Benny Carter? Some mysteries—like the progress of the stars—defy easy explanation.

—Kevin Whitehead

OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLES

A Drop In The Atlantic Ocean

Atlantic Records' reissue programs of the '60s and '70s involved repackaging selected tracks into single-, double-, or triple-album compilations by its successful major artists. So much of Atlantic's classic material from the '50s never saw light again—unless led by John Coltrane or the MJQ. Then by the early '80s a few treasured sides rose phoenix-like from Japan with the original labels and covers. For the recent Jazzlore series Atlantic producer Ilhan Mimaroğlu eschews the anthology approach in favor of repackaging entire albums, and so far those reissues that have trickled out have come from scattered periods in the company's voluminous and treasured LP history. Only the covers differ from the original, and that can be discussed later. For now, here are six more escapees from the Atlantic vaults, "Chicago-style" to soul-funk.

Eddie Condon's *That Toddlin' Town*: *Chicago Jazz Revisited* (Jazzlore 23) was originally issued on Warner Brothers 1315 in 1959 and appears in this series for the obvious reason that Warner now owns Atlantic, and because it fits in so well with Atlantic's history of diverse musical styles. The music Hugues Panassié dubbed "Chicago-style" may be forever debated as a bona fide genre, but no one can doubt its joyous drive. Condon seldom soloed and doesn't at all here, leaving the improvising to trumpeter Max Kaminsky, clarinetist Pee Wee Russell (drolly attractive on *Love Is Just Around The Corner*), and the workmanlike tenor of Bud Freeman. Goodman and Savitt alumnus Cutty Cutshall also has good trombone spots and George Wetling's drums are steady throughout. The fare is expectedly in the tradition these men created, even *Chicago*; *There'll Be Some Changes Made* and *Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble*, despite their later vintage, are spirited performances.

Before unsuspecting **John Coltrane** fans get unduly excited about *Countdown* (Jazzlore 24), they should carefully check the liner acknowledgement that this is the same

LYLE MAYS

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Marc Johnson, Bass

Bill Drewes, Saxophone

Nana Vasconcelos, Percussion

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album issued in 1974 as *Alternate Takes* (Atlantic 1668), and remains available in some shops in that version. Masters of five of the included tunes appeared on *Giant Steps*. This particular *Giant Steps* performance is from a 1959 session a full month prior to the one we've always heard, and features Cedar Walton and Lex Humphries. Walton takes no solo, yet more than makes up for that through his dancing accompaniment and a distinct figure he plays in the head. Trane swings his phrases more consciously, perhaps jettisoned by Humphries' touch, heavier than Arthur Taylor's. A version each of *Naima* and *Like Sonny* was also done at that session. Unquestionably without equal is this extended version of *Countdown*. Coltrane heads will continue to compare these tracks with the initially released ones and continue to guess why it took so long for these to be released.

Atlantic's 1200 series of LPs included rarities by Phineas Newborn, Wilbur DeParis, and Jimmy Giuffre I hope the Jazzlore series will rescue, as it's finally done with the **Tony Fruscella** album (Jazzlore 25, nee Atlantic 1220) from 1955 (some have waited 30 years for this one!). Fruscella played trumpet unhurriedly and possessed a full-bodied lower register, qualities akin to Miles, whom he admired, and Chet Baker. His tone bears a burnished melancholia. Musically, the album displays a '50s West Coast interest in big sound from a quintet or septet, and Phil Sunkel is responsible for the ensemble arranging and most of the tunes. Allen Eager's tenor is dominant, woven around Fruscella's laconic voicings and offering strong solos on *Raintree County* and the canonical *His Master's Voice*. Two Sunkel works, *Muy*, and the aggressive and dense *Salt*, include Danny Bank on baritone and trombonist Bill Holman. *I'll Be Seeing You*, the only quartet track, is leisurely paced, haunting, and of cool verve.

Jazzlore 26 had another lifetime as Atlantic 1369—*The Genius After Hours*, an album by **Ray Charles** recorded at various sessions in 1956 but not packaged until 1960. At a time when Charles enjoys good fortune across stylistic genres, this reissue offers a view of his instrumental-only piano work in a trio setting, some with Oscar Pettiford on bass. Charles always attributed his stylings to Nat Cole's influence and to the blues and the church. By the mid-'50s, only Horace Silver would have been his stylistic rival. While he does *The Man I Love* a bit languorously, his title blues and the fleet *Music, Music, Music* are tasty. Three tracks feature Quincy Jones' arrangements for four horns including David "Fathead" Newman, who has a biting alto on *Joy Ride* and whose tenor has the lead on *Ain't Misbehavin'*.

And how long has the jazz world awaited the reavailability of *Bean Bags*, that command performance with **Coleman Hawkins** and **Milt Jackson** (Jazzlore 27, formerly Atlantic 1316)? Nat Hentoff accurately describes it as a "seminar in improvisation." Hawkins knew no generation gap, and his

tenor astutely joined younger musicians; vibist Jackson remains one of the most respected musicians who emerged from the '40s. The performances remain fresh, too, as the romping *Get Happy* and *Stuffy* attest. More simplified and provocative lines than *Sandra's Blues* and *Indian Blues* you'll seldom find, evidence of Bags' distinctive touch and quite unlike one another, the latter enhanced by Kenny Burrell's spontaneity. The two ballads, *Close Your Eyes* and *Don't Take Your Love From Me*, are perfect in every way. Tommy Flanagan, Eddie Jones, and Connie Kay deliver especially sensitive support.

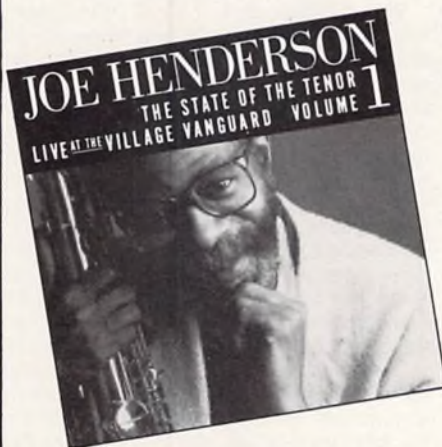
Recorded in late 1966, *Backlash* (Jazzlore 27, once Atlantic 1477) is an often shouting affair by trumpeter **Freddie Hubbard**. It holds a key and appropriate setting in acoustic jazz history: the soul-funk movement had begun to take on some of the Motown and Memphis spirit; the Civil Rights movement was turning Black Power; and jazz was primed to go electric. Yet, the tunes here proved no flash in the pan. *Little Sunflower*, with Ray Barretto's conga, and the evocative *On The Que-Tee*, with its shifting rhythms, have endured as favorites wherever Hubbard performs. *Up Jumped Spring* remains a popular Hubbard flugelhorn outing. Bassist Bob Cunningham contributed *Echoes Of Blue*

and plays with his wonderful intonation; pianist is the late Albert Dailey; on drums is Otis Ray Appleton, who earlier in the year was a ringer on Coltrane's independently produced *Cosmic Music*. Hubbard has always shown fire, but his Atlantic period makes some of his Blue Note work appear pedestrian. Through all his inclinations he's always been lyrical.

Atlantic engaged artist Curtice Taylor to hand-color photos for this series' album covers, but nostalgia-laden old-timers would have appreciated the original covers. Atlantic's photographers and art crew of the late '50s achieved success with shadows and chiaroscuro that was impossible to duplicate, undoubtedly a result of the glossy album texture. The Fruscella album cover was virtually in darkness; the Bags/Hawkins cover indeed portrayed a bag of red beans as though in twilight; the four-color design of Mingus' *Pithecanthropus Erectus* probably inspired the Peter Gunn tv logo; and even the MJQ's album at Music Inn with Jimmy Giuffre seemed to defy the sunshine. These original covers had tactile taste and offered sensations the new ones fail to convey regardless of the shaded quality and chalky pastels of heirloom photos. But, it's a new day and, luckily, no truly creative jazz is ever passé.

—ron welburn

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RECORD REVIEWS

WAXING ON

Self-Produced Artists

BORBETOMAGUS: *ZURICH* (Agoric 1984) ★ ★

COOL AND THE CLONES: *WRONG TIME OF THE MONTH* (EJAZ 2001) ★ ★

NAT DIXON: *UP FRONT* (Sax-Rock 001)

★ ★ ★

THE FRINGE: *HEY, OPEN UP!* (AP-GU-GA 003)

★ ★ ★ ★

JOEL FUTTERMAN: *INNERACTION* (JDF 3)

★ ★ ★

VINNY GOLIA QUINTET: *GOIN' AHEAD* (Nine Winds 117) ★ ★ ★ ★

GONZ: *URANIAN UNDERTOW* (Plug 5) ★ ★ ★

GUNTER HAMPSEL NEW YORK ORCHESTRA: *FRESH HEAT* (Birth 0039) ★ ★ ★ ★

WILLIAM HOOKER: *BRIGHTER LIGHTS* (Reality Unit Concepts 445) ★ ★

SCOTT ROBINSON: *MULTIPLE INSTRUMENTS*

(MultiJazz 101) ★ ★ ★

JOHN SHAW: *SPIRITS FLY WITH THE WIND* (Aisho 1001) ★ ★

ALLEN YOUNGBLOOD: *SELAH* (Griot 7771) ★ ★ ★

Always on the cutting edge, artist-produced recordings give an accurate composite picture of how the present aesthetic landscape is giving way to the future. What the present batch of albums suggest is that anything goes, but only if the artist(s) projects a commitment in the process. What indicates such a commitment? At the risk of sounding tautological, the recordings themselves.

In the case of **Borbetomagus**, their latest commitment to wax is a double-dose two-disc set (with bumper sticker if you're one of the first 500 lucky customers) of their patented teething, gut-wrenching improvisations, which are increasingly touted as the apotheosis of the noise aesthetic. On the exhaustive *Zurich*, saxophonists Don Dietrich and Jim Sauter recycle the cacophonous vocabulary of Peter Brötzmann and his American antecedents in addition to their trademark locked-horn blasts. Guitarist Donald Miller's feedback and string scraping provides industrial color for these seemingly toxic excursions.

Cool and the Clones are equally clamorous in their concoctions of free jazz, psychedelic rock, punk-funk, and the kitchen sink. The large ensemble featured on *Wrong Time Of The Month* is congealed in the mix, though vocalist Beth Emmerling, guitarist Vince Reynolds, and reedist Eric Ziarko rise periodically above the din. Contrasting cuts, however, like Ziarko's (Evan) Parkeresque clarinet solo recorded out of doors, reveal sonic sensibilities that distance them from the dust-on-the-needle ambience perfected by Borbetomagus.

On *Up Front*, **Nat Dixon** reveals a different mix of influences than is usually heard from a saxophonist aspiring to master the bebop idiom. On alto, he segues between the marriage of (Charlie) Parker and Hodges embodied by Sonny Criss, and the coarser con-

tours of Jackie McLean. Dixon's tenorisms are rooted in the hard-nosed drive of Charlie Rouse rather than the flights of Rollins and Coltrane. Accordingly, his permutations on standard blowing structures and his choice of cohorts (Denton Darien, piano; Tarik Shah, bass; Larry Johnson, drums; Virginia Jones, voice) reflect a keen ear.

George Garzone of **The Fringe** draws more directly on the Rollins/Coltrane axis for his ecstatic tenor work, but his most immediate inspiration on *Hey, Open Up!* is drummer Bob Gullotti and bassist Rich Appleman. The Fringe always operates at the boiling point, whether on a barn-burner like *Drum Bobulation*, a lilting Caribbean vehicle like *Islands*, or on *Ballad For Lena*, which finds pianist Ran Blake sitting in; complacency isn't in their rich, varied vocabulary. The Fringe's ability to give a spectrum of materials ranging from the straightahead to the stratospheric a personal stamp is a testament to their 13-year tenure.

Pianist **Joel Futterman** is squarely in the iconoclastic tradition of Cecil Taylor on *Inneraction*, even to the extent of having Jimmy Lyons on board. Futterman, however, replaces CT's breath-like ebb and flow with searing non-stop surges that dampen Futterman's lyrical content, but are breathtaking at times, nevertheless. Technically, Futterman has the requisites, and more; his crashing octaves and cascading crossovers are never less than crisply delivered. Bassist Richard Davis and drummer Robert Adkins round out the quartet with emphatic supportive performances; Lyons is Lyons. *Inneraction* is passionate stuff.

Vinny Golia's self-produced discography reflects the reedist's coming to terms with the art of making good records, distinct from the art of making good music. Golia's albums have always contained plenty of good music, but *Goin' Ahead* has a cohesiveness, a synergy, a maturity that makes it his best yet. His personnel choices make eminent sense: John Fumo is a sinewy trumpeter who can smolder and flame with equal effectiveness; Ken Filiano fills the bass chair of Roberto Miranda, which is a large order; pianist Wayne Peet and drummer Alex Cline continue to be Golia's most empathetic cohorts. The 54-minute program runs the gamut from streamlined neo-bop to pensive ballads to adventurous but accessible forms that Golia invests with considerable wit and warmth. Also, Golia's soprano work is in top form, his tone and articulation rivaling that of Lacy, Bloom, et al.

Partly because Bob Gullotti kicks both trios into gear, much of the praise for The Fringe also applies to **Gonz**, which finds the drummer pivoting between tenorist Jerry Bergonzi and bassist Bruce Gertz. Stylistically, Bergonzi seems to have more overt linkage to the likes of Hank Mobley and Joe Henderson than Garzone, while Gertz is more apt to highlight with harmonics than Appleman. Overdubbed piano parts by Bergonzi and, generally, slightly more polite departure-points in the solos are the other principle differences between the two groups. Otherwise, Gonz' agenda is the same as The Fringe's, and they attend to it with the same vigor.

Gunter Hampel's agenda has been modified on the evidence of his last few albums. No

longer placing a premium on atmospheric lyricism, Hampel, on recent dates, has come out swinging hard, as he does with his New York Orchestra on *Fresh Heat*. Hampel has given his spidery themes heft and torque in his arrangements, and has segued solo and collective improvisations within the charts with aplomb; the vocal duet between Jeanne Lee and Art Jenkins on *Sweet Basil* (where the album was digitally recorded) and Hampel (who sticks with the vibes throughout), Lee, and altoist Thomas Keyserling's trio on *Lichtung* underlines Hampel's ability to meld structure and abandon. With the likes of Perry Robinson, Bob Stewart, Bill Frisell, and Marvin Smith, Hampel has one of the more intriguing lineups in the big band scene.

William Hooker is a tireless, inspired, and fluent drummer who has yet to translate his considerable skills and desire into a cogent recording. Unlike his first, double-disc effort, *Brighter Lights* does not suffer from gargantuan portions of dead-end intensity as much as it does from uneven sidelong pairings with Alan Braufman (alto saxophone, flute) and pianist Mark Hennen. Hennen develops static thematic material into atomizing keyboard smashes that rarely demonstrate any facility or insight. Braufman offers little more than Ornette orthodoxy and puckish lyricism, but with Hooker stoking the fires the effort sends some sparks flying. One can't help but think that Hooker is the exception to the rule; that, if properly produced by a sensitive, yet savvy, a&r person, Hooker's music would reach its potential, and move a lot of listeners in the process.

"Multi-instrumentalist" is a tag that has to be taken seriously with **Scott Robinson**, who plays over 30 different instruments on his debut album. And this isn't a novelty act, although the one-man-band version of *Muskrat Ramble* would humble an outfit like the Kamakazee Ground Crew. Robinson is a chameleon that stays one step ahead of the listener; just as he gives the impression that his passions are in the pre-bop stylings of Webster and Carter, Robinson changes up with post-Ayler gutbucket tenor on *New*; when he seemingly establishes himself as, primarily, a reedist, he serves up some buttery brass, as on *Blue And Sentimental*. With an equally versatile rhythm section (Niels Lan Doky, piano; Ira Coleman, bass; Klaus Suonsaari, drums), Robinson comes off as a triple-threat raised to the third power.

John Shaw is a polished composer and soloist; the compositions on *Spirits Fly With The Wind* have well-turned melodies set against familiar changes that have been pinched into new contours; his flute and tenor and soprano saxophone solos ring confidently as he covers familiar neo-mainstream turf. Partly because of an antiseptic mix, and partly because of a pervasive tastefulness (read: restraint), *Spirits Fly With The Wind* is more breezy than beely, more smoky than smoking. Shaw and tandem tenorist David Schnitter drop some bombs on *Bombay Express*, guitarist Bill Bickford scales to considerable heights, and Calvin Hill delivers solid bass hits, yet much of the program suffers from the air-brushed ambience.

NEW RELEASES

Pianist **Allen Youngblood's** *Selah* benefits from a mix and a program with an edge. Rooted in both Tyner's large chords and dramatic sweep and Hancock's incisive sense of line, Youngblood leads an impressive ensemble (trombonist Julian Priester, bassist Gary Peacock, reedmen Hadley Caliman and Denny Goodhew, and drummer Jerry Granelli) through a self-penned program that spans clarion calls and ruminative ballads. Rather than orchestrate fireworks, Youngblood keeps a steady flame burning bright. Although he is apt to toss in a few more flourishes than is needed in his comping, he makes, with *Selah*, a solid first impression.

If the standard sources for artist-produced recordings (New Music Distribution Service; North Country; Wayside) can not fill your order, write directly to these addresses: Agaric Records, 46 White Ave., South Nyack, NY 10660; EJAZ, 6511 81st St., Cabin John, MD 20818; Sax-Rack Productions, 50 W. 97th St., Suite 11-C, New York, NY 10025; AP-GU-GA Records, 51 Rockview, Jamaica Plain, MA; Nine Winds Records, 6325 DeSoto Ave., Suite J, Woodland Hills, CA 91367; Plug Records, 20 Martha St., Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07675; Birth Records, Phil. Reis 10, D34 Gottingen, West Germany; Multi-Jazz Productions, PO Box 722, Boston, MA 02199; Aisha Records, PO Box 643, Bronxville, NY 10708; Griot Records, PO Box 95858, Seattle, WA 98145-2858. —bill shoemaker

(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.)

PAUSA

Conte Candoli, bopping session from the vet trumpeter includes Phil Woods' alto and others, *OLD ACQUAINTANCE*. **Ted Shumate**, Florida guitarist joins Ira Sullivan's multi-reeds in sextet date, *GULFSTREAM*. **The Ritz**, vocal trio hops and bops in the Jon Hendricks mode, *BORN TO BOP*. **L.A. Jazz Choir**, 18 singers plus the Milcho Leviev Trio and other instrumentalists attack *FROM ALL SIDES*.

CIRCLE/AUDIOPHILE

George Wallington, respected bop pianist's hardhitting quintet (inc. Jackie McLean and Donald Byrd) caught live in '55, *AT THE CAFE BOHEMIA*. **Margaret Whiting**, brand-new servings of tasty chestnuts from the big band vocalist, *THE LADY'S IN LOVE WITH YOU*. **Chris**

Powers, contemporary view of classic Swing Era scores, *AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1985*. **Clyde McCoy**, 1951 radio transcriptions of the wah-wah trumpeter, *SUGAR BLUES*. **Allan Vache**, clarinetist from a musical family audaciously attempts tunes identified w/ BG and others, *HIGH SPEED SWING*. **Warren Vache**, cornetist of the clan offers a '76 reissue in duet and quintet settings, *FIRST TIME OUT*. **Herman Chittison**, pianistic cross between Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson warrants this '44 sequence of transcriptions, *THE MELODY LINGERS ON*. **Lee Wiley**, unique stylist performs Gershwin and Porter songs, *THE 1939-40 LIBERTY MUSIC SHOP RECORDINGS*.

WINDHAM HILL

Ira Stein/Russel Walder, oboe and piano/synth duets plus guests, all in a lyrical mode, *TRANSIT*. **Various Artists**, compilation of atmospheric tracks from 11 LPs, *SAMPLER '86*. **The Nylons**, a capella foursome waxes oldies and newies, *SEAMLESS*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



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1 MILESTONE JAZZSTARS. CONTINUUM (from JAZZSTARS, Milestone). Sonny Rollins, unaccompanied tenor saxophone solo.

[Laughs] . . . Oh, my goodness! Okay, that was Sonny Rollins, and what can you say after you say Sonny Rollins? It was an unaccompanied saxophone montage, I guess—or an unaccompanied saxophone *barrage*.

In a period of my life that was very formative as far as my growth as a player, experiencing music, and formulating my ideas and ideals about a direction in music, I heard Coltrane first. But if I'd heard Sonny first, I might have taken a totally different direction. At that particular time Sonny and Coltrane were the major black saxophone influences—Getz was playing; he was very strong then, too, but that was kind of a different thing, soundwise.

LF: Was Rollins the first person you ever heard playing unaccompanied like that?

EW: No, the first thing I ever heard unaccompanied was Coltrane on *I Want To Talk About You*. There's really no parallel between this and that, because this is a very good example of saxophone technique and saxophone concept within a traditional jazz phrasing situation—you know, the connection of the notes; it is a bebop solo because of the choice of notes and rhythms. Coltrane's solo was separate from jazz, separate from being classified as anything but a non-verbal form of communication. That was the thing about Coltrane to me, it was just beyond music and beyond playing the saxophone.

But Sonny's solo is incredible, it's a beautiful solo and a beautiful example of saxophonistics. Sonny is incredible at that, at exploring the saxophone and dealing with its sound possibilities. So, as far as the rating, I would give it a hundred stars because it's Sonny.

2 RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK. REEDS AND DEEDS (from KIRK'S WORKS, Mercury). Kirk, tenor saxophone, strich, manzello, flute, composer; Virgil Jones, trumpet; Thomas McIntosh, trombone.

That was Roland Kirk. I don't know the tune; I've heard it. The trumpet player and trombone player I'm not really sure about. I thought of Curtis Fuller, but I didn't hear him do the Curtis Fuller triplet thing. The trumpet player might be Richard Williams, although it wasn't as clear as I've heard him.

I thought it was an adequate performance; everybody played okay, but nothing really set it off. I really love Roland

Ernie Watts

BY LEONARD FEATHER

At the time of Ernie Watts' only prior *Blindfold Test* (db, 6/22/72), it was noted that he shared with Pete Christlieb the distinction of being one of the world's two most-heard saxophonists. This is still true, since he and Pete remain with the *Tonight Show* band on a regular basis, along with their many other studio and live gigs.

An NBC staff member since 1969 and a Doc Severinsen sideman for the past 14 years, Ernie has evolved into a remarkably versatile and articulate musician, playing all of the reeds and flutes. Lately he has been cutting down on his extensive studio calls in order to play more live gigs. Over the years he's toured with musicians as diverse as Buddy Rich, Lee Ritenour, and the Rolling Stones; he's appeared recently with an all-star group consisting of Patrice Rushen on keyboards, Alfonso Johnson on bass, and Ndugu Chancler on drums, called *The Meeting*. Most notable among his recordings of the last few years was his work on



ANN SUMMA

the Grammy-winning soundtrack to *Chariots Of Fire* (Qwest 3637) and his most recent LP, *Musican* (Qwest 25283-1).

He was given no information about the records played.

Kirk. Some of the most entertaining evenings I've ever had have been listening to Roland Kirk—listening to him talk, listening to him be himself, as well as to his music. I think he was a really great natural musician. And that performance was not Roland Kirk at his best. And I don't think it was the other guys at their best, either. I would give that two stars.

3 ERIC DOLPHY. THE MEETING (from THE BERLIN CONCERTS, Inner City). Dolphy, alto saxophone, composer; Benny Bailey, trumpet; Pepsi Auer, piano; Jamil Nasser, bass; Buster Smith, drums.

That was Eric Dolphy, and the trumpet player I'm not really sure about. This may have been a European recording. It's a slow blues of some type—I don't know the title. I really like Eric Dolphy. I really like his bass clarinet playing; I haven't heard anybody do, conceptually, on the bass clarinet what he got together. He was an extraordinary musician. His control of the alto and the flute was really very demanding, too.

This is a real good classic Eric Dolphy-out-of-Bird performance. Eric's solo is just beautiful. The other players I'm not really sure of. The pianist was adequate; same with bass and drums. I don't think it's an American band. But I would give it five stars for Eric.

4 LEW TABACKIN. YELLOW IS MELLOW (from DUAL NATURE, Inner City). Tabackin, flute; Toshiko Akiyoshi, composer.

That's my friend Lew Tabackin. We spent a lot of time together on the *Tonight Show*; I learned a lot about music from listening to him play. He's one of the most clear outgrowths of Rollins on the tenor saxophone that I have ever heard. And his flute playing is the best. If Jean-Pierre Rampal or Julius Baker could play jazz on the flute, they'd probably sound—or want to sound—like Lew. His sound concept of flute playing is legitimate, whereas when we listened to Roland before, that was like a jazz concept of flute playing, or a real natural, organic concept. Eric Dolphy's sound was like that, too—trying to emulate the bird's sound.

Lew's sound is classical and it's beautiful. About the only other jazz player you could really compare him with is Hubert [Laws] as far as sound goes, and as far as being into flute technique: double tonguing, triple tonguing—flutistics! Everything that Lew does is very clear, very selective. There's no extraneous matter in his playing. And if you know him, you know that it comes from years of discipline. He's a truly great jazz artist in this period; and that's very hard to be right now with the way the music is going. Two hundred stars! db

Bill Nelson

From '70s rock guitar pyrotechnics to '80s home studio synthesizer impressions, Nelson's music is unique.

BY JOHN DILIBERTO

Bebop Deluxe! Sounds like a great name for a Bird and Diz revival group. But disciples of state-of-the-art guitar know that Bebop Deluxe was the name of a British cult band that held forth during England's glam-rock era alongside David Bowie and Roxy Music. The point man was Bill Nelson, and in the speed and distortion flights of mid-'70s guitar, few could equal his pyrotechnical displays.

Born on December 12, 1948 in Wakefield, England, Nelson's career has been marked by sudden polar leaps. For instance, it's difficult to believe that this peroxide, spiky-haired man before me was once in a religious rock group called the Gentle Revolution. For Bill Nelson, however, it was a short trip from the visions of religion—inspired, he claims, by his first wife—to the visions of acid and late-'60s psychedelic-rock. By 1971, he had privately pressed three albums, including *Northern Dream* (Butt 002), recorded on a primitive home studio with a two-track tape deck. A broadcast by the BBC's influential dj, John Peel, landed him a contract, and he formed Bebop Deluxe.

Bebop Deluxe put out seven albums, beginning with 1974's *Axe Victim* (Harvest) and ending with 1977's *Drastic Plastic* (Harvest/Capitol 16023). With self-taught dexterity and signal-processing wizardry, Nelson orchestrated screams, cries, and whispers into the solos of songs like *Sister Seagull* and *Crying To The Sky*. In the light of his recent music, Bebop Deluxe sounds leaden now, but the savage grace of his guitar solos still holds up.

As Nelson pushed 30, he saw the dead-end of pop stardom and took a sharp left-hand turn into the circuitry of synthesizers. The first inklings of change appeared on *Drastic Plastic*, with its hard-edged metric rhythms and synthesized textures. "I felt that when I was with Bebop Deluxe in its latter stages we weren't stretching ourselves as far as we could as a complete team of musicians," Nelson recalls. "I got my hands on a Mini-Moog synthesizer not long before



GOODS

we recorded our last album. I also had a guitar synthesizer, the Hagstrom Patch 2000, which was one of the earlier, primitive guitar synthesizers. I wrote most of the material on *Drastic Plastic* on synthesizers."

In tracks that presaged the electro-robotics of Devo, Gary Numan, and others by a few years, Nelson experimented with electronic processing and studio techniques in a way that would've made electronic pioneers like Otto Luening and Stockhausen proud (if they weren't horrified).

"We had a track called *Electrical Language*," says Nelson, "that utilized a drum loop with the snare drum put through various devices, a fuzz-box, natural echo chambers, and I played guitar synthesizer on it."

Ironically, Nelson became a technojunkie just as England's youth was stripping down for the bare-bones, no-frills punk barrage. "A lot of the guys who started out in New Wave punk bands eventually got into electronic dance music," Nelson notes. "*Electrical Language* was in fact an electronic dance track."

Quickly, Nelson took another of those polar leaps and abandoned everything that his reputation was built upon. Everything, that is, except a single-minded adherence to the vision of his muse. He dissolved Bebop Deluxe and formed Red Noise.

Red Noise's first and only album, *Sound-On-Sound* (Harvest/Capitol 11931), was almost all Nelson, playing drums, synthesizers, percussion, bass, vocals, and, yes, a little guitar. Seven years after its release, *Sound-On-Sound* remains fresh and vibrant with odd song struc-

tures, stop-start rhythms, twisted lyrics, and jagged arrangements. It was also Nelson's swan song with Capitol Records in the U.S. "In some ways it was a little ahead of its time," Nelson can now say with rueful laughter. "That album actually lost me my deal with Capitol Records. They heard it and couldn't believe I'd made such a quantum jump from Bebop to Red Noise."

Capitol test marketed the record to 150 radio stations. The results, according to Nelson, were so extreme that even Capitol couldn't believe it. "They actually photostatted all the comments and sent them to me," he recalls. "They thought I wouldn't believe them. They were so despairing that they're hilarious. There are things like 'What is this crap?', 'Out Devos Devo!', 'Too whacko for us!'. There wasn't one station that said this was great."

Fans of Bebop were left wailing, "Where's the guitar?" "I got to the stage where the guitar was no longer my main love," answers Nelson. "My main love was making music. To restrict myself to one kind of tonal color seemed a little bit narrow and primitive, particularly with the advent of synthesis and the kind of sounds I just couldn't get with the guitar. I started relegating the role of the guitar from a lead instrument to a sort of texture instrument. I used more chords and minimized the soloing, making it hit hard, short, and out. It was not the centerpiece of the music."

The choppy rhythms and Nelson's manic delivery were perfectly suited to his hymns of technological alienation. "The actual visual and lyrical concerns of the Red Noise album were quite tongue-

in-cheek," says Nelson, "but actually dealt with a near future with the technology that was upon us. I sang about all the uses and misuses of technology. There's a song called *Stop-Go-Stop* about brain implants for political and criminal manipulation. I feel that that now has become a widely exploited genre."

Nelson eventually got a new contract, but during his hiatus, he went back to his home-grown studio to make personal soundtracks of atmospheric guitar, synthesizers, and musique concrete applications that used anything from tv soundbites to pots and pans. It was almost a return to his early solo records, only now, instead of electrified folk songs, Nelson creates moody sound-sculptures and dark landscapes.

The inspiration for these vignettes comes from a notebook in which Nelson writes down his thoughts, what he sees or hears, and then picks out phrases to use as titles and the basis for his songs. "They're very much like instant sketches," says Nelson. "I try to put down tracks very, very quickly and try not to do more than one take unless there are serious errors. Sometimes I'll do a particular chord pattern and reverse the tape, chop it up and work with it going the wrong way for a while, then I'll turn it back and work with it going that way. So you have all these elements that are produced by not quite knowing what's going to happen next."

The results have been five volumes of music that owe more to the musique concrete of Pierre Henry, Stockhausen, and Eno than Jimi Hendrix and Chuck Berry. He started his own label, Cocteau Records, and released *Sounding The Ritual Echo* (Mercury 6359 055), *Das Kabinett Of Doktor Caligari* and *Beauty And The Beast* (Cocteau JCD4), and *Confessions Of A Four-Track Mind* (Cocteau JC-10). As the last title suggests, these were done on a four-track, the TEAC A-3340S. In 1985 he released a four-record box, *Trial By Intimacy (The Book Of Splendors)* (Cocteau JEAN 2), recorded on the Fostex A-8-track and accompanied by Nelson's surrealistic photo constructions.

While Nelson's home studio pieces have a personal charm, his synthi-pop excursions have become increasingly complex and polished. His most recent recordings were done in conventional multi-track studios and have the drive of the best dance records. But Nelson's programmed drum rhythms, swirling electronic textures, and sophisticated lyrics reveal a maturity well beyond the regions of teen beat.

"*The Love That Whirls* (PVC 101) was an album based around trance things,"

Nelson explains. "The rhythmic structures and melodies were based on trance principles. The idea it was putting across was that there is a fusion between sexuality and mysticism. Songs like *Tender Is The Night* and *Another Day, Another Ray Of Hope* have a spiritual quality. It's not just sensuality, but there's an element of that in there. You could dance to it, you could

sit and listen to it. There was this blend of sex and religion."

On tour, Nelson's band uses digital synthesizers like the Yamaha DX7, Linn-Drum computers, and Simmons electronic drums, yet he maintains a spontaneity that would be alien to programmers like Thomas Dolby or Devo. On stage, he improvises with cool

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PROFILE

intensity, coupling his Yamaha SG-2000S electric guitar with Boss Digital Delays, an Ibanez Multi-Effects unit, and an E-Bow. His solos are long sinewy lines that wouldn't be out of place on an Indian raga. Groups like U2 and Big Country have popularized the E-Bow, a hand-held device that drives individual strings into permanent sustain by creating a magnetic field around the string. "It's a very fluid sound," explains Nelson. "I've used it with all kinds of effects in the studio, such as harmonizers tuned to fifths."

Nelson's home studio has gone from four to eight to 16 tracks with his Fostex B-16, an Allen Heath 24-channel console, and a Sony PCM F-1 digital mastering machine. At last count, this studio was recording a Yamaha CS-70M synthesizer, Yamaha DX7, Wurlitzer electric piano, Arp Omni, Casio 1000-P and 7000-P, Casio MT-30, and several VL-Tones.

Nelson still lives in Yorkshire with his second wife, Jan, and three children, one from the first marriage and two from the second. He divorced his first wife "after she smashed my guitar." Having gone through several guitars in the interim, Nelson appears to be exercising unprecedented creative control over his career. "I'm learning to believe in myself a little bit more and not worry about whether it sells or not," he asserts. "I'm 38 now and I can't play at being a pop star anymore. I have to be a human being, and one who expresses that human-ness through his art." **db**

Melvin Sparks

An as archetypal exponent of organ combo guitar playing, Sparks combines soulful savvy with heartfelt commitment.

BY KEVIN WHITEHEAD

In practice, there are two dominant blues strains in modern American music: the elegantly swinging kind associated with Basie and the Kansas City school, and the sweaty, stinging kind perfected behind swinging doors in Chicago. Theoretically inseparable, they rarely intersect,

except in the hardy perennials of the urban club scene, organ combos; groups which combine the 4/4 walk of Basie-c jazz and the gritty soul of Muddy Waters.

Texas-born Melvin Sparks never intended to become the guitarist of choice in organ groups; actually, he'd rather work with a piano player, as he did on his 1982 *Sparkling* (Muse 5248). Still, he's recorded with organists Lonnie Smith, Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff (on two recent Milestones), Charles Earland (on *Black Talk*, Prestige 10024), and Leon Spencer. He's also on saxist Hank Crawford's last three Milestone albums, and wrote the houserockin' title track on the most recent, *Roadhouse Symphony* (Milestone 9140).

Perhaps more than any jazz guitarist today, Sparks combines the same blues strains organ combos blend. He's fluent in uptown and downtown styles. Melvin begins and ends *Sparkling* solo: running double-time rings around *Misty* for openers, later adding flurrying fills to a 12-bar stomp, a la Lightnin' Hopkins. But Sparks is best when he mixes both approaches. Romping on Fats Domino's *I'm Walkin'* (on McGriff's *Countdown*, Milestone 9116), Sparks' lines have a jazz musician's dancing swing, but his intervals, string bends, and raw trebly sound are an electric bluesman's. He plays *Since I Fell For You* with bluesy authority on the same LP, and even takes a rewardingly impertinent blues break on Johnny Lytle's soupy *New York, New York* (on *Good Vibes*, Muse 5271).

But Sparks doesn't see what he does as genre-mixing. "To me, it's all one kind of music." Given his background, you can see why.

"I was born March 22, 1946, in Houston. My mother was a gospel singer in the church, and that was the first music I heard. But she owned what in Texas we call a cafe, so I always heard jazz and blues records on the jukebox when I was growing up. My older brother was a drummer, and I played drums when I was about nine years old. I picked up the guitar two years later, and took lessons for six months with a private teacher who taught me the basics.

"The cafe was connected to our house. I'd sit in my room, or take my guitar in there, but either way I'd play along with records, by B.B. King or Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. I'd try to play like B.B., or to play on the guitar what Bobby Timmons might play on the piano. Monday was teenage jazz night at the cafe; that's where guys like [tenor saxist] Billy Harper and [drummer] Michael Carvin got their start. They'd bring in arrangements, and I'd borrow 'em, and learn



MITCHELL SEIDEL

how to play that way."

Cut to Christmas week, 1959: "I was standing out back of this big auditorium where B.B. King was playing, 'cause my mother hadn't given me the money to go to the show. This man I'd never seen before asked me what I was doing there, and I said I wanted to talk to B.B. King. He said, 'I know B.B. King, c'mon.' He took me backstage—there's nobody around, 'cause B.B.'s out front with his orchestra—and he says, 'Go on, go on out there,' and pushes me out on stage.

"So I'm walking out, and B.B. sees me, and says into his mic, 'Who's this little fella?' (I'm tall now, but I was short then.) 'He wants to play my guitar—should I let him?' And the people were yelling 'Yeah!' and 'Let him play!' So he gave me his guitar, and I played two of his numbers with his band. He didn't know what to expect, you know, but they loved it."

Clearly, Melvin wouldn't be held back by shyness or self-doubts. He wrote arrangements for his high school jazz band, and began playing pick-up jobs with out-of-towners like Joe Turner and Hank Ballard.

"I loved playing with Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, 'cause he was so comical. He needed a regular guitar player, but he didn't want to hire me because I was so young." Underage or not, Sparks at 16 began a three-year road trek with the Upsetters—Little Richard's band until he'd gotten religion—touring the heartland and backing Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, and others.

The ride ended in L.A. Hungry to play, Sparks soon moved to New York.

(He still lives nearby, in Westchester County's Mt. Vernon, though he retains a trace of a Texas drawl.) "I got around, sitting in with people. One day Cornell Dupree told me, 'You should check out this guitarist at Minton's Playhouse, he might be too good for you.'" The guitarist was George Benson. Sparks was wowed but not intimidated; he pressed a skeptical George to let him sit in. Benson liked Sparks' sound, the two hit it off, and George recommended him to Jack McDuff, who hired him six months later.

Melvin was with the organist two years, until 1969, making his LP debut on the McDuff/Jimmy Witherspoon *The Blues Is Now* (Verve). Sparks cut three long-out-of-print organ group albums of his own for Prestige in the early '70s. (In 1975, on conversion to Islam, he changed his name to Melvin Sparks Hassan, but for professional purposes the name Melvin Sparks had stuck.) In all, he's on over 30 LPs, with Sonny Stitt, Etta Jones, Rusty Bryant, Idris Muhammad, organists and more. During the '70s, his decisive working relationship was with Lou Donaldson—he's on several of Lou's later Blue Notes, including *Everything I Play Is Funky* (BN 84337)—who was a most influential mentor.

"When I first went with Lou, I was heavy into avant garde. I've always wanted to get the same kind of feeling as my main inspiration, Grant Green, playing the guitar like a horn. But then my horn influence was, like, Ornette Coleman. I played Trane's solos—I even played some of his avant garde solos. Lou said, 'Hey man, you're not gonna make it at that, you'll just wind up quitting music.' He made me turn back to the blues and stop acting like a fool. Now I don't want to be avant garde. Most people who buy records are sensible and like sensible music. Good entertaining music—nothing above and nothing below." (And so we lost a pioneering Ornette-style guitarist. It's interesting to note, by the way, that Blood Ulmer came up through organ groups during the same period.)

But like his similarly soulful, lyrical, audience-minded mentor Donaldson, Sparks floundered in the funk morass in the '70s, straining for a hit that never came. More recently, producers Bob Porter and Houston Person have put him to better use on numerous grits-and-greens sessions. Sparks says Porter encourages other artists to let him do some arranging; he shares arranger's credit with McGriff on Jimmy's last record *State Of The Art* (Milestone 9135), which despite some funk and synth trimmings is true to the leader's usual style.

"I worked with Big Nick Nicholas in

'83 and '84, and he taught me more than anyone since Lou. Just sitting next to him on stage, seeing the way he excites people as an entertainer, was a big influence on my getting a band together, playing the blues and even singing a bit."

A shame Sparks hasn't recorded with Nicholas; one imagines the pungent blend of Texas-twang guitar and Nick's highly eccentric vocalized tenor. But

Melvin is fronting his own blues quartet, with piano; they play regular duty at Gates in New Canaan, Connecticut. Trying to book other jobs, he's put through the familiar no-gigs-no-name/no-name-no-gigs cycle of the musicians' recession. What's Melvin Sparks Hassan to do, when after 30-plus albums he's told he doesn't have a Name? What else—reach back and play the blues. **db**

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got clamped shut in the fourth grade when somebody said you didn't have talent. Or maybe you were scared and said it to yourself. It's amazing how much expression is blunted in our society."

Whether he's at the farm or in the Cathedral, when he's playing Winter wants to create a community with his audience. And now he's trying to create a community with the people of Russia. After the Sextet returned from Latin America, Winter talked with Bobby Kennedy about a tour of the Soviet Union, but U.S./Soviet relations then were too precarious. Winter eventually travelled to Russia as a tourist in 1984; there, he became friends with Yevtushenko, Russia's most celebrated poet. "He immediately fell in love with our vision of a *Song Of Russia*, a series of albums I want to do. He urged us to go to Siberia." Winter became entranced at Lake Baykal. "It's the largest and deepest lake in the world. There are about 1,200 species of animals and plants unique to Baykal, plus the only freshwater seals in the world." Winter returned twice.

"In the Soviet Union you meet people who resonate, who listen to your music so deeply that you're touched to the bottom of your soul. Plenty of people still think of Russians as this distant enemy, this grey frozen people, but they love the earth as we do, and I feel that maybe that could be a true common ground for peace. The love of nature around the world goes way beyond politics, goes back before politics were invented. If I can bring back some sense of just the geography of the Soviet Union, that'll be a contribution. Siberia alone is as big as the U.S. and Canada combined, a land of

great beauty and diversity, from desert to tundra to mountains."

Winter hopes to record several albums inspired by his travels around Russia. He'll tour there this year, then return through Europe; one concert will be in Assisi for the 25th anniversary of the World Wildlife Fund. He'll also "spend some time with the animals in East Africa" and create some music from that experience. He's recorded several extraordinary albums already for Living Music: *Callings*, a celebration of the sea life around the Americas, including songs of the creatures; *Missa Gaia*, a Mass for the Earth recorded at St. John the Divine; and *Canyon*, a celebration of his musical ventures through the Grand Canyon.

Winter's struggles with the music business made him determined to become an entrepreneur himself—and he's succeeded. "I get to make a lot of different music and a lot of different albums. I created my own enterprise to do that. It's taken me 20 years. We started our own record company, and we've gone through all the years of financial pressure, the many years we were deep in debt—but we've had fun, and even the struggles, as I look back, were enjoyable. There was a horrendous amount of stuff, but I was able to do it because I lived in the country. When things got too crazy on the telephone and with the bills coming in, I'd just go out in the woods and reconnect with that larger perspective."

Just playing music renews Paul Winter. "Music has turned out for me to be a passport to the world, to connect with people in ways that never occur as a tourist. And the greatest thing we can do is encourage people to make music. When people make music they're more integrated, more whole, more connected to each other and to the earth than from any other activity. Music is one of the great hopes for the human species." db

let's translate that percentage into human beings. Roughly 5 percent of the nightly viewing audience would come out to something like six million people. Imagine, six million people watching jazz on tv every week. That's probably 50 times the number of people who ever heard Mozart's music in his lifetime; more than could attend 10 years' worth of free Chicago Jazz Festivals—in just one night.

Now, we might imagine that not all of the available audience who likes jazz would watch the show—after all, it might be scheduled opposite *Hill Street Blues*. But it would also quite probably pick up viewers from *outside* that 5 percent, who out of curiosity, boredom, or habitual channel-switching might tune in—and get hooked. Suddenly, the audience for jazz has expanded.

And that's how the audience *would* grow. What with the withdrawal (for economic and societal reasons) of the audience out of nightclubs and back into the home for entertainment, this sort of exposure is crucial to the music's future. And such exposure would eventually educate others, ultimately creating its own, new audience. But, to be realistic, the key word here is "eventually." The numbers wouldn't be there immediately—as we've seen, in terms of tv expectations the audience would be practically nonexistent for quite a while. But over a long period of time, this self-created audience would build itself into a large, vocal, and yes, money-making entity. After all, when rock & roll initially hit the public consciousness in the 1950s, wasn't the audience (mostly teenaged) less than 10 percent of the music audience? But the music was *marketed*—not immediately, but over 25 years—into the overwhelmingly popular medium it is today. People didn't make millions of dollars off of rock in the early days the way they expect to today. And the same is true of jazz (and classical and folk and cajun and anything else); it needs a solid commitment plus *time* to find and develop whatever audience is now unaware of its existence. We're not talking about brainwashing rock listeners into liking *our* music instead of theirs—obviously rock should and will have its audience, too. What we're looking for is representation of *alternative* types of music—living, breathing art forms, before they are suffocated by mere consumerism. We're not talking numbers now, we're talking survival. db



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Ienzon—I'd known him for years. I got into putting together my own stuff; our album's called *Dance. Le Voyage* was my next trio record with Brackeen and J. F. Jenny-Clark. I had Arild Andersen play bass on one tour. Then in 1980, summer, somehow it wasn't working anymore. I wanted to change, get out of that bass/saxophone/drum format; I wanted guitars. I played a gig with Pat Metheny, and he recommended Bill Frisell. We've been together almost five years now, and the rest of the band came by people suggesting other people.

"I think Tim Berne brought up Ed Schuller's name—if we play a tune with changes, Eddie's cool, if we play free, he's cool; he can cover. Marc Johnson, I think, recommended Joe Lovano, and after I got with him, I wanted another one, I wanted two. He'd played a lot with Billy Drew, they sounded good together, and that was my first quintet. Then I wanted to have two horns that were totally different from one another; Mack Goldsbury did one French tour with me—he's from Texas and had that sound, but it didn't quite work. Then I found Jim Pepper, and we've been doing that.

"I also had in the back of my mind this thing about the saxophone and guitar and drums, without a bass. I never had the nerve to pull it off or try it. Then I did try it, and I liked it, it worked out. Now I'm working mostly with the trio, but the quintet's still together when there's money and interest in it. But it's so simple with the trio, the transportation aspect, the money. I don't even carry drums. The three of us can fit in one cab."

This may sound like Motian's typical flexibility and practicality, but he's got a new attitude about his career, now accepting the drums—and his urge to compose—and laughing about at least some of the dues paying that attends most jazz endeavors. "I found out it's possible to do your own and other stuff. You don't have to be exclusive. Like I'm playing with Marilyn Crispell at Carnegie Recital Hall—she was up here rehearsing yesterday; that's going to be nice. Or this thing with Charlie, Dewey, and Baikida, and I'm going to Canada for a couple weeks with David Friesen. In the past, when people called I wouldn't take their gigs, because everytime I did it took me away from my stuff, and it took me too long to get back into it, writing tunes, playing, and rehearsing. But I've changed. I just made a record for ECM with Paul Bley, John Surman, and Bill Frisell. First time I've played with Bley in 20 years.

"I like melody, lyricism, tunes and songs, more and more," Motian admits. "Writing is not easy for me. I'll have an idea, or sit at a piano—I'm a terrible pianist—and play until I do something I like, then write that down and keep it in mind. It's not easy for me, because I'm not knowledgeable, but I trust my ears and my intuition, and that's the right way.

"That's something I learned on piano, that taught me something about drums. I was taking piano lessons, playing a piece of music, looking down at my hands, and I was really playing the piece. I remember thinking, 'Whose hands are those? They can't be mine.' That's great when that happens; you trust yourself. You know, you're playing with someone and you're thinking, 'I should change the tempo now, I should anticipate. . . . ' Or you're playing a tune and it's ending and you think, 'Okay, I should end this now. . . . ' No, it's cool, just sit back and trust yourself. When the right time for that to happen is happening you'll know it and you'll just do it. Wait, trust yourself, it will end when the time comes. Now I do that, I trust myself." Why not? His past proves others have, and his present attests to his success. db

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