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For Contemporary Musicians

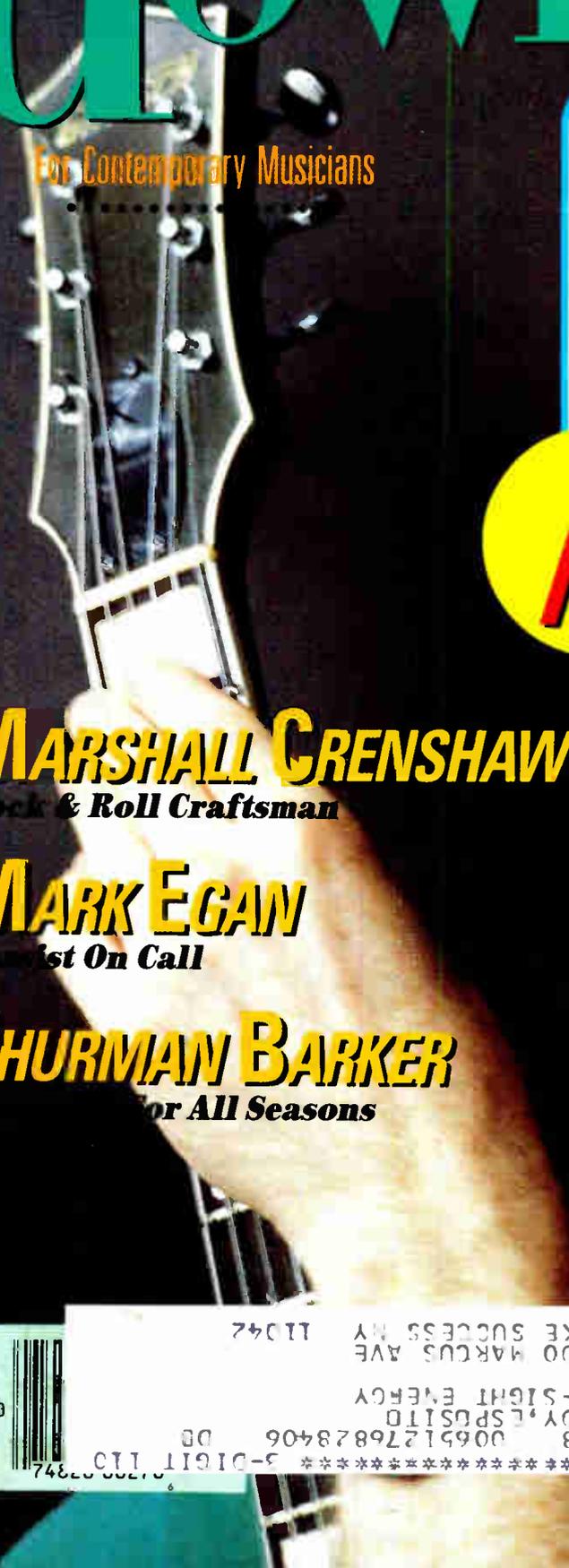


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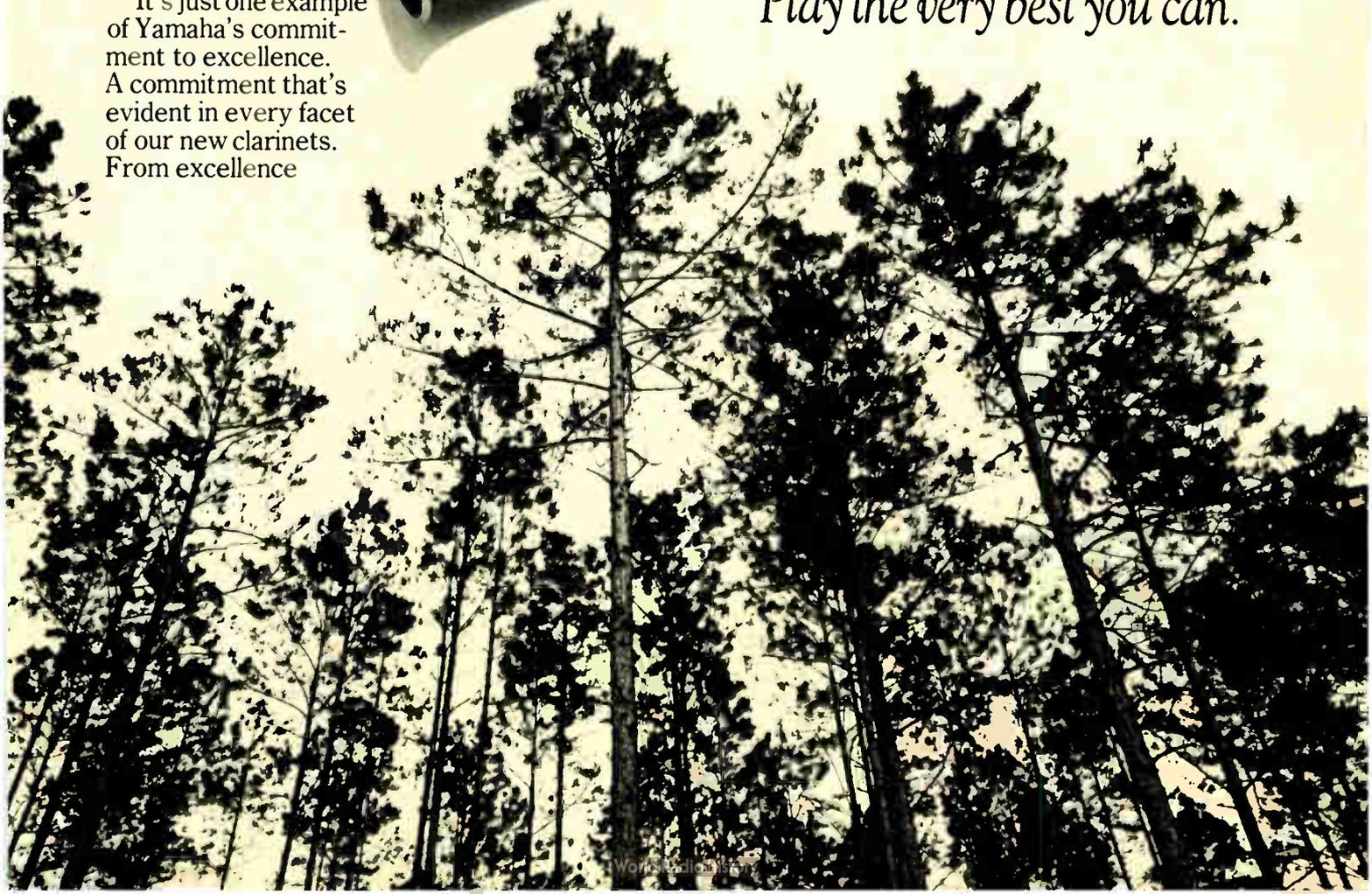
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This electric, eclectic Brazilian trio has been making quite a splash lately, playing the mixture of jazz, funk, and samba they call *samba doído*. Zan Stewart translates for us gringos.

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He never expected to become a cult hero when he quit *Beatlemania* a few years back—the guitarist/songwriter was thinking Top 40 all the way. But, as he tells Bill Beuttler, he'll make it, someday, somehow.

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From Pat Metheny to Arcadia, Gil Evans to Elements, studio work to solo album, this erstwhile trumpeter's logged a lot of prime playing on his adopted axe. Gene Santoro explains how Egan's changing the face of the electric bass.

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down beat (ISSN 0012-5768) is published monthly by Maher Publications, 180 West Park Ave., Elmhurst IL 60126. Copyright 1985 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719, 407. Second Class postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$18.00 for one year, \$31.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions add \$4.50 per year.

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Azymuth



Marshall Crenshaw



Mark Egan



Thurman Barker

down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

MARCH 1986
VOLUME 53 NO. 3

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1-212/243-4786

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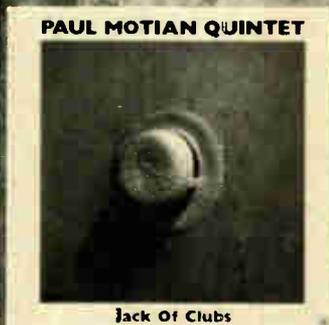
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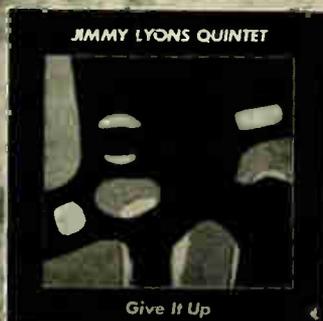
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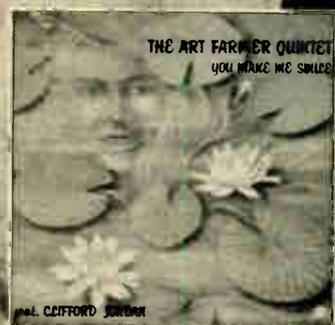
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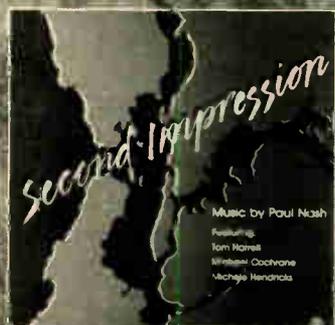
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Time is something no one seems to have enough of these days; if you're like me, it feels like work continues to pile up no matter how much time and energy you devote to it—plus there's never enough time for family, friends, and—wished-for thinking—relaxation.

For most of us, listening to music is a relaxation and a pleasure. True, for some it's an all-consuming passion. And even for the most intense, hardcore fan,

there's just not enough hours in the day to keep up with all the great music being created today—or, thanks to records and tapes, older sounds preserved. Who can keep up with the constant influx of new groups, new sounds, new combinations of favorite musicians—and still have time to re-experience our favorite sounds of yesterday, or explore and expand our knowledge of the great musicians of the past?

Well, we all try, and if it's frustrating, at

least it's a joyful frustration—especially when we discover a new band or new style of music we can enjoy. There's more music—and more *types* of music—available to us than ever before. And for that we should be grateful. However, I sometimes wonder if this abundance of music doesn't affect the *quality* of our listening.

Let me give you an example. When was the last time you went out and bought a record, listened to it once, enjoyed it, but then filed it away in an ever-enlarging collection to be forgotten? As we should all know from listening to the radio, the more times we hear a piece of music, the more it grows on us, until it becomes embedded in our psyche. But how often are we able to *live* with a piece of music for any amount of time, when there are continually newer sounds, newer albums to hear? The result, I fear, is that we experience more music from day to day than ever before, but we aren't able to allow it to become familiar enough to be really meaningful in our lives.

Technology has influenced in this way, too—and I don't mean today's high-tech advancements, I mean the advent of the LP some 40 years ago. It's interesting that so many autobiographical sketches and reminiscences of older music critics and musicians relate how they used to buy one or two 78 rpm discs of their favorite artists, and then listen to them over and over, endlessly, until they knew every note, every nuance of the music—and then they'd move on to a few more 78s. People used to be able to whistle their favorite solos by Charlie Parker or Lester Young—not only musicians, but fans could do this—not because they were especially talented or had a trained ear, but because they heard the songs so many times the solos were etched in their consciousness forever. How many solos can you whistle today? Part of the problem is that instead of two performances on a 78, today we get anywhere from four to 20 performances on an LP, and that's just too much information to digest at a single sitting.

I'd like to say that what we should do is limit our listening habits, perhaps specialize in a few favorite artists until we really know and identify with the creative effort that went into making that particular music. But then we'd miss out on the excitement and fun of a new discovery. Who knows what great new band, what exciting ethnic or classical or rock piece is around the next corner, waiting to be enjoyed? Nevertheless, I fear when we do discover something new, we only experience it at a surface level and never dig deep enough to really let it resonate within us. Ah, for a simpler life. **db**

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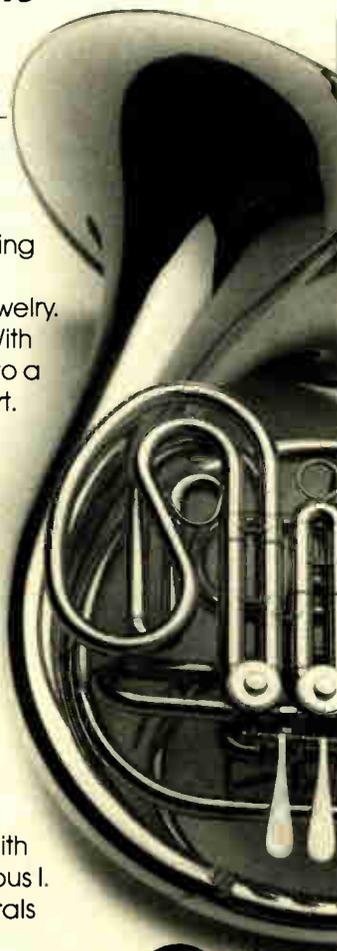
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Ain't so, Branford

Sorry, but I can't let the following pass—and I do have respect for Branford Marsalis. But, from my personal experience as a player (dipping in and out of styles) and in listening to others, I don't think that "it's just a matter of doing the gigs and switching around again" (*db*, "Sting & Band," Dec. '85). If I'm correct, Marsalis is referring to regaining the jazz concept as if it's operated by an on/off switch. I think it is misleading to others as well as oneself to be so flippant about a deeply musical and technical aspect of playing. My good friend, I wish it were that simple.

Also, to the guys—no one even breathed in the direction of how very profitable this gig was. Is this obvious, unmentionable, or beside the point?

Dave Liebman

Peconic, NY

Fan mail

You're number one! As a reader for four years—since I was 18—I must say you're the ultimate in music magazines. Sure there's a lot of music magazines, but

people who know good music read **down beat**. Most people my age are into Prince and heavy metal, but jazz is like religion to me—and your magazine is like a bible for music. Your last issue on Sting was excellent. I'm a 21-year-old drummer, and I was glad to see an article on my hero, Omar Hakim. After seeing him in Sting's movie, I'm convinced he's the greatest drummer in the world, probably since drums have existed. He can play it all. As a fellow drummer, I'd like to know where I can write him.

P.S. A big article on Azymuth is due.

Thomas Gutierrez Jr. Oceanside, CA
Try writing Hakim *clo the publicity department at A&M Records, 595 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022. As far as Azymuth is concerned, have a look at this month's cover.* —Ed.

Jazz access

I've just bought my first issue of *db*, and I can't quite tell who it's written for (jazz aficionados? real serious musicians? certainly not teens!), but I wanted to tell you what a pleasure it is to read something intelligent in a magazine.

Why I picked it up? Your cover story

on Sting & Band (Dec. '85). I saw the movie of course, and was much more interested in the individual band members than in Sting (and I'm plenty interested in him). The movie opened a door into a new experience of music for me. I'd heard some jazz before—Chick Corea, Weather Report, Miles, etc.—but didn't have much *access* to it. That's what the movie offered, and that's what your great article offered. I have a sense of having met some great musicians and engaging human beings. I'm now ready to buy some records, open my ears up, and enjoy.

Cindy Neal

Mill Valley, CA

Principled principal

We would like your permission to reproduce an article from **down beat** in our monthly newsletter to parents. The article was in the April 1985 issue and was called "Music: Basic To Education," by Michael K. McCormick.

Robert A. Robinson

Principal, Sibley High School Sibley, IA
Permission granted. —Ed.

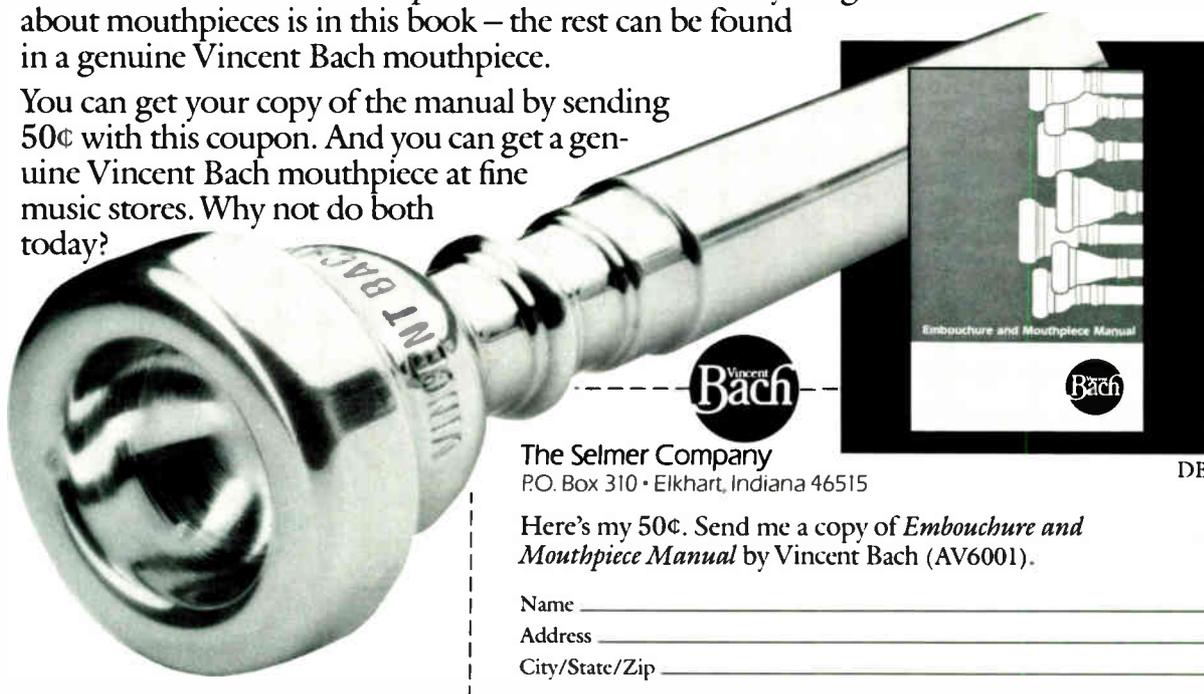
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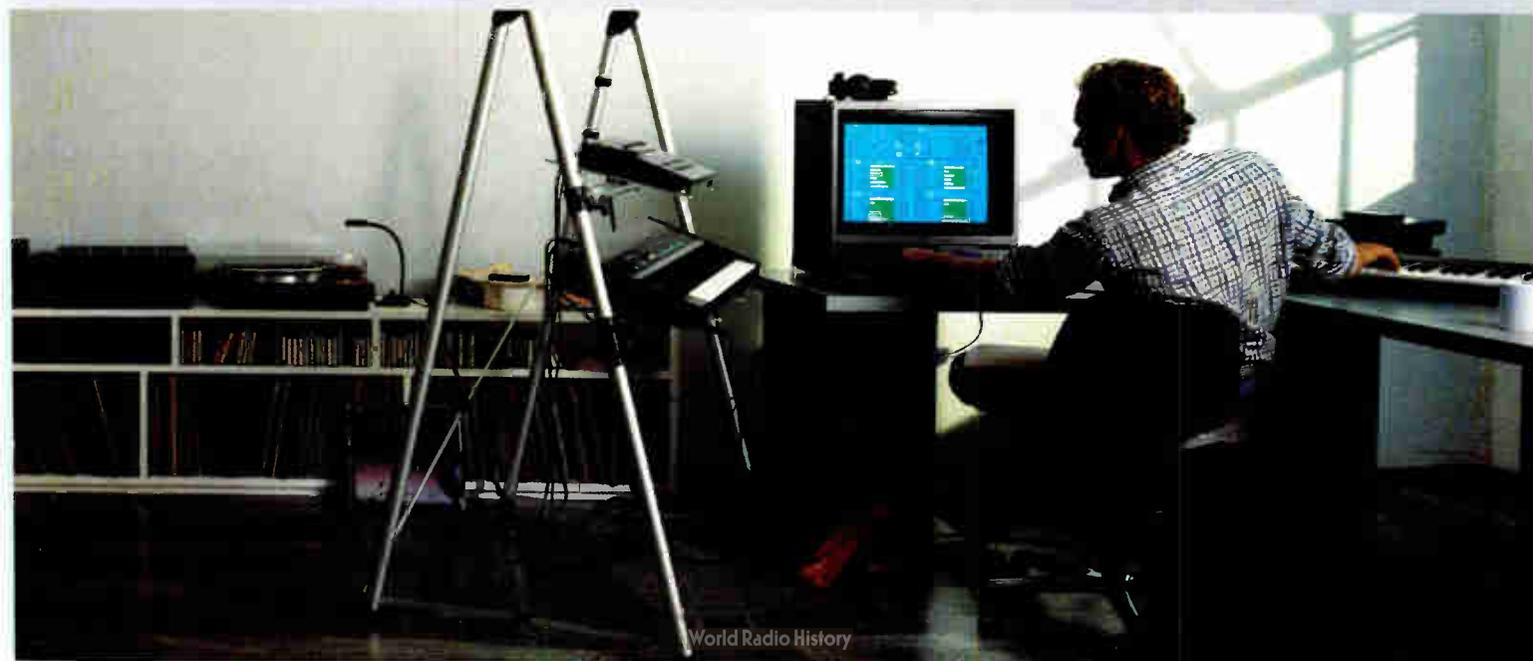
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CHORDS

continued from page 7

Altered lesson

After reading my Pro Session in the December issue, I felt that the 10 examples I gave were still developed too fast. I would prefer that an even slower development of the melody with embellishments were pursued, with the player's attention on the time, so that it really is feeling comfortable as can be. Then moving up a gradient to a little more, and then a little more, and then a little more—not a lot more. In that way, feeling is centered all the time.

Lee Konitz

New York City

Readers Poll—pro & con

This started out to be a letter of complaint because I didn't receive the November '85 issue of *down beat*, but to my delight in the mail box lay the December issue, one that I will keep and treasure for life, for in it was a dream realized—Sarah Vaughan had finally been voted into the Hall of Fame. For years I've voted for Sassy in that category, and to my dismay she never won it, which was way beyond my comprehension. I have to applaud the readers for finally getting on the job. For all the years of pleasure that that phenomenally beautiful, gorgeous voice has thrilled me, I'm pleased knowing that in her lifetime she was made aware of how important she is to *down beat* readers. No matter that she hasn't had a hit record since 1959—unlike that other phenomenally great singer Billie Holiday, we have let this lady know while she's alive that yes, Sarah Vaughan, we love you!

Roy Ryaless Lott

Richmond, CA

The Readers Poll usually succeeds in getting my attention, often for the wrong reasons. This year's poll so infuriated me that I could remain silent no longer. Specifically, what I couldn't ignore was the elevation of Stanley Jordan to number one guitarist. Come on *down beat* readers, we have a responsibility to the music and musicians to vote with integrity and in a knowledgeable, well-informed manner! To do otherwise not only hurts the musicians who get slighted, but also those, like Mr. Jordan, who get elevated to the top when they shouldn't be there. Yes, Stanley is an exceptional guitar player with a novel technique and a very successful and aggressively marketed (pop?) album, and he may someday very well be the number one guitar player in the world; but that remains to be heard. For now, there are 10 or more guitarists who are better jazz players. You readers who voted Stanley number one should save your *down beat* votes for *Rolling Stone* or the *Playboy* jazz poll!

Bob Willett

Quinebaug, CT

Stones drummer fronts big band video

LONDON—Such was the success of the 32-piece Charlie Watts Big Band at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club here recently that the Rolling Stone decided to make a permanent record of the all-star band on video. Together with colleague Bill Wyman, Watts reconvened the band at Fulham Town Hall in South West London to recreate its standing-room-only nightclub week for their Ripple Productions video company. A specially invited audience of musicians, family, and friends including Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton, Pete Townshend, and Bob Dylan attended the late-night recording session by the cream of British jazz musicians, co-led by Watts and jazz drummer John Stevens.

The band personnel reads like a Who's Who of British jazz: Jimmie Deuchar, Harry Beckett, Colin

Smith, Ted Emmett, Steve Sidwell, Dave De Fries (trumpets); Annie Whitehead, John Picard, Paul Rutherford, Chris Pyne (trombones); Willie Garnett, Evan Parker, Ray Warleigh, Peter King, Danny Moss, Don Weller, Bobby Wellins, Alan Skidmore, Courtney Pyne, Olaf Vas, Gail Thompson (reeds); Bill Le Sage, Jim Lawless, Stan Tracey (keyboards); Jack Bruce, Dave Green, Ron Matweson (basses); Bill Eyden, John Stevens, Charlie Watts (drums); Julie Dennis, Gail Dorsey (vocalists); and Alan Cohen (arranger & conductor).

The enormous sound of this unusually large big band was heard to even better effect in the voluminous Town Hall building as the jazzmen went through their book of such standards as *Stompin' At*



JAMES CAMPBELL

WATT'S UP: Charlie Watts (middle of three drummers) takes his 32-piece big band through its motions.

The Savoy, Lester Leaps In, You've Changed, and Flying Home—the latter complete with a brilliant orchestration of Illinois Jacquet's solo on the original Lionel Hampton record. Other highlights included vibist Bill Le Sage soloing on *Robbins Nest*; tenor saxophonist Bobby Wellins on *Midnight Sun*, vocalist Julie Dennis on *You've Changed*, and Gail Dorsey

singing *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, while the six-man tenor battle on *Lester Leaps In* had everyone jumping out of their seats and shouting "Go!"

An unprecedented 60 percent of the profits from the sale of the 50-minute video, scheduled for release later this year, will go directly to the musicians involved

—Martin Isherwood

POTPOURRI

Popular culture: **Miles Davis** and keyboardist **Robert Irving III** recently created the music for an episode of NBC-TV's *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*; entitled "The Prisoner," the show starred Yaphet Kotto as an escaped convict who terrorizes a housewife. The Hitchcock gig was the trumpeter's second foray into tv of late. Miles having played a pimp in an episode of NBC's *Miami Vice* . . . **Phil Woods'** house in Delaware Water Gap, PA, was destroyed by fire; the altoist has since done benefits on behalf of the local fire department

. . . guitar jam: **Lonnie Mack, Roy Buchanan, and Albert Collins** nearly tore the roof off Carnegie Hall at Alligator Records' "Guitar Heroes" bash recently, but the real fireworks flew at the post-concert jam at the S.I.R. rehearsal studio, where such folk as *Late Night-er* Paul Shaffer, rocker Eddie Martinez, bluesman Johnny Copeland, and wildman Jaco Pastorius cranked it out till 4 a.m.; even **db** contributor Ben Sandmel got into the act on drums . . . where's Boo-Boo?: hardcore hitmen **Black Flag's** latest LP (*The Process Of Weeding Out*, SST Records) is an all-instrumental disc; with singer Henry Rollins out fighting the poetry wars, guitarist Greg Ginn takes over and turns out to be the Mike Bloomfield (circa *East-West*) of the punk scene . . . Basie book: British writer **Chris Sheridan** has

completed work on the monumental *Count Basie Discography*; including 955 pages of discographical info and text, plus 300-odd pages of index, the mammoth tome will be released this spring by Greenwood Press . . . jazzmen honored: Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich presented a proclamation honoring Twin Cities trumpeter **Red Wolfe** and saxophonist **Percy Hughes** at a ceremony at the State Capitol rotunda; the pair have been on the local jazz scene for 50 years, having led bands and jazz workshops and now serving as directors of the Twin Cities Jazz Society . . . pop expatriate?: singer **Rickie Lee Jones** has removed to Paris to finish work on her next album; no release date yet for the record, which follows 1984's *The Magazine* . . . distribution deal: **Choice Records** of Sea Cliff, NY, has licensed its 28-album jazz catalog to Bainbridge Records of L.A., and will continue producing new Choice recordings to be distributed by Bainbridge; recent Choice releases include the Shorty Rogers/Bud Shank album *Back Again* with the Vic Lewis Big Band, and *Live At The Haig* by the Bud Shank Quartet . . . K.C. band fest: over 100 high school and college bands will be going to Kansas City for the third annual **Kansas City Stage Band Festival**, 4/25-27, for more info contact festival director Paul Gray, PO Box

753, Lawrence, KS 66044 . . . jazz academy: the **National Academy of Jazz**, now several months into its task of promoting "the advancement and artistry of jazz," has named its star-studded list of officers and honorary board of governors; among those on board are academy president Jim Washburn, comedian Steve Allen, basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, critic Gary Giddins, and jazzmen (and woman) Louie Bellson, Bob Florence, Ray Brown, Benny Carter, Chick Corea, Gerry Mulligan, Oscar Peterson, Buddy Rich, Artie Shaw, George Shearing, Joe Williams, Phil Woods, Billy Taylor, Mel Tormé, Rob McConnell, Spyro Gyra, and Sarah Vaughan. The academy plans to televise its first annual jazz awards show this fall . . . rock walk: a sidewalk collection of handprints and signatures of rock stars, patterned after Hollywood's "Walk of Fame," has been unveiled at the Guitar Center, 7425 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; the first eight "Rock Walk" inductees, chosen for their contributions "to the growth and development of the rock music industry," included artists **Les Paul, Stevie Wonder, and Edward Van Halen**, and instrument innovators **Robert Moog** (synthesizer inventor), **Remo Belli** (perfected the synthetic drum head), and **Bill Ludwig, Frank Martin III, and Jim Marshall** (principals of the drum, guitar, and amplifier companies bearing their names) . . . synth monthly: Yamaha has begun publication of **After Touch**, a free monthly maga-

zine designed for users of the company's FM digital synthesizers; the magazine is available from Yamana dealers or by writing *After Touch*, PO Box 2333, Northridge, CA 91323 . . . March happenings: **Dixieland Monterey 1986** will be held 3/7-9 at the California coastal city, and the 14th annual **New York Brass Conference for Scholarships** is 3/14-16 in Manhattan; for more info on these respective events contact the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, (408) 649-3200, and the NY Brass Conf., (212) 581-1480 . . . country note: in conjunction with Opryland USA Inc., the **Country Music Foundation** will produce an art exhibit celebrating the 60th birthday of the Grand Ole Opry; the exhibit will open its three-year run at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville this spring. . . . jazz aid: The **Jazz Crusade To End Hunger** Foundation, Inc. has recorded the 45-single *So They May Live* and plans an LP of donated cuts by top artists, proceeds from which will be passed on to USA for Africa to be distributed domestically; the Crusade can be reached by writing PO Box 70013, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307 . . . women's fest: an International Women's Music Festival celebrating women's contributions to all forms of music and dedicated to renowned cellist **Jacqueline du Pré** is being planned for 6/23-28 in Beer-Sheva, Israel; write International Women's Music Festival, PO Box 3391, Beer-Sheva 84130, Israel . . .

Big Apple blues

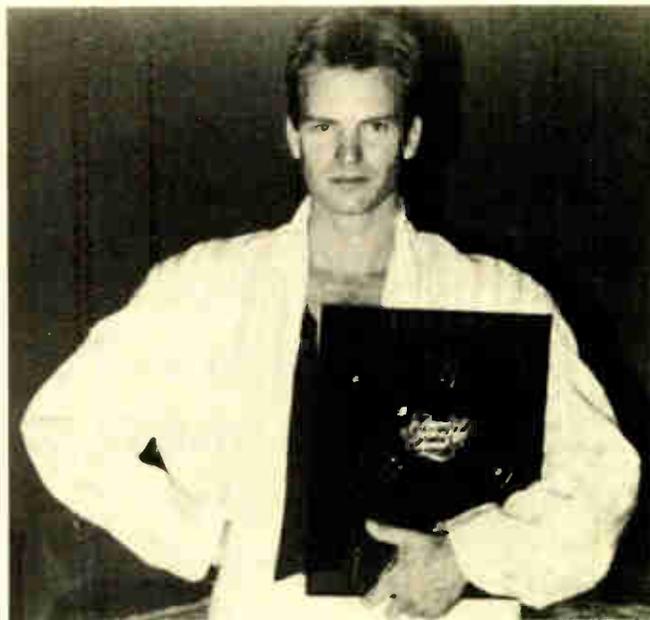
NEW YORK—When Atlanta-based bluesman Bill Dacey came to town in 1969, he was somewhat disillusioned by the dearth of blues clubs in the Big Apple. Many clubs have come and gone over the years, but one mainstay in the face of blues famine has been Dan Lynch's (on Second Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets), where Dacey currently presides over Sunday jam sessions. Precious few other clubs book blues on an infrequent basis—like Tramp's, the Lone Star Cafe, and Irving Plaza—but Dan Lynch's remains the only club booking blues seven nights a week. Dacey figures that's not enough for any city, let alone a sprawling metropolis like Manhattan. So he's doing something about it.

Dacey and other concerned connoisseurs of the blues have united to form The New York Blues Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of blues in the Big Apple. Says the guitarist/harmonica player, "I was in Chicago recently and noticed that there are

probably 40 clubs there that are booking blues, yet there's only one in Manhattan. There's something very wrong there, especially considering that there are so many incredible blues musicians in New York who can't find work—like Rosco Gordon, Sonny Terry, Wilbert Harrison, and John Hammond Jr."

Dacey's plans for the Society include a quarterly newsletter and a series of fund-raising concerts, as well as soliciting memberships and actively pursuing subsidies from beer and other companies. A recent fund-raiser at the Lone Star Cafe included Dacey in the company of some stellar blues sidemen—pianist Pinetop Perkins (Muddy Waters), bassist Harry Holt (James Brown, Dr. John), and drummer Charles "Honeyboy" Otis (Fats Domino, Lloyd Price).

"There is a market in this city to support the blues," says Dacey, "and I'm committed to making it happen." Interested parties can contact The New York Blues Society at 318 E. 6th St., Suite 214, New York, NY 10003. —bill milkowski



GOLDEN REEL: Hot on the heels of their *db* Readers Poll honors, Sting and his bandmates have garnered more accolades for *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*. Ampex Corporation's Magnetic Tape Division presented Golden Reel Awards to Sting, his co-producer Pete Smith, engineers Jim Scott and Frank Gpolko, and band members Umar Hakim, Kenny Kirkland, Daryl Jones, and Branford Marsalis at a recent ceremony at Radio City Music Hall. Sting chose the AMC Cancer Research Center as the non-profit charity to receive a \$1,000 gift from the company in his name.



FELIX WEINTRAUB

SCENIC JAZZ: Sun Ra impersonators? No, Howard Johnson and Swiss composer/conductor George Gruntz are in costume for their respective roles as King Arthur and the Devil in Gruntz' *Scenic Jazz Oratorio*, *The Holy Grail Of Jazz & Joy*, shown for the first time in Graz, Austria. The performance also featured Sheila Jordan (Queen Guinevere), Bobby McFerrin (Mage Merlin), and 150 additional vocalists and musicians. Performed in the world's third largest stalactite cavern dome, the show was videotaped by Austrian tv for showings throughout Europe.

MUS. ED. REPORT

Stan Getz has been appointed Artist-in-Residence at Stanford University, where he will create a jazz division within the school's music department. The saxophonist will curtail his touring schedule this year to accept the position, which will also involve his conducting master classes in all instruments as well as vocals. Stanford is currently locating donors to endow the jazz division over the next three years, and first lady Nancy Reagan is helping in that effort (the Reagan Library is being constructed at Stanford).

Robert Fripp is continuing his series of seminars in guitar craft and one in "musical organization" aimed at non-musicians. The seminars are being held at The Claymount estate in Charles Town, WV, headquarters of the American Society for Continuous Education (which Fripp is president of). Guitar students are asked to bring acoustic guitars with spare steel strings and picks, guitar stand, footstool, and metronome; wherever possible, they should not play for a week prior to attending the

course. Fripp can be written for more info on his courses at Route 1, Box 279, Charles Town, WV 25414.

April 1 is the application deadline for those wishing to attend the **1986 Banff Jazz Workshop** in Alberta, Canada, to be held 7/14-8/8. Muhal Richard Abrams will be guest composer this year, and bassist Dave Holland continues as the workshop's artistic director, a position he has held since 1981. Other faculty members include African master drummer Abraham Adziryah, trombonist/computer musician George Lewis, pianists Richard Beirach and Don Thompson, saxophonists Dave Liebman and Steve Coleman, trumpeter Ken Wheeler, guitarist John Abercrombie, drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and vocalist Jay Clayton. For more info contact the Office of the Registrar, The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, PO Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0, (403) 762-6180.

Ran Blake will offer a new course in the music of Thelonious Monk at New England Conservatory's Summer School this year. The

Monk class will run 7/28-8/1; earlier, Blake will offer Third Stream Aural Training, his basic ear-training class. For more info contact Maggie Daly, Summer School Director, New England Conservatory, 290 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115, (617) 262-1120.

The **Berklee College of Music** in Boston will inaugurate a new major in Songwriting this fall. The major will provide exposure to a broad range of songwriting styles including jazz, pop, rock, country, and Broadway show music. In addition to developing their own songwriting styles, students will learn about copyrights, publishing contracts, performing rights societies, song demos, and other aspects of the songwriting profession.

Trombonist **Steve Turre**, who has placed in several *down beat* Critics and Readers polls, has joined the jazz faculty at William Patterson College in Wayne, NJ. Turre has performed with Ray Charles, Art Blakey, Chico Hamilton, Woody Shaw, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis. □



SYNTH FORUM: The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences recently held a Synthesizer Forum at A & M Records in Hollywood to demonstrate new lines of electronic keyboards. Pictured at the forum are (l to r) Herb Eisman and Marshal Lieb of NARAS; keyboardist Herbie Hancock; NARAS officer (and February *db* Auditions honoree) Darlene Koldenhoven; synthesizer inventor Robert Moog; Ron Kramer, president of NARAS' LA Chapter; and synthesizer executive Peter Stougaard.

FINAL BAR



JACK BRADLEY

Dicky Wells influential and highly regarded trombonist for over 40 years, died Nov. 12 at age 76. Originally from Louisville, KY, Wells came to New York in 1927. He spent the '30s and '40s touring with the bands of Benny Carter, Fletcher Henderson, Teddy Hill, Count Basie, Buck Clayton, Sy Oliver, and Jimmy Rushing. A favorite in France, some of his best recordings were recorded there in 1937, with Wells leading all-star combos.

Joseph "Big Joe" Turner, blues and jazz singer and the original performer of the rock classic *Shake, Rattle And Roll*, died Nov. 24 in Inglewood, CA, following a two-month illness. He was 74. Turner, who also appeared with Count Basie and Duke Ellington, followed his best-known single with another rhythm & blues classic, *Flip, Flop And Fly*. He started his career in the 1930s in Kansas City as part of the same early jazz scene there that launched Basie, and his last club appearance was at Tramps' in New York just before he took ill.

Henry Sterling "Benny" Morton, one of the top trombonists of the

'30s, died Dec. 27 in New York, having suffered from cerebral palsy and Alzheimer's disease since the late '70s. He was 78. Morton recorded with Fletcher Henderson in the late '20s and early '30s, spent the mid-'30s with Don Redman, and joined Count Basie for two years in 1937. More recently, he appeared with Benny Carter, Teddy Wilson, Jo Jones, George Benson, and Red Norvo on the 1975 PBS tv special *The World Of John Hammond*.

Nick Ceroli, well-known session drummer in Los Angeles, died August 11 of a heart attack at age 45. Ceroli performed on Lanny Morgan's Palo Alto album *It's About Time* and was the main drummer for Bob Florence's big band and trio, appearing with Florence on the albums *Soaring*, *Magic Time*, *Live At Concerts By The Sea*, and *Westlake*.

Ian Stewart, backing pianist for the Rolling Stones, died Dec. 12 of a heart attack at age 47. Stewart was the piano player during the group's early days as a six-man band, and he spent 20 years working as road manager and backing musician for the Stones.

Andrew Brown, blues and jazz vocalist/guitarist, died Dec. 11 of lung cancer at age 48 in Chicago. Born in Jackson, MI, Brown often visited relatives in Chicago, where he was said to have joined in a South Side jam session with Charlie Parker at age 12. He spent the past 27 years working as a steelworker in Chicago's south suburbs, touring Europe and recording several records, including four cuts on the 1980 Alligator Records anthology series *Living Chicago Blues*.

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Tom Waits

NEW YORK—We were waitin' for Waits (as the Richie Cole/Eddie Jefferson song goes). Nearly two hours (and a half-pint of scotch) after his scheduled time of arrival, the Raspy One hit the stage with a tongue-in-cheek apology to a packed Beacon Theatre crowd: "You probably blame me personally, as you should," he began. "I was shampooing my dog. And he likes to have a moisturizer, too. Once you start with the toiletries, there's no end in sight."

What a sly out. From that point on, the impatient Waits fans were tamed, riveted to their chairs by his growling vocals, his Kerouac charisma, and tales of one-armed dwarves, hookers from Minneapolis, homeless bums in the rain, and tattooed barmaids.

Waits had just returned from Paris, where his engagement at the Folies Bergere was hailed as something of an historic event (he was the first American entertainer to perform there).

It's easy to understand why the French love the enigmatic Mr. Waits. Everyone knows the French are suckers for the blues. And with that rip-throated howl of his he must sound to them like the reincarnation of Howlin' Wolf, especially on raunchy workouts like *Big Black Maria* and *Union Square*, two numbers from his recent release, *Rain Dogs* (Island 90299-1).

But there are other sides to this guy. Like dig



the unmistakable stamp of Kurt Weill on the quirky *Cemetery Polka*. Or the Lord Buckley-like poetry rap on the gloomy *9th & Hennepin*. And check the country & western twang of *Blind Love*, with Keith Richards and Robert Quine trading steel guitar-type lines.

There's also a tender, poignant side to this scruffy character. Tunes like *On A Nickel, Time*, and *Diamond & Rust* have a schmaltzy quality that recalls the heart-wrenching fare of Edith Piaf or Billie Holiday. The French are particularly fond of this aspect of Waits—the tortured/vulnerable soul

in confessional reverie.

Rain Dogs is Waits' most solid work to date. It's a more focused and satisfying affair than his highly experimental album of 1983, *Swordfishtrombone* (Island 90095-1), a project that owed more to Harry Partch than Howlin' Wolf. And it's a long way away from his 1973 debut for Elektra, *Closing Time*. Now Waits is less the jivey beat poet, more the bemused tour guide.

What's he got planned for an encore? Plenty. Currently in New Orleans filming *Down By Law* (directed by Jim [Stranger Than Paradise] Jarmusch), Waits plays a frustrated dj who is thrown in jail, where he becomes the instant adversary of an inmate played by John (Lounge Lizards) Lurie. In March he begins filming *There Ain't No Candy Mountain*, playing the part of a kid from New York who sets out in search of a reclusive Les Paul-like figure in self-imposed exile in Nova Scotia. Then it's on to Chicago, where he'll star in his own musical drama to be premiered this summer by the Steppenwolf Theater Company. Co-written with his wife Kathleen Brennan, *Frank's Wild Years* is based loosely on a Waits song of the same name.

All this from the man who was "conceived one night in April 1949 at the Crossroads Motel in La Verne, California, amidst the broken bottle of Four Roses, the smouldering Lucky Strike, half a tuna salad sandwich, and the Old Spice across the railroad tracks . . ." —bill milkowski



Frank Lowe

NEW YORK—"I can swing all night if that's necessary, and also play some stuff up-against-the-wall. It depends on what's called for. The point is to be articulate in both styles." So boasts tenorman Frank Lowe about the recent evolution in his sound. Once known as an "energy" player, Lowe is describing the feeling behind his latest record, *Decision In Paradise* (Soul Note 1082), an outing which finds the leader (who once sported the nickname "Doctor Too-Much") bringing the brimstone roar of his earlier work together with compositions which sound like the great grandchildren of hard-bop. Joining the two has long been one of Lowe's hidden agendas.

"See, jazz has got to get it together," Lowe maintains. "We can't talk about the avant garde or the mainstream anymore, we're one family and that's jazz. It should no longer be fashionable to put down the avant garde; that kind of talk sounds too cliched, it doesn't even sound right to the ears."

What does sound right to the ears are the propulsive rhythms that keep *Decision In Paradise* a vibrant swingfest. Lowe began to lay down these strategies of confluence on '82's *Exotic Heartbreak* (Soul Note 1032) and last year's *Intensive Care* by the Jazz Doctors (Cadillac 1011), the latter bringing him together with Billy Bang, Raphael Garrett, and Dennis Charles. These recent recordings show that the Memphis-bred hornman's writing prowess has matured. New

compositions feature a relentless pulse, loose soul-drenched harmonies, and a ubiquitous subtext of the blues. "If we're talking about playing jazz," he says, "then we're really talking about playing the blues."

In Lowe's version of the blues, there's more than a little Memphis soul stew thrown in. "When I first started playing I was working at Stax, at the record store in front—the studio was in the back. Packy Axton would show me Gene Ammons stuff. Isaac Hayes was working there, Otis Redding was coming through. They let me peep as much as I wanted."

The new LP and *Intensive Care* find Lowe in cahoots with some longtime friends. Don Cherry ("He has a million songs in his head") and Raphael Garrett ("He taught me to be relaxed with my playing") have both figured into Lowe's conception over the years. "On the new record I used people in different theaters in jazz—Cherry, Grachan Moncur, Charles and Charnett Moffett, and Geri Allen—but I think we made a great album!"

Lowe's lusty liaison with swing shouldn't come as much of a surprise to his longtime listeners, and his sound still contains the bluster and chomp of his earlier work. With tenor improvisations that chase their muse to all corners of the compositions, *Decision In Paradise* rings out with a newfound confidence. "I put my faith in the music and try to back it up with some action; I'm just trying to find out where I fit."

—jim macnie

George Winston

CHICAGO—George Winston does not like to give interviews. It's not that he is shy or dislikes the media. He feels that his life and his opinions have been documented enough. Winston prefers to divert the limelight toward those deserving wider recognition. After a recent SRO performance at the Chicago Auditorium, the 36-year-old pianist fielded a multitude of questions from fans. He routinely answered questions about his popular piano styles. But when the topic turned to the Professor Longhair LP *Rock 'N' Roll Gumbo* (Dancing Cat 3006), Winston showed a lot more pep. Now that his own pastoral pianism is firmly entrenched in the public ear, Winston prefers to devote his energy to expounding the musical legacies of Professor Longhair, Fats Waller, Teddy Wilson, and others. He accomplishes his mission by releasing choice music on his Dancing Cat label.

Dancing Cat's releases, for the most part, have been solo acoustic performances, much like the music presented on the parent company, Windham Hill. The label's direction is about to take a few turns, though. The company, with its cartoon logo, will be making an interesting advancement into the children's record market. They've already issued a soundtrack to a PBS adaptation of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, with Meryl Streep narrating and Winston at the piano. Upcoming releases include Bobby McFerrin providing music and sound effects to

Just So Stories, with Jack Nicholson as the narrator; Cher and harpist Patrick Ball are collaborating on *The Ugly Duckling*, there is also a project uniting trumpeter/synthesist Mark Isham and actor Jeremy Irons.

Another Professor Longhair album—*The London Concert*, from a '78 performance—will be coming out in late '86 or early '87. R&b piano New Orleans-style will also be featured on an album by the late James Booker. Winston has no immediate interest in putting out an album of his own piano music, however. He is currently caught up in the magic of playing live to audiences, large and small.

"There are so many things in the record industry that are complete fabrications that I can't think of doing anything more real for myself than playing live," reasoned Winston. "It's like a real event. It comes and then it goes—plus the fact that I don't use any microphones."

Live is just one of many playing situations in which Winston revels. If you're lucky enough to hear him in a more intimate setting, a livelier Winston persona emerges and more of his boogie woogie and New Orleans influence is revealed. During a tour of Europe, Winston was invited to a impromptu party after a concert in Warsaw, Poland. It was there he was reminded of the power of boogie woogie.

"It was my greatest musical experience," Winston exclaimed as he described how the locals danced through the night. "The wilder they got,



TOM COPI

the wilder I got. Every time I thought, 'What do I do next?', I fell back to Professor Longhair. It worked every time. I'm glad I was ready.

"The kind of music that I usually play is my own tunes. I didn't really learn or study how to do that, because I didn't get it from anybody. However, with the blues and stride, it's like if someone wants to learn Chopin, they learn it; they don't expand it. Of course I put something new in. I'm bound to put in a few variations of my own. But I have no desire to be original." —mark ruffin



Out Of The Blue

NEW YORK—Every day bettors by the thousands, with loot to burn and an inside line to Lady Luck, queue up at New York's Off Track Betting Corporation (OTB) and dream about hitting the big time. Once in a great while, from out of the blue, a long shot moves inside down the stretch, then takes its place in the winner's circle.

Blue Note Records has wagered a few bob on a sextet of relative unknowns, and though the odds don't yet suggest a major triumph in the works, the early call has the label leading the field with a group of young colts who may someday become champions. The group is Out Of The Blue (OTB), and their eponymous debut release represents the culmination of an extensive auditioning effort

designed to bring the best young jazz players together and to nurture their growth, all under the watchful eye of a record company that knows a little about developing new talent.

The players—Ralph Bowen, tenor sax; Kenny Garrett, alto sax; Robert Hurst, bass; Mike Mossman, trumpet; Ralph Peterson, drums; and Harry Pickens, piano—were the winning entries in the six-month long selection process. "When I first heard about the audition," recounts Mossman, who has just completed a Masters program at Rutgers, "I had the understanding that the label was trying to revive the old policy of keeping young musicians working on different projects. We understood that they were looking for something in the tradition of what Blue Note stood for. Everything we did—our tunes, our

arrangements—had to have some kind of originality."

"There were 36 players who auditioned," explains JoAnne Jimenez, associate producer for the project, whose job included coordinating the talent search with producer Michael Cuscuna. "At first we spent time picking the rhythm section. After that was settled we went into the auditions with the horn players. We picked the men and then had them bring in their tunes. Michael and I decided which compositions were the best, and out of the 12 they recorded we went with the seven that are on the record."

What the record reveals is a return to mainstream jazz, and a group style based loosely on Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Though each of the players has distinguished himself with celebrated professional affiliations that cover considerable musical territory, all are deeply committed to the success of OTB. So is their record company. Mossman sees it this way: "Everyone is a strong representative of his instrument, everyone has great respect for one another's playing, and everyone in the band likes each other."

It sounds like a winning combination. And one can almost see the honchos at Blue Note checking the field, following Mossman's inside line, and deciding to keep the smart money just where it is. This group could make a strong showing.

—jeff levenson



Azymuth
THE FUNKY BASS & SOULFUL GUITAR BAND

Ivan Conti

José Roberto Bertrami

Alex Malheiros

Azymuth's Crazy Samba

As the bossa nova craze came and went in the U.S. in the early-to-mid-'60s, a new generation of Brazilian musicians was being exposed to the quietly charged pulsations of the "new wave," and these players liked what they heard. Then, while journeyman artists such as Antonio Carlos Jobim, Joao Gilberto, Sergio Mendes, and Luis Eça continued to explore the bossa nova tradition they had created, others—including singers Milton Nascimento, Elis Regina, Flora Purim, Jorge Ben, Gilberto Gil, Djavan; percussionists Airo Moreira, Egberto Gismonti, and Robertinho Silva; keyboardists Eumir Deodato and Wagner Tiso; and guitarist Roberto Silva—began to mix bossa novas with all manner of influences, from sounds of nature and African rhythms to popular music and jazz from the United States. As a result, a fresh brand of Brazilian popular music began to emerge.

Keyboardist José Roberto Bertrami, bassist Alex Malheiros, and drummer Ivan Conti are three members of this new generation. They form Azymuth (not to be confused with the ECM recording band from the mid-'70s of the same name), a unique group that delivers an easy-listening, though often provocative, amalgamation of jazz, funk, and samba styles that's been called *samba doído*, or "crazy samba."

Bertrami, Malheiros, and Conti were players in various bands in Rio de Janeiro when they organized Azymuth in 1972. Bertrami, known as "Ze Roberto," was born February 21, 1946 in Tatui, near Sao Paulo, and grew up as a classically trained pianist who was influenced by Bill Evans and Eça. In Sao Paulo, he worked with Purim, then moving to Rio at 21 he formed a trio with drummer Robertinho Silva, who's appeared on Bertrami's two solo LPs, *Blue Wave*, and the forthcoming *Dreams Are Real*. He met Conti at a huge Rio nightclub, the Canecao, and as they enjoyed each other's playing, they decided to put together a group.

Conti, a "Carioca" or native of Rio and nicknamed "Mamao," was born August 16, 1946 in the Tijuca section of Rio. Starting on guitar at 13, he switched to drums at 16. The great Brazilian drummer Wilson dos Neves provided fundamental inspiration and support, including helping Conti get studio work. Conti claims he's worked in all the clubs in Rio at one time or another; he was playing with a rock band when he met Bertrami.

Born August 19, 1946, Alex Malheiros grew up in Niteroi, which is directly across the Baía de Guanabara from Rio, and hails from an inventive, musical family: his father, after seeing the 1956 film *Rock, Pretty Baby*, constructed the first electric bass played in Brazil. Alex began piano at seven but preferred other instruments, eventually settling on bass as a teenager. A few years later, Alex worked a series of duo engagements with Gismonti, playing music for listening—rather than dancing—a rarity in those days. He met his Azymuth partners when Conti and Bertrami stopped by a bowling alley/nightclub where he was playing; they liked his sound and asked him to join their new unit.

Azymuth didn't establish itself as a working band immediately; instead, the men spent a few years deeply immersed in Rio's burgeoning studio scene—recording with almost every-

one. The soundtrack for the 1973 film, *O Fabuloso Fittipaldi* (about Brazilian Formula One driver Emerson Fittipaldi), was their first LP, and the group took its name from one of the tunes from that score. Things stayed at a simmer until they made a smash appearance at the 1977 Montreux Jazz Festival, which was followed by a lengthy U.S. tour with Flora and Airoto.

Since then, their distinctive *samba doído* has been gathering quite a following in the U.S., due mainly to the Milestone label contract they signed in 1979. Like the proverbial snowball, Azymuth started with bits of airplay here and there, and as its alternately upbeat and danceable or soothing and low-key offerings (each member of the band contributes compositions) began to catch on, jazz, Urban Contemporary, and even AOR stations featured their LPs. A few well-received stateside appearances in the major cities of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles in 1983-84 led to the band's two major spring and fall stateside tours in 1985. Response was enthusiastic.

During their recent tour stop in Hermosa Beach, California, where they played at Howard Rumsey's Concerts By The Sea, a few miles south in Redondo Beach, the men of Azymuth, speaking through interpreters Homero Pererai and Terri Hinte, gave the following interview. Unless otherwise specified, the questions, though directed at the group at large, were responded to by Bertrami, who seems to function as the group's unofficial spokesman.

Zan Stewart: What made you want to blend the styles of jazz, funk, and samba that make up *samba doído*?

José Roberto Bertrami [with typical enthusiasm]: We were associated with a lot of Brazilian musicians that were into different kinds of rhythms. That, plus after the bossa nova craze, with the fusion of bossa nova and jazz, was basically our take-off point.

ZS: Was it that you felt that you didn't want to just play bossa novas?

JRB: Exactly. We didn't want to do what all the other musicians were doing. They were either playing bossa novas or just regular music, like folk music or sambas.

ZS: Where did you come by that name, *samba doído*?

JRB: When we started playing this kind of music—that is, traditional sambas with a different kind of accent—we didn't name it. The people who heard it named it, because it was so unusual.

ZS: How did you develop your style?

JRB: We spent a lot of time working as studio musicians, working in all kinds of situations, and that helped us develop, discover what we wanted to do. We continue to develop by being aggressive, because that's what the music is. If we aren't aggressive, the music will stop.

ZS: Where do you play in Brazil?

JRB: We mainly play in Rio. It sometimes doesn't pay to go other places outside Rio because many places aren't ready for what we play. There's an audience but there's a big difference between them and the general public. Besides, Brazil is a new country and if we go to play in a small place far away, a remote city, we may have to stay for a week because the train only runs



PHIL BRAY

AZYMUTH'S EQUIPMENT

José Roberto Bertrami has at his home in Rio the following instruments: Fender Rhodes electric piano, Oberheim four-voice, Yamaha CS01, Hammond B3 organ, Yamaha DX7, Roland vocoder. All of these he has used in the studio, although his two solo albums do not feature the vocoder. For the last year, he has restricted his stage gear to electric piano and DX7, plus assorted percussion (particularly the berra-bai, which he devised himself: two small plastic containers connected by twine and played by opening and closing the palm of the hand).

Alex Malheiros' main instrument is a Fodera electric bass, which he bought a year ago in New York (before that, he used a Fender Precision). He finds it the best all-around instrument for stage and studio. For recording in Brazil, he also uses a fretless bass designed and built by his uncle, Geraldo Malheiros, in '79; he prefers the fretless for ballads and music where rhythm is not so crucial a consideration. Alex uses an MXR pitch transposer (Boss C2), a Peavey Combo 300 amplifier, and a Gibson Chet Atkins guitar (nylon strings, either Savarez or São Gonçalo, a Brazilian string). On the bass, he uses Rotosound Swing Bass/Medium Light/Long Scale, 090, 070, and 055; on the fourth string he uses GHS Bright Flats, either YB35 or YB30,

depending on whether it's a recording or live situation.

Ivan Conti is a Pearl Drums endorser; his kit includes a 22-inch bass drum, 12-inch and 13-inch toms, 16-inch floor tom, eight-inch snare. His two Roto-toms are eight- and 10-inch. He uses an electronic pressure-sensitive device on the snare, made for him by a friend in Japan named Bias. His Paiste cymbals are an 18-inch China, 20-inch ride, Dark hi-hat, 12-inch Formula 505, 10-inch splash. For the last year he has used Korg Percussion unit DDM-110, and a Japanese friend just gave him a new Yamaha RX21 digital drum machine which he has been incorporating into shows. Mamão frequently records with the repique drum and features it on one number per show (a 10 x 12 brass drum with sheepskin head which originated in the samba schools). He uses Regal or Vic Firth American Classic sticks, size 2B.

AZYMUTH SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SPECTRUM—Milestone 9134
FLAME—Milestone 9128
RAPID TRANSIT—Milestone 9118
CASCADES—Milestone 9109
TELECOMMUNICATION—Milestone 9101
OUTUBRO—Milestone 9097
LIGHT AS A FEATHER—Milestone 9089

José Roberto Bertrami
BLUE WAVE—Milestone 9117
Alex Malheiros
ATLANTIC FOREST—Milestone 9131
Ivan Conti
THE HUMAN FACTOR—Milestone 9127

once a week [laughs with gusto].

ZS: How often do you play in Rio as Azymuth?

JRB: Well, each one of us has a band, so that gives us a lot of work. So we save Azymuth for special occasions. A week before I came to the States on this tour, I played with my band, The Blue Wave, at the Hotel Meredian. We already have an audience. Then I went to see Mamão's band in concert and 8,000 people were there, at the Catacumbas. There are a lot of jazz places in Rio now and we are partially responsible for that. Three years ago there was nothing. Now there are four places where you can hear first-class jazz and 10 places where those just below first-class play. So you can always go out.

ZS: Are you getting much radio airplay in Brazil?

JRB: Before we started recording for Fantasy/Milestone, we had three records out in Brazil, and those three they played a lot. They were hit tunes, some of which we had composed for soundtracks of soap operas and Brazilian movies. Only after the album *Flame* did the radio start to play some of our new material. I don't know why it took us so long to catch on again, because we aren't the only ones playing some style of *samba loido*.

ZS: Ivan, where did you get the nickname "Mamão?"

IC: It had nothing to do with my musical career. I got that nickname in grade school. I used to eat a lot of papaya [*Mamão* is Portuguese for papaya].

ZS: What's the role of the drummer in Azymuth?

IC: The main thing is to secure the time. For example, a tune might go back and forth between 2/4 and 3/4, so I can't get locked into the rhythm. I have to be fluid, but still keep everything steady.

ZS: Alex, what's the role of the bass?

AM: I'm in between the war, which is Mamão [smiles] and Bertrami, sort of the link between the two. I see the bass as a more of a percussive than melodic instrument.

ZS: How about you, Bertrami?

JRB: I play around, I throw the ball around. Sometimes I let Mamão have it, sometimes I lead the song. In other words, we change things as we go along. If someone walks in the club in the middle of a tune, that person could be a little confused as to what the rhythm is. They'd have to wait until we went back to the beginning to get a clearer understanding of what we're doing.

ZS: Mamão, why did you start playing drums?

IC: I started on guitar, and when I began to play percussively

on the strings, then I became interested in drums.

ZS: Who were your first influences?

IC: First and foremost, it was Gene Krupa. I have all his records. I liked his ideas, his rudiments, his basic feel. A lot of drummers do nowadays what he did first. Others later were Stevie Gadd, Billy Cobham, Wilson Dos Neves, Robertinho Silva—who plays with Bertrami and Nascimento—plus modern jazzmen like Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette.

ZS: When you compose, Mamão, do you still use the guitar?

IC: Yes. I see the guitar as complimenting the drums, but I really compose on the drums. I hear the tune in my head, establish the rhythm and then sing it. Then I use the guitar for the chords.

ZS: How is your music different than what Bertrami writes?

IC: Bertrami has a different conception, a lot of harmony, backgrounds. I write more with swing, I think.

ZS: Roberto, do you agree?

JRB: Yes. But Mamão will show up with harmonic surprises, and likewise, sometimes I'll have a rhythmic surprise.

ZS: Roberto, what were your musical beginnings?

JRB: Well, I started when I was eight. The government opened a music conservatory in Tatuí, which was unusual since no other small town had this kind of thing. My father was a violin teacher there, so I enrolled, and studied the classics for 10 years, with some time-outs to play soccer [laughs]. My salvation was the fact that I have that classical background, because a lot of the newer players don't have the technique, the facility that comes with that training.

ZS: Your influences include Bill Evans and Luiz Eça.

JRB: Eça is a great piano player who was the first to play bossa nova with a trio. Before him, bossa nova was basically played on a guitar. Even Tom Jobim, who played piano, played his songs on guitar. Bill Evans has recorded some of Eça's tunes. They were friends.

ZS: You seem to have a much harder touch than Bill Evans.

JRB: Bill Evans was like my schooling, but I never tried to imitate him. I also liked Les McCann and Ahmad Jamal. In the late '60s, we started playing funk, so Marvin Gaye made an impression on me. So then I was mixing jazz and funk and sambas. And then we, as Azymuth, discovered that within that jazz-funk format we could find a place for ourselves, a special place with a new sound. Sergio Mendes was the first one to really get ahold of the idea we were using, and he had a big hit with Brazil '66. But ultimately he was restricted to just one beat—everybody knew him by the bass drum.

ZS: How do you compose?

JRB: I have productive phases, and then very slow phases, where the music is hard to come by. But I don't have a system. It just comes out naturally—when it does. Often I'll have jam

sessions at home, all night long, and from those, tunes will emerge. One night, many years ago, I came up with all the tunes for *Telecommunication* that way—all in one night.

ZS: Was the switch to electronic keyboards from acoustic instruments just as natural?

JRB: Yes, I was attracted to their sound. I was the first guy in Brazil to record with an electric piano, in 1969, on a Wurlitzer, with Elis Regina.

ZS: Alex, what was it like coming from a musical family?

AM: Some of the people Bertrami mentioned, such as Sergio Mendes, used to come to the house and jam. Sergio and I grew up in the same section of Niterói. Sergio was much older, though. He was a very progressive pianist at that time, and my father was very impressed that I would be playing with someone of his caliber.

ZS: You've mentioned Scott LaFaro as an influence. What do you like about his playing?

AM: Like Bertrami, I liked mainstream jazz first, but I couldn't hear the bass well until LaFaro. It seemed as if he had a mic real close to the bass, and that's when I started listening to him. From then on, my interest in the bass began to grow. I practiced a lot at that time, when my interests were fired up.

ZS: Did you ever play acoustic bass?

AM: Yes, I've played acoustic a lot because the bossa nova demanded it. But I always connected to the electric, because I was seeing how important it was becoming, for example, by hearing the Beatles. It became a new thing in samba music, too, eventually. It was difficult to impose the electric on bossa nova; still nowadays, people don't like it.

JRB: My impression is that, at first, the electric bass copied the rhythm of the bass drum, but Alex found new ways of working with that. Even nowadays, in a studio, when they're recording a samba, the bass drum and the bass will play the same rhythm. This is obviously not the case with Alex. And this is what caused us to get kicked out of many recording sessions. We were too modern [laughs], too far out.

ZS: Do any of you still do studio work outside of Azymuth?

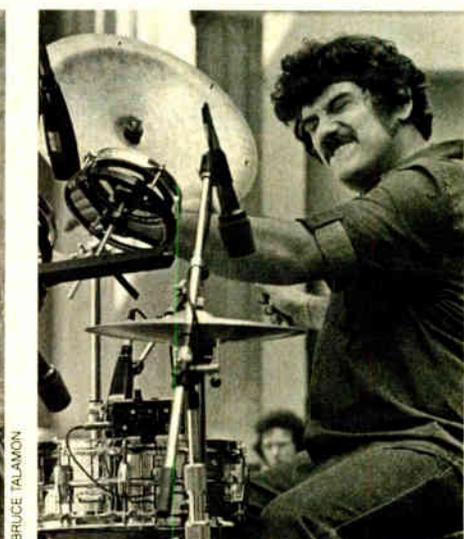
JRB: Rarely, only, and then with a friend. We put in so many years doing studio recordings, and we made a lot of friends.

ZS: You feature guest artists on your albums, but you always tour as a trio. Why?

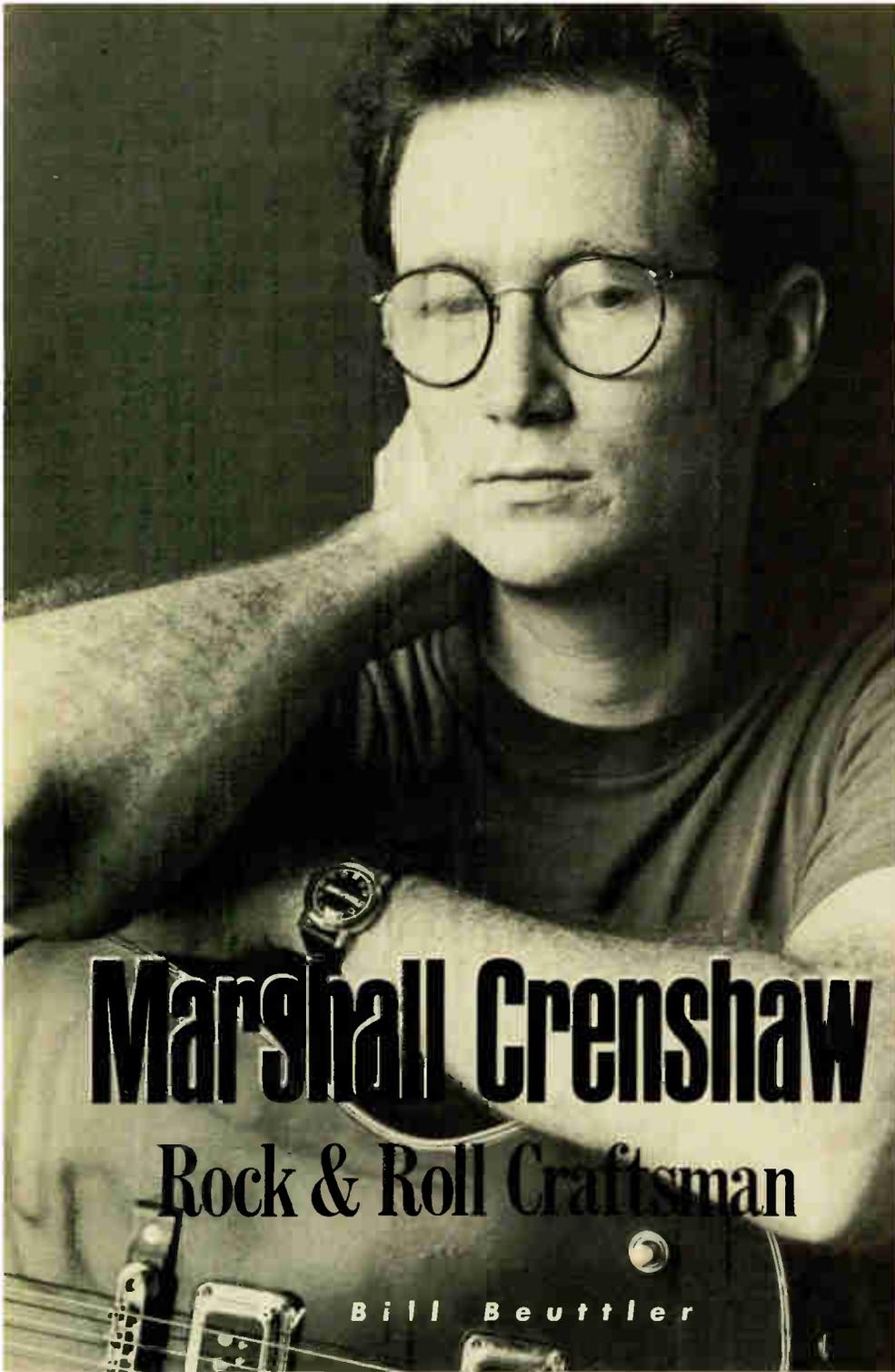
JRB: We like to show the band as it really is, in its raw form.

ZS: The band comes alive in person, much more so than on record.

JRB: It's tough, because you record something, often with other people, and then on-stage it's sometimes hard to duplicate it. But our tours of the States have been great, because American audiences seem to understand our music so well. db



SEPARATE BUT EQUAL: From left, Bertrami, Malheiros, and Conti.



Marshall Crenshaw

Rock & Roll Craftsman

Bill Beuttler

“ . . . I put the words and the melodies together! AM MUSIC! and I write the Songs . . . ” He’s just fooling around singing the Barry Manilow tune at the soundcheck for a gig at Chicago’s Park West, but there aren’t many people out there these days who put words and melodies together as skillfully as Marshall Crenshaw. His clever lyrics and irresistible hooks made the Bo Diddley/Duane Eddy/Buddy Holly-influenced 32-year-old guitarist/songwriter a hit with critics from the beginning: Robert Palmer lauded Crenshaw’s “well-crafted, upbeat pop-rock songs that one walks

away humming” in the *New York Times* before his debut album had even been released; *Rolling Stone*’s Kurt Loder praised his “attitude-free enthusiasm, incisive guitar work, and non-stop hit parade of self-penned show stoppers.” But Crenshaw’s would-be Top 40 fare never really caught on the way he’d hoped it would (*Someday, Someway*, from his first album, remains his lone Top 40 single to date). Undaunted, the suburban Detroit native continues cranking out rootsy rock & roll gems for himself and his hardcore coterie of admirers.

Crenshaw was bored with his role as

John Lennon in *Beatlemania* in February 1980, so he decided to give songwriting a whirl. By August of that year, he was playing his songs at gigs around Manhattan with his drummer brother, Robert, and bassist Chris Donato. After singer Robert Gordon recorded three of his tunes, Crenshaw was signed by Warner Bros.; his first album, *Marshall Crenshaw*, was released in the spring of 1982. *Field Day*, which followed the next year (with brother Robert and Donato still Crenshaw’s lone sidemen), drew a lukewarm response from critics and was largely ignored by the general public. Disappointed by the tepid response to his second album and exhausted from two years of touring, Crenshaw took a couple of years off before bringing out his third album, the recently released *Downtown*, and hitting the road again.

Crenshaw has added some spit and polish to his act since his trio’s first national tour, as well as a pair of guitarists—Graham Maby and Tom Teeley. The band was in top form this night, keeping the joint rockin’ right through its second encore with a mixture of old showstoppers (*Cynical Girl*, *There She Goes Again*, *The Usual Thing*), new should-be (but likely won’t be) hit singles (*Little Wild One*, *Yvonne*), and covers (Big Joe Turner’s *Shake, Rattle And Roll*, Ferlin Husky’s *Gone*—“the number one country song from 1957”). We spoke with Crenshaw just before he slipped on his performance garb—black pants and jacket, yellow shirt, red string tie, bright red alligator-skin boots—and hit the stage. He walked in wearing faded blue jeans and carrying his guitar, which he picked at nervously throughout the interview, pausing at one point to demonstrate the guitar solo from the Kingsmen’s *Louie Louie* (he gives the impression of never putting the instrument down).

Marshall Crenshaw: So this is for down beat? Imagine the prestige. I used to subscribe to down beat a long time ago, when I was in junior high school.

Bill Beuttler: Were you into jazz?

MC: A little bit. I don’t know why I subscribed to it, probably to look at the pictures and the ads. John Sinclair was the Detroit correspondent. He later founded the White Panther Party in Ann Arbor, Michigan; he was like the Detroit area’s answer to Abbie Hoffman. A cool guy—he was a big influence on me [laughs]. So, what have you got up your sleeve?

BB: First off, you write a lot of nice lyrics, but do you consider yourself primarily a musician or a songwriter?

MC: Well, literally I started out as a musician first and didn’t really get seriously into songwriting until I decided I wanted to be a recording star.

BB: When was that?

MC: February of 1980. I always dabbled in it, always found that I could scamp

STEPHANIE CHERNIKOWSKI

together rock & roll songs. But I never really sat down and said, "Alright, now I'm going to create a body of work."

BB: When did you first pick up a guitar?

MC: My brother Robert and I come from a musical family: my cousin is singing backup for Ronnie Milsap down in Nashville, and there's a lot of people in my family who sing in church. So I could always play music—I was a musically inclined child. But I didn't actually start playing until about 1963—I heard *Louie Louie* by the Kingsmen and the guitar solo captivated me. I wanted to play that solo and I had a guitar around the house, so I started actually fooling around with it in earnest.

BB: You toured with *Beatlemania* just before going solo. What else did you do before you went out on your own?

MC: Strictly bar bands. I was in an oldies band for a long time, because about 1974 or '75 I couldn't stand another minute of the current hits—I hated every one of 'em. The only records I liked during the '70s were Al Green records. So I joined this oldies band, 'cause I had a really burning interest in Chuck Berry and Gene Vincent and I wanted to play that music and not even be bothered with anything else. Later I was in a country & western band, a lounge band. I went out to L.A., ran out of money, and had to take a job with this very weird band—three women and myself. I was with them for about six months, and we toured this funny circuit that goes through Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah—just little towns all through those states. That was the last thing I did before I got in *Beatlemania*. In fact, that's what drove me to it.

BB: You said that you didn't like any of the rock that was happening in the '70s, how about the music that's going on now?

MC: The '80s are pretty good. I like U2 a lot. I like Prince a lot. But I think my favorite artist right now is Madonna. I really think Madonna's great. That's no joke. Especially since she started working with Nile Rodgers, who I'm also a really big fan of.

BB: You must like bands like NRBQ [two members of which performed on his most recent album].

MC: Oh, yeah. That crowd—Los Lobos and the Blasters, who else can I put in a plug for? There's this guitar player buddy of mine, D. Clinton Thompson, down in Missouri; Mitch Easter, who's a great guitar player; all those guys who are using the same sort of raw materials as me. I approve of every single one of them.

BB: On *Downtown* you didn't just stick with the trio that you had on the first two albums. Why did you bring in the new instrumentalists—and why did you choose the guys you chose?

MC: The reason I didn't use the guys I've used in the past is that I took about a year off. I left show business for a while,



NANCY STREET

because I was really spiritually and physically exhausted after two straight years of touring . . .

BB: Were you writing during the layoff?

MC: I was mostly singing and playing around the house, ruminating or whatever. So the band didn't do anything for a long time; we were kind of out-of-touch with one another. When we did go back in the studio I found that we weren't able to really click together. That's why I ended up working with people outside of my regular band. The reason I worked with the guys I *did* work with—about half of them were friends of mine, people that

I'd wanted to work with for a while, and the other half of the guys were friends of T-Bone Burnett's [the album's producer]. So it's kind of a mixture. We were really loose about it, we'd just sort of call whomever we felt like calling in. G. E. Smith wound up playing on the thing 'cause the morning we were gonna put the solos on *Yvonne* I ran into him in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel. And I had played a date with the guys in NRBQ the weekend before. They opened up for us, and I was watchin' 'em onstage and said, "They've got to play on the record."

BB: The band you're touring with now is

the original trio plus a couple of guitarists. How has that changed your band's sound—what were you aiming at and why did you bring them in?

MC: Hmm. I brought them in for a lot of reasons. One reason is because I don't think there's any way the three of us could have pulled off the tunes on my new album. I got way into vocal harmonies due to my current infatuation with Marvin Gaye. I've been really influenced by him lately, listenin' to a lot of his later stuff, like the albums *I Want You* and *Let's Get It On*. There's all these lush background vocals—really gorgeous-sounding. Anyway, I got into a lot of that, and the three of us never could've pulled it off, because we just had myself and Chris Donato singing in the group. But the new guys do a lot of singing. I also didn't feel like I was cutting it anymore as the only guitar player in the band. It just was never gonna work at all. There was too much pressure on me. All that we could ever really do onstage was just kind of stand there and sweat; I wanted things to be a little more loose.

BB: You don't have any keyboards in the band—is that an aesthetic decision on your part or is it just that you don't want to lug them around on the road?

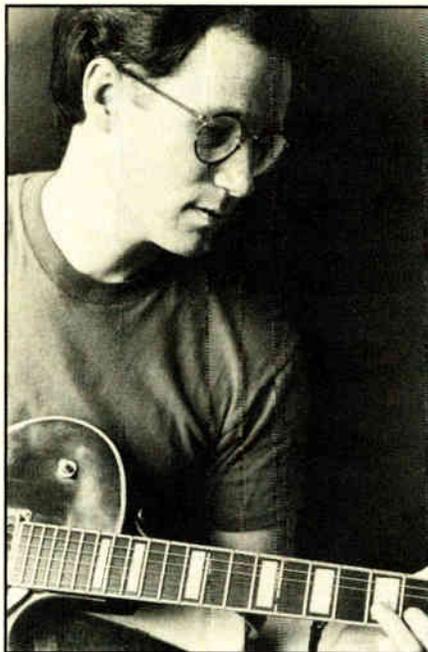
MC: On this last album we had a guy [Mitchell Froom] come in who was a keyboard player, and he played on a lot of the songs. Mostly what he would do, he would use this instrument called an Emulator—one of these things where you program sounds into it and then you play them back on the keyboard. Ninety percent of the sounds he used were either my voice or guitar sounds. So I've used keyboards sparingly on records, but mostly I'm a fanatic for the sound of guitars. And that's really all I care to hear. It is definitely a matter of taste on my part: I'm obsessed with guitars.

BB: Your first two records went over mainly with the critics and your own following. Were you expecting to have some hot singles?

MC: Yeah. When I was putting the stuff together for the first album my role models were Hall & Oates, Abba, people like that.

BB: Are you disappointed because there wasn't a lot of Top 40 reaction?

MC: Well, I can't say that I'm disappointed, no. When things came down the way they did, I was just sort of mildly disappointed. But mostly I was really happy. We were well-received right from day one; we've never had a record come out that's been totally ignored. I was surprised and sort of confused by it because I really was going in that direction—just about every track on the record was conceived as a single. I was trying to write real compact little pop songs, but maybe they were too compact. Maybe I was 15 years too late with that sound. But that's what I was going for, and that's what I thought we would be—a singles band.



STEPHANIE CHERNIKOWSKI

MARSHALL CRENSHAW BAND EQUIPMENT

Marshall Crenshaw is obsessed enough with guitars to own 30 of them, but he toured this fall with only three favorite Mosrites: a 12-string and two six'ers (one blue, one sunburst). His strings are light-gauge Dean Markley customs, and his amp is a Vox AC30. Also along for the tour was an MXR DDL echo box.

Graham Maby, former Joe Jackson bassist, picks a pair of guitars for Crenshaw: a Guild acoustic and a blue Ovation special edition. He also plucks a Fender VI six-string bass on a couple of tunes. **Tom Teeley**, a Beatlemania buddy of Crenshaw's, wields a '64 Fender Stratocaster with D'Arco 10 strings and a Guild acoustic with heavy-gauge flat picks. His amp's a Vox AC30, and he uses an MXR digital delay and MXR Dynacomp.

Lefty bassist **Chris Donato** has a '69 Fender Jazz and a Precision with Seymour Duncan pickups and pots. His strings are medium-gauge GHS Boomers, and he uses a SVT tube amp with two Music Man cabinets front-loaded with four 12-inch Electro-Voice speakers apiece. Younger brother **Robert Crenshaw** batters a 20-inch Gretsch drum kit, with 12- and 13-inch rack toms, a 14-inch floor tom, white Ambassador heads, and Yamaha hardware. His cymbals are Zildjians, except for a 16-inch Paiste pang for special effects. His LinnDrum is triggered by the kick drum, rack tom, and his Promark 5B sticks.

MARSHALL CRENSHAW SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

MARSHALL CRENSHAW—Warner Bros. 3673
FIELD DAY—Warner Bros. 23873-1
DOWNTOWN—Warner Bros. 25319-1

We're not; we're a cult band.

BB: What do you think's going to happen with the new album?

MC: I don't know. The album went up and then down and now it's starting to inch its way up again. My father says he thinks it will be on the charts for about six months, just hang around for a long, long while. He's pretty smart, and I hope he's right.

BB: Are you planning on taking some more time off after this tour, or are you going to be back in the studio again?

MC: I'm just starting now to get some ideas together for songs for the next record. But it's very early, you know.

BB: Is it going to be the touring band?

MC: I think so. I think that we should make a record. This is a really good rock & roll band, the best I've ever been in and one of the best I've ever heard—I'm really, really pleased with the band.

BB: This has been a fairly extended tour for you—first opening for Howard Jones and now as the headliner. What's it been like?

MC: You ever see that movie [*This Is Spinal Tap*]? Remember the scene where they're trying to find their way onstage and they can't? The ass-end of that happened to us. We were playing at the Universal Amphitheater in L.A., and when we left the stage after the set we went the wrong way and we all got lost. We got stuck between these two very dense curtains, and there was no way to see where we were going. The audience was trying to get us back for an encore, but we couldn't find our way *offstage* so we could get back *onstage*. *Spinal Tap*, as you may or may not know, is actually reality—I mean that's what being a rock band is like.

BB: I understand that some country people are doing some of your songs now.

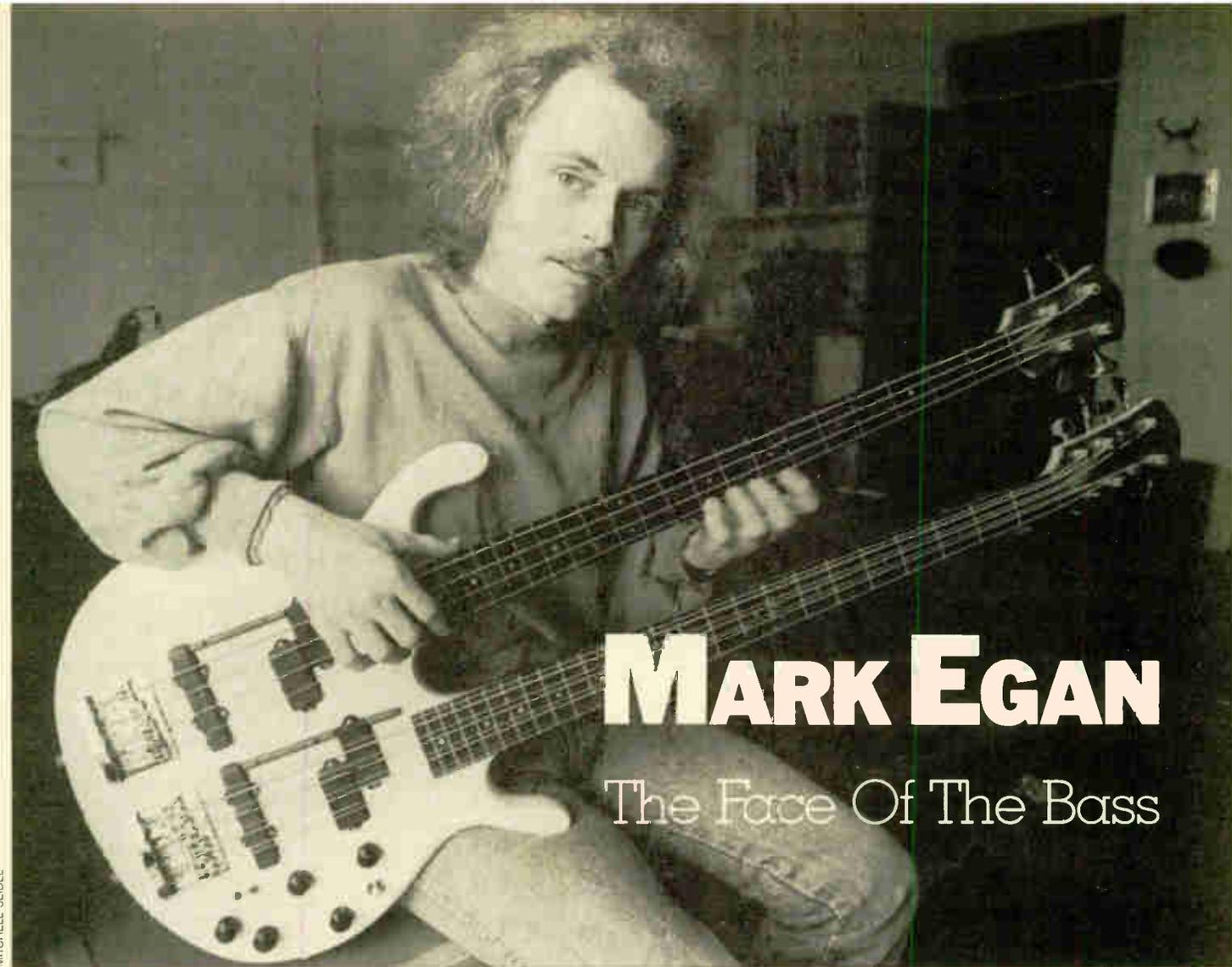
MC: Yeah, I've got a couple of covers out of Nashville. I've had a song covered by the Bellamy Brothers and two songs covered by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

BB: Do you think your style's close to country?

MC: It seems that way. It's hard for me to follow contemporary country music on a day-to-day basis, because I live in New York City and there's no outlet for country music there at all. There's a station there that calls itself a country station, but it's a piss-poor excuse for a country station. They play Anne Murray, Lee Greenwood, Tom Jones—the lowest, cheapest pop music that's out there right now. So I don't really know what country is, I mean *today*. I've heard Ricky Skaggs and the Judds, and I really love them. That's about all I know, but I've heard there's supposed to be some good people out there.

BB: It seems like your music is based on craftsmanship, whereas a lot of the pop stars with big singles rely on theatrics and gimmicks—like Madonna's belly button. Do you think you're going to be able to have a lot of hit singles without the theatrics? Or do you care?

MC: I can't really imagine. See, I don't really understand why we haven't had any hit singles. Again, it doesn't keep me awake at night or anything like that, because we're doing alright. But I don't see why we shouldn't. Every single we've put out I would stand by; we've never put out a bad record. So wait and see, I'll cross my fingers. I'm really not going to stop doing this, you know. I'm having a good time. **db**



MITCHELL SEIDEL

MARK EGAN

The Face Of The Bass

By Gene Santoro

You might not remember his name, but you know what he does. From Pat Metheny's band to Arcadia, from Gil Evans' big band to Elements, from Miller Lite commercials to the soundtrack for *A Chorus Line*, his bass has propelled the music. A highly in-demand studio player, he's just come off the road, where he wielded his axe arsenal for his first solo live gigs behind his first solo album, *Mosaic*. He's Mark Egan, and he's changing the role of the electric bass.

Perhaps that's partly due to the fact that he was first trained on trumpet, an instrument his father played. Attaining the solo chair in the school band, he broadened his musical scope outside by working in r&b bands doing the inevitable James Brown covers, which turned his attention to the bass. "Motown, the early Beatles, Hendrix. I'd just tune into the bass," is how he begins, sitting in his home shed surrounded by basses, Casio synths, a slightly battered upright, and a cascade of cassettes and scores. "The bass parts were very much in front, so that was easy enough to do." After spending a fair amount of time mooning over a Fender bass displayed in the local music store window, the teenager made do with the \$40 Del Rey bass he could afford, and started studying his new acquisition.

Still, the bass—and for that matter, music—stayed a hobby in Egan's mind until after he'd already applied to the University of Miami to study oceanography. "The summer before I was going away," he recalls, "I played in a lot of local bands, and

something just hit me. I said to myself, 'Man, I want to play music.' So I reapplied to be a trumpet major and study jazz."

He couldn't have picked a better place to make the switch. Under the stewardship of Jerry Coker, UM in the late '60s was developing into a real forum for musical experimentation, and as a result attracted students like Egan, Will Lee, Hiram Bullock, Clifford Carter, Danny Gottlieb, and Pat Metheny. "It was '69, right when *Bitches Brew* came out, and there was a real creative atmosphere to the whole place," continues its alumnus. "But there was also a real comprehensive course: theory, arranging, participation in ensembles."

And there was also the perfect supplement to those courses, the on-the-job training offered by Miami's numerous club and show venues. Ironically, those doors opened the way for yet another change of plans for Egan: "There happened to be a shortage of bass players, so by second year I'd brought my bass down and was playing. This was just about when I was getting into hardcore mainstream jazz—Miles, Coltrane, etc. Up to then my background came mostly from big band music, people like Clark Terry, Clifford Brown, Maynard Ferguson: I was a big fan of Chet Baker because I loved his lyrical sound, the fluidity in the way he played. Now, I never had really strong physical chops on trumpet; my strong points were that I had a good sound and I could solo pretty well. But with the bass I could play all the time, and I enjoyed being part of the rhythm section because it was a timeless feeling: even though you're

part of time, time sort of stops, it's of the *moment*. That really appealed to me."

It must have, since he had to work diligently to switch his learning from trumpet to bass. "I went through a period of about two years where I was fanatically playing and going through the whole lineage of the bass," he smiles. "I went through a very heavy period of listening to Paul Chambers for months, transcribing everything he did that I could get my hands on. I listened to Jimmy Blanton and Scott LaFaro and Eddie Gomez—everybody. I started playing acoustic bass and studying with a great classical teacher named Lucas Drew. I feel it's really important for any player on any instrument to have that awareness of where it's come from so that you can know where to take it to."

UM gave him both training and opportunity. "We had one of the most progressive jazz bands I've ever heard, even to this day," he says a bit wistfully. "It was like a Weather Report big band at a time when most collegiate big bands were very straightahead, very stock. And I was just thrown into it on bass; they needed a bass player for the 'A' jazz band, and even though I was still learning how to finger I had a really good feel and a pretty good sound. The teacher was willing to work with me, so I said okay."

And work it was. "I'd gone from the very top end of the orchestra to the very bottom," he jokes, "but I kept my sense of fluidity and tone, which is why I've always been attracted to the fretless bass, I guess. I spent a lot of time transferring what I'd learned about theory and harmony on trumpet to the fingerboard. I joined the Miami-Dade Youth Symphony [*laughs*]—with all these kids—because I needed a discipline, at the same time that I was playing all this far-out jazz. I was really ambitious."

Such diversity fueled his fires. After some graduate work at UM and bandstand work with Ira Sullivan and Joe Diorio, some local tv and jingle work and experimental work at the famed Criteria Studios, where he met and hung out with Jaco Pastorius, Egan hooked up with singer Phyllis Hyman, who took him and his ambitions to the Big Apple. When that gig folded after a month, Egan and Clifford Carter went on the road with the Pointer Sisters, via a Miami connection. Then Danny Gottlieb turned the bassist on to a Deodato tour, which culminated in studio work on a movie score called *Black Pearl*.

And also started Egan off on his lucrative career as a New York sessionmeister. "One thing leads to another," he shrugs. "At first I just went to clubs a lot and met a lot of people, especially at Mikell's—people hung out because Stuff was playing there. I met Steve Jordan—he was just 18—and we'd go out with Cliff Carter and some other guys to this loft in Brooklyn and just jam. That's what I'd been doing all the time in Miami." Playing with a variety of musicians helped straighten Egan's road into the studio scene, and when he joined David Sanborn's band at the behest of ex-classmate Hiram Bullock his session calls escalated mightily. "Just being a part of that band meant you were hooked up to everybody in the whole studio scene," he declares, "so things were starting to happen."

Although not necessarily in ways he could have foreseen at the time. "Pat Metheny was just leaving Gary Burton and wanted to start his own band," he recalls. "He asked Danny Gottlieb, who was also with Gary, to leave with him; he had met Lyle Mays at some summer jazz workshops, and he wanted Lyle in the band, and then he asked me, because we had worked a gig in Nyack where I was playing acoustic bass. The timing was really rough for me; the David Sanborn band had just done a record (*Promise Me The Moon*) which I'd written a song for, I was getting my foot into the New York session scene, things were really happening. It was really taking a risk, since Pat was relatively unknown then, but for me it was a chance to

be part of a really creative ensemble. What turned me around was when I went up to play with Pat and the guys—they were great, the tunes were great, so I said what the hell."

A word that some folks would apply to the immediate results of Egan's decision. "We toured out of a van for a year, setting up our own equipment for one-nighters all over the States," he says. "For the first two years we worked 300 days a year. Our classic drive was from Seattle, Washington to Dallas, Texas to Quebec City to New York in *four days*; and we played gigs at each of those places, opening up for people like Jean-Luc Ponty and Joan Armatrading. It took years off my life [*laughs*]. But out of it all we came up with some fresh music out of a strong group spirit."

Perhaps inevitably, that spirit receded as the band achieved wider recognition after their ECM recording debut. Of his split from the band after three-and-a-half years, Egan says candidly, "We'd spent a lot of time to get a group sound that everybody contributed to—Danny with the cymbals, myself with the fretless bass, Lyle with his orchestrations and prodigious playing, and Pat, who's a fountain of melody. It just got to a point where it became less of a group situation and more Pat Metheny, and I needed to play different music. It was too isolated for my taste, too limited to the upper, lighter end of the musical spectrum."

And so, 1980 found the peripatetic picker back in New York and recontacting old free-lance connections. "I'd never completely lost touch," he explains, "because for the two months a year I had off from Pat's band I would always call in to different contractors and pick up work." That, combined with a Carly Simon tour, a Flora Purim tour, an Airto Moreira tour, and record work with Sonny Fortune and Steve Grossman, plugged the bassist back in, but after a mid-'81 tour with guitarist Bill Connors, Egan decided to stop going on the road so he could stay in town and write. "In December 1981 I'd done a concert at Eric's of all this music," he relates, "and so in early January of '82 Danny Gottlieb and I got together and decided we wanted to go into the studio and experiment with those tunes. We wanted to create a viable atmosphere for ourselves to do different projects of a conceptual and experimental nature. That first project became *Elements*." When they started shopping their tapes around, the duo found, predictably enough, that the major labels were less than blown away by their densely textured, lyrically atmospheric tracks, so they wound up at Philo Records. "People responded really well to the sound because it fit into the atmosphere created by the Pat Metheny Group sound," Egan observes, then adds quickly, "Why? Because Danny and I were the rhythm section for that band and very responsible for that sound, and I want people to know that."

With the release of *Elements*' second LP, *Forward Motion*, on the Antilles label (which also re-released *Elements*), Egan was clearly getting his musical message across. "We recorded both records in three or four days," explains Egan, "because we spent a lot of time in pre-production right here [*gestures around home studio*]. I composed most of the music, and Danny and I arranged some of it, although most of the things I'd written I'd also arranged beforehand. That depends on what inspired me to write; with a lot of the music I'm trying to create different moods and textures, as well as good vehicles for the players. The main interaction between Danny and me comes because we've played together for so long—14 years!—and so we hear very similarly."

That shows on Egan's first solo outing, *Mosaic*, where Gottlieb is physically on only one track. As the bassist himself puts it, "*Mosaic* is a direct evolution from *Elements*. After *Forward Motion* came out in '83, I started experimenting with different basses in different configurations, as you can see looking around this apartment [*laughs*]. Along with the instruments I



MITCHELL SEIDEL

MARK EGAN'S EQUIPMENT

Mark Egan boasts a mind-boggling assortment of custom-made basses by more than a few makers. Among those by M.V. Pedulla are a four-string fretless ("Buzz") bass, a four-string fretted, an eight-string fretless ("Buzz"), a double-neck with a four-string fretless and an eight-string fretted neck, a five-string fretless (the additional high string is tuned to C), and a 10-string fretted tuned like a 12 string in octaves, with that high C string doubled. Among his Ibanez basses are a pair of MC 924s, fretted and fretless, and an RB 888 eight-string, while from Morch he's acquired a five-string fretless and a four-string fretless. More traditional instruments include a 1964 Fender Jazz, a 1958 Precision, and a 1968 Precision. Strings are D'Addario round-wounds, medium-soft gauge. His effects list is impressive: an Ibanez HD-1000 harmonizer, an Ibanez Master Series multi-effects board EDL5, which he has loaded with two stereo choruses, a digital delay, a compressor, and a limiter. In addition, he relies heavily on three Lexicon PCN-42s digital delays, two Lexicon 200 digital reverbs, a Dytronics tri-stereo chorus, and a TC Electronics stereo chorus. His amps are SWR stereo power amps fed through Carvin cabinets with Electro-voice 15-inch speakers and Tiel cabinets with the same.

MARK EGAN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|--|---|
| as a leader | with Gil Evans |
| MOSAIC—Hip Pocket 104 | LIVE AT SWEET BASIL—Electric Bird 19P9395-6 |
| with Elements | with Special EFX |
| FORWARD MOTION—Antilles 1021 | MODERN MANNERS—GRP 1014 |
| ELEMENTS—Antilles 1017 | with Jackie McLean |
| with Pat Metheny | MONUMENTS—RCA 3230 |
| PAT METHENY GROUP—ECM 1-1114 | with Steve Grossman |
| AMERICAN GARAGE—ECM 1-1115 | PERSPECTIVES—Atlantic 19230 |
| with Bill Evans | with Sonny Fortune |
| LIVING IN THE CREST OF A WAVE—Elektra Musician 60349-1 | WITH SOUND REASON—Atlantic 19239 |
| THE ALTERNATIVE MAN—Blue Note 85111 | INFINITY IS—Atlantic 19187 |
| with Arcadia | with Jim Hall |
| SO RED THE ROSE—Capitol 12428 | CONCERTO DE ARANJUEZ—CTI 8012 |
| with David Sanborn | with Michael Franks |
| PROMISE ME THE MOON—Warner Bros. 3051 | SKIN DIVE—Warner Bros. 25275-1 |
| | OBJECTS OF DESIRE—Warner Bros. 3648 |
| with Walter Bishop Jr. | |
| SOUL VILLAGE—Muse 5124 | |

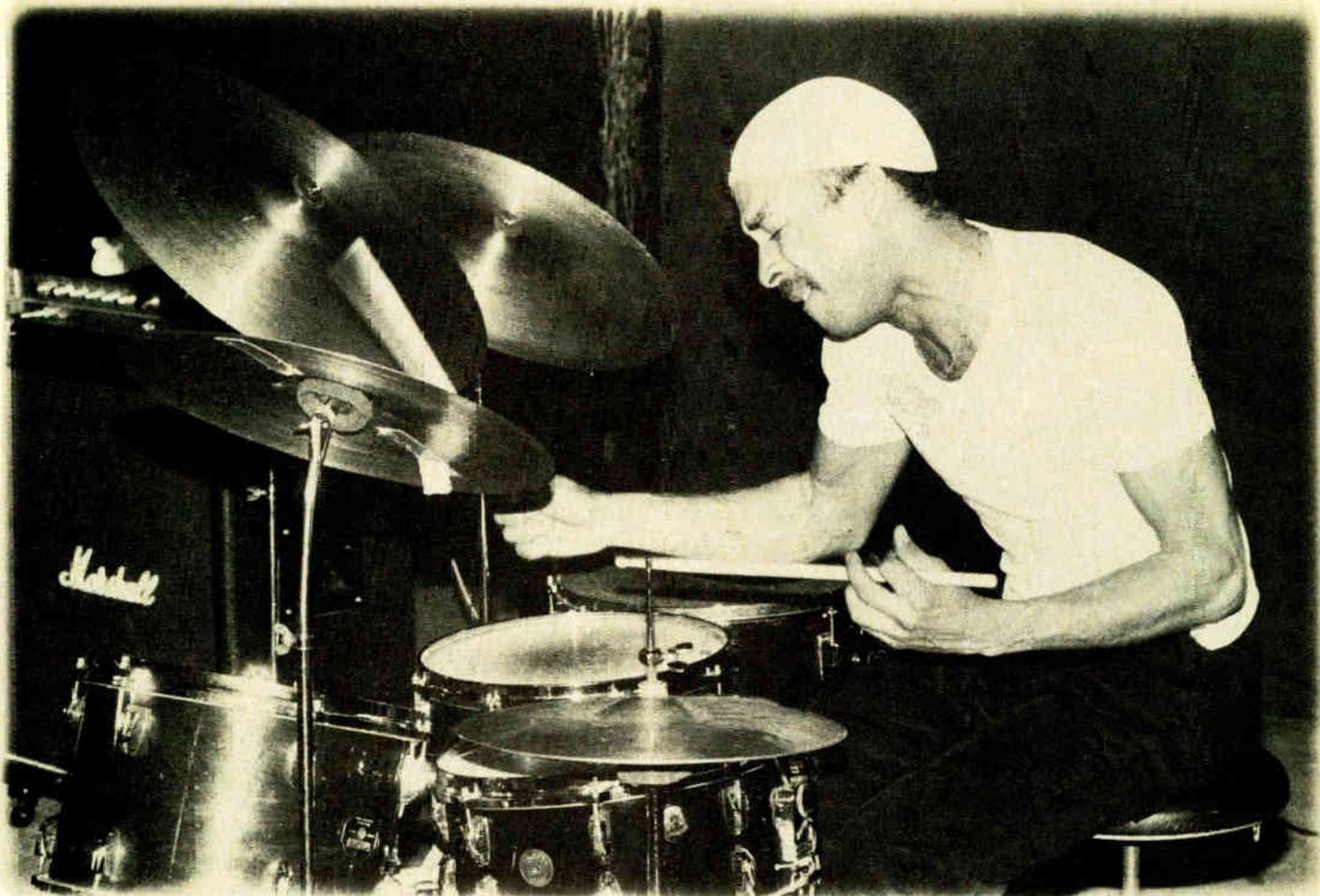
experimented with electronic effects. Then I went into the studio and did a live two-track digital recording of a lot of the music I'd come up with from playing around with this stuff, and I could hear that I was really starting to go into a direction playing solo. So I wanted to do something with it."

So did Windham Hill producer Steven Miller, who heard Egan's four-tune demo and liked it, so a deal was struck with Windham Hill-division Hip Pocket Records. After a period of intensive writing during mid-'84, Egan cut *Mosaic* in November. "I needed an outlet for all my exploring and experimenting with sounds and ideas, like playing the melody on top and the rhythm underneath and harmonic pads and backgrounds using volume pedals and the hold patterns of the digital delays," is how Egan sees his efforts. "There was suddenly a whole spectrum of music I could create by myself on bass; where in *Elements*, with soloists like Bill Evans and Clifford Carter and Danny Gottlieb, I felt I didn't have to feature the bass."

Naturally enough, that's exactly what *Mosaic* does—to stunning effect. Egan's virtuosic control of his vari-stringed and multi-necked basses, as well as the formidable array of electronic hardware he deploys, mark this debut as more than an exercise in self-indulgence. Take as an example the title track. "That particular piece originally was inspired by my using some repeat/hold patterns on digital delays, but on the record there are no repeat/hold patterns, because it's constantly changing. I took the basic idea and extended it through different harmonies, but all in real time. It was all orchestrated, I've got it all written down, and had worked it out very precisely on my four-track machine at home—with a lot of dumping, because there's about 15 tracks' worth of bass on the record. I tell you, it was really something to be sitting there on the first one with just a click track [laughs]. For those chameleon patterns that sound like repeat/holds I used an eight-string fretted bass and an Ibanez HD-1000 harmonizer, which on certain settings will regenerate four notes for every one you play. I wanted to simulate Balinese and Eastern music, so on top of the bottom figures I added an eight-string fretless bass that's very sitaristic. That's typical of what I wanted to do with the whole album—I didn't want to fill it up with flashy licks, I wanted to surrender to the music."

While his ability to do just that keeps him in demand as a top session player, it also leads to other projects, like Arcadia's *So Red The Rose*. Engineer Alex Sadkin, who's known Mark from their days together at Criteria, called Egan on that one, and the bassist found the other half of the Duran Duran boys easy and flexible to work with and, at the same time, very much in conceptual control. "All they had for any type of reference was a cassette of about 10 tunes that they wanted to do," he says, "basically drum machine, vocal, and either Simon [LeBon] strumming a guitar or Nick [Rhodes] playing a rough keyboard track. That was it—no bass parts, no charts. The only directions they gave were about tempo or mood, so I transcribed all the music and then listened to see what might fit. We recorded the basic tracks for each tune in about two days, because the parts had to evolve—in New York I'm used to having to get it after one run-through on the first take. It's a matter of taste whether or not you like Duran Duran or Arcadia, but they are *strong* concepts; they know what they want when they hear it. And in fact, the end of *The Promise* sounds a lot like *Elements*; they gave me a lot of room for arranging and conception."

With another *Elements* LP underway, Egan can afford to sit back and muse on the future. "It's not like I want to be a rock star," he says. "The way I look at it, the Arcadia project is going to make more people aware of me and my music, *Elements*, Pat Metheny, Miles—it's gonna open up those listener's ears because it's a lot more experimental than Duran Duran. I think there's a good movement going on, with people like Sting crossing a lot of different musical boundaries. Maybe it's that time again, where we're going to break out and do something different." It will be, if Mark Egan has his way. **db**



HELMUT FRUHAUF

Thurman Barker: Drummer For All Seasons

In the past few months, multiple-percussionist and self-described "house drummer for the new music" Thurman Barker has enjoyed a flurry of activity. At age 37, he debuted as a leader of trios—one with reedman Joseph Jarman and pianist Amina Claudine Myers in Manhattan at Cooper Union's Great Hall, another with special guest Sam Rivers at Charlie's Tap in Boston. Thurman worked solo for a month of Wednesdays on traps, marimba, xylophone, and orchestra bells at Neither/Nor, a studio/store near his home on the frontier of the East Village. He appeared in the concert series of MOBI (Musicians of Brooklyn Initiative), the recently organized artists' cooperative headed by Lester Bowie and Gary Bartz, and spurred both the specially assembled big band and the Colson Unity Troupe at the 20th anniversary extravaganza self-produced by the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), New York chapter. Albums featuring Thurman in the company of Muhal Richard Abrams,

violinist Billy Bang, bassist John Lindberg, and trumpeter Hugh Ragin have been simultaneously issued by several European labels.

Best of all, "The ideas are coming faster to me as a composer, because I feel more sure about what I want to play and do," says Barker, who's fast, light, responsive, and penetrating in conversation as he is when drumming.

"One of my requirements when I play someone else's gig now is we do one of my tunes, too, and that's helped me feel more fulfilled," he explains, and he's put together a demo tape emphasizing his versatility, with guitarist James Emery, saxist J. D. Parran, keyboardist Rob Schwermer, and bassist Alonzo Gardner playing structured improvisations and tunes that mix fusion and straightahead formats. Barker's busyness proves he's made his move—from Chicago, where since his teens he'd fulfilled many roles as a professional and innovator, to the Apple, where like everyone else he's got to polish his own star.

"Jack DeJohnette told me years ago that you've got to create your own scene in this business, meaning find your own people to work with, your own audience, activities, everything." Whether he realizes it or not, this is what Thurman Barker's done right along.

"When I was in grade school, my eighth year, a heavy rock drummer, Roy Robertson, came to give a concert. He was the first guy I saw with a whole bunch of drums, and that's what pulled me to the instrument. You know, everybody always thinks they can get behind a set of drums and do something—which is cool, because most people in music *have* got rhythm. And it really does something to a person when they hear drums *played*, really hit. It makes something inside you start jumpin'."

Barker jumped into drumming, just like that. "When I started high school, that's when I started taking drum lessons privately. My parents found the American Conservatory of Music—I don't know how, but it was certainly better than

By Howard Mandel

some guy teaching music in the back of a record store, because the environment was very serious about music. All through high school I went there two days a week. I didn't see a drum set the first year—it was all snare drum and music theory to start. My drum teacher's name was Harold Jones. He worked with Eddie Harris, recorded with him and the piano player Willie Pickens, and he had a really positive attitude about music and playing. I'd go around to his gigs—he used to work a lot—and there was just a happy feeling about his business. He was like a big brother to me. So when I was a junior in high school, I knew I wanted to be a musician."

It seems easy when you're a kid—and Thurman was into the good groovin' jazz of the early '60s back then: "The Three Sounds, Gene Harris on Blue Note, this great 45 that Cozy Cole did called *Topsy*. I damn near listened to that and played it note-for-note—that was the first drum solo I memorized," he recalls. "And I had a Cannonball Adderley sextet record with Roy McCurdy, I listened to Louis Hayes with Oscar Peterson—I don't think I would play like I do if I hadn't listened to all that." Shortly after getting into it, he was gigging, first with a saxophonist, John Epps, at a North Side bar where local soul stars Baby Huey and the Babysitters played weekends. "I made seven dollars a night. It was a big deal, being in high school and working, playing music."

"I got to the AACM through Muhal's son," he continues. "We were the same age, in school together, and he told me, 'My dad's a musician.' He said he rehearsed an experimental band every Monday. So I went to the Abraham Lincoln Center—this was '64, '65—and there was Muhal, Jarman, Lester Lashley, all these people. Who else? The bassist Charles Clark, piano players Christopher Gaddy and Jodie Christian, saxists Fred Anderson, Henry Threadgill, [Anthony] Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell. I assumed all the saxists knew each other and Muhal for a while, 'cause one day I came to rehearsal and there they were, playing sax duets."

"The AACM always had more saxophones than any other instrument. There had to be six or seven saxes; the brass was always small, like two trombone players, one or two trumpets at most. Billy Brimfield played trumpet, and Phil Cohran—you heard of him? [See *db*, Profile, Dec. '84.] Leroy Jenkins was there on the ground floor, and Malachi Favors played bass, and Ajaramu, the drummer, was around. I was there when the AACM started—not the first meeting, but the second. I was asked to go because I was pretty consistent making the Experimental Band rehearsals, and the Experimental Band was the core of the AACM."

"These guys were really into their mu-

sic, but I had my training together, and could read and play with mallets—that was different, the AACM guys had me playing with mallets, where on the other gigs and jam sessions I was making I used sticks and brushes. The closest thing I could relate the AACM music to was some classical music I heard when I was at the Conservatory."

"I was trying to develop a sound at that time, and what made me feel these guys were doing something different was their compositional aspect: they had music for me to play. It was all new to them—Joseph, Roscoe, Kalaparusha, they were just learning how to write. Muhal had already gotten to that point—basically, all the charts we played were his. I wouldn't know what to play, and Muhal had a way of saying, 'Just play what you hear, but don't give me any specific time or beat.' That didn't make any sense to me—I'd always thought you had to have something specific to do, but here I had this situation to play just what I felt. So that's what I did. And I think a lot of my style today has come from the kind of demands that were put on me during that period," Barker says.

"By then I'd been studying seriously for three years; I kind of had my basics together, and had a serious attitude about music. I'd listened to Miles' records with Tony Williams—*Live In Europe* was one—and Coltrane with Elvin, *A Love Supreme*. They weren't totally free—these drummers had freedom with some kind of form that I could hear, that I was interested in developing. Their solos made sense, and were real musical. Studying at the Conservatory, rehearsing with the Experimental Band, and doing occasional jobs all helped me develop a concept of controlled freedom, freedom with discipline." In his liner notes to Joseph Jarman's Delmark Records debut *Song For*, also Barker's first recording, J. B. Figi noted the drummer's "cool drive and articulate commentary." Thurman was 19 years old, and the year was 1967.

He'd had some luck, and it would hold. Judged I-Y because of childhood asthma, Barker was draft-exempt. His mother—who'd attended some AACM meetings to find out what her oldest son was involved in, and had approved the group as "something positive"—didn't protest when Thurman announced his desire to stay home after high school graduation, to practice "and see if I could really make it." Through Harold Jones, Barker got a gig at the Playboy Club. He was also playing in one of Braxton's first quartets, performing in the weekly AACM concert series, and recording again for Delmark, on Muhal's *Levels And Degrees Of Light*.

"Those sessions—*Song For* and Muhal's, both—were hard," the drummer recalls, "partly due to the recording

engineer. He didn't know how to record this music, and we, the musicians, didn't know how to be recorded. If Muhal hadn't experimented so much, that album would have sounded better. But that's Muhal, too—his *mysterioso* thing. I've been associated with him for 20 years, and I can say he's the most creative person I know. I have yet to play anything twice with him."

The singular sound of *Levels And Degrees*, its cavernous reverberation exaggerating the already-rich overtones of clarinet, vibes, and human voices, gains some spine and definition from Barker, whose traps signal and stiffen the climaxes. As the album was being issued, though, the AACM was going through changes, suffering deaths, defections, and departures as well as embracing new members.

"In '68 Jarman broke up the band he had, as Charles Clark and Christopher Gaddy died. Roscoe asked him to join the Art Ensemble—Philip Wilson was playing with them. Amina Claudine Myers, who'd been with Gene Ammons, came in about then; so did Leo Smith and Lester Bowie and John Stubblefield. And I got



LONA FOOTE



LONA FOOTE

BARKER ROLE: The drummer/composer (center) with trio-mates Joseph Jarman and Amino Claudine Myers.

this call, out of the blue, to come down to the union hall and audition for a show—with my percussion instruments. So I did. The show was *Hair*.

"I got the gig—wow, my first commercial gig where I was making some money. And it was the epitome of a good gig in Chicago, which I didn't realize at the time. Joe Mantegna, Andre De Shields, Maureen McGovern were in the cast; it was a real heavy theater scene, and it lasted two years. I didn't find it monotonous at all—in fact, playing every day, with a band of the same people, turned me on. Plus, the responsibility of keeping the band together, sounding good, keeping the spirit up on stage—I learned some stuff.

"I was only in the percussion chair for three months; the drummers they hired were into the commercial session scene, they couldn't make any of the matinees, and so I moved into the drum chair. I turned the percussion chair over to the latin percussion teacher from the American Conservatory—by '70 I was teaching there two days a week, both college and private students. Now I had nine people in the band, plus everyone on stage, depending on the drums—because the dancers and singers were all tuned into the rhythm. And I liked this responsibility. I also got into playing with a conductor—it made me feel really big time, made everything seem really grand.

"At one point during this period I got a long distance call from the Art Ensemble—they were in Paris. Braxton and Leo and Jenkins had gone there, too. Roscoe asked me to join the band. But I knew what employment meant by then, I had this professional attitude, so I asked if they had any gigs. And he was honest with me. Roscoe said, 'No, man, we're out here hustling, we've got no gigs, but we

want you.' Of course, if I'd known what it would have led to I'd have quit my theater gig, but I was young, I liked the attention I got playing at the Shubert Theater, carrying my cymbal bags every day, so I turned it down.

"I was happy for what they were doing, and I was still going to AACM meetings, but not playing as much on the concert series. The AACM guys gave me a hard time about this—this was when they were against the whole commercial scene, but I knew where they were coming from. There was some jealousy going on. It wasn't that cats like Cannonball, Wayne Shorter, my idols, couldn't play—it was that the creative scene wasn't getting any attention. So I was able to absorb that criticism, and not let it destroy my attitude about the music.

"Harold Jones had taught me it's not about the money, it's about the music, and working. If the music's strong, the money falls in—I believe that today. But I knew my professional responsibilities would help me. I'd become organized, because I had to be punctual. I'd learned discipline, which I think is really important. If you're not organized and your discipline is out, you're gone, man. Especially at the level we're on. So I stayed at the Shubert Theater. I was there from '68 all the way to '80."

As a houseman at the Shubert, Barker was in the pit for *The Me Nobody Knows*, 1776, *Promises Promises*, *Bubblin' Brown Sugar*, the musical version of *Raisin In The Sun*, *The Wiz*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *One Mo' Time*; he toured Canada and the U.S. with *Purlie* (the road show starred Cleavon Little and Melba Moore), and was even paid a salary for some shows that didn't use a drummer, in accordance with union rules. He got studio session calls for jingles, and jobbed behind Bette

Midler ("when Barry Manilow was her pianist") and Marvin Gaye. He performed with Muhal and Malachi Favors at mosques and restaurants opened by the Nation of Islam and as a warmup act for Nina Simone. His credits on AACM records—many were being recorded in Europe or New York—became sparse, though he was one of eight players using percussion on Roscoe Mitchell's sidelong *The Maze*.

"Roscoe made a good attempt, but you can tell it's not a percussion player who wrote that piece," Barker notes. As his own understanding of drums had advanced, he'd become frustrated by the limitations of some AACM composers. "*The Maze* is more sound-oriented. On a percussion piece, the melody *definitely* comes in the rhythm. And the counterpoint comes from layers and layers of rhythm on top of each other—that's when the stuff really begins to happen.

"When I was doing the Experimental Band rehearsals, the music wasn't making sense that way to me; I got off on the fact that they encouraged me. Even today, I get mad when I go to a rehearsal and the composer or arranger has music for the bass, the piano, the horn sections, then turns around to me and says, 'I don't want you to play with us; I want you to come up with something totally opposite'—and no music.

"I mean, why is it I have to be the one who has this individual scene going on? And what the hell do you do?"

If this is the challenge facing all the drummers behind the "free" composers and players—the jazz people who threw off the confining clichés of 4/4—you know the house drummer of the new music met it head on. "You've got to come up and create something from your own experience. I think this is a big difference between me and a lot of other people—I like to have a game plan. And I started developing this game plan early, subconsciously. I didn't realize it at the time. But it happened by me knowing a little bit about the artists and their music."

For instance, in 1978 Thurman got a call—out of the blue, again—from Sam Rivers. "He said, 'Man, I really liked that concert you did with the AACM at Columbia University and look, I want you to play a record with me, so can you be in New York? Here's the number of the studio; I want you on this date.' My first playing situation with Sam Rivers and Dave Holland was in the studio, recording *Waves*.

"So I thought, who am I playing with? I knew of Sam as a player who respects tradition as well as improvisation; I knew there was going to be some straight-ahead playing involved, as well as long solos and fast playing. The energy level would be high. I knew he played flute and soprano as well as tenor. So when I was practicing,

before I flew into New York, my game plan was to develop a sense of playing fast and light—which wasn't hard for me, I had a sound for that—as well as loud. I'd have a particular sound behind tenor, another behind flute, another behind soprano, depending on how I addressed my drum set and the mood I'd create.

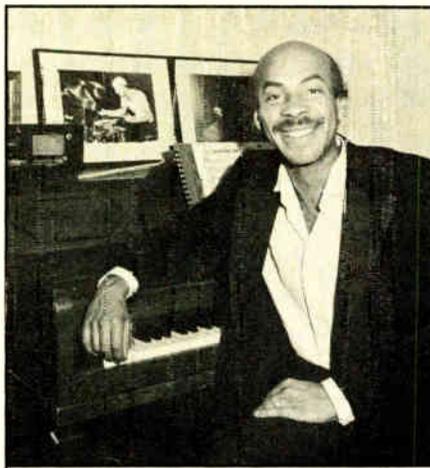
"With the tenor, it was going to be a volume thing, a lot of activity, and a driving sensation. Behind flute I was going to be thinking of sweetness, a lot of mallet playing, maybe some latin things. Behind soprano it would be free improvisation with drums and sock cymbal—whereas with the tenor the strong thing would be with the cymbals, upstairs."

At the same time, Thurman had been working in Braxton's quartet with bassist Mark Helias and trombonist Ray Anderson: "That was as different from Sam's band as night and day. Braxton's concept of playing at the time he called 'collage'—he wanted the quartet to sound like we were each playing in our own practice rooms, yet were onstage together as a band. It was an interesting concept, and it was working, and I liked it, but I didn't get to swing with that band. It was maybe how one would play in a Stan Kenton band or stage concert band, not the kind of swing I'd heard on Cannonball Adderley or Three Sounds records. It was Braxton's way of swinging; in terms of swing, that was his sound. But with Sam, I got a chance to play some rhythm & blues, to play some backbeat, some latin, and with a great bass player like Dave Holland, it was a lot of fun. I felt good—like alright, now I'm in a band where we're mixing the music up. I liked the fact I got to play with strong rhythm."

Barker says, "For those few years, '78, '79, being on the road with Braxton and Rivers, I got a taste of the big jazz scene—the touring, the concert halls, the festivals, and I said, 'Ah, this is what it's about.'" He made 12 trips to Europe in the two years, and eventually felt a change in the Chicago air.

"I didn't get the call for *Evita*. I called up my contractor and said, 'Hey, what's the deal?' He said, 'I'll be honest with you, Thurman: it's sort of an opera, and I know you don't have any opera experience.' Well, he was saying he was being honest, but I think it was that work had gotten so bad around Chicago that guys who'd felt theater work was demeaning, because you had to go there six days a week and repeat yourself, guys who'd turned that work down now wanted it. I really feel it was that goin' down." Braxton and Rivers were cutting back on how much of Thurman's travel costs they'd assume, too. Barker had done Chicago; it was time to venture on.

So, after a season at Karl Berger's place in Woodstock—"It got to be September, and these people were thinking about



THURMAN BARKER'S EQUIPMENT

"I'm using Slingerland drums—a 16x18 bass drum, which is not standard size, which I had specially made," says Thurman Barker. "The bass drum is smaller and easier to carry around, and gives me a good cannon sound, with a lot of bottom, not flat. This is the tone I like. I'm using two floor toms, 16-inch and 14-inch, two upper tom-toms, and four cymbals across—Zildjians at this time. My mallet instruments have been Musser—I use a three-and-a-half octave marimba, made of rosewood, a three-and-a-half octave Musser xylophone, and Degan orchestra bells, which are also three-and-a-half octaves, cut the bottom notes the G above middle C on the piano, so they're pitched really high, same as the xylophone. I use Bill Crowden sticks from Drums Unlimited in Chicago—it's a nice stick, a long stick, and it's got a nice beater ball on it—I prefer a stick with a wood beater ball to a plastic-tipped stick. All my drums are made out of wood—three-ply rather than five- or six-ply, which is standard. I prefer the three-ply because I get more resonance out of those shells, and the others are too much wood for the kind of music I play. The three-ply seems to penetrate more. I just don't need the heavy shelled drums."

THURMAN BARKER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

with Muhai Richard Abrams

VIEW FROM WITHIN—Black Saint 081
MAMA AND DADDY—Black Saint 041
LIFE A BLINEC—Arista-Novus 3000
YOUNG AT HEART, WISE IN TIME—Delmark 423
LEVELS AND DEGREES OF LIGHT—Delmark 413

with Sam Rivers

WAVES—Tomato 8002
CONTRASTS—ECM 1-1162

with Joseph Jarman

SONG FOR—Delmark 410
AS IF IT WERE THE SEASONS—Delmark 417

with Anthony Braxton

PERFORMANCE 9/11/79—hat Hut 19
SEVEN COMPOSITIONS 1978—Moers Music 1#66

with Roscoe Mitchell

L-R-G/THE MAZE/S II EXAMPLES—Nessa 14/15

with Billy Bang

THE FIRE FROM WITHIN—Soul Note 1086

with Kalaparusha

HUMILITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE CREATOR—Delmark 419

with John Lindberg

TRILOGY OF WORKS FOR ELEVEN INSTRUMENTALISTS—Black Saint 082

with Hugh Ragin

METAPHYSICAL QUESTION—Cecma 1007

with The Jazz Doctors

SUITE PERSCRIPTION—Cadillac 1ba

with Amina Claudine Myers

CIRCLE OF TIME—Black Saint 078

with World Bass Violin Ensemble

BASICALLY YOURS—Black Saint 063

firewood for the winter; I had no concept of how to live like that"—Barker moved to Yonkers, just north of New York City. His game plan was to get into a Broadway show, but he soon learned there's a long line for those steady paying jobs. Tenor saxist John Stubblefield gave him a gig in Brooklyn, with pianist Hubert Eaves and bassist Clint Houston, and he did some off-Broadway theater for a few weeks.

"The calls started coming in—from the Chicago connection. You know, you can direct some of your activities, but you have to go where the money's coming from, where the jobs are. And I went with what is familiar," Barker says, almost apologetically. No such deprecation is necessary, though; his flexibility and fine-honed skills were—*are*—in demand. Barker toured Europe with Air after Steve McCall left the trio, worked up the drum book for Leroy Jenkins' band Sting, performed with cellist David Eyges' too-short-lived quintet, joined Henry Threadgill's ensemble at the Public Theater, and Threadgill's sextet, too. While in Yonkers he'd composed his demo material, and since moving "downtown"—to the East Village, tenement central for artists and musicians—he's become more in-demand.

"I guess I'd be considered a free-lance percussionist," Thurman admits. "I'm interested in writing more, though, and I'd like to get the Thurman Barker Trio off the ground. I'd like to work with a Freddie Hubbard or McCoy Tyner, too—I'd learn a lot from someone like that, and it's music I grew up on but haven't had a chance to play. I'm sure I'm categorized as a free player, and people probably think I chose that. But on my demo I wanted to make the statement that not only could I play conventionally, I could write some stuff, too. I play with both acoustic and electric musicians; I have the training and sophistication to pull that off. I also want to develop my multiple-percussion work. Things are beginning to happen—I've got a duo gig at Roulette, and I've been asked back to Boston. It's just a matter of time for people to find out about you, I've learned, and unfortunately it takes a long time in jazz."

Barker rues never having been a member of a long-lasting group, though he's indispensable to Muhai, and he intends to take an active role in the planned training program of the AACM's New York chapter. "I want to be involved in MOBI, too—I think it's very strong when artists come together to get their work out. If it wasn't for the AACM, I don't know if my scene would have happened so soon." Yet as a theater pro, he knows that even if he's between engagements, a juicy part will soon present itself. Most shows, after all, start in a flurry of activity, then intensify. Act two, one suspects, will find Thurman Barker in the thick of things. **db**



STEVE LACY

FUTURITIES—hat Art 2022: *SAD ADVICE*; *THE HOUSE*; *LOVE COMES QUIETLY*; *OLD SONG*; *THE WARNING*; *JUGGLER'S THOUGHT*; *JACK'S BLUES*; *MIND'S HEART*; *CHANSON*; *THE END OF THE DAY*; *A FOLK SONG*; *THE TRAVELER*; *OH NO*; *THEY SAY*; *HEAVEN*; *TRAIN GOING BY*; *THE EYE*; *FOR NO CLEAR REASON*; *THE RHYTHM*; *NIGHT TIME*.

Personnel: Lacy, soprano saxophone; Irène Aebi, voice; Steve Potts, alto, soprano saxophone; George Lewis, trombone; Gyde Knebusch, harp; Barry Wedge, guitar; Jef Gardner, piano; J.J. Avenel, bass; Oliver Johnson, drums, gongs, glockenspiel.

★★★★★

A virtual renaissance in couplings of poetry and improvised music has emerged over the past decade, including (to name only a partial list) Kip Hanrahan's recent production featuring settings of the work of Ishmael Reed by Carla Bley, Lester Bowie, and others; Amiri Baraka's matchups with David Murray and Steve McCall; the Mike Westbrook settings of William Blake; Steve Swallow's compositions based on poems of Robert Creeley; performances of Jayne Cortez with her harmolodic electric ensemble; and Ronald Shannon Jackson's solo renditions of Poe, Shakespeare, and 20th century black writers. The common starting point for these widely diverse interpretations is the literary text, whether spoken by Baraka, sung by Sneila Jordan (from Creeley according to Swallow), or flexibly *sprechgesang* (treated as speech-song) by Shannon Jackson.

Certain assumptions behind such linkages set them apart from conventional popular songs: that the words possess a certain density, that they can stand apart from music, that they deserve respect. The composer must discover music that will not overwhelm texts, nor shrink away from them. Transcendental results are rarely guaranteed.

Steve Lacy has experience with the genre, having collaborated with literary collagist Brion Gysin to produce *Songs* (hat Art 1985/86). But *Futurities* manages a smoother, smarter fit between words and music. The compositional quirks that are Lacy's trademark match to a tee the serpentine line and surprise syntax of Robert Creeley's poetry. The two-record deluxe boxed set contains settings of 20 poems from a major American poet. Creeley's deceptively simple texts—wacky fairy tales, love lyrics, meditations, aphoristic nuggets—could not be more straightforwardly written. Yet they release new meanings, deepening the closer one reads. The poems are about comings and goings, the rhythms of life and, fittingly, they

flow into one another without pause. The original cycle, which premiered in France in 1984, utilized costumed dancers and sported a stage-set in the form of an altar, as the "Original Cast Album" subtitle printed on the cover humorously reminds us.

If only for musical reasons, *Futurities* has a lot on the ball. Lacy's decision to augment his usual sextet with harp and guitar thickens textures to the point where *Heaven* recalls, almost, the luxuriance of Ravel's *Daphnis Et Chloe*. Another guest, George Lewis, plays a major role, his trombone solos encompassing moods from truculence (the fast-forward open horn on *For No Clear Reason*) to reflection (the tenebrous plunger on *Mind's Heart*). Reedman Steve Potts, newcomer pianist Jef Gardner, and Lacy himself contribute additional strong statements, while J.J. Avenel and Oliver Johnson are firm preservers of continuity among the shifting notated and ad lib structures.

Irène Aebi's voice becomes inseparable from the words; she's as insistent as a crier proclaiming news in the street. Hers is an unusual voice, androgynous, antique-sounding, an aural daguerreotype suited for drama and declamation. Aebi brings the gritty irony of Brecht/Weill to Creeley/Lacy and it works!

The understanding established between music and words is crucial. *Futurities* decidedly has more in common with the art song of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* than the rap song. These are not mere recitations; Lacy has written songs in which language receives its due, in which group and solo improvisation is encouraged. How the "fixed and open" structures coexist is demonstrated in *The Eye*, at nearly seven minutes the second-longest piece here: "Moon/and clouds, will/we drift/higher/than that we look at,/moon's and/mind's/eye." Introduced by a composed flourish played twice, the theme is stated in legato unison by voice and soprano saxophones, and supported by music box piano with counterlines from plunger trombone. Then a delicate-as-breath soprano solo drifts free of the ensemble, in perfect complement to the poem's (and the arrangement's) Eastern dreaminess, its tones gradually contracting to a thin whistle accompanied by light arpeggios and mallet percussion. That sympathetic knack Lacy has for tying composed and improvised material to the sense of a text shows up time and again, whether on the interrupted waltz that carries *Sad Advice*, or the hipster-plaint riff tune *Jack's Blues* (reminiscent of *Salt Peanuts*).

Futurities has its slight blemishes. Hokey musical onomatopoeia and a protracted ending mar *Train Going By*. But the best songs have a ring of rightness, of inevitability—as though they had always existed somewhere, out of sight. After listening you find yourself remembering the words with the melodies and placing them. It would be a shame if derogatory stereotypes about poetry, or the comparative bumper crop of recent Lacy releases for that matter, scared away potential listeners. A tip to *poetryphobes*: *Futurities* probably would sicken Percy Dovetonisils, the late Ernie Kovacs' persona for the prissy puckering poet behind Coke-bottle lenses. The true wit, head-

on emotion, and heated jams would fog up his spectacles. —peter kostakis



VARIOUS ARTISTS

LOST IN THE STARS: THE MUSIC OF KURT WEILL

A&M 9-5104: *MAHAGONNY SONGSPIEL*; *THE BALLAD OF MAC THE KNIFE*; *THE CANON SONG*; *BALLAD OF THE SOLDIER'S WIFE*; *JOHNNY JOHNSON MEDLEY*; *ALABAMA SONG*; *YOUKALI TANGO*; *THE LITTLE LIEUTENANT OF THE LOVING GOD*; *SEPTEMBER SONG*; *LOST IN THE STARS*; *WHAT KEEPS MANKING ALIVE?*; *SURABAYA JOHNNY*; *OH HEAVENLY SALVATION*; *CALL FROM THE GRAVE*; *BALLAD IN WHICH MACHEATH BEGS ALL MEN FOR FORGIVENESS*; *SPEAK LOW*; *IN NO MAN'S LAND*.

Personnel: Steve Weisberg group (cut 1); Sting and Dominic Muldowney band, featuring Branford Marsalis and Kenny Kirkland (2); The Fowler Brothers Band with Standard Ridgway (3); Marianne Faithfull and Chris Spedding (4); Van Dyke Parks (5, 16); Ralph Schuckett Band with Richard Butler, Bob Dorough, Ellen Shipley (6); The Armadillo String Quartet (7); John Zorn (8); Lou Reed Band featuring Fernando Saunders (9); Carla Bley Band featuring Phil Woods (10); Tom Waits (11); Dagmar Krause (12); Mark Bingham Band with Johnny Adams and Aaron Neville (13); Todd Rundgren with Gary Windo (14); Sharon Freeman Band with Charlie Haden (15).

★★★★★

Producer Hal Willner's tribute albums are the most daring projects happening in music today. Not only are they conceptually intriguing (interpreting the music of master composers using contemporary artists from various genres), but they are musically satisfying as well. And one interesting net effect of these ambitious projects is the fact that listeners are being exposed to new artists, new sounds, new approaches via Willner's mix-and-match LPs. Some rock fan may pick up this album to hear Sting or Lou Reed and fall in love with the sound of Phil Woods' alto or Charlie Haden's bass. By the same token, a jazz aficionado may buy it to hear Carla Bley's band and come away with newfound respect for Tom Waits or Todd Rundgren.

This is easily Willner's most involved project. His first tribute album, *Amarcord Nino Rota* (Hannibal 9301), paying homage to the composer of the soundtracks for most of Federico Fellini's films, contained mostly solo showcases. The next one, *That's The Way I Feel Now* (A&M 6600), honoring Thelonious Monk, involved quite a few more musicians to cover

the music on two discs. For this sprawling project he works with 120 musicians on 16 cuts, recorded here and there in studios all over the world (tracking down Sting in Paris, recording Aaron Neville in Louisiana, Dagmar Krause in London, and so on). And this may also be the most accessible of the lot, thanks to the radio-play presence of Lou Reed on a danceable remake of *September Song* and Sting's schmaltzy reading of *Mac The Knife*.

But those who have become Willner fans don't buy his albums for their accessibility. They want the unexpected, the odd, the outrageous. And Willner always delivers.

In this tribute to the prolific composer who was a guiding light in German theater of the late '20s and early '30s, before moving to America and setting up shop here, Willner gives us such eccentricities as John Zorn's

wacky, chaotic reworking of *The Little Lieutenant Of The Loving God* from the 1929 play *Happy End*; Todd Rundgren's particularly intense reading of the foreboding *Call From The Grave* from 1928's *The Threepenny Opera*; Ralph Schuckett's rock interpretation of *Alabama Song* from 1930's *Mahagony* (a tune previously covered by the Doors) with vocals by Richard Butler of the Psychedelic Furs, jazz singer Bob Dorough, and cabaret chanteuse Ellen Shipley. How's that for a curious combination?

Carla Bley, who has been an integral part of all three Willner projects, performs *Lost In The Stars* with her band and guest soloist Phil Woods. Sharon Freeman, another Willner regular, leads an ensemble through a soothing rendition of *Speak Low* with guest soloist Charlie Haden. R&b stylists Aaron Neville and

Johnny Adams add their soulful touch to the Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill tune *Oh Heavenly Salvation* from *Mahagony*. Each of the above artists gives a new twist to the old in their respective interpretations.

Apart from dreaming up odd combinations, Willner also has a knack for making appropriate matches. Tom Waits is a natural for the cynical Brecht/Weill tune *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* from *The Threepenny Opera*. And Marianne Faithfull's chilling rendition of *Ballad Of The Soldier's Wife*, another Brecht/Weill collaboration, is particularly effective in capturing the morose spirit of that dirge.

There's lots here for music lovers and musicologists alike. And check out the CD for a bit extra, including a version of *The Great Hall* with Lester Bowie and Henry Threadgill. Bravo, Hal.

—bill milkowski



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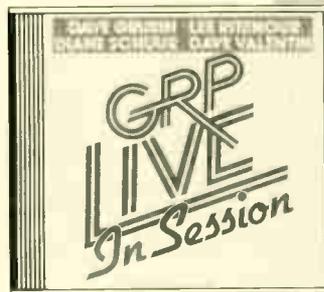
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RECORD REVIEWS



MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS

VIEW FROM WITHIN—Black Saint 0091: LAJA; VIEW FROM WITHIN; PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS; DOWN AT PEPPERS; POSITRAIN; INNER LIGHTS.

Personnel: Abrams, piano, gongs; Stanton Davis, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Purcell, flute, soprano, alto, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Marty Ehrlich, piccolo, flute, alto, tenor saxophone, B-flat, bass clarinet; Rick Rosie, bass; Warren Smith, vibes, marimba, gongs; Thurman Barker, drums, orchestra bells, marimba, gongs; Ray Mantilla, bongos, conga drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

For almost 20 years, Muhal Richard Abrams has refused to speak for publication about anything at all. We've been deprived of a participant's perspective on the advancement of creative music in Chicago (and more recently, New York), the wisdom of an incisive—and not inartful—teacher, leader, artist, man. Muhal, one assumes, wants his *music* to be the listener's focus, his own extra energies being given not to self-promotion but to encouraging viable jazz support groups, getting vital music performed well and widely. Meanwhile, his own music has been regularly documented (though not in its entirety, which includes symphonic, unconventional jazz orchestra, and chamber compositions as well as piano solos and combo works). *View From Within*, his eighth album on Black Saint since *Sight Song*, a duet with bassist Malach! Favors released in '76, offers so much imaginatively organized and impeccably improvised sound, so deliberately balanced, that the absence of the title's promised intimations may not be missed.

First, we're made aware of rhythm—Ray Mantilla popping hand drums like he's got an extra palm—that broadens with the interlocking parts of the tuned percussive instruments Muhal's fascinated by: his own piano, of course, Warren Smith's vibes, and Thurman Barker's choicely deployed traps, underwired by Rick Rosie's thick bass line. Into this ringing, pulsing field trumpeter Stanton Davis and reedmen John Purcell and Marty Ehrlich rush with Muhal's unique melodic material. The Afro-Caribbean beat surges under their brief but urgent, cogent statements—which owe nothing to genre clichés; Muhal's chorus is a brilliant anti-*montuno*—and the interspersed ensemble variations which grow from the motifs and sweep the song (*Laja*) along. After a rousing percussion break, the contrapuntal themes resolve in a joyous unison cry. Like most of the other pieces here, *Laja* demon-

strates Muhal's conviction that rhythm, melody, and color are inextricably woven and infinitely mutable.

The power of this notion as understood by Muhal and company persists in the title track, a moody, strangely structured work opening with woodwinds, comprising gongs, marimbas, an uncredited electric keyboard (Muhal's used synths sparingly since the mid-'70s), bowed bass, and a theme which emerges about two-thirds through, only to drift off into peaceful quiet. Unlike many sound-for-sound's-sake attempts, *View* maintains an internal cohesion; it has an end in sight, reaches it and goes beyond. Repeated listening will be endlessly rewarded, yet this piece keeps us at a distance. We may admire its beauty, but hardly draw it to our hearts.

Personal Conversations seems at first like chaotic free-blowing, but with the entrance of a walking bass takes another form. There's an ensemble chorus that clarifies the generating idea, then a series of eight-bar turns; another group section that stills to let Ehrlich show what he can do with a single tone on his tenor; a bass and brass duet; Purcell (on soprano) with Barker, recalling an aspect of Roscoe Mitchell's *Sound*; Muhal with Smith on vibes (and Mantilla?). This last grouping supplies the cell from which the ensemble blows, again, apparently freely—if we hadn't heard how artfully determined the preceding music was.

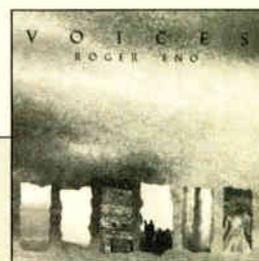
Down At Peppers, after its winding introduction, is a straight, slow blues dedicated to Chicago's deepest bluesmen; it features trumpeter Davis. Attractive horn figures accompany Purcell's alto solo; Muhal comps nicely, though he's no Otis Spann. His solo is in the pocket, building to grandeur on the chords he rocks. There's collective blues improvisation by the horns, then a trumpet coda—Davis shows off chops and dynamic sense—and a truer ending, with the trumpet waxing lyrical over modest, modern piano and reed voicings.

Because of its angularity, flute and trumpet leads, and Smith's vibes atop Barker's straight-ahead drums—also, the breaktimes—*Positrain* reminds me of Dolphy's *Out To Lunch*. There's too much detail, too many layers, too much interaction to describe; maybe that's another reason Muhal prefers to keep his thoughts to himself rather than verbalize them: words can't come close to his music, and if they could, why bother to play it? In *Inner Lights*, too, the design of the theme is as intricate as a mosaic of tiles suggesting different shapes from different perspectives. Muhal takes an unaccompanied solo; Davis has a line between piccolo and bass clarinet; Rosie plucks-and-bows a solo, accented by the vibes. The piece and the album end unexpectedly, with Davis blurring small sounds—as though there's more to come.

I assume there is, and hope that as Muhal adds to the body of serious works by jazz-associated artists he feels more willing to let his emotions complement his intellect. Not that the playing here is mechanically cold; there's passion more than adequate to realize the difficult compositions as coherent music, swinging and hot as dry ice. Much as I'm awed by his constructs and drawn to hear them again, though, Muhal's music doesn't warm me, as I

somehow believe it could and should. *View From Within*, like his earlier *Mama And Daddy*, begins to reveal the personal side of the composer/performer who has inspired countless musicians and stimulated a sincerely interested audience, too. Come out a little further, Muhal—please don't stop now.

—howard mandel



ROGER ENO

VOICES—Editions EG 42: THROUGH THE BLUE; A PALER SKY; EVENING TANGO; RECALLING WINTER; VOICES; THE OLD DANCE; REFLECTIONS ON I.K.B.; A PLACE IN THE WILDERNESS; THE DAY AFTER; AT THE WATER'S EDGE; GREY PROMENADE.

Personnel: Roger Eno, piano, synthesizers, guitar; Brian Eno, treatments.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

MICHAEL BROOK

HYBRID—Editions EG 41: HYBRID; DISTANT VILLAGE; MIMOSA; POND LIFE; OCEAN MOTION; MIDDAY; EARTH FLOOR; VACANT.

Personnel: Brook, guitars, percussion, mbira, steel guitar, synthesizers, bass, vibes, mix; Brian Eno, treatments, piano, swamp percussion, synthesizers, bass, mix; Daniel Lanois, percussion, treatments, bass; Gordon Phillips, northumbrian pipes, cricket recordings; Dick Smith, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

Michael Brook and Roger Eno may be the titular leaders but the presence of Brian Eno informs every fiber of these recordings. His credit for "treatments" suggests that after everyone laid down their tracks and left, he stepped into the deserted studio and worked his personal magic. I find the benign despotism, nepotism, and insularity disturbing, yet I'm drawn to these recordings and the moods they create.

Brook has appeared on the last few Eno records and it shows. The title track borrows unabashedly from Eno's productions for trumpeter Jon Hassell. Sub-textual African percussion pummel out trance rhythms and Brook's sinewy feedback guitar replicates Hassell's sinewy trumpet, right down to the Indian phrasing.

The pan-ethnicity that Eno explored on his Fourth World series of recordings continues here with the odd combination of Hawaiian guitar and mbira on *Distant Village*. It's not culture clash, but cultural submersion in Eno's illusionist mix. Everything is slowed down, re-

mixed, and re-EQ'd until their origin is barely implied.

Brian's younger brother, Roger, is also the beneficiary of treatments from Brian and producer Daniel Lanois. If *Voices* is any evidence, Roger's personality is that of a clone rather than a sibling. The pensive, melancholy tunes and reverberating silver sheen would've fit nicely on Brian's last offering, *Apollo* (Editions EG Eno 5).

These songs are like drawings in dust. Like an Erik Satie melody shedding its skin in slow motion, *A Paler Sky's* skeletal piano melody is shadowed by the quietest synthesizer lines and empowered through subtle delays, reverb, and harmonizations. As on Brook's *Hybrid*, the level of tape hiss indicates that a lot of processing was effected on tracks like *The Day After*. In these days of digital clarity, Brian Eno is one of the few composers for whom tape hiss is an instrumental color. It lends both a timelessness and antiquity to these poignant compositions.

Although Roger Eno's *Voices* can be somnambulant over the long haul, and despite the fact that both artists are all too beholding to the concepts and manipulations of Brian Eno, these are beautiful, compelling recordings. Simplicity is the charm. The rhythms are static, yet moving; the melodies are sparse, yet invitingly elusive. This isn't the wallpaper of Eno's ambient works, but evocative dream fragments. Michael Brooks and Roger Eno may have independent musical visions, but they aren't evident here. Or they may simply share Brian's sonic view. For the moment, I'm content with the latter.

—John Diliberto



FAIRPORT CONVENTION

GLADYS' LEAP—Varrick 023: *How Many Times; Bird From The Mountain; Honour And Praise; The Hiring Fair; Instrumental Medley '85; My Feet Are Set For Dancing; Wat Tyler; Head In A Sack.*

Personnel: Simon Nicol, vocals, guitar; Dave Mattacks, drums, keyboards; Dave Pegg, bass guitar, acoustic bass, mandolin, bouzouki, vocals; Cathy Lesurf, vocal (cut 6); Richard Thompson, guitar (8); Ric Sanders, violin (2, 4, 5).

★ ★ ★

Back in the dim, prehistoric era when I went to college—and listened to Fairport's *Unhalfbricking* and *Liege & Lief*—I had a friend who was very bright but a little crazy. He'd stay up all night partying, crash for a few hours, then write his term papers in mad, frenzied bursts of typing—and go back to partying. He almost never went to class, but he graduated somehow and disappeared for a few years.

JACK REILLY

Composer/Jazz Pianist



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Lee-Jeske, Down Beat



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Fred Goodman, Rolling Stone Jazz Record Guide

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—*Barry McKee, Jazz Journal*



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RECORD REVIEWS

The next time I saw him, he had cut off his hippie fright wig and traded in his Woodstock uniform for the preppie look. He was keeping regular hours and had enrolled in business school. It was great to see him—but somehow it wasn't the same. Which is basically how I feel about this album, Fairport's first studio album in more than seven years.

The original Fairport Convention of the late '60s was a British version of the Byrds, putting a rock foundation under the framework of traditional and folk tunes (and doing eccentric versions of Bob Dylan songs). Their albums were uneven, and sometimes it seemed that their ideas were beyond their ability to execute them. Being thoroughly American, I wasn't really in touch with their sources, but I could

appreciate the energy and originality of their music.

After numerous personnel changes, the group finally wheezed to a halt, with its members going on to a myriad of solo projects and other bands. Richard Thompson has been the most successful of the ex-Fairporters, and he returns here as a "Special Guest," adding some pithy lead guitar to *Head In A Sack*. The current group, as defined by this album, is really just a trio: Simon Nicol, Dave Mattacks (both original members), and Dave Pegg. Sorely missed, to these ears, is demon fiddler Dave Swarbrick.

Technically, the record sounds marvelous ("digitally mastered, alcohol assisted"), but the music has few surprises. The arrangements

are so tight that they strangle the tunes—more room for solos (or group mayhem a la *Matty Groves*) would have helped a lot. Side one is low-key to the point of being dull, all ballads and dirges. Ralph McTell's *The Hiring Fair* stands out in an oddly compelling way, with Nicol's mournful voice striking a contrast to the pastoral lyricism of the music. Things get a bit perkier on the flip side, with Pegg's Jaco-esque electric bass lighting a fire underneath *Instrumental Medley '85* and vocalist Cathy Lesurf evoking the spirit of Sandy Denny on *My Feet Are Set For Dancing*. Her voice is much more agile and enticing than Nicol's—too bad we don't get to hear more of it.

Like my friend, Fairport Convention has gotten all slicked up for the '80s. That's okay, I

Bechet's Legacy

It is precisely because jazz history has provided us with so many figures of incontestable importance that newcomers to the field may easily become bewildered by their sheer number, much less their respective positions on this ever-widening pantheon of greats. As a rule, those who try to teach something about our music's background soon come to realize the futility of such endeavors within the proscribed limitations of a one-semester format. Consequently, they tend to outline their curricula according to their own personal order of priorities, with the inevitable result being that the earlier years of jazz history—those preceding the mid-'40s emergence of bebop—are shortshrined in favor of more recent developments, undoubtedly those in accord with conventionally reigning tastes. Thus, Miles Davis would probably receive more semester time than Louis Armstrong, Coltrane more than Hawkins or Young, and Bill Evans more than Earl Hines.

So, with this anomaly in mind, it is now even more important than ever for younger musicians and other lovers of our music to seek out for themselves that which they cannot receive through formal tutelage. Since all of the old masters are sadly long gone, all that remains, outside of the memories of those who were fortunate enough to have heard them in person, lies in their recorded documents, and for that we must be everlastingly grateful.

Sidney Bechet, the first masterful improviser in jazz, who had preceded even Louis Armstrong in the area of rhythmic and structural liberation, is, for example, customarily accorded only a few paragraphs in contemporary Jazz Ed texts, and those usually in conjunction with comments about fellow New Orleanian reedman peers, notably Johnny Dodds and Jimmie Noone. Of course, this is not the place to compare Bechet with Armstrong, Dodds, or Noone, but it should be pointed out that though Armstrong is rightfully heralded as the virtual inventor of swing phrasing, Dodds as the most expressive blues player of his and possibly all time, and Noone as unquestionably the most proficient clarinetist in jazz

before Benny Goodman, it was only Sidney Bechet who encompassed all of jazz' most important attributes at one and the same early time—and on a bastard instrument to boot!

Around 75 years ago, Bechet was a child prodigy who, at the age of 13, was working professional jobs in New Orleans with men more than twice his age. And because of his easy assurance and the faith bestowed upon him by his elders—legendary names in their own right—the young clarinetist and, somewhat later, sopranoist early developed a feeling of self-confidence that he would maintain throughout his lengthy career. The first jazzman of any kind to tour Europe, he received in 1919 a glowing tribute in the press from the Swiss symphony conductor Ernest Ansermet that quite literally, in almost Nostrodomus-like fashion, predicted the entire course of 20th century music. In America, though, Bechet was to scuffle for many years before he finally decided to settle in France. A Creole by birth, Bechet handled French better than most Americans; with his natural flair for drama and the overtly romantic in musical expression, he quickly became lionized on the same par with such other national treasures as Maurice Chevalier and Edith Piaf, the only difference being that unlike those "establishment" figures, Bechet appealed to the rebellious young as well as the seasoned jazz lovers. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the last 10 years of his life, Bechet achieved a superstar status in France that could have only been rivaled by that enjoyed by Armstrong and Ellington. But, ironically, during those same years his name was virtually unknown to the majority of his countrymen, as it unfortunately still is.

The recordings contained in *The Complete Blue Note Recordings* (Mosaic 6-110) represent something of a midway mark between his glorious early work with Clarence Williams, Noble Sissle, his own variously manned New Orleans Feetwarmers, and his latter-day appearances as a star soloist in front of sundry European trad bands. But there is nothing "midway" at all about his playing here, for, far from being a transitional point for Bechet, whose style barely changed at all from his first recordings in 1923 to his last in 1958, most of these sides reflect

Bechet at his best. A remarkably consistent player, indeed the only instances of less-than-total immersion in the rigors of creative self-abandon occur (somewhat occasionally at that) during a couple of the later sessions, in which, for reasons still obscure, Bechet is yoked to sidemen of only pedestrian skills.

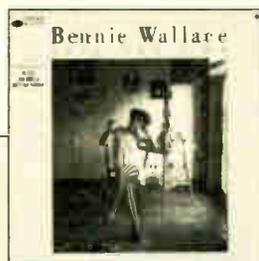
The earlier dates, particularly those through 1946, present Bechet at his finest and least stylized. This is an important distinction to make, because at this mid-decade point Eddie Condon and his radio/recording/concert promulgation of "dixieland" had already made this style of jazz such a viable commodity that by 1949 or '53, for example, it would have been literally impossible for Bechet to repeat such "hits" as he had earlier scored with *Summertime*, *Dear Old Southland*, and *Blue Horizon*. With young audiences psyched-up for *That's A Plenty*, *Fidgety Feet*, and *When The Saints Go Marching In*, it would have been imprudent, at the least, to have tried to "sell" a soulful slow blues or a ballad. Thus the change in format over these brief few years.

No more of a stereotypical "dixielander" than, say, Edmond Hall, Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson, Rex Stewart, or Benny Morton (who were also partially dependent on Condon for work during this period), Bechet found himself increasingly pigeonholed into smaller and smaller areas of repertoire. And, although he never lost his taste for the "good old good 'uns" from his youth, unlike many of his background and generation, he also had an innate gift for passionate balladic expression. Especially, he enjoyed playing the compositions of Gershwin, Kern, and Rodgers. It is particularly instructive, then, to note that his latter-day reputation, in America at least, should have rested almost solely upon his ability to stomp down the ancient warhorses.

There is far too much more to be said about Bechet than could possibly be contained within the confines of this column, so the interested reader is referred to John Chilton's biographical notes—a precis of his forthcoming full-scale work—which append this state-of-the-art six-record boxed set. Complete details necessary for purchase can be obtained by writing: Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut 06902.

—jack sohmer

suppose, but I miss the inspired sloppiness of the old version.
—jim roberts



BENNIE WALLACE

TWILIGHT TIME—Blue Note 85107: *ALL NIGHT DANCE*; *IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT DIXIE*; *SAINTE FRAGILE*; *TENNESSEE WALTZ*; *FRESH OUT*; *WILLIE MAE*; *TROUBLE IN MIND*; *SAINT EXPEDITO*; *TWILIGHT TIME*.

Personnel: Wallace, *Rabbit Edmonds* (cut 1), *tenor saxophone*; *Ray Anderson*, *trombone* (3, 6, 8, 9); *Stevie Ray Vaughan* (1, 7), *John Scofield* (1, 3-6, 8, 9), *guitar*; *Dr. John*, *piano, organ* (1, 3, 6-9); *Bob Cranshaw*, *electric bass* (1, 7); *Eddie Gomez*, *acoustic bass* (2-6, 8, 9); *Bernard Purdie* (1, 7), *Jack DeJohnette* (2, 4, 5), *Chris Parker* (3, 6, 8, 9), *drums*.

★ ★ ★ ★

Play or sing the following sequence from your favorite scale: one-three-five-seven-etc. This is an arpeggio. Bennie Wallace likes arpeggios. He likes to bump them around.

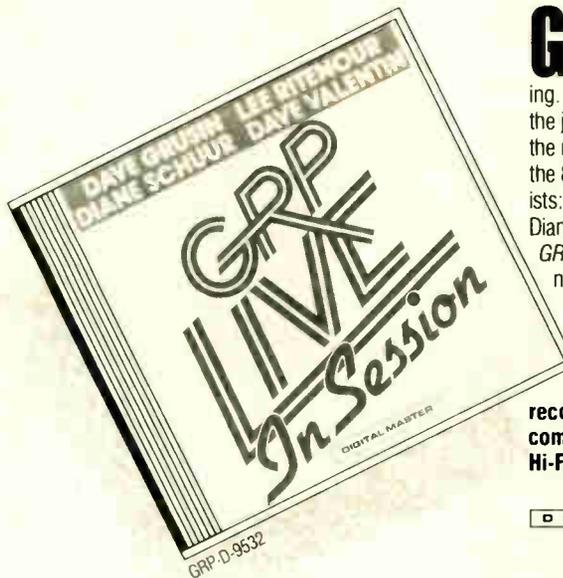
Wallace is from Tennessee. He has a feeling for Southern music. This record caters to that feeling. He's spent a lot of time in the woodshed and in the practice room of the mind. He respects his elders—Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, Sonny Rollins and Ornette Coleman, but is not averse to a little degenerate blues raucousness in the right places (*Sainte Fragile* and *Saint Expedito*).

In fact, this record could make it as jukebox material in a Southern roadhouse, all except Wallace's *Fresh Out*, which is hardcore Ornette-bop all the way. On the other performances, Wallace leads you in with a familiar or ersatz familiar melody. The way he blows the melody actually redeems *Tennessee Waltz*, for example. In one sense, it's a put-on of the song's corniness, but in another sense it's emotionally true to the spirit of the song.

The feeling of the blues dominates this record as much as arpeggios dominate Wallace's improvisations. Then there are backbeats, shuffle beats, and New Orleans calypso beats, plus Stevie Ray Vaughan's stinging Texas guitar, Ray Anderson's vocalized trombone (check out his mournful interlude on the title cut), and Dr. John's boogie piano. Scofield is another story: a stunningly angular bluesman. (Hear what he does to *Tennessee Waltz*.)

Without describing every track and every Wallace improvisation burping and catapulting out of his low register, we know that he is a very original and often brilliant player. This record is more fresh-in than fresh-out. It counterbalances his hard-hitting trio records, and has fun doing so.
—owen cordle

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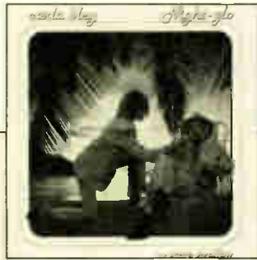
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RECORD REVIEWS



CARLA BLEY

NIGHT-GLO—Watt/ECM 16: *PRETEND YOU'RE IN LOVE; NIGHT-GLO; RUT; CRAZY WITH YOU, WILDLIFE (HORNS, PAWS WITHOUT CLAWS, SEX WITH BIRDS).*

Personnel: Bley, organ, synthesizers; Steve Swallow, bass; Larry Willis, piano, electric piano; Hiram Bullock, guitar; Victor Lewis, drums; Manolo Badrena, percussion; Paul McCandless, oboe, english horn, bass clarinet, soprano, tenor, baritone saxophone; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Clark, french horn; Tom Malone, trombone; David Taylor, bass trombone.

★ ★ ★ ★

Carla Bley is jazz' queen of hijinks, but she's no clown. The accomplished, acclaimed composer/bandleader revels in witty irreverence, keeping listeners happily off-balance with earnest and often wry musical humor. On occasion, Bley's music, such as that on her previous pop-slanted *Heavy Heart* (Watt/ECM 25003-1) and the similarly directed *Night-Glo*, reveals her as an ironist with a sentimental side.

According to Bley's tongue-in-cheek ECM ad for *Night-Glo*, we're suppose to nestle, imbibe, and let the album's exquisite pop-jazz sweep us away—straight, maybe, to the tropical paradise of her musical imagination. No, the beach she sets us down on isn't some travel brochure's Hedonism Deluxe vacation spot. It's a peculiarly gorgeous uncharted isle where the sunset-gazer experiences unsettling wonderment rather than self-complacency.

Night-Glo's attractive sounds are far more provocative—and rewarding—than cursory attention suggests. World-class arranger Bley ingeniously fits the musicians' parts together, constructing smoothly flowing songs full of poignant detail. Steve Swallow, his electric bass mixed to the forefront, handles melodic chores with great sensitivity to phrasing, intonation, and song form; his playing can best be described as seductive and mysterious. Oregonian Paul McCandless' occasional oboes provide an aura of eerie stateliness, and Bley's organ sentimentalizes without sinking in mush. Bley, per usual, makes wise, magnificent use of grouped brassy, giving the music affecting harmonic solidity. Plus Larry Willis on pianos, Victor Lewis on drums, and electric guitarist Hiram Bullock play their restrained roles effectively.

Picturesque numbers *Pretend You're In Love* and *Night-Glo* have pensive undertones while the more obviously reflective *Rut* conjures up the uneasiness surrounding, say, the wait for a long overdue love letter. *Crazy With You* has its mood of cheery infatuation, signaled by spiraling

guitar and organ, checked by an irresolute, haunting ending. Funereal bass and organ lead the way on the plodding *Paws Without Claws*, whose gloominess eventually dissipates when a quirky, energetic section of the 12-minute-plus *Wildlife* suite takes over. It comes as no surprise when *Wildlife* concludes in emotional/musical ambiguity for the album as a whole is infused with Bley's complex feelings. Rich music.

—frank john hadley



JACK WALRATH

AT THE UMBRIA JAZZ FESTIVAL, VOL. 1—Red 182: *TWO IN ONE; BLUE MOVES; JOHN AGAR.*

Personnel: Walrath, trumpet; Glenn Ferris, trombone; Michael Cochrane, piano; Anthony Cox, bass; Mike Clark, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

AT THE UMBRIA JAZZ FESTIVAL, VOL. 2—Red 186: *FEEL NO EVIE; A PLEA FOR SANITY; INCHEN; MUCENE THE GENIE.*

Personnel: Same as above.

★ ★ ★ ½

Jack Walrath hates clichés, but he loves the jazz tradition. This could be an outgrowth of his tenure with Charles Mingus' band. On these records, the music is inside—"free." The compositions generally follow the forms of Mingus-bop, with lots of arresting twists, but the solos splinter the pet phrases of a whole range of styles—old-time blues to new-time hues and cries.

The musicians choose physical and intuitive directions over intellectuality and refinement in their solos, but this emphasis never reduces to blind emotions hitting the wall. In the front line, you get Walrath's ragged tone and squashed bursts of notes to Ferris' funky, J.J. Johnson-like tone and spacious phrases. Walrath likes vocal effects and dead-pan humor, and certain splats and eroding tones he plays may remind you of Lester Bowie, although he's more subtle and less calculating than Bowie. In the rhythm section, Cochrane pounds more rhythmically than melodically—he's out of Tyner, Evans, and Corea without imitating directly—and Cox and Clark slug straight ahead.

John Agar, the long cut that occupies all of side two on *Volume One*, best sums up the philosophy of this band. It incorporates long solos by everyone, tempo changes, a cappella interludes, latin and bop melodies, old-timey riffs, wah-wah trumpet licks, machine-gun bop trombone, and funky squirts a la Miles that disappear in the high range of the trumpet. Walrath is willing to give everything a chance. Of course, this supersedes brevity and polish. The search for interesting notes is the real

music.

Walrath wrote six of the seven tunes on these records. (Cochrane's *Two In One* is the outside entry.) He also wrote the liner notes, which explain the concept of this band music, sometimes humorously. In the performances, humor and seriousness of purpose go together to explode rote thinking. If three stars is a good rating—and good is getting better these days—this music is better than good.

—owen cordle



TINA BROOKS

THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE RECORDINGS OF THE TINA BROOKS QUINTETS—Mosaic

4-106: *NUTVILLE; THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT; STAR EYES; MINOR MOVE; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; GOOD OLD SOUL; UP TIGHT'S CREEK; THEME FOR DORIS; TRUE BLUE; MISS HAZEL; NOTHING EVER CHANGES MY LOVE FOR YOU; BACK TO THE TRACKS; STREET SINGER: THE BLUES AND I; FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE; THE RUBY AND THE PEARL; DAVID THE KING; STRANGER IN PARADISE; THE WAITING GAME; TALKIN' ABOUT; ONE FOR MYRTLE; DHYANA.*

Personnel: Tina Brooks, tenor saxophone. Cuts 1-5: Lee Morgan, trumpet; Sonny Clark, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; Art Blakey, drums. 6-11: Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Duke Jordan, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Taylor, drums. 12-16: Blue Mitchell, trumpet; Kenny Drew, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Taylor, drums. 17: add Jackie McLean, alto saxophone. 17-22: Johnny Coles, trumpet; Drew, piano; Wilbur Ware, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mosaic has scored again with the issue of these Tina Brooks dates recorded for Blue Note from 1958-61. And with producer Michael Cuscuna's discographical and vault sleuthing, his and Robert Palmer's essays, and contributing annotations by Ira Gitler and Larry Kart from previous Brooks releases, we have Brooks' four albums as a leader and a profile of a musician who made a rather unseen mark, fell through the cracks, then died in 1974.

Tina Brooks was a mystery even to hard-bop devotees who caught the overstatement of his "previous releases." He led these Blue Note sessions and was a sideman on Jimmy Smith, Kenny Burrell, Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, and Freddie Redd dates for the label. But of his own four only *True Blue* was issued as scheduled; his 1958 debut was issued in Japan only a few years ago as *Minor Move*; his third and perhaps best date, *Back To The Tracks*, was only a photo in Blue Note's advertisements and, like his last session as a leader, was never issued until now. As Cuscuna, in the

annotations for *Back To The Tracks*, states poignantly of Brooks' fate: "It is a sadly fitting irony that Tina Brooks was best known for music that no one had ever heard." Musicians of graceful ability and maturity dying young sans recordings are the root stuff of legends; those with a few recordings and promising careers who yet drop into anonymity remain forever a mystery. This Mosaic box set rescues Tina Brooks' music for us.

What fine music it is. Imaginative, free-swinging yet controlled, it exhibits its leader's growth, confidence, and prowess. Blue Note owners Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff encouraged hard-bop, ostensibly in the blowing session mold. Drummers like Art Blakey and Art Taylor are masters of the ride, and Kenny Drew and Sonny Clark virtually established an identifiable Blue Note piano sound. Such perform-

ance ingredients enhanced Brooks' style. Traces of inspiration are evident early, notably from Hank Mobley and Lester Young. Brooks often varied his attack, however, hence some passages—like the opening to his *Nothing Ever Changes My Love For You* solo—float above the rhythm in a characteristically Lesterian manner before moving on to the more aggressive texture associated with contemporaries Junior Cook, Clifford Jordan, and Wayne Shorter. Described as a reticent and shy man, Brooks' musicianship could be aggressive yet exhibit a subtly playful quality (obvious in his occasional, almost imperceptible quotes from other songs, and the equally apparent joy he derives from the changes of *The Way You Look Tonight* of his '58 session and its harmonic roller-coaster kinship in *Nothing Ever Changes*).

CRITICS' CHOICE

Art Lange

NEW RELEASE: Bennie Wallace, *Twilight Time* (Blue Note). Two special bands—one a kinky chromatic blend of John Scofield's guitar, Ray Anderson's trombone, and the leader's squirrely tenor; the other a juke-joint jamfest with Wallace, Dr. John, and Stevie Ray Vaughan—plus scrappy solos all 'round should raise eyebrows a'plenty.

OLD FAVORITE: Grace Slick, & *The Great Society* (Columbia). If they reformed today, these '60s psychedelic precursors could be the most exciting band of the '80s; their sound—stripped-down and nervous, nervy and jangling—is being imitated by countless groups to lesser success.

RARA AVIS: Sonny Stitt/Art Pepper, *Groovin' High* and *Blow! And Ballade* (Atlas). Sorry, but it's impossible to choose between these two stupendous same-session Japanese-only releases. The stories these two swap—obviously inspired by each other's presence—are more than solos, they're life-affirming statements. Now, what American label will be hip enough to pick them up for domestic release?

SCENE: Tex-Mex maven Joe "King" Carrasco's raucous rock & roll is simple, often silly, and positively infectious, and it turned the Cubby Bear in Chicago into a large bordertown party.

Kevin Whitehead

NEW RELEASE: Alvin Batiste/John Carter/Jimmy Hamilton/David Murray, *Clarinet Summit, Volume II* (India Navigation). A sequel that tops the first release. Almost miraculously, this ad hoc unit makes Ellington's natty classicism and Carter's frayed-textural studies sound perfectly compatible. Beautifully recorded, too.

OLD FAVORITE: Joe McPhee, *Tenor* (hat Hut). A saxophone, a glass of beer, a farmhouse in the Alps, and a tape recorder: all that was needed to produce an uncannily haunting solo recital by a perennially undervalued maverick.

RARA AVIS: Joseph Spence, *Good Morning Mr. Walker* (Arhoolie). You never heard such sounds in your life. The Bahamas' marblemouthed song stylist and detuned-string thwacker was the Monk and the Beefheart of the calypso guitar—an outlandish original.

SCENE: Sorry, Garrison Keillor; weekends, my dial's tuned to *Hot Jazz Saturday Night* on Washington's WAMU-FM: four-hour weekly excursions into Ellingtonia and the hot discography, thoroughly researched, admirably organized, and sensibly commented on by Robert Bamberger.

Howard Mandel

NEW RELEASE: Herb Robertson Quintet, *Transparency* (JMT). Appealing new voices—trumpeter Robertson and bassist Lindsey Horner, as well as altoist Tim Berne, drummer Joey Baron, and the ubiquitous guitarist Bill Frisell—muse as one with calm elegance and a well-paced plan taking post-modern responsibility for their freedoms.

OLD FAVORITE: Jr. Parker, *Driving Wheel* (Duke). Old, yes, and out-of-print, but tight, swinging arrangements for guitar and brass small band, cuddling the urbanly bluesy crooner, make this Southwestern soul LP timeless and lively.

RARA AVIS: James P. Johnson, *From Ragtime To Jazz: Complete Piano Solos 1921-39* (CBS Disques). Whyzit these classic delights—not from piano rolls—are available only as an import, and the old Columbia compilation is impossible to find?

SCENE: At Roulette's Christmas party in Manhattan, downtown composers and improvisers—among them Jim Staley, David Weinstein, Ned Rothenberg, Phill Niblock, Shelley Hirsch, Elliott Sharpe, Peter Zummo, Marty Ehrlich, the Melford/Brandis Duo, and Irene Schweitzer—danced, drank, and chatted to rock-solid pop hits like everybody else.



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RECORD REVIEWS

Finally, Brooks eschewed strict adherence to trumpet-over-tenor leads, and voicing the tenor above achieves an effectively haunting cry in *Theme For Doris*. Other ensemble passages feature the tenor alternating the lead; his *Street Singer* (issued in Japan a few years ago as the title track of a McLean album) uses a pedestrian pace, and Jackie McLean's alto comments seem to close off fuller-sounding passages; Freddie Hubbard has similar phrases on *True Blue*, a sort of brief musical

"That's right" or "Amen" that invokes the oral tradition. The entire *True Blue* album is particularly rewarding for Hubbard's warm and full-bodied lower-register sonorities, broad strokes in ensembles almost trombone-like in timbre. Counterpoint characterizes the theme of *Miss Hazel* on that session and *David The King* on the final '61 date featuring the unique Johnny Coles texture that, seemingly not so brassy, was the perfect match for Brooks' temperament.

Tina Brooks was a consummate Blue Note artist. He had the sound and the muscle, and to listen to these recordings now is to review the pleasures of a special era in modern jazz.

—ron welburn

down beat

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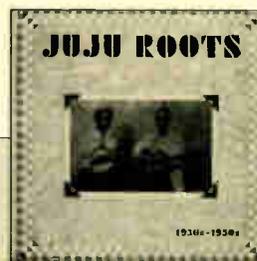
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VARIOUS ARTISTS

JUJU ROOTS: 1930s-50s—Rouder 5017:
ORIN ASAPE EKO; OBA OYINBO; DUNIA; OJO DAVIES; ABASI OLUBADAN; ATARI AJANAKU; CANAAN CANAAN CALABAR; ORE MI KINI SE?; MO TI BOKO DE CALABAR; OJOWU 'BINRIN; SOWEMIMO; AWOLOWO; EGAN MI KO YE O; IYAWO MA PA MI; BABA ONI TAXI; CHIEF OGUNDE.

Personnel: Irewolede Denge and Dickson Oludaiye; Tunde King and His Group; Ayinde Bakare and His Group; Ojo Babajide and His Ibadan Juju Group; Jolly Orchestra; S.S. Peters and His Group; Lagos Mozart Orchestra (Calabar Brass Band); Julius Olofin and His Group; Rafiu Bankole and His Group; Ojode Daniel and His Juju Band; C.A. Balogun and His Abalabi Group; J.O. Araba and His Rhythm Blues; J.O. Oyesidu and His Rainbow Quintette; Irewolede Denge and His Group

★★★★★

Now that Nigerian stars such as King Sunny Adé and Ebenezer Obey have opened American ears to the spellbinding sounds of contemporary juju music, Rouder Records has issued this superb anthology of early juju recordings, tracing the development of the Lagos-based, Yoruba-language genre from its small group origins in the 1930s to the beginnings of the modern electrified style in the 1950s.

The word "juju" apparently refers to the tambourine, which was introduced to West Africa by Christian missionaries and adapted to the popular Lagosian "palm-wine" idiom by the founder of juju music, the singing banjo player and guitarist Tunde King. Two of King's 1936 Parlophone recordings are included here: *Dunia*, with its mournful nasalized refrain, and *Oba Oyinbo*, which eerily foreshadows the Bo Diddley beat.

Another seminal juju stylist was Ayinde Bakare, who is heard first in a quartet session from 1937, accompanying his singing on a ukulele-banjo, and again on a 1950 septet recording, playing electric guitar. Bakare's earlier sound is emulated by Ojo Babajide, but without Bakare's latin-tinged sophistication. Other early selections present various juju offshoots as well as competing period styles, including a rousingly ragged march by the Calabar Brass Band that suggests embryonic jazz.

The album's second side consists mainly of

material from the '50s, by which time juju percussion had expanded from tambourines and calabash rattles to include bongos, maracas, and "talking" pressure drums. The bands of this period were sweeter-sounding and more relaxed than their predecessors, but otherwise similar in flavor, combining traditional Yoruba melodies with elements of Cuban, c&w, and calypso music.

The underlying continuity of juju is illustrated by the opening and closing tracks, both by Irewolede Denge. *Orin Asape Eko*, recorded in the mid-'30s, is in the old palm-wine style, with Denge's singing and acoustic guitar playing accompanied only by a square-framed "samba" drum. *Chief Ogunde*, from the mid-'50s, features Denge on amplified guitar with a six-man percussion section. His mellifluous vocals—similar to those of Afro-Cuban cult chanting—and lilting guitar work are essentially the same on the two songs, despite the latter's rhythmic agitation.

Although it omits such important postwar bandleaders as I.K. Dairo and Tunde Nightingale, *Juju Roots* grounds the multi-layered, electronically colored sound of today's 20-piece ensembles firmly in historical context. Moreover, the album is a musical delight, made all the more intriguing by juju's familial resemblances to Afro-American forms.

—Larry Birnbaum



DAVID TORN

BEST LAID PLANS—ECM 1284: *BEFORE THE BITTER WIND; BEST LAID PLANS; THE HUM OF ITS PARTS; REMOVABLE TONGUE; IN THE FIFTH DIRECTION; TWO-FACE FLASH; ANGLE OF INCIDENTS.*

Personnel: Torn, guitars; Geoffrey Gordon, drums, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

The lead guitarist for Everyman Band delves into some mighty adventurous territory here. And what he comes up with in these organized free improvising romps with drummer Gordon is a jarring distillation of non-Western tones, Hendrixian feedback, and Cage-like soundscapes. This stuff is strictly for sonic alchemists and open-minded ears only.

Torn relies heavily on distortion and wang bar tactics throughout this album, but he also

likes space between the notes. Unlike some guitar heroes who lay on the wang bar and run scalar lines up and down the neck incessantly, Torn comes up for air now and then. He exercises taste and makes creative choices. No grandstanding here.

As one of the new breed of guitarists who take advantage of up-to-the-minute technology and unorthodox picking techniques, Torn is able to achieve a sound that often does not sound like a guitar at all. Probably the most successful application of this new approach to the axe is being done these days by Bill Frisell (check out his ECM albums, *In Line* and *Rambler*, or his recent duo album with Vernon Reid on Minor Music, *Smash & Scatteration*). Others in this non-guitar school include Michael Brooks, whose droning "infinite" guitar is captured on *Hybrid* (Editions EG 41); Paul Dresner, whose orchestral sound tapestries can be heard on *Liquid And Stellar Music* (Lovely Music 2011); Terje Rypdal, whose spatial guitar work in duet with cellist David Darling is on *Eos* (ECM 1263); James Emery, who explores microtonal flurries and smears on *Art Life* (Lumina 007); and the kings of Cage-ian guitar, Fred Frith and Henry Kaiser, who team up for a noise fest on *With Friends Like These* (Metalanguage 107).

Torn is perhaps the most rock-inflected of the bunch, owing as much to Hendrix and

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RECORD REVIEWS

Robert Fripp as Don Cherry (a big influence on the guitarist). *Before The Bitter Wind* is the most propulsive cut, featuring rock-powered crunch chords from Torn and traps bashing by Gordon. *Best Laid Plans* is actually two solo showcases in one. The title is apt in that Torn's best laid plans to play lyrical arpeggio lines are all for naught as the melody develops and ultimately dissolves in a morass of edgy wang bar madness. He builds the pretty structure, then goes out to lunch with it, but always

returns to the melody.

The Hum Of Its Parts is Frippertronics-meets-Hendrix, and the freaked out *Removable Tongue* is Duane Eddy-meets-Fred Frith in a heavy metal band. This guy does have a sense of humor. In *The Fifth Direction* and *Two-Face Flash* show Torn exploring ringing harmonics and scalar lines on top of Gordon's tribal burundi beats, while his guitar on *Angle Of Incidents* has such a sinister, menacing quality to it that the thing almost sounds alive,

like some evil, nasty beast in hiding.

Torn's an original. Sure, the stuff can be grating, irritating, and chaotic to some ears. But it's always surprising. *Best Laid Plans* is an alternative to conventional, cliché-ridden guitar albums. Your move. —bill milkowski

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Personnel: Webster, tenor saxophone. Jay McShann and His Orchestra (cuts 1-6): McShann, piano; Orville Minor, trumpet; Fats Dennis, Clifford Jenkins, tenor saxophone; Pee Wee Crayton, electric guitar, vocal; Gene Grid-dins, electric guitar; Lloyd Anderson, bass; Cooky Jackson, drums. Johnny Otis and his Orchestra (7): Otis, vocal; other personnel unknown. Johnny Otis and His Orchestra (8-15): Otis, vibes, vocal; Don Johnson, Gerald Wilson, trumpet; John Pettigrew, George Washington, trombone; Floyd Turnham, alto saxophone; Lorenzo Hoderness, tenor saxophone; Curtis Lowe, baritone saxophone; Devonia Williams, piano; Pete Lewis, electric guitar; Mario Delagarde, bass; Leard Bell, drums; Gaucho, conga. Ben Webster Sextet (16-25): Maynard Ferguson, trumpet; Benny Carter, alto saxophone; Gerald Wiggins, piano; John Kirby, bass; George Jenkins, drums. Dinah Washington with Jimmy Cobb's Orchestra (26): Washington, vocal; Wardell Gray, tenor saxophone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Cobb, drums; other personnel unknown. The Ravens (27-28): Joe Van Loan, Leonard Puzie, Warren Suttles, Jimmy Ricks, vocal; Bill Sanford, piano, arranger; other personnel unknown. Ben Webster with Johnny Richards' Orchestra (29-32): Don Elliot, trumpet, mellophone; Eddie Bert, trombone; Sam Rubinowitch, alto saxophone, piccolo; Sidney Brown, baritone saxophone; Billy Taylor, piano;

Milt Hinton, bass; Jo Jones, drums; Richards, arranger. Marshall Royal Quintet (33): Royal, alto saxophone; Bobby Tucker, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; Jo Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

AT THE RENAISSANCE—Contemporary 7646: *GEORGIA ON MY MIND*; *CARAVAN*; *OLE MISS BLUES*; *STARDUST*.

Personnel: Webster, tenor saxophone; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Jim Hall, electric guitar; Red Mitchell, bass; Frank Butler, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

The Brute: Gentle Ben. Some see Webster as a schizoid stylist, either monster or mellow. But like any great actor—and interpretive gifts were central to his art—Webster attained a vast expressive range through simple modulation of voice. It's only slightly over-simple to say that the main thing distinguishing Ben's gruff barks from his languid sighs was the amount of lungpower involved.

The complete EmArcy recordings—according to Kiyoshi Koyama, who provides more than a dozen alternates, scraps, and rediscoveries—afford a detailed view of Ben's activities for one label, from October 1951 to April '53. Like a Hollywood contract player, he was tapped to play disparate character roles; like the great artist he was, he commands the proceedings through sheer presence. He rouses a groggy Johnny Otis band, the day after Christmas '51; he paints broad swaths across arranger Johnny Richards' pastel backgrounds (which seem designed to highlight Ben's robust attack).

It was in the cadences and sounds of speech—throaty rasps, breathy whispers, Hodges-derived slurs—that Webster found freedom from his elegant model, Hawkins (without sacrificing elegant solo construction). That vocalized bent allowed him to honk 'n' scream with easy conviction—on *Goomp*, Jay McShann's *You Didn't Tell Me*, *The Ravens' I'll Be Back*—just as his oozing lines were ready-made for a Ravens ballad, and his bluesy streak for Dinah Washington.

Webster soars above even McShann's splendid band, on sides which obliterate distinction among late K.C. swing, period r&b, and early rock & roll. The Otis band supplies less inspiration—Johnny's vibes sound clunkily clanky—and Ben merely coasts through the jive *Oopy Doo*. But his *Stardust* turns are sublime, anticipating the ballads he'd cut the following day, in a motley sextet assembled by Benny Carter, *Old Folks* and *You're My Thrill* feature some of Ben's most captivating, lustroly romantic playing. Like many an actor, he fine-tunes while the tape runs, tinkering with his line readings. But his companions don't sustain the same concentration through multiple takes.

Cut to: Hollywood, 1960. With sidekick Rowles and repertory players, Webster performs live *At The Renaissance*, in a role of his own choosing. He's more relaxed, starting *Georgia* with a loose paraphrase and ending with a rowdy blues tag, and smoothing the ride on Handy's 1916 train song *Ole Miss*. Ben's voice is softer and breathier, but also more

harsh and vocalized, more suggestive of naked emotion. (Here is a grainier *Stardust*.) Yet there's no hint of the New Thing in Webster's moans and falsetto fragments, so closely do they relate to the chords and to his well-established style. In 1960, Ben wasn't looking for new ideas; his bag of tricks was already amply stocked. —Kevin Whitehead

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Trumpet Tunes

- DOC CHEATHAM:** *THE FABULOUS DOC CHEATHAM* (Parkwood 104) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½
- HOWARD MCGHEE:** *JUST BE THERE* (SteepleChase 1204) ★ ★ ★ ★
- JOE NEWMAN/JOE WILDER:** *HANGING' OUT* (Concord 262) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
- ROLF ERICSON:** *STOCKHOLM SWEETNIN'* (Dragon 78) ★ ★ ★ ★
- IDREES SULIEMAN:** *BIRD'S GRASS* (SteepleChase 1202) ★ ★ ★ ½
- WILLIE COOK AND THE YOUNG SWEDES:** *CHRISTL MOOD* (Phontastic 7563) ★ ★ ★ ½
- JACK SHELDON AND THE SWEDISH ALL-STARS:** *BLUES IN THE NIGHT* (Phontastic 7569) ★ ★ ★ ★
- ART FARMER:** *YOU MAKE ME SMILE* (Soul Note 1076) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
- WILLIAM FIELDER:** *LOVE PROGRESSION* (Prescription, no number) ★ ★ ★ ★
- PETE MINGER:** *STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE* (Spinster 0004) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½
- TED CURSON:** *LIVE AT LA TETE DE L'ART* (Can-Am 1700) ★ ★ ½
- CHUCK FOSTER:** *LONG OVERDUE!* (SeaBreeze 2023) ★ ★ ★ ½
- BOBBY SHEW:** *BREAKFAST WINE* (Pausa 7171) ★ ★ ★ ★
- BOBBY SHEW/CHUCK FINDLEY:** *TRUMPETS NO END* (Delos 4003) ★ ★ ★ ½
- WOODY SHAW:** *SETTING STANDARDS* (Muse 5318) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

A sampling of trumpet-led albums for those who enjoy the trumpet and its cousin the flugelhorn. The media, such as it is for jazz at large, has overlooked so many trumpeters now that the young monster is on the scene. Wynton Marsalis' plaudits are well deserved and he's worth his weight in gold. But we've had Pops and Little Jazz and Diz and Fats to establish the language of the trumpet, and their impact has been felt in post-Depression Mississippi and Florida; Albuquerque, New Mexico might have been the last place to be thought of as producing a modernist brassman, but sure enough, Bobby Shew hails from there.

The Eldridge-through-Gillespie-through-Navarro trumpet line of linguistic descent dominates these records. Mellow moments and mellow stylists invoke Bix and Miles, whose sensibilities are not always dramatic but low-keyed and introverted, or a Kenny Dorham or

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RECORD REVIEWS

Joe Smith as a compromise between extremities. Then, suppose had Bix lived longer, the flugelhorn might have emerged in jazz before the '60s. The instrument allowed trumpeters to alter their composure and discipline their blasts. But it depends on the way you do it. If so many trumpeters today come out of Diz, Fats, and Brownie, the flugelhorn players are apt to stem from Miles and Art Farmer. You can take your pick, given a few ringers in preference and generation, from the following roughly chronological collection.

The Fabulous Doc Cheatham was recorded in late 1983 when **Doc Cheatham** was merely 78, and today at 80 he's lost no power, fire, or imagination. *The Man I Love* and *Big Butter & Egg Man* demonstrate how even at fast tempos Doc knows how to pace himself. He's ever young. *'Round Midnight* reaffirms so much of the jazz tradition for its composer and its attraction to a musician well into his own career at its inception over 40 years ago, a rewarding Harmon-muted performance with an open-horn bridge. Equally in the trumpet-playing tradition is the alter-ego of vocalist, and here most trumpeters really have their fun. *Let's Do It, I Double-Dare You*, and *Jeepers Creepers* are Doc's standbys with a sly humor coming on. Bassist Bill Pemberton and drummer Jackie Williams are sturdy rhythm-mates and in a surprising sideman role is pianist Dick

Wellstood.

A "new" SteepleChase LP is **Howard McGhee's *Just Be There***, with Kenny Clarke, Mads Vinding, Horace Parlan, and on baritone Per Goldschmidt. This was recorded in 1976 and like the Idrees Suleiman LP to be discussed is likely a tribute to the masterwork of Klook. Goldschmidt has found an identity with the bigger horn and Parlan and Vinding turn in fine performances. Except for *Wee Dot*, Maggie wrote the other four pieces here. *Just Be There* deserves a set of lyrics and is the perfect dynamic for the trumpeter's burnished tone. This and *Into It* are the longest performances. Maggie's phrasing and sound are tightly woven and clear and he seldom unfolds a poorly constructed solo. *Jazz Exchange* is a great line seemingly from the bebop/hard-bop transitional period. High-caliber playing all around is on *Your Something*, a warmly lyrical ballad where McGhee doesn't need a flugelhorn to capture an essence and deliver.

Unlike two-tenor tandems, there have been few groups with two trumpets as the only horns, but *Hangin' Out* puts format conservatives to rest. **Joe Newman** and **Joe Wilder** know how to balance their lines without conflicting or compromising their styles. In fact, Wilder's delightfully original puckish humor stands out amidst all these trumpeters—a soloist at play in the fields of Sweets Edison

and akin to Clark Terry in his droll expression. This is especially apparent as Wilder favors the Harmon mute and flugelhorn; Newman is decidedly brassy, smearing and shouting. With one open and the other muted, the two sound like a Basie section for Neal Hefti's *Duet*, which becomes a signifying exchange. Newman was in the band that originally recorded this in 1957. Each has a showcase: Newman, again muted, brings a luster to Frank Wess' arrangement of *You've Changed*, and while Wilder has flugelhorn leads on *Secret Love* and *He Was Good To Me*; *Here's That Rainy Day* is his alone. Bassist Rufus Reid leads the trumpeters' muted sound out of the solemnity of *Battle Hymn Of The Republic* into a real cakewalk; his guitarlike texture on Frank Foster's *'Lyso Mania* gives this a "Mas in Brooklyn" appeal. Throughout, Hank Jones' piano is graceful and witty when the need arises.

Rolf Ericson, long one of Europe's top trumpeters, possesses a bright tone and playful manner, his clear, self-assured articulation almost free-floating above his backgrounds. Recorded in Sweden in 1984, Ericson's quintet is spurred on by drummer Mel Lewis, and has in tenorist Nils Sandström a partner reminiscent of Harold Land. The leader's original ballad, *Evelyn*, is a darkly soulful melody perfect for the flugelhorn and Ericson's conscious use of space. Agile he is on the opening *Bird Song*, a Thad Jones tune where he's muted, and *Stockholm Sweetnin'*, Quincy Jones' 1953 tune based on *You Leave Me Breathless*. Fat in the lower register, Rolf approaches the larger bore sound in his *Thou Swell* trumpet solo taken at a fast clip.

Idrees Suleiman's LP is another SteepleChase session that sat in the vault for nine years. Klook is clearly outstanding as he varies shadings and shifts on the ride cymbal, especially on Denzil Best's *Wee*. Suleiman and bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen execute well here, but the album as a whole is rather uneven. The leader displays an impassioned, full-bodied sound on flugelhorn for *The Summer Knows*, and *Billie's Bounce*, taken at a medium clip, has leisurely interplay between trumpet, bass, and tenorist Per Goldschmidt with Horace Parlan tempting everyone toward outer harmonic reaches. At times, however, Suleiman's phrasing contains cluttered sounds and disconcerting smudges in articulation; his *All Your Words* solo, interestingly entitled for several areas of meaning, seems disjointed and has intonation problems. Goldschmidt, a bit stiff, is all over his horn but no show-off. He contributed *Loneliness Is A Mutual Feeling*, an impressive hard-bop line.

Willie Cook is a "young" vet of the Lunceford, Hodges, and Ellington bands as well as a late edition of Diz' '40s aggregation. He is a sure-footed soloist, ever unhurried, and sounds almost more commanding with a mute than without. His album features three striking originals. *Christl Mist* has an intriguing melody carried by trumpet, flute, and tenor; *Christl Mood* is a serene and arresting ballad, bordering on an attractive melancholy of atmosphere with unusual progressions—how many other tunes like this does Willie Cook have in his heart? *Time Passes By* surprises us with pianists Ulf Johansson singing; Cook wrote it with

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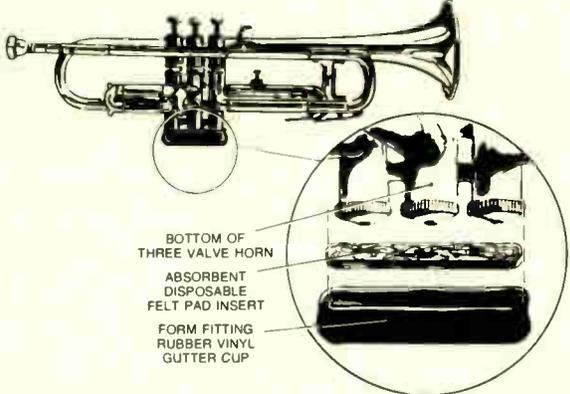
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Roland Smith and it opens something like *Where Are You*. One of the three Ellington pieces is the seldom-heard *Almost Cried*, and while Cook is comfortable here his tenorist Johan Alenius is not; in fact, Alenius and second tenor John Högman, who is slow getting started on *It's You Or No One*, are yet cutting teeth.

Now, **Jack Sheldon** has a way of singing no one would want to imitate: a sort of lazy man's Peter Dean. Fortunately, he doesn't take himself too seriously in that department and that's what makes his album so nice. His *Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me* is his own put-on and he did not have to record *Ain't Misbehavin'* to prove his love of Fats Waller. Just listen to his own *Enemy* ("my own worst . . ."). *Lady Be Good* opens with a Mulligan-like arrangement, and with Harmon mute he and clarinetist Putte Wickman carry *Get Happy*. Sheldon has a brassy identifiable sound that isn't very big. Understatement is his forté on the trumpet, at least, and he's always possessed a Milesian texture without seeming introverted.

Art Farmer went to the flugelhorn exclusively over 20 years ago. It was made for his own shy trumpet demeanor and propensity for elegant understatement. A leisurely pedestrian pace is his metiér, which for other flugelhornists might sound perfunctory or languid. Try *Nostalgia* here, so often taken uptempo. Scriabin's *Prelude No. 1* is a surprising if excellent vehicle, no doubt because it contains the kernel of the *What Is This Thing Called Love* theme. Farmer offers lessons in relaxed phrasing, and Clifford Jordan's work helps create music that floats above itself, yet is uncannily full of warmth and right there. Virtually as a trademark, Farmer doesn't push his upper register with this instrument to shrillness and a possible loss of identity. Rather than shout he prefers elegantly executed legato runs that—though already in the trumpet language—assume a special luster from the flugelhorn's timbre. Remember, this instrument still had to establish its identity and Art Farmer more than Miles (in a paradigm akin to Steve Lacy/John Coltrane for contemporary soprano sax) is the fountainhead.

Mississippian **William Fielder** plays all trumpet for his recording debut and his label is evidently a family affair: label producer/drummer Alvin Fielder, a Sun Ra/AACM alumnus, is also a pharmacist and subject of *Tribute To Alvin*. Trumpeter Fielder is a university-level instructor whose proteges include his pianist Mulgrew Miller and Wynton Marsalis. Fielder's no dry academic: he cuts the mustard with bell-clear tones as in his *What's New* cadenza, and he writes in a minor groove the title selection and *Minor Opus*; for *Validity* he clearly likes the Horace Silver style. There is, in fact, a bit of Blue Mitchell in Fielder's phrasing but his laying on a note, imagination, and confidence are personal treasures. Strong alto work by Kenny Garrett and drumming by Ralph Peterson Jr. pace this record.

Unlike Farmer's low flugelhorn flame, ex-Basie section man **Pete Minger** takes more chances into the instrument's upper register en route to thoroughly satisfying readings of four standards, a gorgeous *Easy Living*, an equally mellow and cuddly *But Beautiful*, and some

roller-coaster passages on Benny Carter's *When Lights Are Low* (also riveting for Minger's all-out lyricism). *It's You Or No One* and *Pete's Blues* are trumpet outings. Minger brings a touch of class to these performances, and so does Keter Betts with his sinewy upper-register bass inclinations.

The Canadian Concert Of Ted Curson, as his LP is billed, has some historical value. Trans-World previously issued it in 1962 and it seems to have escaped modern jazz discog-

raphies. Featured in the quintet are a Jackie McLean-inspired Al Doctor (who otherwise has a thick sound) and Montreal rhythm trio led by the late Maury Kaye, who a bit too self-consciously comes off like Mal Waldron with a heavy left hand. The audio quality of the record is poor. The bandsmen, while not strangers, lack a polished group sound. Curson's cry comes closest to the sound Booker Little left with us, but when he falls back on his *Wade In The Water* phrase on different pieces here the

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imagination is in need—recall his recordings with Mingus on *Candid* where the phrase is effectively quoted and isn't a cliché. Not a memorable Curson outing.

Chuck Foster has had orchestra and Vegas experience since the '60s. He writes melodies that are sinuous (*Round The Corner*) and jerky (*Watch For Signs*) and has a pretty sound. On Irving Berlin's *You Keep Coming Back Like A Song* and his own *Song For Nancy* his legato phrases are warm on flugelhorn and he varies his note values with subtle rhythmic interest.

Another Vegas vet and band alumnus is **Bobby Shew**, a relaxed and confident soloist whose album is strengthened by Makoto Ozone's piano and transplanted Philadelphia drummer Sherman Ferguson. *Alone Together*, taken at freeway speed, is a superb outing that fails to handcuff Shew's flugelhorn or the supple bass work of young John Patitucci. Lyle Mays' *Waltz For Bill Evans* is tenderly stated with an awfully fat Harmon mute sound. A standard Harmon mute texture graces *I Waited For You*, a near forgotten Diz/Gil Fuller ballad. In whatever context Shew plays a lyrically resonant horn and has the good sense to step back just enough from the supporting rhythm.

Pairing with Shew ala the Wilder/Newman duo is **Chuck Findley**, with a crisper sound and busier style. Two flugelhorns deliver Carl Saunders' jaunty *Will Do—Done Did* and Shew's warm *Nadalin*; trumpets catapult on *Brownie Speaks* and pianist Art Resnick's inter-

vallically demanding *Direct Connection*. Findley, who plays trombone on one outing, is competent, but Shew is clearly in charge here, performing *Chelsea Bridge* with reserved passion. For the call-and-response *Stompin' At The Savoy* Shew unveils his Shewhorn, a two-belled innovation we're sure to hear more of. Alternating between open and muted bells, he's got a key to the future.

Woody Shaw's flugelhorn tone is not as

broad as is customary with many others, but he exercises deliberate vibrato and a crisp attack. He's been outstanding for his saxophone phrasing and Tynerish descending arpeggios, and his faster solos are nimble and warmly resonant. *Spiderman Blues* he pins to the wall but ballads, often swinging, are this album's focus—*All The Way* and pianist Cedar Walton's *When Love Is New* are especially rewarding.

—ron welburn

NEW RELEASES

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

UPTOWN

Kenny Barron, half-standards and half-originals from the prime pianist, plus Rufus Reid and Freddy Waits, *AUTUMN IN NEW YORK*. **Don Joseph**, swing-band trumpeter returns fronting a quintet inc. tenorman Al Cohn, *ONE OF A KIND*. **Claudio Roditi**, Brazilian trumpeter leads an augmented sextet thru' mainstream paces, *CLAUDIO!*

BLACK SAINT/SOUL NOTE

Paul Motian, colorful percussionist's quintet (Jim Pepper, Joe Lovano, Bill Frisell, Ed Schuller) goes inside and out of the changes, *JACK OF CLUBS*. **Don Pullen**, pianist blends rambunctious and romantic styles w/ his quintet (inc. Olu Dara & Donald Harrison), *THE SIXTH SENSE*. **Paul Nash**, composer/arranger's melodic charts find full favor from nonet, *SECOND IMPRESSION*. **Jimmy Lyons**, Cecil's right-hand man energizes his piano-less quintet, *GIVE IT UP*. **Jaki Byard & The Apollo Stompers**, debut recording of big band gives voice to novel arrangements of familiar material, *PHANTASIES*. **Fred Houn**,

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TREND/MUSICRAFT

Robert Conti, West Coast studio guitarist swaxes rhapsodic solo program, LAURA. **Mel Tormé**, '46-47 half-orchestral half-trio vocals w/ the Velvet touch, GONE WITH THE WIND. **Lisa Rich**, vocalist surveys standards and lots of Clare Fischer tunes, TOUCH OF THE RARE.

MUSE

Sonny Stitt, reissue of the saxist's legendary '73 db Critics Poll Album Of The Year (w/ Barry Harris, Sam Jones, Roy Brooks), CONSTELLATION. **Pepper Adams/Frank Foster**, hot saxists co-lead a sextet featuring the debut of multi-reedman James L. Dean, GENERATIONS. **Earle Warren**, alto vet and Basie-ish cohorts supply plenty of swing, AND THE "COUNT'S MEN." **Mark Murphy**, hip vocalist breezes his way thru' THE NAT "KING" COLE SONGBOOK VOL. 2.

INDEPENDENTS

Michel Petrucciani/Ron McClure, pianist/bassist team up for interactive '85 program, from Owl Records, COLD BLUES. **Ran Blake**, imaginative, elliptical piano soundscapes inspired by films, from Owl, VERTIGO. **Bobby Enriquez**, propulsive Philipean pianist w/ Garner/Tatum ties in trio, from GNP Crescendo Records, THE PRODIGIOUS PIANO OF ... **Art Blakey**, perennial drummer and his Jazz Messengers caught at an '85 gig, via GNP Crescendo, LIVE AT SWEET BASIL. **Gene Harris**, soulful ex-Three Sounds keyboarder updates his tack, from Jam Records, NATURE'S WAY. **Herman Riley**, longtime tenor toiler in other leader's gardens steps out front, from Jam, HERMAN. **Curtis Clark**, adventurous pianist presents an all-original program, from Nimbus Records, DEEP SEA DIVER. **Rufus Reid**, admired bassist's trio includes Jim McNeely's piano & Terry Lyne Carrington's drums, from Sunnyside Communications, SEVEN MINDS. **Chris James**, West Coast pianist in MJQ-ish instrumentation plus Richie Cole's alto on one cut, from Catero Records, DESSERT.

Linton Kwesi Johnson, reggae poet/rapper accompanied by the horn-hot Dub Band, from Shanachie Records, IN CONCERT. **Various Artists**, three LPs of electrically generated African, instrumental, and street-

beat music, from Celluloid Records, TRILOGY. **Fela Anikulapo Kuti**, four of the African musical freedom-fighter's best '70s-80s LPs reissued, by Celluloid, ZOMBIE, NO AGREEMENT, SHUFFERING AND SHMLING, and ARMY ARRANGEMENT. **Bunk Johnson**, rediscovered legendary N.O. trumpeter cuts tracks, from Folklyric Records, in NEW YORK 1945. **Various Artists**, vol. 18 in a series of Tex-Mex border music surveys songs from 1933-36, from Folklyric, LOS MADRUGADORES. **Maddox Bros. & Rose**, Grand Ole Opry performances from the upbeat country group circa '49, from Arhoolie Records, ON THE AIR VOL. 2.

Terry Riley, keyboard/composer joins sitarist Krishna Bhatt in soundtrack to film, from Plainisphere Records, NO MAN'S LAND. **David Moss**, unconventional percussionist/vocalist plus friends Fred Frith, Arto Lindsay, Wayne Horvitz, others, from Moers Music, DENSE BAND. **Paul Smoker**, energetic trumpeter's trio is augmented by Anthony Braxton's alto, from Alvas Records, QB. **Peter Zummo**, NYC

trombonist/composer with dance-commissioned pieces, from Loris Bend Foundation, ZUMMO WITH AN X. **Michael Vlatkovich**, idiosyncratic trombonist duets with a variety of instrumentalists, from Thankyou Records, 9113. **Eugene Chadbourne**, tongue-in-cheek outer-space takeoffs of c&w and folk tunes, from RRRecords, COUNTRY MUSIC OF SOUTHEASTERN AUSTRALIA. **Malcolm Goldstein**, violinist/composer/conceptualist waxes two sidelong concepts, from MG Records, VISION SOUNDINGS. **Various Artists**, compositions by Donald Erb, Steven Stucky, Daniel Breedon, and Lou Coynor, from Spectrum Records, THE COMPOSERS CONSORTIUM. **Various Artists**, compositions by Michael Colgrass, Robert Chamberlain, Edward J. Miller, and Michael F. Hunt, from NMC Records, REFLECTIONS.

Phillip Aaberg, solo piano narrates the story of wide-open spaces and flowing grain, from Windham Hill Records, HIGH PLAINS. **Mary Watkins**, pianist/arranger sports a solo

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

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sensibility, from Redwood Records, SPIRIT-SONG. **David Lanz/Michael Jones**, a pair of pianists plumb the snowy season, from Narada Records, WINTER SOLSTICE. **Michael Jones/Gabriel Lee/David Jones**, a pair of pianists and an acoustic guitarist revel in gentle sounds, from Narada, SAMPLER #1. **Gabriel Lee**, acoustic guitarist combines dreams and dances, from Narada, IMPRESSIONS. **Allaudin Mathieu**, solo piano music on a wavelength with Nature, from Sona Gaia Records, LISTENING TO EVENING. **John Michael Talbot**, instrumental orchestral album of Christian meditational music, from Meadowlark Records, THE QUIET. **Justo Almaro**, vocalist/reedist appears with members of Koinonia and the Yellowjackets, from Meadowlark, FOREVER FRIENDS. **Jeff Johnson/Sandy Simpson/Dieter Zander/Kathy McClatchy**, acoustic and mild electric music with a message of faith and wonder, from Meadowlark, NO SHADOW OF TURNING.

Mezz Mezzrow, colorful clarinetist's quintet featuring two trumpeters (Peanuts Holland & Guy Longnon) play a pair of blues, from Swing Records, PARIS 1955 VOL. 1. **Eartha Kitt/Doc Cheatham/Bill Coleman**,

'50-'56 mix-and-match sessions by the sultry songstress and the swinging trumpeters, from Swing, KITT/CHEATHAM/COLEMAN. **Lena Horne**, '61 reissue of songs arranged by Shorty Rogers, from DRG Records, LENA GOES LATIN. **Meredith D'Ambrosio**, cabaretish vocalist tackles standards and little known gems, from Sunnyside Communications, IT'S YOUR DANCE. **Laurie Antonlioli**, vocalist receives first-class accompaniment from pianist George Cables, from Catero Records, SOUL EYES. **Roslyn Burrough**, vocalist gets help from youngbloods like Kevin Eubanks, Kirk Lightsey, and Onaje Allan Gumbs, from Sunnyside, LOVE IS HERE. **Janet Planet**, CA singer sings songs by Chris Swansen and John Harmon, from SeaBreeze Records, SWEET THUNDER. **Pinky Winters**, lotsa standards sung, supported by Lou Levy & Monty Budwig, from Jacqueline Records, LET'S BE BUDDIES. **Corina Bartra**, Peruvian-born vocalist visits *The Jungle* and Manhattan, from Corva Music, YAMBAMBO.

Bobby Shew, chestnuts performed on trumpet, flugelhorn, & Shewhorn (combining both), from Mopro Records, 'ROUND MIDNIGHT. **Cal Collins**, vet guitarist swings thru' quartet

outing, from Mopro, CRACK'D RIB. **Jon Crosse**, saxist backed by Clare Fischer's trio plays "snoozy" tunes, from Jazz Cat Records, LULLABIES GO JAZZ. **Nerlio**, vibist/percussionist plays mostly original pieces with latin vibes, from NRD Records, (AN EVENING IN) LUZON. **Milton Marsh**, reedman plays and arranges for woodwind quintet and string quartet too, from Alicia-Milatrix Records, CONTINUUM. **Rio Nido**, Twin Cities' vocal quartet updates some standards and jive, from Red House Records, HI-FLY. **Phil Lopez**, trumpeter/vocalist plus plenty of guests, from Cygnet Records, YOU'VE GOT SOME LOOSE CHANGE. **Allan Barnes**, saxist formerly w/ the Blackbyrds and Gil-Scott Heron debuts as leader, from Riza Records, THE CARETAKER. **db**

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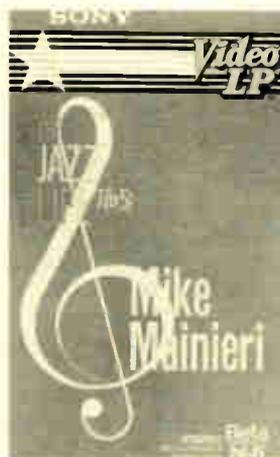
A Sony Day In D.C. Town

Of the seven new jazz videos released by Sony, four come from the ongoing *Jazz At The Smithsonian* concert series at the Smithsonian Institute. Though this results in a certain sameness of format, it allows for a lot of good, mainstream, music.

The Smithsonian concert by soprano saxist *Bob Wilber And The Smithsonian Repertory Company* (59 minutes, directed by Clark & Della Gravel Santee) offers music by Sidney Bechet played with panache, if less than stylistic verisimilitude. No one else is keeping this classic repertory alive with the vigor of Wilber—and the high-spirited ensemble swing reminds us how much we miss Soprano Summit. The high points are Wilber's gutsy *Summertime* homage, and *China Boy*, where the energetic interaction of the saxist and trumpeter Glenn Zottola invoke the great Bechet/Spanier Big 4 recording. Elsewhere, though, Zottola's trumpet is rooted in inappropriately flashy Harry James-isms, and the remaining soloists are uninvolved. Still, swing fans should enjoy the program.

Next up on the same stage is *Art Farmer* (57 minutes, directed by the Santees), and his thoughtful, measured flugelhorn sings with a calm, reassuring voice even in an uptempo sizzler like Joe Henderson's *Recorda Me*. His rhythm section (Fred Hersch, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass; Billy Hart, drums) provides a soft-sell swing: not an insistent beat, but a gentle nudge, which suits Farmer's character, even through the most polite version of a Parker tune (*Red Cross*) I've ever heard. A saving grace is found in the slow surety with which Farmer constructs his two *Blue Monk* solos—a captivating study in structure. All told, this hour is low on energy and high in elegance.

Joe Williams (58 minutes, directed by the Santees) displays a majestic demeanor, but his storytelling capabilities turn the Smithsonian hall into an intimate club setting. Opening with *Every Day* and subsequently covering *Well Alright, Okay . . .* (but omitting *Goin' To Chicago*), he essays a variety of sophisticated blues and ballads without crooning. His expansive and friendly intros add to the charm, and he receives sturdy support from Kirk Stuart's piano, Keter Betts' bass, and Steve Williams' drums. But would it be nitpicking to suggest that a guest horn soloist—a la Lockjaw Davis or Sweets Edison—would have sweetened the deal even more?



The Mel Lewis Orchestra (55 minutes, directed by the Santees) is a mixed bag of sound and visuals. On-screen identification of personnel would have been helpful, especially given the parade of soloists through each tune (only four long selections, so there's not exactly an abundance of variety to be heard). Pianist Jim McNeely stands out of the crowd. Lewis himself is content to cushion the robust ensembles: his only solo (on an updated chart of Herbie Hancock's *Eye Of The Hurricane*) is long and slowly paced and marvelously musical, with excellent episodes of dynamics and contrasting percussive colors. Further, there's a nice camera shot, tight over his right shoulder, letting you follow Lewis' methodical choice of which part of his kit to hit next. But that's just a few moments in a recital that seems longer than it really is. And one more quibble—the tape carton and filmed credits both say the bassist is Marc Johnson, when it's really Dennis Irwin.

Up the road a piece—Manhattan's Seventh Avenue South nightclub, to be exact—we find *Mike Mainieri* (60 minutes, directed by Stanley Dorfman) fronting a Steps Ahead spin-off group. In addition to the leader's electric vibes, there's Warren Bernhardt's piano and synth, Eddie Gomez' acoustic bass, Bob Mintzer's reeds, and the irrepressible Omar Hakim on drums. There's no doubt this is an electric band, in sound and temperament, especially during Mainieri's vibrant solos, but they can create warm and mellow moody ballads too. The majority of the material is Corea-flavored uptempo riff tunes, and the group scores points for attacking them enthusiastically, if not memorably.

Speaking of Chick Corea, though advertised under his name and photo, *A Very Special Concert* (60 minutes, directed

by Gary Legon) is actually hosted by drummer Lenny White. Filmed cross-country at a country club in Reseda, CA, circa '82, the bass mix is too high, over-complementing Stanley Clarke's remarkable acoustic bass chops. It's Clarke that anchors the quartet's airy conception; with Corea skittering lightly over the changes and White chattering commentary about the beat, the real meat and muscle is provided by Joe Henderson's tenor—appealing corkscrew twists on sinewy post-bop orthodoxy. Those familiar with the band's Griffith Park LPs will doubtless enjoy seeing how it was done.

The same foursome accompanies *Nancy Wilson* (60 minutes, directed by Gary Legon), who replaced Chaka Khan for live gigs following the original *Echoes Of An Era* album, in what is apparently the second half of the same concert. The band locks into an understandably tighter groove for this batch of standards; the singer's spotlight forces pithier solos—the concision restrains Corea's flow, but Henderson treads over the chords like a hungry panther. Wilson's occasionally histrionic wails and swooping, stretched-out-of-shape phrasing is accomplished but an acquired taste; the uptempo section of *'Round Midnight*, following a moving Henderson solo, shows no taste at all. And it's depressing to hear a segment of the audience whoop for joy at the Cole Porter lyric: "Some get a kick from cocaine."

Except for the one nice shot over Mel Lewis' shoulder, none of the videos feature any remarkable, lasting visual images. The integrity of the performers is maintained by the no-nonsense concert footage; still, the medium is crying for a director with the ability to spice up the visuals to match the inventiveness of the music.

—art lange



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BLINDFOLD TEST

1 DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA. *JAM WITH SAM* (from *FEATURING PAUL GONSALVES, Fantasy*). Gonsalves, tenor saxophone.

That was very nice. The rhythm section reminded me of Duke's, but the orchestral sound had a kind of West Coast feel. I had the feeling that the tenor player might be Paul Gonsalves: nice playing. I liked the composition a lot. It didn't go on too long, and when it went around and around there were always some nice variations. The out-chorus had some different kinds of counterpoint. Excellent.

2 GEORGE RUSSELL SEXTET. *ZIG ZAG* (from *OUTER THOUGHTS, Milestone*). Russell, piano; Don Ellis, trumpet; Garnett Brown, trombone; Paul Plummer, tenor saxophone; Steve Swallow, bass; Pete LaRoca, drums; Carla Bley, composer.

Strange: different idioms and players being mixed stylistically. Very well-played, but surprising. The trumpeter and trombonist were into a looser concept, but the sax and drummer were more in the tradition—the sax was more West Coast. The pianist had a Monk or Andrew Hill feeling, but a pianoless sound; the music was voiced as if the piano weren't there. Unusual. The adventure in the brass playing lent it more to the ideas of the composition.

3 SONNY ROLLINS. *I'M AN OLD COWHAND* (from *WAY OUT WEST, Contemporary*). Personnel as guessed. Rec. 1957.

I love it! That was extremely daring at the time: just reed, bass, percussion. Sonny Rollins was into the large book then; Broadway tunes kept him very fresh. He was playing *The Last Time I Saw Paris* and *Toot Toot Tootsie*—tunes people had forgotten, but Sonny brought them back. I was excited and amazed by the cohesion of a pianoless group at the time, and it opened up to me ideas of a huge range of material. The classics I recorded were by Jelly Roll Morton and Scott Joplin—the first standards. The rapport and dynamics are great: Ray Brown and Shelly Manne, right?

4 JAMES BLOOD ULMER. *WOMAN COMING* (from *TALES OF CAPTAIN BLACK, Artists House*). Ulmer, guitar; Ornette Coleman, alto saxophone.

I'm sure that was Ornette Coleman. That was excellent. I've always liked what Ornette is doing, past and present. I particularly liked the way the emotional and dynamic level of this piece were kept under control. Implications of his North African *joujuka* music are in the non-

Henry Threadgill

BY FRED BOUCHARD

Airborne since 1973 in Chicago and leader of an expansive sextet the last few years, reedist/composer Henry Threadgill has made strong strides with chord-free improvisation and dramatic structures. Threadgill, 42, has recorded with Roscoe Mitchell and Anthony Braxton, and subbed in the World Saxophone Quartet. His score for *Diggers*—a documentary on the Panama Canal—was heard on National Public Television this past season, and his cantata, *Thomas Cole*, premiered at the Public Theater in NYC.

When Threadgill made an appearance with his Sextet at Charlie's Tap—a new club in Boston's (or rather Cambridge's) thriving armada—he made time for his first Blindfold Test. He was enthusiastic about a great variety of music, expressing appreciation for everything from Howlin' Wolf to Sibelius to Romanian folk music, and remarked, "As an entertainer, Liberace's my man! Gene Autry's movie bands were *baaad!*"

Time constraints led to the choice of



CHARLES SHEARD

tracks under five minutes length; Threadgill seemed to enjoy the short forms. He was given no information about the tracks played, before or after. He avoided star ratings, but awarded many "excellents."

Western rhythm—it's not skipping, it's very advanced. The piece is part filled-in (like radio versus tv, or poetry): you have to complete the picture. There are hints of pop, classical, rap music—world ideas.

5 WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH. *ECHOES OF SPRING* (from *JAZZ LEGACY, Inner City*). Smith, piano.

That was another incredible piece of music. It could have been James P. Johnson, or maybe Willie The Lion. You rarely hear a piece this well-composed. Would you make me a tape of that? It may be an older piece of music, but it's contemporary. The harmonic lines are so advanced, so beautiful! This composer knows music. He lets you realize how much musical information has been synthesized over the years—it's very clear that the pianist has played many different kinds of music.

6 BENNY CARTER. *BLUE STAR* (from *JAZZ MASTERS OF THE SAXOPHONE, Franklin Mint*). Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Phil Woods, Charlie Rouse, reeds; Dick Katz, piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; Jo Jones, drums. Rec. '61.

Very beautiful! The ensemble was ex-

quisite and the rhythm section was like a soufflé. Tommy Flanagan? Roger Kellaway? The pianist was shadowing the reed section wonderfully. Sounded like Marshall Royal there on lead—very original. Good playing is expected from any professional, but to do something different—that was fresh. Nothing complicated harmonically, but melodically it was like [the alto player] wrote his solo. Strong kind of Basie reed section feel, but it lightened up a little.

7 COLEMAN HAWKINS. *PICASSO* (from *JAZZ MASTERS OF THE SAXOPHONE, Franklin Mint*). Hawkins, tenor saxophone. Rec. 1948.

That was a beautiful solo piece. Sounded like Coleman Hawkins. It's amazing how one instrument can be so fulfilling. What can I say except that it was beautiful? It was overwhelming—it leaves me speechless. It was magical that he played that at that time. Of course, he did spend a lot of time in Europe and had acquaintances in wide artistic circles. He returned into a rather tight musical situation here, and you can hear the implications of bebop in his lines. db

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Chris Flory

The young guitarist prefers Swing Era harmonies to more modern styles; still, don't dismiss the touch of r&b raunch in his playing.

BY BILL MILKOWSKI

Like his colleague and longtime playing partner, saxophonist Scott Hamilton, guitarist Chris Flory is a young man who appears to be from another era. His manner of dress, his style of play, his vintage axe (Gibson L-7) all speak of bygone days. The '40s, to be exact.

This 31-year-old minister's son from Geneva, New York, has seemingly settled on the Swing Era as his stock in trade, forgoing the bop, avant garde, and rock movements that would appear to be his birthright. Most jazz guitarists his age cite Jimi Hendrix, Jim Hall, Wes Montgomery, and John McLaughlin as main influences. Flory names Floyd Smith, Oscar Moore, Charlie Christian, and Tiny Grimes as his main men.

"I flirted with some of the more modern stuff," says Flory. "When I moved to New York in the summer of 1976 I started listening to a lot of the avant garde that was going around. I checked out Archie Shepp and Cecil Taylor and all those guys, but as much as I sort of pretended to like that music—because it was fashionable—I just couldn't figure it out. And at that period I almost regretted playing the guitar because it didn't seem to have much voice, not compared to what Shepp and those guys were doing. I remember hearing Blood Ulmer when he first came out, and I didn't really see what all the fuss was about. Seeing him just confirmed to me that the electric guitar didn't have much voice in the avant garde."

Thus ended his fling with modern music. Of course, Flory had gone through the obligatory rock and blues bands as a teenager growing up in Geneva. But somewhere along the way he got turned around. Meeting up with Scott Hamilton in 1974 was no small impetus in this swing shift.

"My family moved to Providence, Rhode Island, when I was 15. Scott had lived there all his life and was a year behind me in school. He had a blues band with guys he knew and I had a rock



AL MAURO

band with some guys I knew. It really wasn't until 1974, when I went back to Providence after attending Hobart College in upstate New York, when I was about 20 or so, that Scott and I actually started playing on an official basis. One of the reasons I came back to Providence in 1974 was to play with him, because that was one of the only situations I had to play the type of jazz I like."

Flory had assembled a small group of his own around that time, but he dissolved the band to get the gig with Scott when Hamilton's guitarist left the band. "It was like it was in high school," he recalls. "Scott had his band and I had mine. But then the bass player and guitarist of his band left because they weren't making any money. They couldn't make a living playing with Scott, so they left reluctantly."

Enter Phil Flanagan, the bassist who grew up with Flory in Geneva (the birthplace of Scott LaFaro, by the way). Drummer Chuck Riggs joined the group around 1975, and the four young swingers have been playing together, off and on, ever since.

"Phil and Chuck actually left the band for a while because they just couldn't make ends meet," says Flory. "I stuck it out, but my bail-out was always, 'Well, if this doesn't work out I'm gonna go to New York, whether I have to work a day job or whatever. I wanna be there.'"

Flory and Hamilton had been easing up to that big step by visiting Manhattan every weekend to check out the scene. "We'd go to Ryan's and Condon's to see Roy Eldridge and Illinois Jacquet. We'd

sit in now and then. Roy was really instrumental in spreading Scott's name around, and mine too, to a certain degree."

On the recommendation of Eldridge, Hamilton landed a good gig—six weeks at Michael's Pub with guitarist Billy Butterfield, bassist Milt Hinton, and pianist Hank Jones. Into the second week, Butterfield got sick and Flory was called in as a replacement. "This fast-talking agent called me up one day and says, 'Roy Eldridge says you play a mean guitar.' They put me on for a week, just to check me out. Hank and Milt both liked my playing, so I stayed for a month. It was like paradise."

Soon after that gravy gig ended, young Flory was introduced to the harsh realities of living in the city. "There I was, sitting pretty, working five nights a week at Michael's Pub. The gig ended on Labor Day, and I didn't have another one until the beginning of November. It was the first of many dry-spells. It kind of opened my eyes."

Flory had quickly burned through his Michael's Pub money, so out of necessity he grabbed a day gig. "I got a part time job, cleaning up in the laboratory at Columbia Presbyterian Medical School. Strange work. Nothing to do with my skills, but it helped me get by. And I kept that job on and off for two years."

He had moved to Manhattan in the summer of 1976, following Hamilton's lead. That fall, Riggs and Flanagan also came to town. The old Providence gang was reunited in the Apple, hoping to keep together if at all possible. Eventually, they lucked into a regular Sunday night gig at now-defunct Condon's. "The place was mostly known for dixieland, but on Sunday's they were trying to get into more of a mainstream thing. The idea was to showcase Scott with a group. This was around '77-78, right when Scott was first getting hot in New York. So it was Scott, myself, Chuck, and Phil, and each week we'd have a special guest star, which is how we hooked up with people like Buddy Tate, Kenny Davern, Bob Wilber, and Harold Ashby."

Flory was playing a Gibson ES-125 back then, but he switched to an ES-150 in 1978. A few years later, while playing with Hamilton in the Benny Goodman big band, he changed to the L-7, partially at Benny's request. "He had been using me on and off for years and intensively for about a year, around 1982. And one day he started saying, 'That guitar of yours—the sound of it... I don't know. It sounds alright when you turn it up and take a solo, but it sounds a little, it doesn't...' Anyway, he got me to switch

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to the L-7, which is what Charlie Christian played. But when he was talking to me about my guitar sound, I think he was thinking more in terms of the real rhythm guitarists he had used, like Allan Reuss."

Flory's steady comping and wry solos have since turned up on several Concord Jazz sessions: *In New York City, Skyscraper, Close Up* (all with the Scott Hamilton band); *Rosemary Clooney Sings The Music Of Irving Berlin*; *A First* (with Hamilton and trumpeter Ruby Braff); *Uptown* (Maxine Sullivan with the Hamilton quintet). He's also appeared on a number of small label recordings with Bob Wilber's band, as well as playing on a 1984 album by singer Sussanah McCorkle.

Flory continues to keep busy with Scott Hamilton, recording and playing all the major jazz festivals around the world. He occasionally pops up around Manhattan in a trio setting with bassist Riggs and pianist John Bunch (who is currently the fifth member of Hamilton's band). There's talk of a solo album on the horizon. And you can bet that any Flory project will certainly include his cohort and pal.

"I have to give Scott credit in listening to music a lot more widely than myself," says the guitarist. "My tastes have been influenced by him a great deal. And what we both share is a love for blues—the tenor kind of rhythm & blues stuff rather than the more electrified Chicago style. So what we're doing now is trying to play mainstream jazz while keeping those blues roots intact."

A throwback to an earlier era? Let the other guitarists on the scene today have their solid body guitars and super slinky strings. Chris Flory is content to strum rhythmically (a la Freddie Green) and pluck persuasively (a la Charlie Christian) on his fat-bodied, thick-necked, heavy-stringed Swing Era axe. It's the perfect instrument for the music he prefers. **db**

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THEORY AND MUSICIANSHIP FOR THE CREATIVE JAZZ IMPROVISER

by michael longo



WILLEM BREUKER KOLLEKTIEF

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR—You-had-to-be-there (shake head, smile, wave hands in air). “A band that can simultaneously play the musics of those famous Joneses—Elvin and Spike—and anything in between?” No. How about “A group comfortable with the three B’s—Beethoven, bebop, and bananas”? Okay, what if Frank Zappa had grown up in Amsterdam listening to Ornette and Coltrane instead of doo-wop. . . .

Saxophonist/composer Breuker and his nine accomplices present concerts that are a treat to attend but a bear to review. The Kollektief—two trumpets, two trombones, three reeds, and a piano-bass-drums rhythm section—takes an unpredictable, anarchic, manic approach to the whole range of Western music; jazz is their primary but not sole idiom. Humor holds the mix together, and Breuker’s distinctive point of view gives it focus. He and his colleagues are excellent musicians, almost virtuosos, capable of playing any style authentically, and of creating honest, personal new music performances. At the same time they refuse to be serious about what they do, or to waste time on transitions from one segment to the next. The results often have the difficult-to-describe exhilaration of a roller-coaster ride through a funhouse.

The Breukers started exactly on time and played nonstop (and usually flat out) for almost two hours. So much of what they did was strongly visual that I suspect even their recordings are an inadequate indicator; this band *must* be seen to really be heard. Each of the 10 got space to solo; I was most impressed with Belgian alto saxophonist Andre Goudbeek’s solo early in the set, but all of the players were at least good.

The award for succinct expression of opinion goes to trumpeter Boy Raaymakers; midway into a bristling free solo he began to slow down, gradually bending over at the same time, until finally, trumpet pointed backwards between his knees, he played the head to Miles Davis’ *Jean Pierre*. Much of the rest of the goings-on lose their punch in the telling: the rustic May Day dance, the band dressed in striped socks, sandals, and cloth caps; a tango which stopped every two bars while Breuker staggered around the stage trying to sustain a tone; the trumpet section being chased off the stage when they continued to miss their



LAUREN DEUTSCH

THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM: the Kollektief comps.

cue in a version of the universal chaser *The Theme*.

The range of the group’s references to jazz, classical, and early pop music is amazing. Perhaps because so much of the music is parody, however, I was not overly taken with most of Breuker’s compositions. Breuker writes regularly for films, and many of the concert’s compositions seemed to have a background quality to them, serving as functional vehicles for the individual soloists and their theatrics. He can evidently arrange anything—note the three encores: a perfect recreation of the theme to *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*, followed by an early ’50s big band r&b blues, ending with an authentic version of a 1920’s pop tune (*Remarkable Girl*).

You had to be there. —david wild

EDDIE DANIELS

GUSMAN CONCERT HALL

MIAMI—Highlighting a two-and-a-half week concert schedule of varied programs under the all-inclusive heading of “Festival Miami,” the University Of Miami Music School, under the artistic direction of conductor Jose Serebrier, presented virtuoso clarinetist Eddie Daniels in performance. Daniels, who should rightly be considered the measure of all qualities appropriate to the playing of contemporary clarinet, was actually hired for the date on the condition that he perform Jacob Druckman’s *Animus III* for clarinet and electronic tape, and Milton Babbitt’s *My Ends Are My Beginnings*. As it turned out, Daniels

managed to circumvent the latter responsibility by having the School Of Music contract Anand Devendra, the clarinetist for whom the piece was originally written, who had already performed it in concert some five or six times before. Unfortunately, Daniels was still stuck with Druckman’s experimental theatrical travesty but, to his credit, he braved it through with good humor.

But that was all on Friday. The next night was something else entirely. Following a set of expertly rendered Joplin, Stravinsky, and Milhaud rags by pianist J. B. Floyd, Chairman of UM’s Keyboard Program, Daniels assumed front and center position. Floyd remained onstage to assist Whit Sidener’s db award-winning Concert Jazz Band in Igor Stravinsky’s never-quite-fully-accepted *Ebony Concerto*, a piece that Woody Herman commissioned the famed composer to write for his 1946 band. Though interesting in spots, it is hardly a clarinet concerto in the true sense of that term; as a consequence, it seemed that Daniels’ talents were wasted on this work. Ironically enough, one week earlier, UM’s Professor of Clarinet, William Klinger, performed Artie Shaw’s renowned *Concerto For Clarinet* to a standing ovation in the same hall. Would it not then have been far more appropriate to have had Daniels, an acknowledged jazzman, do a tribute to Benny Goodman by playing some of Mel Powell’s or Eddie Sauter’s really challenging clarinet show-pieces? But, then again, the *Ebony Concerto* was also a requisite of his contract.

Anticipation mounted, however, as Daniels announced the next chart in what proved to be a series of straight-ahead swingers. Proceeding through Bob Mintzer’s *Mr. Fonebone* and imag-

inative rescoring of the standard *I Hear A Rhapsody*, Daniels proved over and over again that he must be ranked alongside the most proficient clarinetists in the world. The Concert Jazz Band's tenor soloist, Andy Middleton, contributed *Mount Rundle*, while the leader dug into his files for Chico O'Farrill's *There'll Never Be Another You*, once a Count Basie feature for trumpeter Pete Minger, currently a mainstay on the UM campus. The encore at both Saturday night performances was Maria Schneider's updated concept of yet another old standard, *My Ideal*. On all of these quickly paced and thoughtfully constructed arrangements, Daniels disported himself with breathtaking inventiveness and swing, while Sidener, ever a source of inspiration to his charges, encouraged the younger soloists in the band—trumpeter Steve Hale, trombonist Phil Grey, pianist Jim Trumpeter, and the above-mentioned Middleton—to even greater heights than usual. —jack sohmer

JOE "KING" CARRASCO

LONE STAR CAFE

NEW YORK—From the moment he bounded out onto this venue's small stage accoutred in his trademark crown and royal mantle and brandishing his Telecaster, the King of Tex-Mex rock & roll drove his music and audience straight to the party he seems to bring with him wherever he goes. Opening with his dance-chant hit *Let's Go*, he got the happy crowd bouncing and bopping immediately with his energetic vocals and Chuck Berry guitar fills—and a solo chorus of button accordion didn't hurt none, neither.

Baby Let's Go To Mexico, *Qué Pasó*, and *No Pasarán* introduced the band's comic *Spanglais* patter between tunes, and revealed as well their accomplished renditions of vocal trills, yelps, yips, and wolf-whoops. *96 Tears* turned pandemonium loose and helped launch the band into their able, foot-tapping two-steps and polka-beat tunes. By this time the crowd was as stoked up as the performers, and requests from Carrasco's idiosyncratic catalog were screamed at the bandstand; when one insistent fan kept yelling for *Who Buys The Guns That Kill The Nuns*, Carrasco good-naturedly inserted that politically charged song, with its modulations between reggae and pure-punk sections, into the set by saying simply, "I'll do it later; okay, I won't do it later. I'll do it

now."

Following more patois wisecracks and some twisted down-home tunes, the King revved up a punkers'-delight version of *Please Let Me Kiss You One More Time*, and used it to race up the stairs next to the stage, then back down, then through the audience toward the bar. Once he got there, he clambered up onto that low-ceilinged slab of wood a few feet opposite the stage, and while the bartender obligingly moved the low-hung lamps along Carrosco's route out of his merry and manic way, the singer finished out the tune by doing a modified Chuck Berry duckwalk along the top of the bar. The simplest way to sum it up: *Just Having A Ball*, the name of one of his tunes, is still the best way to describe this likable maniac's lunatic musical performances. —gene santoro

RAY CHARLES

PEARL STREET

NORTHAMPTON, MA—When does a living legend become a has-been? Standing in a long line waiting to get into the first of two sold-out shows at this small nightclub in Western Massachusetts, I had to wonder: would this be an evening of great music, or just a trip down Memory Lane?

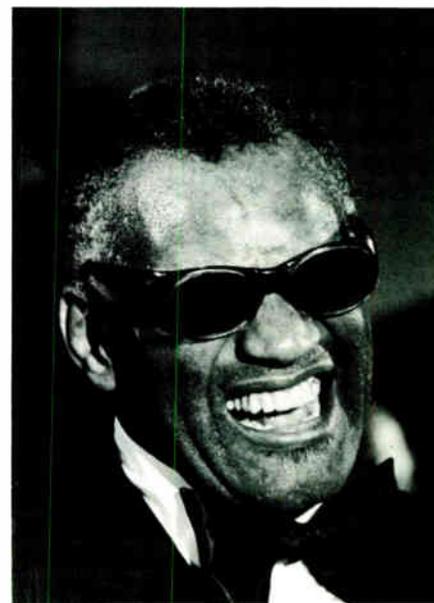
Great talent generates great pressure. Every true genius is driven by the desire to transcend earlier achievements, to "push the envelope," as the test pilots said in *The Right Stuff*. Audiences and nagging critics feed the fire, demanding more ideas, better performances, more and more stimulation. When the pressure gets too great, you either quit—or die—or search for a comfortable middle ground lit by the reflected glow of previous glories.

In the late 1950s, Ray Charles lifted rhythm & blues to a new level of artistry and popular acceptance (black and white). It didn't matter much what the song was—*Oh, What A Beautiful Morning* was just as good as *I Got A Woman* once Ray Charles got ahold of it. His impassioned, gut-wrenching vocals, backed by sophisticated, Nat Cole-inspired piano and roaring big band charts set a standard that has never been surpassed.

Charles himself evidently decided at some point in the '60s that he couldn't surpass that standard. He took the middle ground and settled into a familiar pattern that has included countless one-nighters much like this one. After a swinging blues from his 16-piece band (a

mixture of veterans and Konservatory Kids), Charles makes a dramatic entrance. The applause swells and rolls over him as he is led to the grand piano at center stage. Grinning widely, swaying back and forth, he rips into *Busted*. After a couple more tunes, the five Raelettes emerge to add lackluster backing vocals on a greatest-hits package that builds to the inevitable versions of *I Can't Stop Loving You* and *What'd I Say*.

Perfunctory, routine, run-of-the-mill—almost. But there is a moment when Charles really is "The Legendary



JON CHASE

Genius of Soul" (as we are told repeatedly), when the burden of all the years of repetition melts away. Surprisingly, the song is *Georgia*—how many thousands of times has he sung it?—and the performance goes something like this: Charles' piano intro is loose and improvisatory, concealing his musical intentions until he sings the first few words, practically in a whisper. The verses build as Charles bends and stretches the phrases above the riffing horns. Then there is a sudden, unexpected breakdown with the vocal flying free. The band slips in, following the onrushing vocal to a climax in the last verse—and then, almost shockingly, drops to a whisper as Charles gently caresses the last few words of the song.

It is an extraordinary performance, an electric movement that towers over the rest of the show like a great monument. It is also an answer to my question, too, because only a legend still living could have raised himself up for such a heroic—albeit momentary—performance.

—jim roberts

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Photo by Cenicola

José Roberto Bertrami's Solo on *Universal Prisoner*—A Piano Transcription

BY DAVID WILD

Pianist/author **David Wild** has compiled *The Recordings Of John Coltrane: A Discography and, with Michael Cuscuna, Ornette Coleman 1958-1979: A Discography (both Wildmusic, Ann Arbor, MI)*. He is *down beat's* Detroit correspondent.

José Roberto Bertrami's solo on *Universal Prisoner* is taken from Azymuth's most recent release, *Spectrum* (Milestone M-9134). The composition (Cathlen Music, BMI), was originally recorded in the early '70s by Les McCann; it's been part of the group's repertoire since before the band was officially formed. The solo comprises the first portion of the song (in B^b, preceding a modulation to G Major), which forms a 32-bar A A' song of its own.

Points of interest:

- 1) Bertrami effectively employs arpeggiated triads in juxtaposition to the basic chord to add harmonic color to his lines. Note the D triad superimposed on the B^b augmented chord (measures 3-4, 7, 19) and the E triad played against a D half-diminished seventh chord (measure 11).
- 2) Bertrami makes use of a chromatic scale passage at measures 20-23, covering two octaves. This passage echoes the descending scalar passage at measures 5-6 (the equivalent measures of the first A section), giving the solo cohesiveness.
- 3) Bertrami builds tension with rhythmically displaced figures at measures 13 and 24. The pattern in measure 13 grows out of a figure in the tune's melody, making the time seem to float in measures 14-15 before Bertrami reestablishes the pulse with chordal punctuations in measure 16. The displacement at measure 24 is more complex, with the feeling of three-against-two quarter notes played an eighth note behind the beat.

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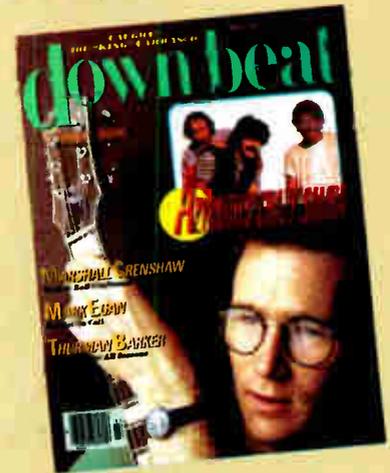
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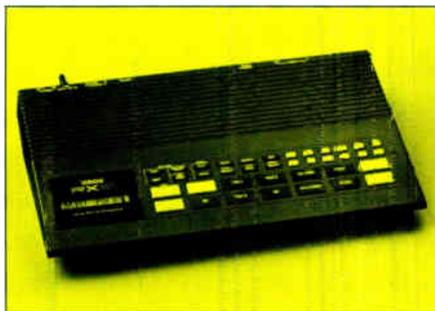
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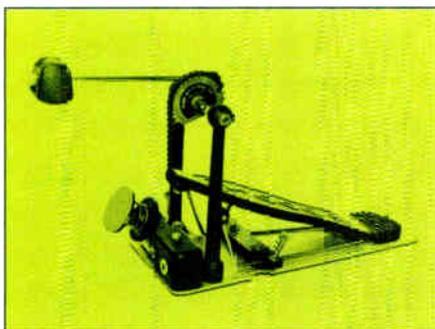
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Drum Workshop's Electronic Pedal

DRUM WORKSHOP INC. (Newbury Park, CA) has developed an electronic trigger pedal with the feel of a conventional bass drum pedal. The D.W. EP-1 is a combination pedal/electronic bass drum designed to be compatible with Simmons and most other electronic drums. It combines the chain-drive action of the company's 5000 Turbo with a new pickup for wider, more dynamic range. Input and output jacks permit expansion of a drummer's current set.

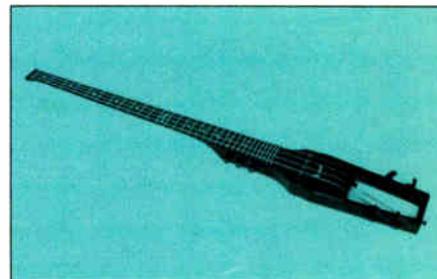
KEYBOARD COUNTRY



Ensoniq's Updated Keyboard

ENSONIQ CORP. (Malvern, PA) has updated the Mirage Digital Sampling Keyboard with a new weighted-action keyboard, low-noise circuitry, and an expanded list of accessories. The Mirage uses digitally recorded waveforms of actual instruments to produce its sound, and Ensoniq's sound library includes acoustic, electric, and electronic instrument sounds stored on three-and-a-half-inch diskettes. The weighted-action keyboard responds to a player's touch with velocity-sensitive control over amplitude and filter envelopes; the Mirage also features 37 playback parameters to control envelopes, filters, modulation, tuning, and keyboard effects. Circuitry improvements include a 12dB signal-to-noise ratio upgrade and better filtering to improve frequency response.

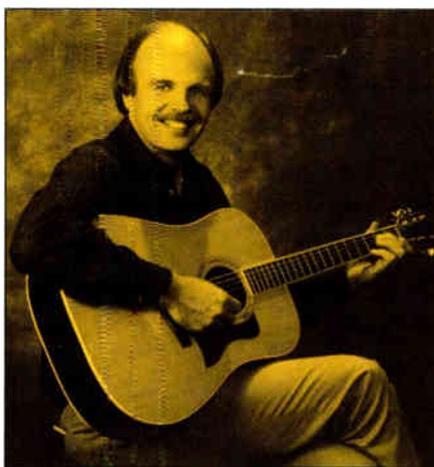
ideal for bluegrass players, according to Crary. The guitar is said to resemble a combination modern Taylor/old-time guitar. It's made from Rosewood, with a spruce top, rounded cutaway, cream-color binding, a new bridge, and engraved snowflake inlays. The tuners are reproductions of Kluson Deluxe circa 1950.



IMC's Flash Bass

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPANY (Fort Worth, TX) has introduced the Hondo Flash Bass, which features a piezo electric pickup under the bridge and a stacked humbucking pickup. Controls include a pickup blend rotary knob, passive high-end roll off and volume controls, and selector switch. The body is made of hard-rock maple and has a 34-inch scale with Grover tuners. The Flash Bass, the first in a series of six guitars created by custom guitar designer Harry Fleishman and Hondo, is available in all black or metallic white with black hardware.

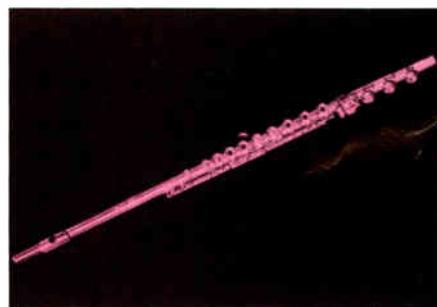
GUITAR WORLD



Taylor's Crary Signature

TAYLOR GUITARS (Lemon Grove, CA) has designed the Dan Crary Signature Model Guitar for flatpickers and bluegrass players. A new bracing pattern with a thinner top lets the guitar be played loudly in both bass and treble, making it

WIND WARE



Mirafone's Model 600

MIRAFONE CORP. (Valencia, CA) has introduced the model 600 Pearl Flute, featuring the same basic scale and design of the higher-priced silver body models in the Pearl line. The model 600 body is nickel silver, silver plated, with a silver head joint and hand-finished silver embouchure hole. Other features include pinless construction, rolled-drawn tone holes, and power-forged keys. The Pearl 600 is available in open hole and plateau styles with B foot. **db**



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continued from page 63

nothing he brings down the price and sabotages the respect for all. The loft scene and the JCOA are but two examples of what can be accomplished when musicians stick together as opposed to backbiting and undercutting.

Finally, the babblings of some irresponsible or ignorant critics, though they are the first to deny it, have at times been instrumental in undermining the quality of the music. The words of the press *can* influence hiring practices. Promoters look to the press to see what's hot and what's not and promote accordingly. All across the States and especially in Europe there is a growing sense of disillusionment that comes from hiring acts on the basis of press hype for slapdash, one-shot efforts that some critic, who obviously thinks that *any* instrumental music is jazz, compares favorably to the best works of Miles or Trane or Bird, when in reality the said acts should not be blowing horns but should be blowing it out their shorts!

One of the most just, knowledgeable, and understandably informed jazz writers I have ever read was Kenny Dorham, who wrote for *down beat* in the mid-'60s. It would be good for musicians to take his cue and write more. There are many fair-minded editors who welcome the opinion of musicians. Also, the public is appreciative of musicians who let them in on their thought processes. As to the benefits, if musicians were to write more much of the "boneheadism" promoted by the *ignorati* in the press, especially that of "analysts" and "experts" who can't pick out a C scale on the piano, would be offset. Musicians like to say, "Let the music speak for itself," but usually too much has been said about it by others before the music comes to the attention of the public.

Jazz is still the music with the most potential for ongoing creation and growth, exhilaration, inspiration (most rockers, even, admit to having jazz musicians as idols), and transcendental fun (many players should stop taking themselves so seriously and develop a sense of humor!). However, in order for it to be resuscitated, the music must expand not only in eclectic directions, but *from its core*, in formal, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, experimental ways; otherwise, it will be labelled, categorized, and put up on the museum shelf with the rest of the dinosaurs. **db**

Jack Walrath is a trumpeter and composer/arranger who has worked extensively with Charles Mingus and Dannie Richmond in addition to leading his own groups. His most recent releases are two volumes of Live At Umbria (Red Records).

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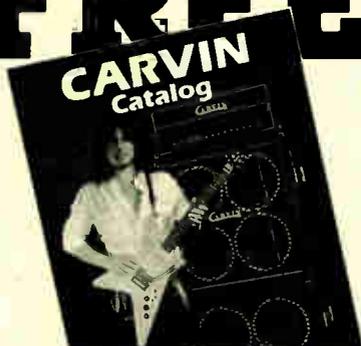
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Jazz In A Coma

BY JACK WALRATH

People play jazz for the same reason that poets write poetry, painters paint, and sculptors sculpt. It will never die and it refuses to be killed, but sometimes it may be stifled and beaten senseless. Currently, the music receives much more attention than in previous decades. There are more clubs and more players known by the public, but on the other hand, there is a conspicuous lack of creativity, innovation, and an excess of polarization and standardization that account for a loss of vitality in the music.

In 1964, when I was a student in Boston, I would go hear every act appearing in town. Never wanting for variety, in a matter of a few weeks I could hear the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Art Blakey, Lee Konitz, Horace Silver, and Freddie Hubbard. These were the top groups of the time. Twenty-one years later, I now go into a club and see the current top acts like Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Art Blakey, Lee Konitz, Horace Silver, and Freddie Hubbard! Of course, these giants should still be on top; but nevertheless, there have been millions of people born, and a few thousand of them became jazz players, since I was 18. These days, in a club, I get the feeling of being caught in a time warp where the tune never changes and I age 21 years. Occasionally, though, the faces do change, but the tune and the suits remain the same!

The current problem of boredom and stagnation in jazz is not the result of the lack of new creators, however, but the lack of creative situations; i.e.: *There are no bands*. Originally, the most significant innovations came from a soloist's or composer's concepts as expressed through the medium of a steady group. The band not only provided the testing ground for new ideas but defined the very sound of jazz.

The trend in recent years seems to have moved away from the band and experimentation and innovation to attempts at "re-creations," "reincarnations," "rehashments," and "regurgitations" of hoary (whorey?), safe formulae. We are constantly being besieged by "the New Trane," "the Next Miles," that perennial favorite "the New Wes Montgomery," "Young Dexter, Phil, Bird, Bud," the "Next Mingus," or "the Coming Whatever," *ad nauseam*. Those who promote these fabrications should realize that the giants whom they are trying to replace and cash in on were playing new



Jack Walrath

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music relative to *their* times. In other words, it is not only impossible but also boobish to try to capture the past unless one has a time machine. A musician, no matter how hard he tries to copy another's style, presumably in hopes of getting rich, can at best only achieve a hollow imitation or achieve the status of *idiot savant*—strike the *savant*. Moreover, most of the musicians who are being hailed as these "reincarnations" resent this typecasting.

Much of this tendency towards recreation is influenced by the way the music is taught in the schools. Most seem to be more concerned with grinding out technical and theoretical whizzes than giving insight into the cultural, historical, and emotional aspects of the music. It is not surprising that so many 19 year-olds seem to have achieved a more proficient technical level, as compared to former times, considering the amount of literature and analyses published on the subject in the last 30 years. But jazz is not classical music. If the classical approach to teaching doesn't change, jazz will eventually be regarded as simply another musical technique such as counterpoint or the 12-tone system. Furthermore, a player need not ascribe to the chauvinistic, moldy-fig mentality that before trying anything new you must learn every lick that Charlie Parker ever played. There are equally important lessons to be learned from the spiritual motivations of the great artists—risk taking, originality, individualism, rebelliousness—as from the purely technical aspects of their music.

The personality cult, quick buck mentality (*in jazz?*), and misunderstanding of the very nature of the music in the press and educational system are only surface problems that contribute to the dearth of new creative music and lack of working bands. The seemingly increasing greed,

ignorance, wishy-washyness, and mercenary attitudes of some aspiring promoters, producers, clubowners and, indeed, musicians have done much to sabotage situations for musical growth that can only develop out of the band concept.

I have seen solid, well-rehearsed groups break up because a leader gave in to some promoter's stipulation that he fire so-and-so and hire such-and-such if he wanted a gig or record date. Thrown together aggregations of disparate artists with contrasting egos are usually short-lived. There is seldom any rehearsal. Repertoires usually degenerate to something like the six-billionth rendering of *How High The Moon*. Why do promoters suddenly think that they are contractors and bandleaders and sometimes even go to the extent of trying to tell the musician his repertoire—usually fagged old standards and Broadway show tunes? (Does Twisted Sister go through this?) Also, why can't promoters realize that the reason A and B have never played together in their 30-year careers is because they probably can't stand each other? That the public can soon see through these fabrications can be understood by looking through the cutout sections of your neighborhood record store.

Musicians, by their actions (probably dictated by fear more than anything else) seem to forget that these "businessmen" wouldn't even be in "business" if it wasn't for them and their music. For example, how many musicians have worked for the door—and on an off-night on top of that—in hopes that the clubowner will like them and give them a future gig? This thinking illustrates not the logic of an Earthman, but that of a visitor from Uranus. Number one: The public knows that most off-night groups work for nothing, so why should they pay for what the club won't? (Don't work for the door unless yours has a hole in it!) Number two: *Buddha* would have a hard time drawing a crowd on, say, a Sunday or Wednesday anyway. (If they want to give you only one night try to hold out for the weekend.) Number three: Why should the club pay you in the future when it won't pay you now?

Jazz musicians are acknowledged as being among the most proficient and usually have no trouble finding work in rock bands, funk bands, latin bands, show bands, and others paying much more money, so why sell out your name for chump change when you can get a gig that pays and you can take your money and use it to invest in a project that you believe in? When one musician works for

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AUDITIONS

down beat spotlights young musicians deserving wider recognition.



MARTIN RICHARDS, 22-year-old drummer from Framingham, MA, who recently completed his studies at the Berklee College of Music, is the newest member of vibist Gary Burton's band, joining bassist Steve Swallow, pianist Makoto Ozone, and saxophonist (and October Auditions honoree) Tommy Smith. A recipient of the Buddy Rich Jazz Masters Award for outstanding musical achievement, Richards recently toured the Caribbean with Burton and fellow Berklee students aboard the luxury liner S.S. Norway.

Richards has also performed with the Berklee Rainbow Band and trombonist Phil Wilson during a monthlong tour of the Caribbean and Latin American, and with the school's Concert Jazz Orchestra, directed by trumpeter Herb Pomeroy, during a weeklong engagement at the first EPCOT Center Jazz Festival at Walt Disney World in Florida. In addition to serving in Burton's band, Richards performs throughout the East Coast as a member of the Boston-based latin jazz group Ananda, a quintet whose debut album, *Amazonia*, was recently released on the Sonic Atmospheres label.



REG SCHWAGER has made his mark on the Canadian scene very quickly. The guitarist played Toronto and Montreal clubs as a teenager and now at 23 is embarking on a promising recording career. Born in Holland, raised in Sudbury, Ontario, and a Toronto resident since 1979, he has accompanied veterans Peter Appleyard, Herb Spanier, Joe Newman, Ruby Braff, and David Young.

Building on a bop base, this self-taught musician has recently moved further afield musically and now also works in various contemporary situations, including a trio, a free-improvisational duo with drummer Michel Lambert, and an ensemble known as Plectrum Spectrum, inspired by his experiences in a Cecil Taylor orchestral project at the 1985 Banff Jazz Workshop.

Schwager and his younger sister, Jeannette, a singer, were chosen to represent Canada in a Canadian/European broadcast recording saluting International Youth Year. Schwager made his commercial record debut in early 1985 on Montreal pianist Oliver Jones' *Lights Of Burgundy*, and recorded his first trio album with Lambert and bassist David Piitch for release on Montreal's Justin Time label.



NORMAN ARNOLD, 20-year-old Toronto native, plays electronic and acoustic drums and percussion, and is the recipient of a Canada Arts Council grant to pursue full-time study of studio music and jazz at the University of Miami, where his instructors include Steve Rucker and Warren White. He performs in the rhythm section of the school's Jazz Vocal I (1985 **down beat** "deebie" winner for Jazz Vocal Choir). Arnold graduated from the Interlochen (MI) Arts Academy in 1984, where he received an individual Distinguished Performance Award and was a member of the Outstanding Big Band award-winning I.A.A. studio orchestra at the 1984 Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival.

Arnold has performed with pianist Ramsey Lewis, vocalist/songwriter "The Baron," and the East York Symphony Orchestra; served as musical director for an outdoor street theater company; and done various pit, live, and studio work. He has also done recordings and live performances with the Toronto-based pop band Pleasure Gallery. Arnold's influences, he says, include "Keith Jarrett, Steve Gadd, Nexus, Tyrone B. Feedback, and Indiana Jones."



BRUCE SAUNDERS, guitarist with North Texas State University's One O'Clock Lab Band, was awarded the Louis Herbert Memorial Scholarship from the Dallas Jazz Society. A graduate student studying with Jack Petersen, Tom Johnson, Rich Matteson, Paris Rutherford, and Neil Slater at NTSU, Saunders is also an accomplished performer on six-string classical guitar. The 30-year-old Bradenton, FL, native earned his undergraduate degree at Florida State University, where he studied classical guitar with Bruce Holzman and theory with Peter Spencer.

Saunders, who names Jim Hall, John Coltrane, Tom Harrell, John Abercrombie, Chick Corea, and Bill Evans as influences, is composing and arranging for big band, as well as working his way through school by performing with a jazz quartet. He has performed in orchestras with Lainie Kazan and Roy Clark in Florida, and with the national touring companies of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *A Chorus Line* at the Dallas Summer Musicals. After graduation, Saunders plans to "do a lot of writing and possibly move to the Northeast."



DONESSA WASHINGTON, 18-year-old vocalist, is a Who's Who of American High Schools listee and a member of the National Honors Society who graduated from Arts Magnet High School in Dallas in 1985. Among the honors she's achieved are that school's Outstanding Jazz Vocalist award for 1985, an Outstanding Musicianship award at the 12th annual N.A.J.E. Convention in Dallas, an Outstanding Perform-

ance award in the 1985 "deebie" competition, and honorable mentions in both the jazz and classical divisions of the National Arts Recognition and Talent Search. She has appeared on the Arts Magnet albums *Impressions* and *Milestones*.

Washington is presently freelancing and doing commercial backup vocals for a number of Dallas-area studios. She plans to attend the Berklee College of Music in Boston on a scholarship this fall.



JEFF NELSON, 22-year-old trombonist, is a recent Summa Cum Laude with degrees in Performance and Sound Recording Technology from Fredonia State's School of Music. He has studied classically with Barry Kilpatrick. Among the awards Nelson won while at Fredonia are an Outstanding Performance award as part of the six-piece combo Alternative Jazz Experience at the 1985 Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival, an individual Outstanding Performance with the Fredonia Jazz Ensemble at the 1983 Notre Dame fest, and a share of a "deebie" award for best studio recording for his work on the FJE's 1983 album *Royal Flush*.

Nelson performed in numerous classical ensembles while at Fredonia, and he was active in many studio recordings, both as a musician and engineer. Last spring, recordings he engineered were selected by Audio Technica Inc. to be part of a company demo tape. While in high school, Nelson studied with Don Paulson of the Albany Symphony, and he held chairs in several New York All-State bands and orchestras. He spent last summer performing at various festivals around New York state, and he plans to continue performing and doing studio work as an engineer.

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Young musicians wishing to be considered for Auditions should send a black & white photograph and a one-page typewritten biography to **down beat**, Auditions, 222 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL 60606.

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