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DB 3/87



MITCHELL SEIDEL

Branford Marsalis



VERNON L. SMITH

Wendy Carlos



STEVEN GROSS

Robert Cray



Steve Roach

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16 THE MANY SIDES OF BRANFORD MARSALIS

Though Branford's brash and a joker, too, he's one young star not in need of special pleading—above all he's a serious artist, with the savvy to swing from Sting to his own straightahead conceptions. **Kevin Whitehead** provides us with a closer look at the multi-faceted, multi-opinionated Marsalis.

20 WENDY CARLOS: A.D. (AFTER DIGITAL)

Synth pioneer Carlos has stretched electronic sound boundaries—and her audience's ears—for nearly 20 years, since her trendsetting Switched-On Bach. On her new album, *Beauty In The Beast*, she's launched yet another technological assault on tonality, as **John Diliberto** relates.

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Red-hot guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Cray and his band are breaking down listening barriers by proving there's more to the blues than 12-bar shuffles and guitar boogies. **Jim Roberts** talks with the man everyone's talking about.

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down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

MARCH 1987

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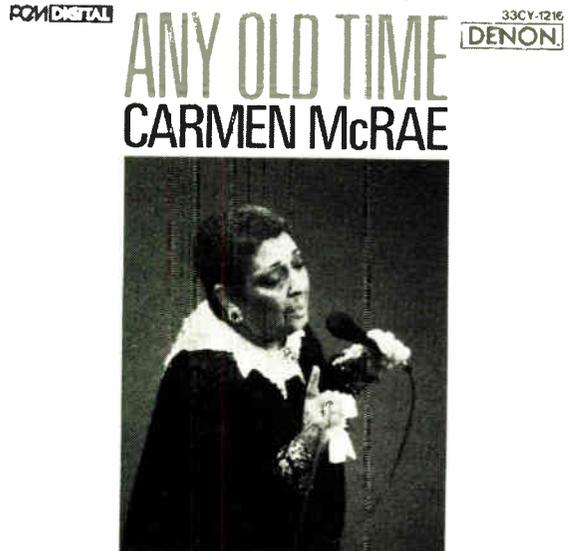
CY-1018. THE COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA, "LONG LIVE THE CHIEF," DDD



CY-1128. McCOY TYNER, "DOUBLE TRIOS," DDD

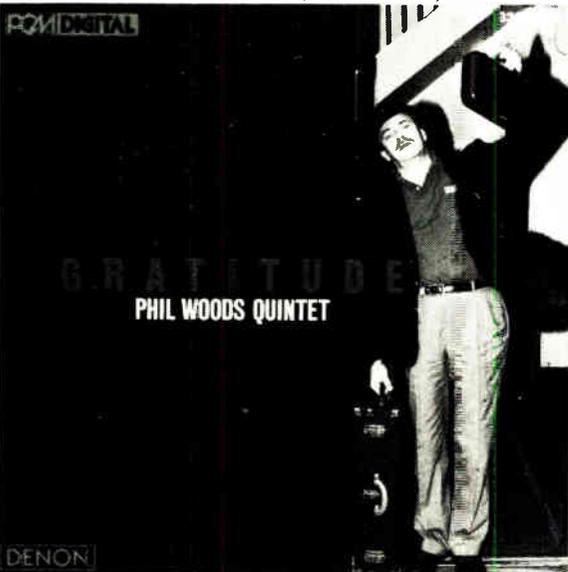


CY-1216. CARMEN McRAE, "ANY OLD TIME," DDD



***This winter,
Denon jazz
is hot.***

CY-1316. PHIL WOODS QUINTET, "GRATITUDE," DDD



Recorded in New York as part of Denon's Jazz Project, each of these four Compact Discs contains over 60 minutes of heat. Experience the warmth of Carmen McRae in the thirteen classic cuts of "Any Old Time." McCoy Tyner's first work on the Denon label, "Double Trios" is also his first to include performances on electric keyboards. Also new to the Denon label are two first-place winners in the 51st Annual *down beat* Reader's Poll: the Basie Band and Phil Woods.

To keep the heat on, this music has never stepped outside of the digital domain. Each disc was digitally recorded, digitally mixed and digitally mastered on proprietary Denon equipment. But you'd expect no less from the First Name in Digital Recording.

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MY FIRST CD

by Art Lange

Well, I fought the good fight for as long as I could, but finally succumbed to the inevitable: I bought a CD player. I resisted the initial media and industry hype (remember quadrasonic sound?), and even held firm against the enthusiastic recommendations of friends

and fellow critics whose trained ears I trusted. But record companies finally made me an offer I couldn't refuse—they began issuing alternate tracks and (sigh!) entire sessions *only* on CD, with no plans for LP or cassette release. What could I do? They had me where I live.

So, I bit down on my lower lip, scrunched up my face in my best Gary Cooper-ish "doubting Thomas" look, and marched into my local audio dealer. Thirty minutes later I marched out again, the

owner of a Yamaha CD-450 machine.

Now, keep in mind that I am hardly a technological whiz, so I didn't spend a lot of time talking distortion specs with the salesperson. Nor does hi-tech flash appeal to me—I've owned and enjoyed the same middle-of-the-road, non-audiophile amplifier, turntable, and speakers for over 10 years now, with no desire to "trade up" to the latest, spiffiest, shiniest toy on the market. And, with over 6,000 LPs in my possession, I'm not exactly anxious for the CD revolution to make the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm album and the equipment necessary to play it obsolete.

But I did some comparative listening between CD players of various makes and prices—and to be honest with you heard very little difference in sound. I bought the Yamaha because it seemed dependable, had the few features I knew I wanted *and no more*, and didn't cost an arm-and-a-leg. I took it home, plugged it in, and plopped in the potentially noisiest CD I had on hand—a Denon recording of the Bruckner *Symphony No. 8*.

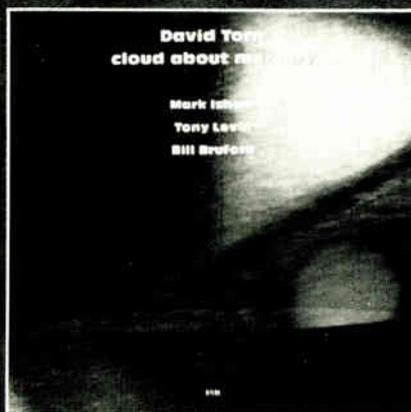
Well, it didn't change my life, but I had to admit it sounded pretty good. The sound was clean and clear, and the lack of distortion had me turning the volume much higher than I normally play LPs—to the distress of my wife and, I'm sure, my neighbors. For my second CD, I decided to get fancy and do an A-B comparison. I chose Oliver Nelson's *Blues And The Abstract Truth* on Impulse—music I knew fairly well, and which I had on both CD and LP. I started them playing at the same time, and switched back and forth between the two. The difference was more than noticeable—it was stunning. There was infinitely more presence to the CD—you could hear Roy Haynes sliding his brushes across the top of his snare, and recognize the *texture* of the sound, where on the LP he was just a vague background presence.

The third CD I played, a live '60s Duke Ellington concert from Japan, also on Denon, enhanced Johnny Hodges' melting tone—like a warm knife through butter—beautifully, but also revealed a few muddy ensemble sections (though whether this is a result of the original microphone placement or due to transfer to the CD format I do not know).

Given the CD's lack of tape hiss, surface vinyl noise, and distortion, I can think of some music (George Crumb, Ran Blake, Morton Feldman, the Art Ensemble of Chicago's *People In Sorrow*) whose drama emerges out of silence and thus *demand*s the advantages of the CD format. I'm looking forward to hearing them. As for everything else—especially at the current price of CDs—well, I'm only partially convinced, but give me time. I'm still a stranger in this strange land.

db

New Music on ECM



David Torn
cloud about mercury

Mark Isham
Tony Levin
Bill Bruford

David Torn CLOUD ABOUT MERCURY

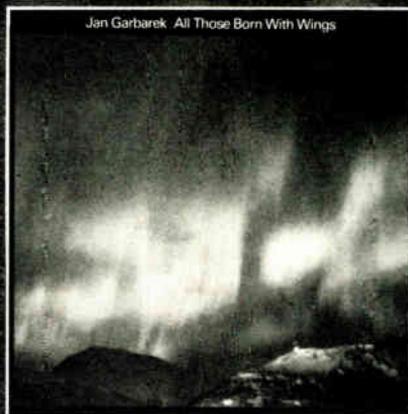
Cloud About Mercury demonstrates that David Torn is more than an impressive young guitarist on the rise. In collaboration with Mark Isham (trumpet and flugelhorn), Tony Levin (Chapman Stick, bass synth) and Bill Bruford (Drums, percussion), Torn reveals his maturity as a writer, group leader and conceptualist with a desire to delve into previously unexplored musical territory. *Cloud About Mercury* is a state-of-the-art recording by four of the most distinctive musicians in contemporary music.

831 108

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Jan Garbarek All Those Born With Wings

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World Radio History

chords & discords



Peter Schaefer Quintett
SCHNIPP SCHNAPP

HAT HUT RECORDS PRESENTS

Peter Schaefer Quintett

SCHNIPP SCHNAPP

The music of Peter Schaefer is, in its suspicion against forms, an assault. It is subcutaneous work of persuasion, surprise, hide-and-seek, sometimes even terror. But above all it is communication, information. Quite full of hope too, for: "The first manifestation of the new is terror (Heiner Müller)".

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NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

I appreciate your article on Bertrand Tavernier's movie *Round Midnight* (Jan. '87); however, your article only increased my negative impressions of some jazz artists. My curiosity concerning Gordon's ability to walk so sickly (I thought he was acting) and how he "deliberately" managed to play weakly was shattered by the revelations in the article. Jazz will remain only an academic curiosity as long as its artists are pictured as self-destructive nomads in a subculture of drugs, alcohol, etc.

James S. Dorsey
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

UPDATE RAP

Regarding Bill Milkowski's concert review (Caught, Dec. '86): Weather Update blew the lid off the Ritz in NYC that night. I can't say enough about this great band. Where was Milkowski when he downbeated this rap—New Jersey?

S. Ronga
Astoria, NY

EYEING THE BEHOLDERS

I've been buying *down beat* since 1959 and own issues back to 1948, but your January 1987 issue has the most widely diverging views of the same album that I've ever seen. In the Critic's Choice section on page 38, Michael Bourne writes for his Old Favorite: "*John Coltrane And Johnny Hartman* (MCA/Impulse). Still the masterpiece of jazz and song . . . Trane and McCoy never sounded more romantic; Hartman's voice was all heart." But on page 57 in "The Pulse of Impulse" review, Jon Balleras writes: "Moving . . . to the ridiculous, we have *John Coltrane And Johnny Hartman* (MCA 5661), a fluke of a record . . . Hartman's only redeeming virtue may be that his enunciation is clear, but his sleepy, offhand delivery conveys little, if anything, about the substance of the ballads collected here. Coltrane and his men stay in the background, wisely."

My personal taste tends to run with Bourne's (as does, apparently, posterity's—the album has been in-print for most of the time since *db* first reviewed it in the October 10, 1963 issue), but one thing is clear: truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Phil Bailey
Louisville, KY

ADAMS FAN

During the early 1970s, I had the good fortune of seeing Charles Mingus at Paul's Mall in Boston. I was particularly impressed that evening with the exceptional saxophone playing of George Adams. So much so that I found time to hear Mingus' ensemble three more times in

the next few months in small clubs around Chicago—mainly because I was so blown away by George Adams. Needless to say, Jim Robert's review of the Don Pullen/George Adams Quartet in the January *down beat* was a welcome sight, for this musician has to be one of the most underrated and unsung saxophonists of his time. It sure would be nice to see Adams profiled in an upcoming issue. In the meantime, thanks for a great magazine.

Mark Heller
Northbrook, IL

While awaiting our next Adams Feature you might want to hunt up our Nov. '79 issue, the last db to feature Adams. —Ed.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

I couldn't agree more with Bill Beuttler's "On The Beat" [Oct. 1986]. The proliferation of charity concerts has begun to strain the suspenders of credibility. Such extravaganzas resemble mass orgies of self-congratulation. One cannot help but feel a sense of hypocrisy at celebrity musicians arriving for these concerts in chauffeured limousines. However, the attitude that such events must be planned sparingly in order to maintain credibility and keep from exhausting the public is avoiding the issue. Maybe the problem is not the credibility or frequency of such events. Instead, the public's ability to tire of or "cynicize" such events reflects an unwillingness to raise social consciousness to a level that will provide solutions instead of charity concerts.

Dave Graham
New York City

BILLIE/ARTIE SEARCH

Only one recording survives from the period during which Billie Holiday performed with the Artie Shaw Orchestra. I wrote to Mr. Shaw to ask if *Any Old Time* was indeed the only known record from Billie's stay with his group, and he replied that it was. Mr. Shaw notes that "I am informed by normally reliable sources that there does exist, somewhere (God knows where!), a series of airchecks taken from radio broadcasts my band made during the late summer of 1936, during which period Billie was working in the band as a regular vocalist. To date I have failed to unearth any of these despite a long and assiduous search."

From August to October of 1936, Artie was playing on WABC on a CBS wire from the Hotel Lexington. Four cuts survive with Artie playing as part of the Billie Holiday Orchestra from July 1936. George Simon and others also place Billie with Artie in the Boston Roseland-State in 1938. These broadcasts marked Artie's rise to fame. It is possible that air-checks from

these broadcasts have also survived. Thus both his "string" and "swing" bands may be preserved somewhere with Billie as vocalist. Jack Millar, in his discography *Born To Sing* mentions that while playing with Artie Shaw, Billie "broadcast a number of times with them, and it is possible that some air-shots have been preserved." I would greatly appreciate any information concerning the existence and location of any air-checks from this period with Billie as vocalist with the Artie Shaw Orchestra. Not only would they fill a major gap in Billie's recorded legacy, but judging from *Any Old Time*, should contain some wonderful music. Please send me such information % Tulane University Libraries, New Orleans, LA 70118.

Bruce E. Fleury
New Orleans

SEEKING SUMAC

I am an avid reader of *down beat* and a jazz record collector. I recently came across a bunch of 78 rpm records of a "jazz" vocalist by the name of Yma Sumac, who has an incredible four-octave range and did some interesting avant garde vocals, especially on a cut entitled *Birds*. My question involves my hearing two different stories about her background: one is that her name really was Yma Sumac and she grew up in the Peruvian Andes and was a descendant of Inca royalty; another was that she was from New York City and her real name was Amy Camus, which is Yma Sumac spelled backwards. Could you or any of your readers tell me which story is true and if there is a biography of her available? Any info on "Yma's" background and recording career would be appreciated, including a complete discography of her work.

Marc Shulman
Pueblo, CO

SWAP RECORDS?

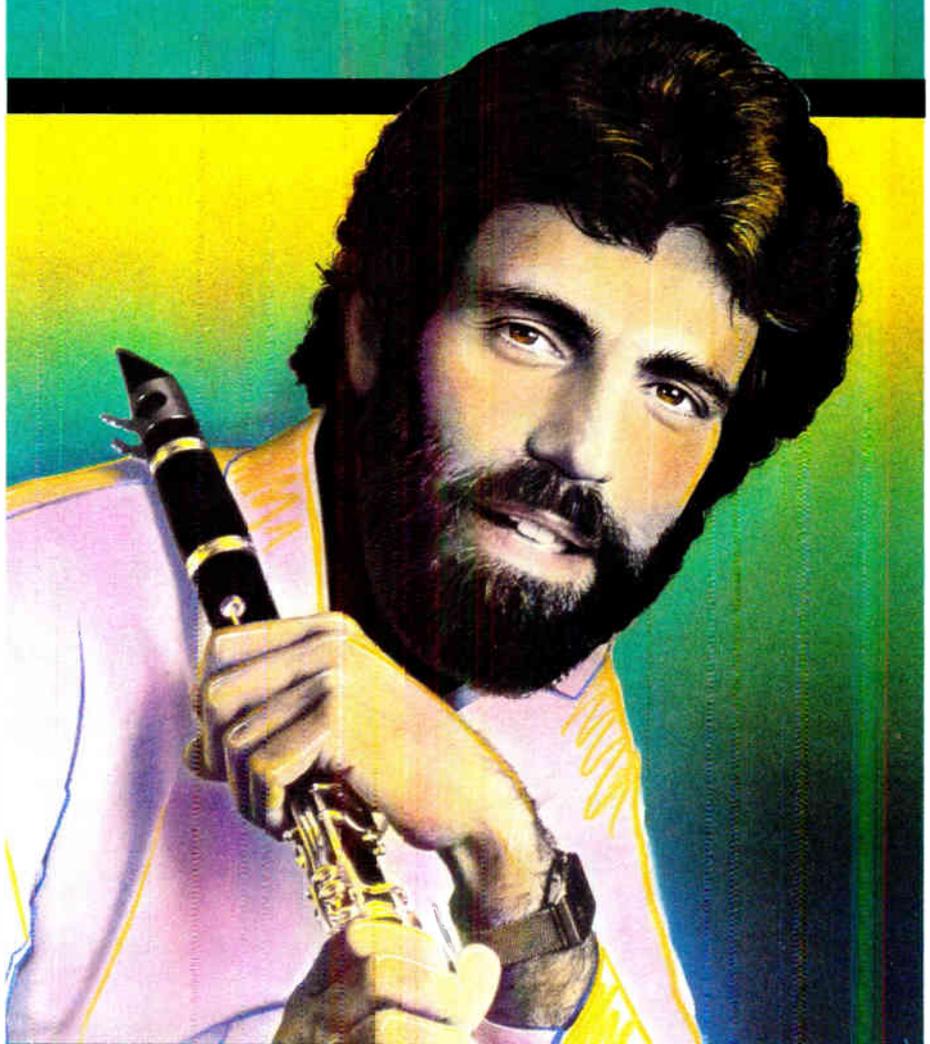
I am very much interested in modern jazz and rock, and my hobby is collecting records. Therefore I'd like to exchange records with partners from the U.S.A. or other countries because such records are not available in my country. As it is not easy to find partners, I'd like to ask you for help.

For exchange, I can offer all kinds of records from Poland and other socialist countries, as well as stamps, etc. As I've said above, I'm chiefly interested in modern music: Ornette Coleman, Ronald Shannon Jackson, David Murray, Lou Reed, Pere Ubu, etc.

Those interested can write me at 41-200 Sosnowiec, ul. Nowotki 10/14, Poland.

Marek Lepiarczyk
Poland

MONSTER BREAKTHROUGH!



EDDIE DANIELS & VANDOREN

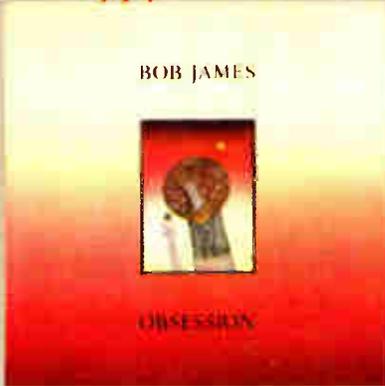
Quincy Jones called Eddie Daniels "The Monster clarinetist...a virtuoso musician," and considering the source, that's a monstrous compliment! Another fan, Artie Shaw, described Eddie as "without a doubt one of the finest clarinetists on the contemporary music scene." Eddie's new Jazz/Classical crossover album "Breakthrough" on GRP records, is being termed a "masterpiece" by nearly everyone.

And Eddie uses the reeds that the great ones use. Vandoren. French cane. Contour cut. Consistently excellent. Just like Eddie's music.

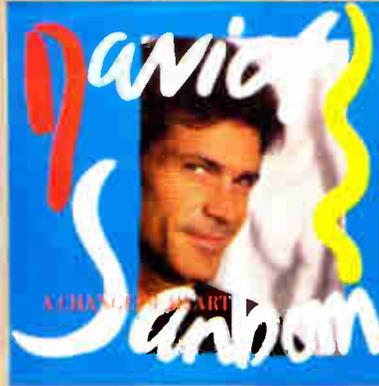


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GET JAZZZED.



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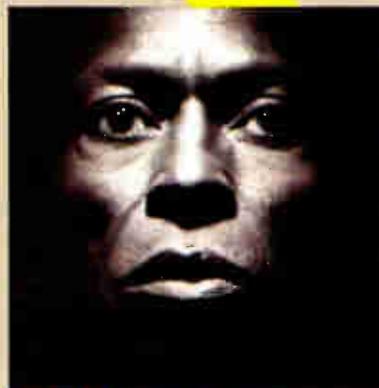
Mark O'Connor
Stone From Which The Arch Was Made

GET JAZZZED.

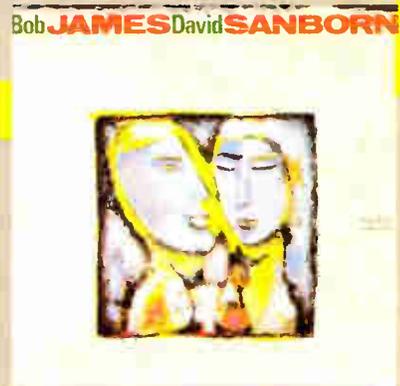
Madhouse
8



Miles Davis
Tutu



Bob James and David Sanborn
Double Vision



GET JAZZZED.



BRANFORD LECTURE: Branford Marsalis recently put on an hour-and-a-half concert/clinic at the Arts Magnet High School in Dallas, donating his time free-of-charge in order to "give something back" to the music. Branford performed with the school's down beat Student Musician Award-winning lab band and lectured to 200 students. Pictured left are Arts Magnet jazz studies director Bart Marantz and Branford's brother Delfeayo.



JAZZ FOR KIDS: Former Headhunter bassist Poul Jackson (right) leads a four-man Japanese jazz band at a recent performance of his non-profit "Jazz for Kids" program, attended by 500 appreciative Japanese schoolchildren. Jackson's program included a jazzed-up version of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, standards like *Maiden Voyage* and *St. Thomas*, and a brief history of jazz that traced its roots to African music, spirituals and slave work songs, Dixieland, ragtime, and the blues. "Our basic message," says Jackson, who lives in Japan with his Japanese wife and their son, "is that music is fun."

Dotpoukki

Film review: **Dr. John, Tom Waits, David Johansen, Joe Strummer, and Leon Redbone** will star in *There Ain't No Candy Mountain*, a musical road movie about "a young musician's scam-of-a-lifetime that turns into a metaphysical pursuit, as well as the search for the legendary [guitarmaker] Elmore;" the soundtrack will feature these five, with **Bill Frisell** joining Dr. John for incidental music, and the film will be co-directed by photographer/documentary filmmaker **Robert Frank** and novelist/screenwriter **Rudolph Wurlitzer** (*Pat Garrett and Billy The Kid, Coming Home, Sid And Nancy*). Meanwhile, jazzers have turned up on soundtracks for three recently released feature flicks—former Miles Davis sideman **James Mtume** contributes the score for *Native Son* (based on the Richard Wright novel), the **Yellowjackets** perform on *Star Trek IV*, and **Bill Watrous** blows 'bone solos on Clint Eastwood's *Heartbreak Ridge* . . . drummers' choice: **Phil Collins** is having no trouble keeping busy following the latest Genesis tour; **Tony Williams** and **Buddy Rich** are eyeing him as producer for their next albums, and he's also been offered a movie role . . . Stone status: **Charlie Watts** isn't the only Rolling Stone with a solo project underway; bandmates **Mick Jagger, Ronnie Wood,**

Bill Wyman, and Keith Richards are all said to have solo albums in the works (with **Robert Cray** rumored to be joining Richards on his) . . . jazz endowments: **Cleo Patra Brown, Melba Liston, and Jay McShann** will receive 1987 Jazz Masters Fellowships of \$20,000 each from the National Endowment for the Arts' Music Program; the three join the following past honorees—Roy Eldridge, Sun Ra, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk (who died before his proposed grant could be awarded), Count Basie, Kenny Clarke, Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, Max Roach, Gil Evans, Ella Fitzgerald, Jo Jones, Benny Carter, Teddy Wilson, and Dexter Gordon . . . new Grammy: there'll be a new category included in this year's **Grammy Awards**; despite the trickiness of defining just what constitutes it—and the reluctance of several of its best-known artists to be lumped with the genre—the growing popularity of New Age music (it now accounts to two-three percent of all record sales) has earned it its own award . . . hat trick: **Ray Charles** earned a trio of major awards in '86; he became the second youngest recipient of the Kennedy Center "Award for Excellence" for his "extraordinary contribution to American culture" at a ceremony awarded by **President Reagan** and five other award winners (televised on a CBS

special), and picked up a pair of honors from the people of France—the "Commander of Fine Arts & Letters" medal for his overall contribution to the arts and a "Victories de la Musique" award as "best foreign artist of the year" . . . foreign affairs: the **International Jazz Federation** is expressing "deep concern" over the arrest and imprisonment of six members of the jazz section of the Czechoslovakia Musicians' Union; the Czech Ministry of the Interior officially abolished the jazz section a year ago, and the charges stem from the section's continued sale of its cultural publications. Meantime, Czech jazz fans were being treated to music by **Herbie Hancock, Betty Carter, John Scofield, Lester Bowie' Brass Fantasy, Bobby McFerrin, and Flora Purim & Airto** at a pair of festivals—the Prague International Jazz Festival and the 12th annual Bratislava Jazz Days. Other recent happenings abroad include **Henry Butler, Grover Washington Jr., and Broadway star Ren Richardson** being among a select group of artists traveling to Moscow, Leningrad, and Riga to create a musical dialog with Soviet artists as part of "A Journey in Soviet Diplomacy;" and jazz vocalists **Deater O'Neill** and **K. Shalong**, their backing combos, and the **D.C. Contemporary Dance**

Theater journeyed to Bangkok recently as part of a United Airlines/Sister Cities cultural exchange . . . chamber music competition: time's almost out to compete for the \$5,000 first prize and sponsoring Chamber Music Chicago's 1987-88 series concert date in the **1987 Chicago Discovery Competition**; applications and tapes (including one work each in the classical, romantic, and modern genres) must reach Chamber Music Chicago by 3/1 at Fine Arts Bldg., 410 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 462, Chicago, IL 60605 . . . music ed.: a hundred students braved one of the worst Quebec snowstorms in recent memory to attend a two-and-a-half-hour composition lecture and discussion by **Carla Bley** and **Steve Swallow** at Concordia University; for students seeking warmer surroundings, Hollywood's **Musicians Institute** has announced that new schools for songwriters and vocalists have been added to MI's existing guitar, bass, and drum schools . . . club news: Boston lost its last name jazz club when Howard Johnson's Motor Hotel in Kenmore Square converted the **Starlight Roof** to executive offices, but across the river in Cambridge **Ryle's** celebrated its 10th anniversary; in Washington, DC, Blues Alley has debuted its own Blues Alley Big Band, a "neo-traditional" swing ensemble directed by trombonist **Bob Israel** . . .

SONIC YOUTH

"I guess you could say we're enthralled by good American Pop," guffaws Sonic Youth guitarist/vocalist Thurston Moore with a slight scent of sarcasm in his voice. But even though this most-appropriately named band has been dealing with songs of late—their psychosexual take of Madonna's *Into The Groove* under the name Ciccone Youth at once lampoons and salutes notions of stardom and craft—it's still bold, swelling clamour and an effective use of dissonance which define their sound.

Moore champions pop despite the fact that he and fellow string player Lee Ranaldo did time in Glen Branca's "extremely ferocious" all-guitar orchestra, an ensemble that (slightly) inspired Sonic Youth's slant. "I really liked the bastard attitude that Glen's music had" Moore admits, but reminds that "the Velvet's and early Stooges" were a closer approximation of what his ideal skronk-to-song ratio should be.

Initially saddled with the post-*No New York* media epithet of "noise rockers" ("I hated that art shit" he fumes), of late the group has been attempting to crystalize the squall and still retain its accompanying power. The jagged motifs that they pasted together on their first LP, *Confusion Is Sex* (Neutral 9), were blurry due to a lack of chops. By *Bad Moon Rising* (Homestead 16), their celebration of/attack on physical and



NAOMI PETERSEN

emotional gore was cemented as the topic of choice; they described this nation's violent underbelly with a sardonic glee, and effectively echoed it instrumentally.

"Yeah, we try to mix and match mood as far as lyrics and music go," Moore deadpans, "we're also interested in attracted opposites; you might hear some happy music with some sad words."

It wasn't long before their metallic ribbon candy and psychic melees began to meld together. On their latest LP, *Evo!* (SST 059), the engulfing drones foster a unity, and the ruefully ethereal moments sound almost romantic. Still, the scrap heap continues to inform their sound; sticking out of the dirges are rocket-blast takeoffs of feedback and susta n. They've found a way to keep bassist/

vocalist Kim Gordon and drummer Steve Shelly building on structure while Ranaldo and Moore essay all of guitarville—slides, strums, smears. Many of these effects are aided by "prepared" instruments: screwdrivers and drumsticks have been known to be driven into the strings.

On stage, improvised sections now roar with clarity "because of all the roadwork we do," laughs Moore. "Actually whatever improvisation goes down on stage is included in our songwriting," he explains. "We have pieces that might sound different every night, but the thing is they're always played that way. They might've started out as improvisational, but since then they've been notated. It's kind of deceptive."

—jim macnie

THE VIBRATION SOCIETY

"A nybody who came in Rahsaan's path was touched in a way they won't forget," said Dorthaan Kirk, widow of multi-instrumentalist and visionary Rahsaan Roland Kirk. "Everybody tells good stories and bad stories about Rahsaan, but always appreciative stories."

I always tell of the night Rahsaan frightened me in the kitchen of the Village Vanguard during an otherwise wonderful interview for *db*, or the night at Radio City Music Hall when Rahsaan, who'd suffered a stroke and was said to be finished as a musician, walked onstage, paralyzed but indomitable, and played one-handed, all by himself—and beautifully.

Steve Turre and Hilton Ruiz were young musicians who came in Rahsaan's path. Now they co-lead The Vibration Society, a band devoted to Kirk's music, with a recently released first recording (*Stash 261*). The Bill Hardman/Junior Cook Quintet became the Society's nucleus, with trombonist Turre added as arranger and pianist Ruiz as musical director.



BILL MAY

Vibration Society frontliners Steve Turre, Bill Hardman, and Junior Cook.

"I played with Rahsaan steadily for two years," Turre said. "He was a strong influence, not just stylistically but in terms of the meaning of the music, the depth of the tradition. Rahsaan could play further out than any of the outside cats, then he'd come back and play pretty and sweet, and then play *Giant Steps* behind that. He could play *all* the music. He didn't just talk about it."

Kirk was often celebrated as a novelty: a blind musician who'd often play three saxophones at once without seeming to breathe. "It wasn't just that he played three saxophones," Turre said, "or that he played the flute like Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson got all the money for, or that he was an historian. It

was his presence and his spirit and his ability to tell the truth, even though sometimes people didn't like to hear it, that attracted me to him. Rahsaan was blind, but he saw the truth. He judged a man by what was in his heart, and that's what I loved about him."

Ruiz joined Kirk in 1973 and stayed until Rahsaan's death on the road in '77. "Rahsaan was exciting, fiery, a rare performer with so many talents," Ruiz said, "and the nature of his music was so happy and spiritual." Ruiz arranged *Serenade To A Cuckoo*, one of Kirk's happiest numbers, for the new recording. *Bright Moments* features singers Suzanne Klewan and Timmy Shepherd and is indeed momentarily bright.

Turre arranged most of the recording, highlighted by a haunting *Inflated Tear* and the aptly titled *Steppin' Into Beauty*. Ruiz and Turre both hope the record will generate gigs for the band. They've already played festivals and concerts in San Francisco, New Orleans, and around New York.

Dorthaan Kirk hopes the band will regenerate interest in Rahsaan's music. "Rahsaan played the whole spectrum of music, and his music had a lot to say," she said. "He recorded 30 albums, and each album was totally different, but most of his music is out of print. The Vibration Society is our way of keeping his music alive."

—michael bourne



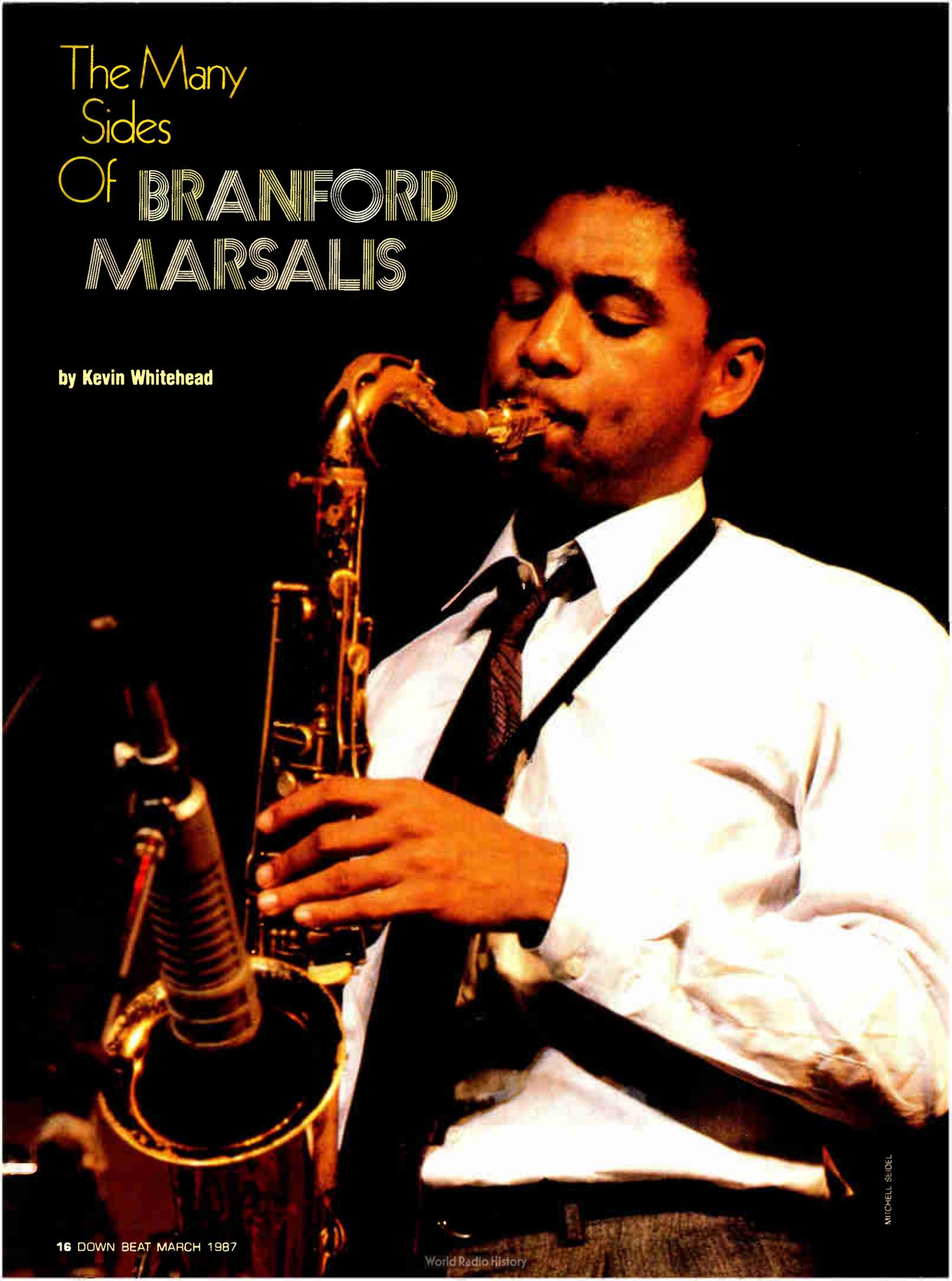
The Stand Mate Mute Holder comes in two models – for straight and cup Trumpet/Cornet mutes and an extended model for straight and cup Trombone mutes. Both models clip onto just about any music stand, wire, metal or plastic and hold your mute ready for use.

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La Voz
Quality
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The Many
Sides
Of **BRANFORD
MARSALIS**

by Kevin Whitehead



MITCHELL SEIDEL

“I’m confident of my ability, but I’m not ready to break new ground right now.”



Six years later, Branford Marsalis wants to come clean. “Tony Lujan, trumpet player in Clark Terry’s band! I admit it, I put the powdered soap in your shoes and switched your valves around while you were sleeping. Clark, it was me who switched your valves during intermission! (He threatened to kill Ned Otter for that, I didn’t have the heart to confess.) Singer Michele Becker, me and Ned put the shaving cream on your door.

“I did some crazy shit in Clark’s big band to defuse my frustrations,” Branford remembers, describing a bus tour in which serious players jostled with tasteless mercenaries. “In that kind of situation I have two choices: I either get very angry and start kicking ass, which I don’t like to do, or get very childish and silly.”

That’s ambivalent Branford: funny and affable, caustic and indiscreet. Though he’s a quiet stickler for family loyalty, little outside the Marsalis clan escapes criticism: targets include the black music policies of the record company to whom he’s signed for eight more LPs, and the music camps run by the collegiate alma mater he endorses. (“They spend all their time bickering over who’s better, Joe Henderson or Wayne Shorter. And either Joe or Wayne is better than *all* of them!”)

Here’s Branford on those who don’t hear the humor in his music, or who say he sounds just like Shorter: “They don’t listen. Did you notice I play *Yakety Sax* in the middle of my solo on *Royal Garden Blues*? On Wynton’s gigs we used to play *Beat It* in the middle of a song and nobody ever heard it. Once at a jam session, I played a verbatim Sonny Rollins solo I’d been working on, and this other tenor player says, ‘Wow, I hear so much Wayne in your playing!’”

On working with his friend Sting: “It must be rough to be the leader of the Police, where you join a band and you’re the leader and you’re not doing anything. I saw him in *down beat* [Dec. ’85] talking about what he taught us, but what could he teach us? About reggae? No. Structure? I play jazz, which is the *ultimate* in structure. He was the leader—there was never any lack of respect, but he gave us the chord structure and we did the rest. The rhythm section really did it.”

Branford’s compulsive perversity would be his undoing if he weren’t such a *charming* guy, with a frankly mocking ear-to-ear grin and an open manner that inspires one to ask tasteless questions. Like, did you play with Sting for the money?

“Whatever they say. I hate pop music, it’s the worst thing in the world,” he says, sitting in the piano room of his bright Brooklyn apartment. (The interviewer smiles inwardly: a journalistic coup!) Marsalis gets up, and throws open the doors of a cabinet. “Yes, I hate pop music, as you can see by looking at these worn, faded rock & roll records, some of which I’ve had for 10 years”—pointing out the ancient Steely Dan, Led Zeppelin, James Brown, and Pink Floyd records stacked next to *The Complete Tina Brooks*. Get the idea, sucker?

But perversity has its price. Branford explains why his second jazz LP as leader, *Royal Garden Blues*, was recorded toward the end of a year-and-a-half on the road with Sting: “I wanted to do a record in the middle of a pop tour, because I heard so many disparaging remarks—‘You guys think you can play jazz at the same time you play pop, I got news for you. I tried it and it doesn’t work.’ I thought, ‘Okay, we’ll see how right they are.’ Looking back, my record would have been 100 percent better if I’d waited six months. My jazz chops had fallen off, definitely. I

was really struggling to get my control together; the direction I take on the solos is real strange.

“I don’t have a band, I don’t worry about structure,” Branford says of the LP, to which he contributed just one tune with just one chord (*The Wrath Of Tain*). Yet despite the album’s revolving cast, each cut follows standard quartet format—for now, his ideal lineup. “I play better, I write better, I *hear* a quartet setting.”

And even without a working group, you can hear Branford’s distinctive vision of how his band should sound. “The quartet is my quintet,” he says—by which he means that the piano often functions like a second horn: joining in on the head, taking a solo, and evaporating when Branford’s soloing. (“Kenny Kirkland’s got taste. When you’re blowing a lot of chords, he just spaces. It’s great.”) Branford likes hard blowing; he despises the anemic, “generic” brand of bebop he associates with the West Coast.

His playing here does have muscle, but the aspect of the album he’s proudest of is its sound. It’s a sign of Branford’s “post-Sting” clout that CBS allowed younger brother Delfeayo Marsalis to produce. Branford credits Delfeayo, artful tape-splicer and zealous student of recording techniques, with helping shape the overall LP; the producer insisted that a burning excerpt from a “generic” *Strike Up The Band* be included. Branford praises him for getting a spacious, large-room sound too few jazz records have anymore. The saxophonist hates the flat sound of drums recorded in booths, punched-up with digital reverb. Delfeayo had to isolate the drums to prevent leakage, but he ingeniously solved the room-ambience problem by building a wall of baffles around the drums, from the floor to the high ceiling of Branford’s favorite surviving studio, RCA A in Manhattan.

“Digital reverb was invented for pop, digital recording for classical. But there’s no such thing as jazz technology—no recording equipment created for the optimum jazz sound. Nobody’s putting any money into it. We’re trying to develop a microphone for the bass, so it’ll sound like wood, not like an amplifier. I’ve gained enough leverage now to discuss such things with people, and they’re willing to listen. Where if I tried this three years ago, people would say, ‘Who the hell are you?’”

Now that Branford’s post-Sting, they know. But he scoffs at the idea that he might now be the most famous member of his family: to the world, he’s just Sting’s sax player. Not that he cares. Branford is amused by journalists’ clumsy attempts to invent sibling rivalries; he makes a convincing case that he’s not plagued by ego problems.

Which puts Branford in an unusual position. He has industry backing, but no identity as a musician to sell. The 26-year-old Marsalis has often said he’ll be content to find himself *after* he’s 30, like Coltrane—in an era when academically trained players such as himself tend to find a voice early or not at all.

Marsalis family history is jazz’ modern up-the-river fable; no need to dwell on it except to point out that Branford didn’t live in New Orleans until he was 14, having spent his childhood in the Cajun town of Breaux Bridge and in outlying NOLA suburbs, in and around Kenner—which may explain the lack of overt New Orleans tendencies in the brothers’ music. Dad Ellis Marsalis, of course, was a key player in New Orleans’ modern bop movement. As a teen Branford reluctantly accompanied him to gigs, though he paid little attention to the



MITCHELL SEIDEL

PINCH HITTER: Branford subs for the WSQ's Dav d Murray—from left, Julius Hemphill, Marsalis, Hamiet Bluiett, Oliver Lake.

musicians on the scene. “But when you grow up in an certain environment, there are a lot of things in the air that you pick up. People from Newark say Wayne has a Newark sound. I didn’t know what that meant till I heard a lot of saxophone players from Newark who were much older who played like that.”

Branford came to jazz late, the oft-told story goes, after jiving in high school funk bands (rather like the young Ellis, who’d honked rote sax breaks in the Groovy Boys). He and roomie Donald Harrison clowned in marching bands for a year at Southern U., before Alvin Batiste—“who feared we’d take our ability and flush it down the toilet to be big men on campus”—booted them up to Boston’s Berklee College, to build something on the technical foundation they’d acquired.

“When I was at Berklee we liked everybody, listened to everybody, and learned everything. I was there during a lucky period; Smitty Smith and Donald Harrison were my roommates, Jeff Watts was down the hall, and Jean Toussaint, Tim Williams, Ira Coleman, and my bassist Delbert Felix were around. I went there with a specific thing in mind: experiment, meet musicians, practice, get down to New York. I knew what I wanted to learn, I didn’t just show up and say, ‘Teach me.’”

After graduation came five months with the Jazz Messengers. “Blakey taught me how to play the drums when I play”—a lesson made obvious on *Strike Up The Band*. “Rhythm is it. It’s what makes soloists different, what makes Sonny Rollins or Bird so great. I understood how time worked when I left Art.”

In the Messengers, Branford played alto—a horn he’s now reinvestigating—before switching to tenor and soprano on joining Wynton’s quintet. (“But I always had tenor elements in my alto playing, even if I’d never played tenor.”) Given his choppy staccato phrasing and full sound, and the group’s much-discussed aural resemblance to Miles’ classic quintet, it’s not surprising Branford got tagged early and often as a Shorter imitator. But if

Marsalis is still groping for a tenor style, his tastes are clearly a little broader than that; on *Royal Garden Blues* his tenor conjures the spirit of 1957 Rollins and Coltrane.

A little broader, but hardly encyclopedic. Branford is a paradox; he speaks with eloquent passion about how America ignores its own cultural history (especially where blacks are involved), but he’s partly guilty himself. Indeed, the growing critical grumble against the “Marsalite sect” hinges on their narrowly prescribed neo-classicism; their world begins with Bird at Monroe’s and ends when Trane got weird or Wayne left Miles. But as the critics take aim, the targets disperse. It’s hard to reconcile Donald Harrison’s whippet solos with Don Pullen—or Branford’s *Wrath Of Tain* charge over indeterminate rhythm—with the reactionary complacency they’re accused of. Not that such charges mightn’t stick elsewhere. True, Branford’s warm-yet-assertive soprano, a reflection of early clarinet training, helped define the sound of Wynton’s quintet. But you don’t have to talk to Branford long, or examine his career very closely, to realize he doesn’t see things the way the equally outspoken Wynton does. In fact, after meeting cut-up Branford, you might view Wynton’s ultra-seriousness in light of the middle-child syndrome.

When Branford says he “listened to everybody” at Berklee, that’s not exactly true. The bop he heard around the house and in the air when he was a kid set his tastes. No accident that *Royal Garden Blues’* kick-off track, evoking Trane’s *Moment’s Notice*, was penned by Ellis. On tenor, Shorter may be an obvious “reference” (a word Branford prefers to “influence”), but his playing’s informed by the main channel of the tenor tradition. It’s a tradition he’s still wading through, a process which has made finding his own voice on tenor slow going.

● ● ●

“What could [Sting] teach us? About reggae? No. Structure? I play jazz, which is the ultimate in structure.”

He was more quick to develop a style on soprano, he says, because, "My only reference was Wayne. He's the only cat to me to have played soprano, besides Steve Lacy. For Coltrane it was an extension of his tenor playing. Wayne gave it a completely different character, made it into a voice."

Though he quotes Sidney Bechet on the dixie warhorse *Royal Garden Blues* (taken on a modern 4/4 fly), Marsalis finds Sidney's vibrato "corny. I listen to his records because I know I'm supposed to know that stuff. Not that it isn't great music, but it's great music for its time. To play it now—if you have technicolor why shoot in black & white?"

Branford loves Coltrane's *Ascension*—"nasty, makes me tremble"—and the freewheeling Mingus/Dolphie combos of 1960. But to Branford, '60s free jazz and '70s solo concerts only allowed incompetents to perpetrate artistic fraud; his objections to those movements are as anecdotal as Reagan's opposition to welfare. Marsalis doesn't dismiss David Murray, Billy Harper, or Albert Ayler, but they don't do anything for him, either. On present-day George Russell: "The way he writes is not the way I hear it." On Ornette's *Prime Time*: "I understand more of it now than I ever did, but it gets a little rough for me to understand sometimes, very difficult to listen to. Maybe when I'm older."

He does, however, admire saxist Steve Coleman's unorthodox lyricism, recognizing a potential for an outward-bound approach he may adopt himself one day. But like most of his future plans, it's tentative. Marsalis hated traveling with Terry's and Blakey's big bands, but wouldn't mind recording in front of one—a possibility he'd been exploring with Thad Jones at the time of Thad's death. He's like to continue matching spoken words with music, as he did on his cover of Mingus' *Scenes In The City*. And he's looking forward to a long and productive haul with his new quartet: Julian Joseph, piano; Delbert Felix, bass; Louis Nash, drums.

But Branford's top priority is raising the restless, inquisitive year-old son he casually minded during our talk: Reese Ellis, named for mom Theresa Reese Marsalis and for the man who instilled in Branford a sense of family responsibility. "I'm not going to sacrifice his life for the music.

"I'm confident of my ability, but I'm not ready to break new ground right now; I still want to do classical *and* pop records. But it's no lie, I won't play anything for money. When you do shit for money you have to kiss too much ass, and I can't stand the smell." Branford's face cracks into a self-deprecating grin. "Man, if I did shit for *money*, would I say half the things I say?" db

BRANFORD MARSALIS' EQUIPMENT

Branford's tenor is a Selmer Mark VI, with an Otto Link #9 mouthpiece and a Fred Hempke #4 or Rico Royal #4 reed. "For rock & roll gigs, a small sound gets picked up better by microphones. For jazz gigs I want a big sound so I use Otto Links." His alto is an H. Couf, with a Meyer #9 mouthpiece, and Rico Royal #4.

"Next, I have a real dilly for the folks," Branford bubbles in an Aunt Millie voice: a Selmer Mark VI, silver curved-neck (straight) soprano. "Beautiful. This sounds warmer than any soprano I've ever played. There are only three or four like it in the world, and it's the only one I've ever seen—Wayne's is a Yamaha. I checked with Selmer—they didn't import it, they don't know how old it is." It's fitted with a Bari .64 medium-open mouthpiece and a Vandoren #4 reed.

He's "just trying out" a Selmer Super-action 80 alto and Selmer U.S.A. tenor and alto. All told, Marsalis has four tenors, three altos, four sopranos.

Other toys include a Prophet 5 and a Casio MT-31 "for pokin' around—I'll probably give it to my kid. But you can use it to drive keyboards." He also drives keyboards with a MIDI-equipped Apple Macintosh Plus. With that, muses Branford—who had to scrap a shaky version of an intricate tune from *Royal Garden Blues*—he can make demos to send to musicians before a recording date: they capture phrasing and spirit better than sheet music, and are cheaper and less time-consuming than a rehearsal.

BRANFORD MARSALIS SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| as a leader | with Dizzy Gillespie |
| ROYAL GARDEN BLUES—Columbia 40363 | CLOSER TO THE SOURCE—Atlantic 81646-1 |
| SCENES IN THE CITY—Columbia 38951 | NEW FACES—GRP 1012 |
| with the English Chamber Orchestra | with Kevin Eubanks |
| ROMANCES FOR SAXOPHONE—Columbia 42122 | OPENING NIGHT—GRP 1013 |
| with Wynton Marsalis | with Ray Drummond |
| BLACK CODES (FROM THE UNDERGROUND)—Columbia 40009 | SUSANITA—Nilva 3048 |
| HOT HOUSE FLOWERS—Columbia 39530 | with Bobby Hutcherson |
| THINK OF ONE . . . —Columbia 38641 | GOOD BAIT—Landmark 501 |
| WYNTON MARSALIS—Columbia 37574 | with Miles Davis |
| with Ellis and Wynton Marsalis | FATHERS AND SONS—Columbia 37972 |
| with Sting | with Roy Ayers |
| BRING ON THE NIGHT—A&M Bring 1 | YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED—Columbia 40022 |
| THE DREAM OF THE BLUE TURTLES—A&M 3750 | with Teena Marie |
| with Art Blakey | EMERALD CITY—Epic 40318 |
| KEYSTONE 3—Concord 196 | with Tina Turner |
| LIVE AT MONTREUX AND NORTHSEA—Timeless 150 | BREAK EVERY RULE—Capital 12530 |



MESSENGER REUNION: From left, Branford, Bill Pierce, Terence Blanchard, Donald Harrison, Wynton Marsalis.

MITCHELL SEIDEL



“The truth is that absolutely every time I’ve done a record it seems like in retrospect I look back and say, ‘Dammit, there you go again, Wendy, always trying to pioneer, you know.’ And you know what pioneers get.”

In the case of Wendy Carlos it’s been a combination of acclaim and ridicule, celebrity and scandal, exhilaration and pain. This has been the emotional terrain of the musician who put Moog synthesizers on the map and into the popular consciousness with *Switched-On Bach*. Now, nearly 20 years after that signpost work, she’s talking about her new album, *Beauty In The Beast*, a dramatic assault on the world of tonality and a World Music recording that expands the limits of the entire genre.

Carlos’ view of herself, as an adventurer at the edges of sound, going where no one has gone before, are not entirely unjustified. There is *S-OB* and *The Well-Tempered Synthesizer*, of course, but they were followed up in 1972 with *Sonic Seasonings*, a compelling two-record suite of ethereal melodies threaded through tape-manipulated environmental sounds. Ten years later, New Age musicians are still clumsily tossing birds, breezes, and waves behind drifty melodies, not realizing the depth of Carlos’ electro-acoustic machinations. “It was an attempt by

WENDY CARLOS

BY JOHN DILIBERTO

A.D. (After Digital)

Rachel Elkind [Carlos’ early collaborator] and I,” she explains, “to make a combination of natural sounds, sort of environmental, and yet also sort of a laidback type of music that could compel some listening attention but not as much as say, listening to a symphony.”

Although Brian Eno would make just those claims for his ambient recordings a few years later, the response *he* received was certainly more encouraging than Carlos’. “We did it and it was received with an absolutely astounding degree of silence.” She may get a second chance, however, if Carlos completes her plan for *Digital Seasonings*.

Then there was the *A Clockwork Orange* soundtrack, full of futuristic vocoder renditions of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and

the desolate synthesizer strains of Purcell’s *Music For The Funeral Of Queen Mary* (*Title Music From A Clockwork Orange*). “People hated the vocoder on the Ninth,” exclaims Carlos.

In 1982 Carlos re-emerged with the soundtrack to Disney’s computer game fantasy, *Tron*, in which she combined orchestra and synthesizers, although most critics thought, since it was Carlos, it *had* to be electronic. And just to throw them a curve, in 1984 she issued *Digital Moonscapes*, a manifesto for digital synthesis in which the orchestra was, in fact, recreated on her GDS digital synthesizer. In an obvious pun on the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), she called hers the LSI Philharmonic, or Large Scale Integration, i.e. computer chips.

For those of you who think playing synthesizers is easy and that the work of Carlos, be it her Bach interpretations or her original music, is the result of simple computer trickery, welcome to the asylum of shattered expectations and misdirected prejudices. Carlos operates in a world of theoretical complexity and sonic detail that is both confusing and astounding. When she did Bach, she did him down to the buckles on his shoes, understanding not only the mathematical precision of his music, but getting *inside* the reasons why he phrased in a certain way and selected his orchestrations and registers. Twenty years later some people are still trying to duplicate Carlos’ insights. One need look no further than the CD chart-topping album of 1986, Don Dorsey’s

arthritic *Bachbusters*, to hear how much craft and art is involved in Carlos' work. There'll be no more excuses once Carlos releases her *Secrets Of Synthesis* recording, in which she not only breaks down the orchestrations and patches for many of her works from *Switched-On Bach* to *Digital Moonscapes*, but reveals the limitations of synthesis as well.

"The details involved in voicing one of my digital voices are two orders of magnitude greater than the Moog," proclaims Carlos. "Two orders! A hundred times greater! It takes that much more time to build, too. But of course no one is going to be able to pick it up on a few auditions. So for that reason I no longer have people coming to me saying 'How did you do that patch?' because they know damn well that the answer is going to be it took five hours—and no one does that anymore."

The fact is that while countless computer hacks and preset keyboard wizards have acted like the Moog, the Prophet 5, the Emulator, or the Synclavier was a boon from the heavens, Carlos has always wanted more. It wasn't enough to have the so-called infinite sounds of the Moog, she wanted even more complex timbres. And now that she has complex timbres, she wants newer tunings. It's this constant search for tools for the outer manifestation of her inner being that has made much of her music so revelatory.

"I really had gotten very bored with the simplistic sounds of analog synthesis," she complains. "I think by now, years after the fact, it's becoming rather clear that that vocabulary has been pounded into the ground with a vengeance, and there can be very few of us who have not heard a VCF with an ADSR (synthesizer for Voltage Controlled Filter and Attack-Decay-Sustain-Release) ahead of it with a sawtooth wave going 'bee-you-bee-you' or 'weep, weep' or whatever. The limited vocabulary that I've been talking about for years ought to be manifestly obvious to anyone with half an ear listening to any of the pop records coming out today, the techno-pop, or what have you."

"But if you had played with the technology back in '67 or '68 when I was first getting going with the Moog style of gear, that was obvious then too. It wasn't a great big revelation. And so I got bored and upset real fast about the whole thing, and I was just waiting with anticipation for the next step to be made—and it's only been in the last couple of years that it's happened."

What has happened is Carlos acquired a GDS synthesizer, an advanced computer-music instrument that presaged, but was overshadowed by, the Synclavier and Fairlight. Like those instruments, the GDS generates sounds digitally rather than the analog mode of previous instruments like the Moog, Prophet, or Oberheim. With its computer control and access to virtually all parameters of sound, the GDS can make sounds that

have the complexity of the acoustic world. Carlos also uses two Synergys, a mass-market-oriented version of the GDS. Both were produced by the now-defunct Music Technology, Inc.

The first results of her GDS composing can be heard on the *Tron* soundtrack, where she merged digital synthesis with the London Symphony Orchestra. Sometimes she created alien sounds, other times she mimicked the orchestra's instrumentation, and occasionally she used the GDS to replace botched orchestral passages. Only Carlos knows for sure.

It was *Digital Moonscapes* on which Carlos threw down the gauntlet of digital synthesis. "People said 'No! We've got sampling instruments,'" she exclaims, "not realizing that that is such a bad cul-de-sac that won't I won't go into it here again. 'Anyway, we don't need to have you synthesize an orchestra for us. We can capture it by recording one.' Oh sure. Anyway, I did decide that I wanted to learn how to do every voice in the traditional orchestra, and what better way to do it than to write a piece of music for orchestra and then play it with my own LSI Philharmonic voices?"

Digital Moonscapes isn't the Space Epic, sequencer-driven affair one might expect from the title. Although it's an extended tone poem, taking its titles from the moons of the solar system, the lush orchestrations often recall an earlier era, slightly re-tuned by Carlos' uniquely 20th-century perspective. With typical Carlos earnestness, she explains the concepts of *Moonscapes*, "For me the *Digital Moonscapes* record was my testimony to saying look at how close the technology allows a very obsessive person to get to the symphonic tradition's sounds, you know—the acoustical wealth of riches that were polished by the Steinways, the Stradivarians, the Guarneri family, the Boehms, and all these other people who built the marvelous instruments that make up a fine orchestra. And while I don't pretend for a moment to have duplicated—that would be an insult—nevertheless I think the word replicate is a decent enough compromise terminology to suggest that I feel I have gotten the essence of what it is that makes that sound appealing to us without quite duplicating it."

Now comes *Beauty In The Beast*, with thundering Tibetan trumpets, whining shenais, and clattering percussion. Gamelan orchestras dance against a symphonic refrain. But it's all digital sound, a pan-ethnic East-West synthesis formed in the crucible of Carlos' synthesizers. "*Beauty In The Beast*," claims Carlos, "is, I think, the first recording to have the extrapolated type of timbres that are all based on acoustical models that no longer are limited to the LSI Philharmonic, as we call it, and also using tunings which are not the obvious ones like just-intonation or [mean tune] intonation, but are certainly not equal-tempered intonation."

Beauty is the most atmospheric, abstracted music Carlos has recorded since

Timesteps (from the *Clockwork Orange* soundtrack). The title track in particular sports a haunting theme that leaves listeners wanting more. "That's a place I want to be. That's part of me, that whole. . . ." Carlos thinks out loud. "I guess in some ways, you know, part of my personality is Slavic too, although I'm such a mongrel of different ancestors in my background that it's hard to know what plays an influence. Nonetheless, I do like that type of a brooding thing, the image you get of thinking of being in the Siberian forest or up in Finland when you have the midnight sun and these long periods in these vast spaces. Maybe it comes from my love of astronomy, where you contemplate the cosmos and think of what really it means to talk about travelling light years and . . . I don't know, but to me there's something about it."

It's Carlos' love of astronomy that brought her to Bali. She and her partner, Anne Marie Franklin, are eclipse chasers, hopping planes around the planet to catch solar eclipses and capturing them in photographs. Carlos does nothing halfway, whether it's music, cartography, or astronomy. And when her various activities are really clicking, they feed into one another, resulting in pieces like *Poem For Bali* on *Beauty*. "My experience with Balinese music began when we were chasing an eclipse in Bali a few years ago and I fell in love with the music there," recalls Carlos. "It was such a compelling experience to be in Bali, surrounded by the music, I had to know more about it. So that brought the first touch of ethnicity to the album that you're referring to. *Beauty In The Beast* would have probably had nothing but a touch of the Balinese about it and then the rest would have been my own point of view except that once I got into the Bali piece then I thought, well, why not some other cultures as well? And indeed there are a few others in there such as Tibet, Bhutan, and several areas of Africa."

Carlos avoids the obvious clichés of simple pentatonic scales playing lilting Asian melodies over a drone of synth strings and bird sounds and the occasional Burundi drums. While there is a deep spiritual sweep to *Beauty In The Beast*, it's far from being an ethnological forgery of meditation music. "There was a spiritual kind of affinity," admits Carlos. "Obviously when you're composing you're too busy to be into a mantra feeling of saying my 'Om' and all that. Composing is a much more active thing than that. Not trying to do a boring kind of environmental thing I tried to make it exciting. So I took elements of the performance that they do and I symphonized them. I put them together in a way that had A-B-A-C-A-D-A-B structure, sort of a rondo form. That's not what they do. They also don't use prayer wheels—but by using a xylophone patch, a french horn patch, a white-noise patch, and the vocoder I came up with those ratchety turning sounds that open and close *Incantation*, which I love. They sound so definitely musique concrete, but they're not. They're



C's sharp: Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, Phil Collins.

MIKE KAPPUS

In 1977, the band was playing in Eugene, Oregon, where the movie *Animal House* was being filmed. Cray auditioned for a bit part and was cast as the bass player in Otis Day & the Knights. He didn't actually play a note in the movie—the music was all pre-recorded—but John Belushi started coming around to see the band. He sat in a few times, and eventually came up with the concept of the Blues Brothers.

In '78, the Cray Band got their first real break when producer Bruce Bromberg heard them play at the San Francisco Blues Festival. Bromberg and his partner, Dennis Walker, signed them to record an album that was released on Tomato Records in 1980. Six months later, Tomato went out of business, and *Who's Been Talkin'* disappeared into the cutout bins. (A digitally remastered reissue is now available from Charly Records.) The album featured traditional blues tunes, but it foreshadowed the current Cray style on funky originals like *If You're Thinkin' What I'm Thinkin'*.

After Tomato collapsed, Bromberg and Walker started their own label, Hightone Records. Bromberg had written a couple of songs for *Who's Been Talkin'* (credited to "D. Amy"), and he and Walker soon began to take a more active role in the band's music. On the second Cray album, they not only supervised the sessions but wrote or co-wrote six of the 10 tunes. *Bad Influence* was released on Hightone in 1982. Stylistically, it was a major step forward: there were only a couple of covers, and the arrangements were simpler and more refined. *Bad Influence* sold respectably in the U.S. and went all the way to number two on the British independent album chart. The album's strongest tune, *Phone Booth*, won a 1984 W.C. Handy Award as "Blues Song of

rock-solid grooves have the same kind of urgency that made *Green Onions* and *Cissy Strut* so unforgettable. The arrangements are clean and uncluttered, with the Memphis Horns (Wayne Jackson, trumpet and trombone; Andrew Love, tenor sax) adding touches of soulful color. Upfront, Cray sings in a smooth, gospel-tinged tenor and plays short, explosive guitar solos.

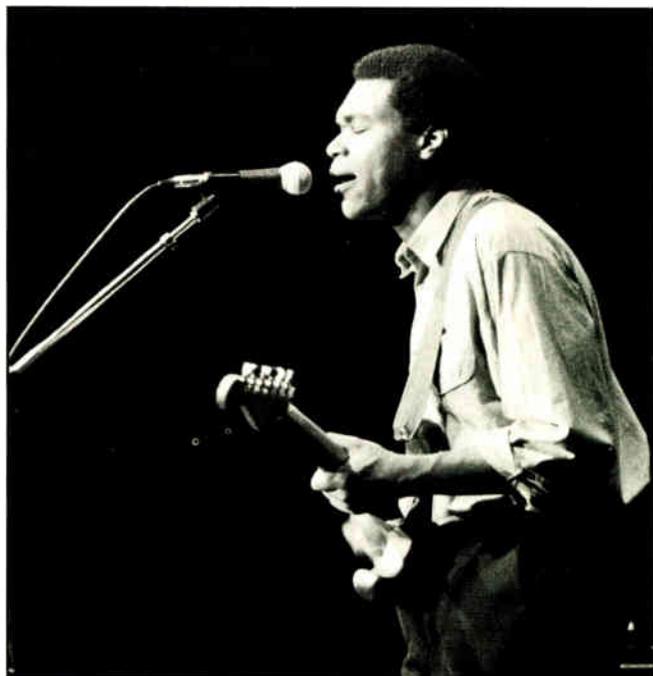
The songs are gritty narratives of adultery, deception, betrayal, and grief. On *Smoking Gun*, Cray sings: "I get a constant busy signal/ When I call you on the phone/ I get a strong uneasy feeling/ You're not sitting there alone." He's not the victim but the culprit on *Right Next Door*: "She was right next door and I'm such a strong persuader/ She was just another notch on my guitar/ Now she's going to lose the man who really loves her/ In the silence, I can hear their breaking hearts." On *Still Around*, Cray sings of a different kind of blues, the blues of a person trapped in a bad relationship: "I did my best to love you/ Now do your best to leave/ Can't you see that's what I want/ I really need?"

"The things I like to sing about are real-life stuff, real-life situations," says Cray. "Current affairs, trying to live, falling in and out of love. To me, they make more sense than other kinds of things. They're for the long run."

The son of a career soldier, Cray was born in Georgia in 1953. His family was always on the move, with stops at army bases all around the U.S. and in Germany before landing in Tacoma, Washington, where Cray went to high school. Music was important in the Cray household. "My parents had a real nice record collection," says Cray, "with jazz and Chicago blues and the pop music of the day." Although he heard Miles Davis, Ray Charles, and Muddy Waters at home, it was the Beatles that launched his musical career. "I started off playing guitar through the British Invasion stuff," explains Cray. "I took some lessons, and I played rock & roll things for a while."

Cray's high school band covered rock and soul tunes, and he learned to play both Jimi Hendrix and Steve Cropper licks. He began to dig deeper into blues guitar after a friend played him some old B.B. King albums. Seeing Albert Collins at an outdoor concert in Seattle added to his curiosity. "I also listened to Albert King and Magic Sam," says Cray. "Hubert Sumlin is another of my favorites. And Buddy Guy—he's really wild." Cray also absorbed gospel singing and the soul sounds of Otis Redding, Johnnie Taylor, and O. V. Wright.

After graduating from high school, Cray formed a band that included bassist Richard Cousins, who's still with him. They worked the bar circuit in the Pacific Northwest and did a stint backing up soul singer Little Frankie Lee. Then they hooked up with their hero, Albert Collins. "We worked with Albert off and on from '76 to '78, when he was on the West Coast," says Cray. "Both Richard Cousins and myself. We knew a lot of his material, so when he picked us up, we fell right into the pocket. He was kind of like a father to us."



STEVEN GROSS

ROBERT CRAY'S EQUIPMENT

Robert Cray's main axe is a silver 1964 Fender Stratocaster with a rosewood fingerboard. He owns several more Strats, and he's pictured on the cover of *Strong Persuader* holding what appears to be a brand-new, sunburst Strat. "The one on the album cover is a '58," says Cray. "Some guy had it under his bed for 28 years."

He plays straight into a Fender Super Reverb amp. "In the studio, I might use a phase shifter," says Cray, "but live it's just reverb. I've never used any pedals. It's too much to deal with, trying to sing and play at the same time."

ROBERT CRAY SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader	<i>WHO'S BEEN TALKIN'</i> —Charly 1140
<i>STRONG PERSUADER</i> —Mercury/High-	<i>ALL NIGHT LONG</i> —P-Vine Special 9050
tone 830-568-1	with Albert Collins
<i>FALSE ACCUSATIONS</i> —Hightone 8005	and Johnny Copeland
<i>BAD INFLUENCE</i> —Hightone 8001	<i>SHOWDOWN!</i> —Alligator 4743

the Year" and was recorded by Albert King.

False Accusations, released in 1985, featured the band's current lineup: Cray, Cousins, Peter Boe (keyboards), and David Olson (drums). It went to the top of the British independent album chart in less than a month and also moved onto the *Billboard* Top 100 chart. *Newsweek* magazine named it one of the best albums of the year, and the title tune won another Handy Award.

All of the tunes on *False Accusations* and *Strong Persuader* were written by the members of the band and the producers, in various combinations. This cooperative approach has contributed greatly to the band's success. "When we started working together," says Dennis Walker, "we decided, as a unit, that we were going to do all original stuff. At that point, I sat down with Robert, and said, 'What do you feel most comfortable singing about?' From then on, we began designing the tunes to fit his personality." The band's 200-to-250-nights-a-year touring schedule contributed to their unique relationship with Bromberg and Walker. "Robert is so busy out on the road," notes Walker, "that he doesn't have time to write a lot. So when he comes to town, we have to have material pretty much prepared for him."

Walker and Bromberg record demos of their songs while the Cray Band is rolling down the highway. "They're very rough," says Walker. "Usually just me, or Bromberg and me, playing guitars and keyboards. On my tunes, I write charts with the bass lines and everything, so when we go to do them, it's real quick. When Bruce and I sing, it sounds more country than soul, but Robert can decipher them."

When they get in the studio, Cray says, "the whole band is involved." Walker elaborates, saying, "With guys like that—with the experience that they have—you listen to what they say. They really do know what they're talking about. That's always been our approach to producing, to get really good people together and take everybody's ideas. With these guys, it works extremely well

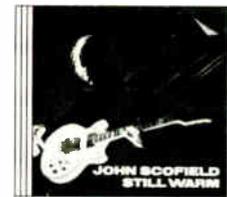
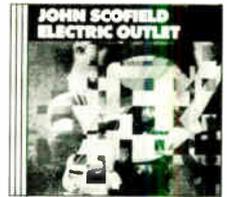
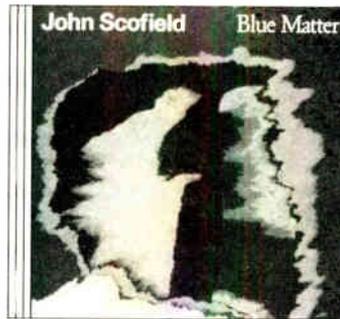
because we're all good friends. Everybody chimes in with their two bits on the situation at all times."

oon after the release of *False Accusations*, Cray was involved in a different kind of collaboration when he made the album *Showdown!* with Johnny Copeland and Albert Collins. His equal billing with these established blues masters solidified Cray's position as the most important bluesman of his generation. The album was widely praised and won a 1986 Handy Award as "Album of the Year." (Cray added four more individual awards, including "Entertainer of the Year.") The big record companies began to call.

PolyGram eventually signed the Cray Band to their Mercury label, but Bromberg and Walker will continue to write and produce for the band, and the Hightone name will appear on their records. Walker says that PolyGram took a hands-off approach to *Strong Persuader*. "They hardly interfered at all," says Walker. "And the few times they did, they were absolutely right. So we really had no problems with that. And I think now that this one's taking off, they'll at least let us make one more before they stick their nose in."

While the commercial success of *Strong Persuader* might turn off some blues purists, Cray doesn't feel that he's compromised his music to reach a wider audience. "We've always done different kinds of music," he says. "Now, we want to get the records out to more people. That's important. The music is for everybody." Walker agrees, adding, "If you listen, Robert is really still doing blues stuff. We've polished it up and brought it up to date, but we haven't mangled it too bad, I don't think." db

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THE BIG GUNDOWN

John Zorn plays the music of Ennio Morricone



JOHN ZORN

THE BIG GUNDOWN—Nonesuch/Icon 79139-1: *THE BIG GUNDOWN*; *PEUR SUR LA VILLE*; *POVERTY (ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA)*; *MILANO ODEA*; *EROTICO (THE BURGLARS)*; *BATTLE OF ALGIERS*; *GUI LA TESTA (DUCK YOU SUCKER!)*; *METAMORFOSI (LA CLASSE OPERAIA VA IN PARADISO)*; *TRE NEL 5000*; *ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST*.

Personnel: Zorn, alto saxophone (cut 1), harpsichord (4), piano (8), game calls (7, 9), vocals (2, 7); Arto Lindsay, guitar (2, 4), vocals (2, 7); Bill Frisell (1, 5), Jody Harris (4, 10), Fred Frith (4, 7, 9), Vernon Reid (7), Robert Quine (10), guitar; Christian Marclay, turntables (6, 9); Tim Berne, alto saxophone (2); Melvin Gibbs, electric bass (4, 10); Toots Thielemans, harmonica, whistling (3); Orvin Aqart, harmonica (2, 10); Bobby Previte, drums (2, 5), percussion, timpani (1, 9); Mark Miller, drums, timpani (7); Anton Fier, drums (2, 4, 6); Jim Staley, trombone (1, 9); Anthony Coleman, keyboards (1); Wayne Horvitz, piano (2, 6, 8, 9), organ, celeste (7, 9); David Weinstein, *Mirage*, microcomputer (1, 9); Bob James, tapes (2, 7, 9); Guy Klucsevsek, accordion (3); Carol Emanuel, Jew's harp (3); Shelley Hirsch (5), Luli Shili (1), Laura Biscotto (5), Diamanda Galas (8), vocals; Vicki Bodner, oboe (6), english horn (6, 7); Ned Rothenberg, shakuhachi, ocarina, Jew's harp (7); Michihiro Sato, Tsugaru shamisen (7); Polly Bradfield, violin (8); Big John Patton, organ (5); Jorge Silva, Alaudio Silva, Ciro Batista, Duda Fonseca, Reinaldo Fernandes, batucada (1).

★★★★ ½

John Zorn's quirky genius has thus far been confined to small, renegade record labels like Parachute, Lumina, Rift, and Zoar (all available through New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012). This major label effort, produced by NMDS' Yale Evelev and distributed by Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch, will no doubt bring Zorn's Theatre Of Musical Optics to a much larger audience. Whether they will be able to appreciate this melange is quite another question.

Zorn's music has been called an audio equivalent of Jackson Pollock's paintings. Others simply dismiss it as random chaos unleashed by some loony tune who plays game calls and blows sax mouthpieces in buckets of water. But there is a method to Zorn's madness.

Actually, the term Loony Toons is appropriate in any description of Zorn's music, since the composer has been equally influenced by Stockhausen, Braxton—and cartoon music. His compositions all have rational structures, though these forms mutate so rapidly (just like

cartoon music) that it often appears to be cacophonous free improvising. Styles, moods, textures change with great frequency, hopping from surf music to horror music to Japanese folk music so smoothly that it all seems a product of the studio. The effect of all this abrupt switching-of-gears is, as the liner notes put it, "like watching a chameleon race through a paint box."

One complaint with this musical philosophy has been that the music never settles into any one place long enough to really get hold of it. Or a new groove comes out of nowhere, stimulates you, then is gone in the wink of an eye. On *The Big Gundown*, however, Zorn acts as interpreter rather than principal composer. Here he mutates the works of Italian film-score composer Ennio Morricone (famous for his work on Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns starring Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson). Like Zorn's interpretive pieces on Hal Willner's tribute albums to Thelonious Monk and Kurt Weill, his arrangements here are faithful to the composer while remaining true to his own form.

Morricone was an innovator during the early '60s for his use of electric guitar and *musique concrete* sounds in his soundtracks. Zorn draws from this premise but exaggerates it tenfold, employing the East Village Guitar Army of Fred Frith, Robert Quine, Jody Harris, and Arto Lindsay, and utilizing all manner of sampled sounds, taped noise, and other odd sounds (courtesy of turntable artiste Christian Marclay). It's a heady mix, but using Morricone's music as a basic structure to build from, the results are often more linear (and, therefore, familiar) than Zorn's past projects.

The title cut is his most ambitious suite, blending together spaghetti western motifs, surf guitars, a wild batucada jam, and a quote from Beethoven's *Für Elise*. Don't ask how it works, but it does. *Peur Sur La Ville*, from a suspenseful film about a psycho who goes around strangling women, features saxist Tim Berne unleashing appropriately frenzied alto on top of an ominous ostinato, while the tense sounds of twisting, choking, and screaming filter in and out of the mix. Talk about cinematic—on this one, you hear the footsteps of the stalker and the heartbeat of the victim.

On the opposite end of the emotional spectrum is *Gui La Testa*, a silly-sweet love song with birdies chirping away behind a giddy shoop-shoop chorus—charming, though tongue-in-cheek. *Milano Odea* is a surf guitar freakout featuring the East Village boys, while *Battle Of Algiers* features Christian Marclay's gallery of found sounds over a martial beat.

Guitar buddies Quine and Harris blend their signature squalls into a mournful mesh on *Once Upon A Time In The West*. *Poverty (Once Upon A Time In America)* combines Toots' melancholy harmonica with Guy Klucsevsek's schmaltzy accordion for a cool clash of cultures. Diamanda Galas' deranged witch wailing over a pounding dirge beat gives *Metamorfosi* a "descent into hell" quality, while Shelley Hirsch's eerie wordless vocals bounce back and forth with Bill Frisell's guitar on *Erotico*, a minor key blues buoyed by the organ of former Blue Note artist Big John Patton.

The one original piece on the album, *Tre Nel 5000*, is classic Zorn, zipping from Frith's zany

guitar to industrial noise to kiddie music to banjo picking, segueing from one musical universe to the next. Rather than comparing it to Pollock, I'd call it the aural equivalent of *Pee Wee Herman's Playhouse*. There's so much stimuli from second to second that it simply demands your attention—or turns you off entirely.

—bill milkowski



STANLEY JORDAN

STANDARDS VOLUME 1—Blue Note 85130: *THE SOUND OF SILENCE*; *SUNNY*; *GEORGIA ON MY MIND*; *SEND ONE YOUR LOVE*; *MOON RIVER*; *GUITAR MAN*; *ONE LESS BELL TO ANSWER*; *BECAUSE*; *MY FAVORITE THINGS*; *SILENT NIGHT*.

Personnel: Jordan, guitar.

★★★★

Stanley Jordan has created wide interest in jazz guitar by applying his radical two-handed technique to familiar tunes. The former Gotham street player's first major label appearance, *Magic Touch*, from Blue Note in early 1985, nested on both *Billboard's* pop and jazz charts for better than a year, winning listeners with dazzling pianistic treatments of songs belonging to Miles, Monk, Hendrix, Michael Jackson, and the Beatles. Current chart entry *Standards Volume 1*, a solo guitar effort, clearly has a rosy commercial future, consisting as it does of pop music "classics" subjected to his fretboard sorcery.

Jordan has stated that he wasn't entirely pleased with his playing on *Magic Touch*, claiming he was distracted during recording by nonmusical matters. Satisfaction comes, says Jordan, when the music surges up from within, when the right frame of mind allows intertwined feelings and creative impulses to travel through his Travis Bean. *Standards* surely measures up: Jordan's more emotionally direct than ever before, more given to nuances in his voicings and less prone to soulless grandstanding.

With hands simultaneously working out melodic line, bass, and harmonic underpinning, Jordan shakes the dust off old reliables *Moon River* and *My Favorite Things* by illuminating the lyricism of the former and recasting the latter as a wildly racing conflagration of passions. *Georgia On My Mind* receives blue-noted interpretation with the 27-year-old guitarist wrapping himself in the music as Ray Charles had the lyrics in 1960. Jordan also paints *Silent Night* blue, as convincingly as fellow jazz guitarists Barney Kessel and Tiny

Grimes might, though by doing so he's sacrificed the hymn's spirituality to secular novelty.

Jordan holds nostalgic affection for several Top 40 hits from past years, but he seldom gets sentimental in the process of celebrating them. The guitarist's warm sound and excitement-building contrary motion pull us into *Sunny's* heartache-tinged world of bonhomie. His musical surety and ingenuity elevate Paul Simon's *Sound Of Silence* from the trough of poetic self-absorption. Jordan's generosity of spirit and that guitar make most any song tolerable; cases in point are *Guitar Man*, the Bread narcotic, and the Fifth Dimension's gaga *One Less Bell To Answer*.

Perhaps, though, future "volumes" will have Jordan digging into popular songs that elicited praise from Alec Wilder, say, rather than rock radio dj's. —frank-john hadley



SONNY ROLLINS

ALTERNATE TAKES—Contemporary 7651: I'M AN OLD COWHAND; COME, GONE; WAY OUT WEST; THE SONG IS YOU; YOU; I'VE FOUND A NEW BABY.

Personnel: Rollins, tenor saxophone; Victor Feldman, vibes (cut 5); Barney Kessel, guitar (4-6); Hampton Hawes, piano (4-6); Ray Brown (1-3); Leroy Vinnegar (4-6), bass; Shelly Manne, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ART PEPPER

REDISCOVERIES—Savoy 1170: CHILI PEPPER (take 3); CHILI PEPPER (take 5); SUZY THE POODLE (take 3); SUZY THE POODLE (take 5); EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME (take 2); EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME (take 3); EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME (take 6); NUTMEG (take 6); NUTMEG (take 7); CINNAMON (take 2); WHAT'S NEW (take 1); THYME TIME (take 1); STRAIGHT LIFE (take 1); ART'S OREGANO (take 1).

Personnel: Pepper, alto saxophone; Jack Montrose, tenor saxophone (8-14); Russ Freeman (1-7), Claude Williamson (8-14), piano; Bob Whitlock (1-7), Monte Budwig (8-14), bass; Bobby White (1-7), Paul Ballerina (8-11), Larry Bunker (12-14), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Rollins has it, Pepper had it. "All I had to do was reach for it, just do it." Pepper says in *Straight Life*, his autobiography.

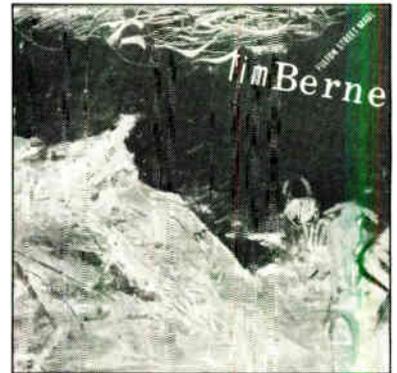
The Gift.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

THE CRITICS' CHOICE.

TIM BERNE

"'Fulton Street Maul' is an industrial strength amalgam of jazz, rock, R&B and classical music that'll stand as one of the better records of the '80s," raves *Musician*. Tim Berne, whose weapon is a fiery alto sax, "is fast becoming one of jazz's most innovative composers," says Jon Pareles of *The New York Times*. "A jolt of shock therapy to contemporary jazz," says *Music & Sound Output*. Now it's your turn to take the trip to Fulton Street.



THE MUSICIANS' MUSICIAN.

EDDIE GOMEZ



Eddie Gomez's musical references include playing with Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, McCoy Tyner, George Benson and many others. Now the premier session player and super sideman has stepped into the spotlight with "Discovery"—the debut album that highlights his composing skills and unique mastery of the double bass. If you want to learn where jazz is heading, Eddie Gomez's "Discovery" lights the way.

NEW MUSIC THAT DEMANDS TO BE HEARD. ON COLUMBIA RECORDS AND CASSETTES.



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SIX-STRING SIZZLE

by Bill Milkowski

There was a time when you could be considered a great guitarist if you could play a few Chuck Berry licks. Those naive days are long gone. In these post-fusion times, the pioneering work of such innovators as John McLaughlin, Larry Coryell, and Pat Metheny has been absorbed into the mainstream vocabulary of every Berklee student and aspiring guitar hero out there. Walk into any musical instrument store and you're likely to find some 16-year-old hotshot flying up and down the neck with two-handed tap virtuosity (the latest bit of technique to be incorporated into today's guitar vocabulary).

The following 10 guitarists all have considerable chops. But not all are accomplished composers. While some of these albums serve mainly as vehicles for flaunting technique, others are fully realized projects reflecting the artist's musicality and soul. While the legions of guitar aficionados may pant over endless flurries of 64th-note arpeggios, most record-buyers are more interested in the overall sound and what feelings the music might stir in them. Long after the sustained wang-bar screaming dies down, the melody lingers on.

Kevin Eubanks combines skill and pleasing melodies on *Face To Face* (GRP 1029), his tamest project to date. He puts his Mahavishnu chops on the shelf and takes the easy-listening route throughout much of this album, à la Earl Klugh. The muzak-y string arrangements (courtesy of Dave Grusin) on Carlos Jobim's *Wave* and Burt Bacharach's pop hit, *That's What Friends Are For*, might be a bit too saccharine for the jazz and fusion set that Kevin courted in past GRP albums (the fiery *Sundance* and the Wynton Marsalis-produced *Opening Night*). And pop-funk offerings like Stevie Wonder's *Moments Aren't Moments* and the title cut may be too slick for the same crowd. But Kevin still burns in any context. And he redeems himself in the eyes of jazz fans with two blazing bop duets with Ron Carter—Bird's *Relaxin' At Camarillo* and Wes' *Trick Bag*. Whether jazz fans will be willing to wade through all those lush Grusin strings to get to the real meat of *Face To Face* remains the question. And will easy-listening fans drawn in by the melodious, muzak-y cuts be able to handle the frenetic pace of Bird's bop? This album goes both ways.

Lee Ritenour, Kevin's labelmate on GRP, helped to define the West Coast fusion sound with his series of albums through the '70s. Along the way he flirted with the samba sound (Elektra/Musician's *Rio* and GRP's *Harlequin*). He combines the slickness of L.A. fusion with the warmth of samba on *Earth Run* (GRP 1021). Ritenour

is a chopsmeister from way back. They don't call him Captain Fingers for nothing. But he sidesteps grandstanding displays of technique here in favor of molding melodious tunes. His stuff is upbeat, bright, hummable, for the most part. And while cuts like *Soaring* drift off into the realm of "happy jazz," he reaches for something more ambitious in a rendition of Herbie Hancock's *Butterfly* and on the mellow ballad *Watercolors*, in which the guitarist engages in some cool call-and-response with Ernie Watts' tenor sax. Ritenour skillfully blends classical guitar and Synthaxe into the fabric of these tunes, showing more concern for textures and structure than sheer single-note virtuosity. But he pulls out the ol' Captain Fingers chops on *The Sauce*, an '80s salsa tune spiced up by Paulinho Da Costa's hot timbale fills.

Allan Holdsworth's use of the Synthaxe is more adventurous on *Atavachron* (Enigma 73203). The guitarist's guitar-hero weds his uncanny technique with futuristic technology, allowing him to take the idea of legato playing to new levels. On the jazzy *Funnels* he affects a circular breathing sax approach, while on *The Dominant Plague*—a rock dirge with church organ Synthaxe—he goes for crazed dissonance. Like Frank Zappa's "difficult music," these complex suites demand disciplined, meticulous players. No vamps here. Bassist Jimmy Johnson fills the bill throughout. Drummer Tony Williams (Allan's former bandmate in Lifetime) handles the intricate meters and strict stop-time stuff on *Looking Glass*, while Gary Husband mans the battery on four other cuts. Holdsworth solos mainly on standard six-string, with the exception of *All Our Yesterday's*, a Synthaxe improvisation with Chad Wackerman on synth-drums. As always, Allan's scalar runs and fluent wang bar work will elicit howls of delight from guitar groupies (particularly on the rock-edged title cut). Whether the grandiose sweep of his music will inspire pedestrians remains to be seen.

Frank Gambale is another exponent of the fluid, sax-like approach to guitar. In fact, his publishing company is called Legato Licks Music. The former Jean-Luc Ponty sideman (currently employed by Chick Corea) has his debut as a leader on *Brave New Guitar* (Legato 1001). Gambale's developed an unorthodox arpeggio technique that can quadruple his speed while minimizing right hand picking effort—and it's truly astounding. He glides over arpeggios with uncanny speed and facility. Too bad his compositional chops aren't up to his guitar chops. Like Lee Ritenour, Gambale is fond of pop samba. And being a resident of the West Coast he has succumbed to the "happy jazz" syndrome of L.A. fusion. His solo, for instance, on *Blues For Hollywood* is incredible, but such stunning virtuosity demands better material. Guitar fanatics will gawk at his transcendent solo on *Song For Family* or

his amazing arpeggiated playing on *Fe Fi Fo Funk*, but the tunes are tame. Compositionally, his best effort is *Credit Reference Blues*, a samba-influenced romp, and the ballad *Alone Together*, on which he plays gentle, nylon-stringed acoustic guitar.

Talk about technique! **Tony MacAlpine** flaunts some jaw-dropping, eye-popping guitar work on his debut, *Edge Of Insanity* (Shrapnel 1021). This kid is unbelievable. A member of the Yngwie Malmsteen school of classically influenced Heavy Metal guitarists, MacAlpine blazes his way up and down the neck like a buzzsaw in a logging camp. His two-handed hammer-on technique takes Eddie Van Halen to the next level. If Paganini were alive today and playing an electric guitar through a stack of amplifiers, he'd sound like this kid. Most of the pieces here are speed-rock vehicles for MacAlpine's scorching runs. He tears through a myriad of chord changes and fills out the sound with layers of overdubbed guitars doubling melody lines. Billy Sheehan (of David Lee Roth) and drummer Steve Smith (of Steps Ahead) help push the young phenom to adrenaline-inducing heights of raw energy. There is unashamedly no attention paid here to subtlety, nuance, dynamics, and only a minor nod to composition. The kid just burns on cut after cut. Impressive? Yes, but it's all a blur after one listen. No need to really hear all the tunes here. Just put on *Quarter To Midnight* (a live solo) to check him out. You will be amazed.

Leni Stern does not possess the mindboggling technique of a Holdsworth, Gambale, or MacAlpine. But what she lacks in chops she makes up for in taste, sensitivity, and musicality. And compositionally, her material on *Clairvoyant* (Passport Jazz 88015) is far beyond all the slick fuzak out there. There is no hesitation in calling this a jazz album (as opposed to any kind of hyphen-jazz). This is due in large part to the presence of Paul Motian and Harvie Swartz—a living, breathing, thinking rhythm section. They actually use silence and never hit you over the head with locked-in 4/4, like the majority of drummers today who emulate drum machine beats. On this impressive debut, Leni has crafted six strong originals, and wisely surrounds herself with top-shelf soloists, including tenor saxist Bob Berg, pianist Larry Willis, and guitarist Bill Frisell. She struts her stuff on *Flamingos* and the title cut, showing the influence of her husband Mike. But magic moments happen on her acoustic guitar duets with Frisell on two classics, *Someday My Prince Will Come* and *Stella By Starlight*. Long after the cold technicians have worn out their welcome, this platter will remain on my turntable.

Mike Stern takes a much more electrified approach on *Upside Downside* (Atlantic 81656-1), while still paying attention to dynamics, interplay, and composition. Stern's bebop chops were legendary around Berklee long before he

ever hooked up with Miles Davis, who told the young guitar-slinger to "Turn it up or turn it off!" He continues to play bebop trio gigs around Manhattan, but this Atlantic debut is more an extension of his work with Miles than a tribute to Wes Montgomery. Mike kills the guitar on the title cut and rips off some vicious blues licks on *Mood Swings*, a funky vehicle propelled by Steve Jordan and Jaco Pastorius. *Little Shoes* is a pleasing melody with cool changes that builds gradually to peaks of intensity before settling back to the sensitive side. *Goodbye Again* is a nice ballad vehicle for David Sanborn's signature alto, while Bob Berg goes for it on *Scuffle*, a reggae-ish groove that features another of those monstrous solos by Stern. Bop fans may be holding out for a Stern trio record—something intimate with the volume on three. Until then, he's heeding the advice of his former employer and cranking it up to 10.

Daryll Dobson is a throwback to the days of early Mahavishnu Orchestra. His stuff on *The Mind Electric* (DVP 1001) is intensely raw with a nod to Indian modalities. In this non-trendy album, he takes you on a trip rather than presenting neat little packets of product. This sort of open-ended blowing is not everyone's cup of tea, particularly in these days of the short attention span. But Dobson does reach inspired heights here and there. On the Shakti-esque *Babylon* (featuring L. Shankar on 10-string violin) he beautifully blends acoustic guitar with guitar-synthesizer, while Delmar Brown's church organ drone recalls Larry Young's work with Lifetime. On *Life*, another Eastern-influenced number, he hits Coltrane-type peaks during his solo. *Tibet* pairs acoustic guitar and tamboura for a signature Shakti mix, and *Thor (Part II)* is five minutes of screaming guitar, a Mahavishnu-esque journey to the stratosphere with Hendrixian flights of feedback. Untamed, explosive guitar fantasia. Cool, if you're in a zen mood.

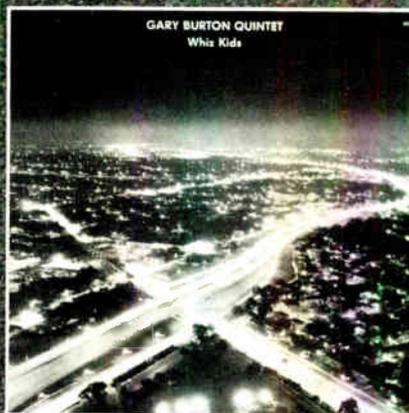
Steve Recker, yet another Berklee alumnus, leans a little to the rock side of jazz-rock on *Fun With Old Clothes* (Autumn Breeze 1001). Some of the material (like *Cafe*, *No More War*, and the title cut) is L.A. slick (if you know what I mean) though Recker's distortion-fed chops should hold interest for six-string aficionados. There's an undeniable bluesiness about him, reminiscent of Larry Carlton's proficient bent-string playing. This comes across most readily on the country-pop ballad *Are You Mine* and on *Nothing Could Be Finer*, an uptempo samba rocker. *Mudpuppy*, with its coy walking bassline, is some kind of fake jazz, while *Swingshift* is an all-out rocker, burning like Steve Morse and the Dregs. The guy can definitely play, but so can a million other guys today.

Al Weissman of Night Shift can also play. But he has a number of interesting ideas as well. *Global Village* (Syntax 80808) bears the influence of Weather Report, Jaco, and Shakti. (If you gotta borrow,

borrow from the best.) Weissman, the band's principal composer and resident axeman, is interested in more open-ended compositions and ethnic voicings, which sets him apart from all the other happy-jazz clones on the West Coast. Like Daryll Dobson, Weissman combines acoustic guitar, electric guitar, and guitar-synthesizer in his One World recipe. The title cut is a virtual one-man show, with Weissman manning sequencers, drum machines, and all kinds of MIDI hardware, and somehow

he manages to keep this oriental-influenced number from sounding too cold. When things do threaten to go slick, percussionist Michito breathes life into the proceedings. Weissman acquires himself admirably on a number of axes here, but the overall effect is a band sound. The compositions and arrangements rank up there with the best of fusion today. Choice cuts: *Three Flights Up*, *The Ring*, and *Back Fist*. Not a killer guitar album, per se, but a quality offering. **db**

New Music on ECM



GARY BURTON QUINTET
Whiz Kids

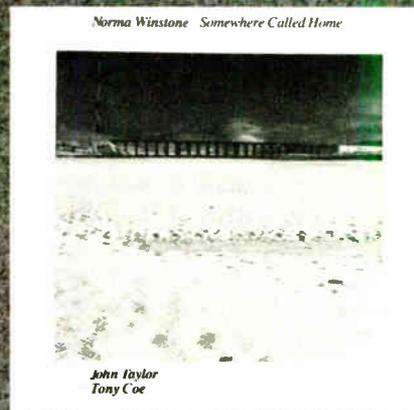
Gary Burton Quintet WHIZ KIDS

In keeping with his widely held reputation as a group leader who selects and cultivates only the strongest young jazz talents, vibraphonist Gary Burton has chosen three of today's most promising instrumental voices—pianist Makoto Ozone, saxophonist Tommy Smith and drummer Martin Richards—for his new album, *Whiz Kids*. Together they display their precocious musical abilities in the company of two of the most accomplished soloists in jazz—Burton and the highly respected bassist Steve Swallow. A digital recording. 831 110

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In her ECM debut as a leader, British vocalist Norma Winstone has found an outlet for her pure and direct vocal expression with a program of song-oriented material by a variety of composers. Joined by reed player Tony Coe and pianist John Taylor, Norma's interpretations on *Somewhere Called Home* range from songs such as the Arlen/Mercer classic "Out of This World" and the Bill Evans piece "Prologue" to works by contemporary composers Ralph Towner and Egberto Gismonti. A relaxed, yet uplifting recording.

831 107



Norma Winstone Somewhere Called Home

John Taylor
Tony Coe

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These previously unreleased takes reveal once again the extent of these musicians' gifts. To "just do it" means the instantaneous ability to swing at any tempo; to think and feel whole or multiple choruses while detailing the moment; to convey a sense of discovery, logic, and climax; and to relate integrally to the ensemble. With only a few lapses, Rollins and Pepper do these things brilliantly on these sessions from the '50s.

Alternate Takes derives from the sessions for

2120 S. MICHIGAN AVE.

by James Brinsfield

After 15 years of bouncing around from one continent and company to another, the Chess Records catalog has found a home at MCA. In turn, MCA has released the first dozen LPs—*The Best Of Little Walter* (MCA/Chess 9192), *Bo Diddley and Go Bo Diddley* (MCA/Chess 9194 and 9196), *Howlin' Wolf, Moanin' In The Moonlight* (MCA/Chess 9195), *Muddy Waters Sings Big Bill Broonzy and Muddy Waters At Newport* (MCA/Chess 9197 and 9198), *John Lee Hooker Plays And Sings The Blues* (MCA/Chess 9199), *Memphis Slim* (MCA/Chess 9250), *Big Bill Broonzy And Washboard Sam* (MCA/Chess 9251), *Little Milton, We're Gonna Make It* (MCA/Chess 9252), *Various Artists, The Blues, Vol. 1* (MCA/Chess 9253), *Various Artists, Rock, Rock, Rock* (MCA/Chess 9254)—under the Chess imprimatur as part of a projected reissue program from the thousands of titles available to them from the Chess/Checker vaults. The blues connoisseur will recognize these albums as old familiar friends—and to the recent aficionado these are among the most indispensable examples of urban blues. Their value is inestimable, for they are the recorded heritage of America's rural black population moving from South to North after WWII, bringing their music to the industrial heartland and fashioning it around dreams of equality, prosperity, and self-determination.

Consequently in so many of these recordings there is a palpable optimism and faith in those ideals; Muddy's swaggering braggadocio, Little Walter's happy harmonica, Chuck Berry's teen fantasies—their songs were the signifiers of a belief willed with such might and conviction that a generation gauged reality in the urban milieu of the 1950's to the rockin' zeitgeist flying out of 2120 S. Michigan Ave.

Chess Records started out as a bar, the Macombo Lounge, on 39th Street in Chicago's South Side. Leonard Chess, the Macombo's owner, booked jazz and, sometime later, blues groups on the weekends to fill out the cavernous

the albums *Way Out West* (recorded in 1956, not '57 as printed on *Alternate Takes*' cover) and *Sonny Rollins And The Contemporary Leaders* (recorded in '58). *Come, Gone and The Song Is You* are the outstanding performances. The former, a variant of *After You've Gone* (as is Pepper's *Straight Life*), summarizes Rollins' bebop roots, tonal and rhythmic eccentricities to date, and one-man-band capabilities. This was his first pianoless trio date, a setting which led to his *A Night At The Village*

dimensions of his establishment. After buying into a partnership with Aristocrat Records, Leonard and his brother Phil began recording the bands that appeared at the Macombo—including Muddy Waters, a blues singer recently arrived from Mississippi. In 1950 the brothers became sole owners of Aristocrat and changed the label's name to Chess.

During the next decade they recorded nearly every blues and jazz artist of note in the Midwest: Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Gene Ammons, James Moody, Sonny Stitt, Kenny Burrell—the ranks of artists is as stellar as it is long. Leonard's musical intuition and Phil's financial acumen were enough to keep the company struggling along until 1955, when they recorded a rock & roll singer from St. Louis, backed by Willie Dixon on string bass and members of the Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley bands. As Chuck Berry and *Maybellene* blasted into the international consciousness of the world's teenagers, Leonard and Phil went out and bought a 50,000 clear-watt radio station, WVON (whose initials stood for "Voice Of [the] Negro"), and moved everything—radio station, recording studio, and record label into the old Revere Camera Building at Michigan and 21st. Perched in his custom-made barber's chair on the eighth floor, Leonard presided over his empire. He assembled a cadre of talented professionals to staff the organization, hiring A&R man Ralph Bass away from King Records, employing sound whiz Ron Malo, and personally supervising most of the sessions recorded down on the fourth floor. Author Studs Terkel was asked to write the liner notes to the first slew of blues LPs released in 1957-58, to accompany Don Bronstein's sensitive photo portrait covers. The new Chess/MCA reissues duplicate these early Chess configurations and include personnel listings from Chess' files.

Albums like these, available again after long neglect, remind us that past events, transformed by memory and time, acquire a burnished brilliance because they are seen in isolation, divorced from the details of before and after, the fibers and wrappings of time. The artists too, suffer a transformation; they sink slowly deeper and deeper into the ocean of memory like weighted bodies, finding at every new level a new assessment, a new evaluation of the human heart—while their music continually celebrates the triumph of the spirit. db

Vanguard, a classic LP from 1957 recently re-released by Blue Note. *The Song Is You* finds the saxophonist in a "sheets of sound" mood and points both forward to his '60s, post-*The Bridge* response to free jazz and the challenge of John Coltrane and back to Coleman Hawkins, Rollins' musical grandfather. The other cuts, although less formidable than these, also show interesting insights into Rollins' gift.

The quartet tracks on *Rediscoveries* were recorded in 1952, the quintet sides in '54, both originally for the Discovery label. Pepper's relaxed yet mercurial lines streak and stream across the standard progressions (*Chill/Tea For Two, Suzy/Indiana*) sweetly, almost innocently, with Freeman, Whitlock, and White cooking nicely. Each take is inventive. But the real discovery here is the quintet with Montrose, whose articulation and suppleness are very Peppery. The horns often begin in counterpoint, bouncing ideas and phrases off each other until Pepper glides into a break and dances nimbly through a chorus to be followed by Montrose's equally agile, insinuating chorus. As *Straight Life* demonstrates, uptempos are no sweat to this pair—or the rhythm section. At the opposite end of the tempo range comes *What's New*, as pretty as *Straight* is fast. Pepper's style, represented by these early dates as a leader, never really changed; it just opened up to incorporate all the personal changes he experienced. Four stars for side one, five for side two. —owen cordle



ERIC CLAPTON

AUGUST—Warner Bros. 25476-RE2: *It's In The Way That You Use It; Run; Tearing Us Apart; Bad Influence; Walk Away; Hung Up On Your Love; Take A Chance; Hold On; Miss You; Holy Mother; Behind The Mask.*

Personnel: Clapton, guitar, vocals; Greg Phillings, keyboards, vocals; Nathan East, bass guitar; Phil Collins, drums, percussion, vocals; Gary Brooker, keyboards, vocals (cut 1); Richard Cottle, synthesizer (1); Lawrence Cottle, bass (1); Henry Spinetti, drums (1); Richard Feldman, keyboards (5); Michael Brecker, saxophone (2, 4, 6, 7, 9); Jon Faddis, Randy Brecker, trumpet (2, 4, 6, 7, 9); Dave Bargerone, trombone (2, 4, 6, 7, 9); Tina Turner (3, 8), Katie Kissoon, Tessa Niles (7, 10, 11); Magic Moreno (7), vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

With a couple of outstanding exceptions (*461 Ocean Boulevard, Just One Night*), the man who was God hasn't released too much stuff since Derek and the Dominoes' *Layla And Other Assorted Love Songs* that has lived up to

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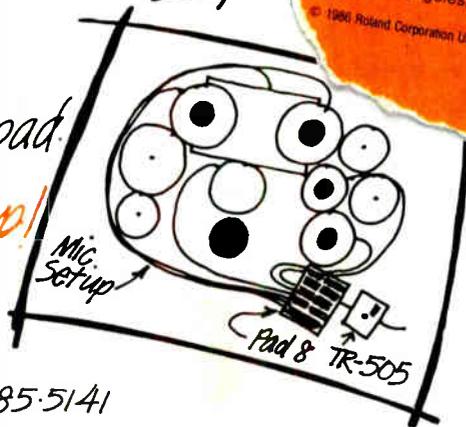
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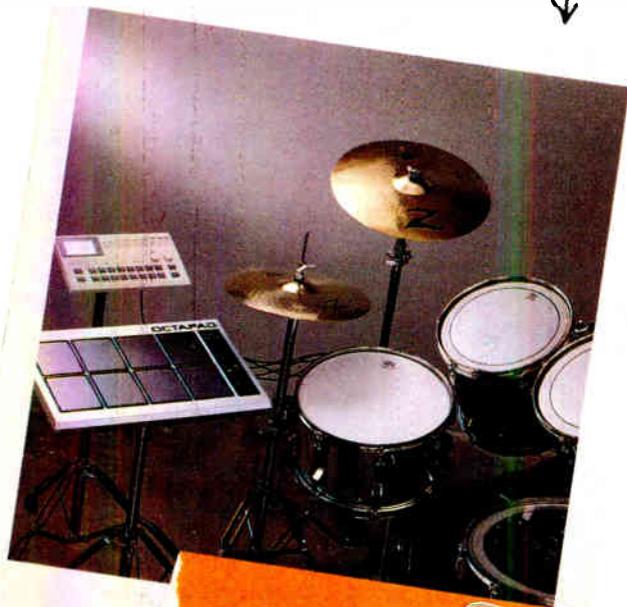
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either his massive rep or his live shows. Even though it featured some of his most striking recent work, last year's effort, *Behind The Sun*, suffered by comparison to the fire-eating arrangements that smoked through his tour. And the basic schizophrenia that shaped it—Clapton, producer Phil Collins, and bassist Duck Dunn of MGs fame had recorded all blues- and soul-based material until Warners yanked Clapton back into the studio after hearing the masters and made him choose some MTV-oriented material, like *Forever Man*, to cut—splintered the LP into segments that, like a jigsaw designed by two different elves in two different parts of the world, just didn't fit together.

But after a career that now spans over two decades, Slowhand has lived through several

generations of musical change and learned, piece by piece, to adapt his own unique sounds to what's going down at the time. *August* bears the fruits of that long and uneven educational process. And to stunning effect; not only has Clapton rediscovered the tort, heartrending voice that seared through *Layla*, not only is his axework cutting as and more tonally varied than most of his output, but on this disc they soar over high-energy, Motown-inspired grooves that don't quit. Neither a compromise nor a patchwork, *August* marks Clapton's emergence as a fully developed artist of the '80s.

The opening track, *It's In The Way That You Use It*, featured in the movie *The Color Of Money*, gives you the key when it kicks off with

pounding toms behind a ragged, double-tracked vocal, then shifts to a chug-a-lug beat under some resonant singing, phased, throaty guitar, and stabbing horn licks. *Run* explodes with hooky motifs chasing each other, thumb-popped bass, and an Arthur Bakerish mid-section mix; *Tearing Us Apart* slices the rhythms into tensile syncopations; *Walk Away* melds touches of Roxy Music with gutsy guitar blues; *Miss You* (not the Stones tune) blends Stax drumming, disco bass lines, and lurching, angular, gritty-toned axe. Then, for the doubters, there's Clapton's winning remake of Robert Cray's *Bad Influence* as a soul-style shuffle, and the straight-from-the-heart gospel of *Holy Mother*. Simply put, *August* depicts a mature and confident artist who is no longer afraid that musical growth means abandoning his roots and audience.

Way back at the very beginning of his recording career, a young guitarist walked out of a Yardbirds session because he refused to participate in what he saw as overcommercialism—the abandoning of their blues mode for chart success—and moved himself and his axe over to fellow purist John Mayall's Blues-breakers for what has become a classic album. Twenty-one years later, Eric Clapton's *August* promises to be a chart-topper, kicking ass while it makes you shake your booty.

—gene santoro

MINIMAL EXTENSIONS

by John Diliberto

For those who thought that minimalism was a pointless cul de sac in the mid-1960s, the ensuing 20 years must have been bitterly disappointing. The original exponents continued to grow, they're spawned a whole second generation of composers inspired by their works, and they've even impacted on the popular consciousness.

Two signs of the music's continued viability has been its evolution beyond the limits of the minimalist nomenclature and, more importantly, the continued vitality of its earliest works. Evidence of both can be found in **Steve Reich's** *Sextet/Six Marimbas* (Nonesuch 79138-1), where he returns to the small percussion ensemble format that earned him his initial reputation. *Six Marimbas* is a re-scoring of a 1973 work, *Six Pianos*, which retains the entrancing symmetry of its phase delay canons etched with even greater clarity on marimbas. Short patterns break through the surface of its interlocking designs, only to be engulfed by the larger pattern even as new ones arise. Meanwhile, unlike the mesmerizing evolution of Reich's early works, *Sextet* contains shorter movements with transitions made by abrupt modulations. Like most Reich works, it generates its own momentum, only across a more contrasting landscape. Bowed vibes and synthesizer lend an ethereal atmosphere to *Sextet*, a sustaining resonance in a percussive maze.

Terry Riley, after foundering for a few years, has released a monumental recording in *The Harp Of New Albion* (Celestial Harmonies 018/019). Playing a piano tuned in "just-intonation" he combines virtuoso improvisation within a structural setting. Rich orchestrations, arpeggiated gamelan effects, ragtime fugues, and Gershwin-esque romanticism emerge over the course of nearly two hours of lush, transfixing music. Minimalism is

only a subtext to Riley's Indian-derived phrasing in this roiling landscape. Sections like the extended *The New Albion Chorale* revel in a lush melodic wellspring that has always set Riley apart, but now gives him a voice he's been seeking since *Shri Camel*. It's a long way from the epochal *In C*, but equally important.

Alvin Curran is a disciple of minimalism with a bent toward atonality. His early works, notably *Songs And Views From The Magnetic Gardens*, contained Riley-like synthesizer improvisations over environmental tapes. *For Cornelius/Era Ora* (New Albion 011) is his first record in many years. Like Riley he's abandoned synthesizers for piano. These two sidelong compositions explore steady-state moods. *For Cornelius*, dedicated to the late British composer Cornelius Cardew and played by Ursula Oppens, begins and ends with slow, wistful reminiscence—a sort of fog-filtered idyll. But it surrounds an extended section of rippling arpeggiations, that attempt to tear past their lockstep through forceful repetition of minute changes. *Era Ora* is equally daunting, with Oppens joined by Frederic Rzewski. After pounding out the last eight bars of *I've Been Working On The Railroad* in unison, they launch into close right- and left-hand patterns that butt and lock each other like a minimalist bull, generating tension without release sliding through changes that are relentless, but lacking in inevitability.

The odd man out here is **Harold Budd**, who isn't strictly a minimalist, but whose music owes a debt to their use of tonality and spartan structures. *Lovely Thunder* (Editions EG 46) is of a piece with his earlier collaborations with Brian Eno, such as *Plateaux Of Mirrors* and *The Pearl*. Gentle, nearly nonexistent melodies played on a Synclavier tug on you as if in a dream, swathed in digital reverb and a fog bank of drowning cello-like sounds. It works on shorter pieces like *The Gunfighter* and *Flowered Knife Shadows*, but the sidelong *Gypsy Violin* is just too redundant. A steady distant reverb drone casts its shadow against a lone, heavily processed violin sound that meanders at the edges of melody. It has charm, but lacks the rigorous discipline that marks the other composers.

db



BUDDY DE FRANCO

THE COMPLETE VERVE RECORDINGS OF THE BUDDY DE FRANCO QUARTET/QUINTET WITH SONNY CLARK—Mosaic 5-117: JACK

THE FIELDSTALKER; CABLE CAR; I WISH I KNEW; IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU; LOVER MAN; TENDERLY; DEEP PURPLE; MONOGRAM; YESTERDAYS; BLUES IN THE CLOSET; MINE; YOU GO TO MY HEAD; GERRY'S TUNE; NOW'S THE TIME; AUTUMN LEAVES; TITORO (long version); TITORO (short version); THE BRIGHT ONE; SONNY'S IDEA; LAURA; I'LL REMEMBER APRIL; WILLOW WEEP FOR ME; MINOR INCIDENT; A FOOGY DAY; WHAT CAN I SAY DEAR; MOE; GETTING A BALANCE; THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC; THEY SAY IT'S WONDERFUL; BUT BEAUTIFUL; BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA; THE NEARNESS OF YOU; HOW ABOUT YOU; LITTLE GIRL BLUE; INDIAN SUMMER; I CAN'T GET STARTED; STARDUST; COOKING THE BLUES; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME.

Personnel: De Franco, clarinet; Clark, piano, organ (cuts 30, 33, 35, 37, 39-41); Gene Wright, bass; Bobby White, drums; Tal Farlow, guitar (27, 29-39).

★★★★★

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Buddy De Franco deserves every musical accolade he has ever received. For over 40 years he has been recognized as the unparalleled master of bop clarinet. However, he has also, by virtue of unshakable persistence, been able to survive not only a decade or more of universally fallow conditions for jazz in general but, in addition, a seemingly industry-wide prejudice against the instrument of his choice.

Today, though in his early 60s, he is still at the top of his game and playing better than even his most ardent admirers could have imagined some 32 years ago, when the contents of these albums were originally recorded. But, unlike many musicians whose careers have spanned several decades, Buddy has never seen any reason to alter his basic stylistic approach, except perhaps to broaden it and polish it. Consequently, the new listener to De Franco, one who has heard only his more recent albums, would probably have little difficulty, were he to be given a blindfold test, in correctly identifying the clarinetist on these records.

With nary a single reference to earlier jazz styles nor a commercial concession in view, these long unheard sides easily prove, once and for all, that the clarinet in the right hands can hold its own in a bop context. But it requires a very special player to make it speak convincingly. At the time these recordings were made with his working quartet, Buddy already had behind him a decade of jazz renown—and his playing shows it. Totally assured and self-confident in both his medium and his message, Buddy is the exemplar of musical freedom throughout. However, his is a freedom born not out of anarchic rejection of all musical signposts, but a freedom that comes about only through the very mastery of musical tradition and its obligations.

Without doubt, De Franco has always been a consummate technician on his instrument, but he is also far more than that. His harmonic sense alone has continued to grow over the years; but, even in these earlier times, it was much more advanced and more consistently applied than those of many of the critics' then "hipper" favorites. This collection, out of Verve's vast store of De Franco items, is understandably limited to those sessions featuring the Bud Powell-inspired piano of Sonny Clark, a musician whose brief life included as much jazz-making as was humanly possible in those highly active, highly sensitized, and, for many, highly self-destructive years of bebop high life.

Sonny was only 22 when he replaced Kenny Drew in Buddy's quartet, but he was already a heated, incisive player in the percussively articulated manner of Powell. He was to live only another nine years, but during that time he scored many successes on Blue Note dates with such as Dexter Gordon, Jackie McLean, Ike Quebec, and Charlie Rouse. According to the requirements of Buddy's head arrangements on various tunes, Sonny sometimes doubled the lead phrasing in unison and/or thirds, sometimes engaged in contrapuntal interplay with the clarinetist, and sometimes simply comped in the conventional bop fashion. De Franco does not usually leave very much room for a pianist, but when he did, Sonny was there.

Guitarist Tal Farlow, of Red Norvo Trio fame, is the other main soloist and, though he is only

added toward the end of the sessions, his voice proves a welcome foil to Buddy's. They complement each other in a manner that is, quite appropriately, their own, and at some distance from expectations based on the Goodman/Christian heritage out of which they both emerged.

Hopefully, in future sets, Mosaic will reissue the remainder of Verve's holdings of De Franco material, especially the combo sessions with Kenny Drew, Oscar Peterson, and Sweets Edison. —jack sohmer



RICHARD THOMPSON

DARING ADVENTURES—Polydor 829 728-1: *A BONE THROUGH HER NOSE; VALERIE; MISSIE HOW YOU LET ME DOWN; DEAD MAN'S HANDLE; LONG DEAD LOVE; LOVERS' LANE; NEARLY IN LOVE; JENNIE; BABY TALK; CASH DOWN NEVER NEVER; HOW WILL I EVER BE SIMPLE AGAIN; AL BOWLLY'S IN HEAVEN.*

Personnel: Thompson, guitar, mandolin, hammered dulcimer, theramin, vocals; Jerry Scheff, electric, acoustic bass; Mitchell Froom, Hammond organ, piano, Emulator, theramin; Mickey Curry (1, 2, 4, 5, 7-11), Jim Keltner (3, 6, 12), drums; Alex Acuna, percussion; John Kirkpatrick, accordion, concertina; Chuck Fleming, fiddle; Phillip Pickett, Chinese shawm, recorder; Brian Taylor, Tony Goddard, cornet; David Horn, tenor horn; Ian Peters, euphonium; Clive Gregson, Christine Collister, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

EXPLETIVE DELIGHTED!—Varrick 029: *THE RUTLAND REEL/SACK THE JUGGLER; THE CAT ON THE MIXER/THREE LEFT FEET; BANKRUPTURED; PORTMEIRION; JAMS O'DONNELL'S JIGS; EXPLETIVE DELIGHTED; SIGH BEG SIGH MÖR; INNSTÜCK; THE GAS ALMOST WORKS; HANKS FOR THE MEMORY (SHAZAM/PIPELINE/APACHE/PETER GUNN).*

Personnel: Ric Sanders, electric, octave violin, keyboards (4); Simon Nicol, acoustic, electric guitar; Dave Pegg, bass, mandola, acoustic guitar (3); Dave Mattacks, drums, percussion, keyboards; Martin Allcock, acoustic, electric guitar, slide guitar, bouzouki, mandolin, mandola, double bass (3); Richard Thompson (10), Jerry Donahue (10), guitar.

★ ★ ★

HOUSE FULL—Hannibal 1319: *SIR PATRICK SPENS; BANKS OF THE SWEET PRIMROSE; TOSS THE FEATHERS; SLOTH; STAINES MORRIS; MATTY*

GROVES; MASON'S APRON; BATTLE OF THE SOMME.

Personnel: Richard Thompson, guitar, dulcimer, vocals; Dave Swarbrick, violin, vocals; Simon Nicol, guitar, mandolin; Dave Pegg, bass, mandolin; Dave Mattacks, drums.

★ ★ ★

Fairport Convention, the quintessential English folk-rock band, was dealt a calamitous blow when co-founder Richard Thompson left the fold in early 1971, about a year after other key members Sandy Denny and Ashley Hutchings went their own ways. While singing guitarist/songwriter Thompson forged an artistically successful career, Fairport Confusion lumbered on till tardy dissolution at the close of the '70s. Today, Thompson has set forth the 13th chapter in his continuing studio-told chronicle, three legitimate Fairporters have emerged from the ashes with records trumpeting their renewed exuberance, and Hannibal Records has reissued a lost Thompson-with-Fairport concert album.

Down through the years Thompson has shown a Hank Williams-morose view of life, so it comes as no surprise that the emotionally naked songs of *Daring Adventures* resonate with his mocking cynicism. Blighted love is a primary concern: he's scarred enough to think feelings of affection may be "just a dose of the flu" (*Nearly In Love*) and "deception is the rule" (*Lovers' Lane*). The Englishman's Sufi-Anglican darkness, carried forth by his rascally, worldly-wise vocals, has the power to simultaneously enchant and repel us.

Furthermore, *Daring Adventures* is striking for Thompson's Stratocaster-as-stiletto thrusts and for how spiritedly the Los Angeles sessionmen work with the intransigent Briton. (Several folk friends of Thompson also appear, playing exotic squeeze-boxes, medieval ancestors of oboes, and such.) Sir Richard and squires make *Valerie* and *Dead Man's Handle*, in particular, paragons of persuasive, early-take-crisp rock; they furnish the spellbinding *Jennie* with instrumental pathos entirely appropriate to the guitarist's quietly heartbroken singing. There are nine more songs to wonder at on what stands as one of Thompson's strongest albums—with or without ex-wife Linda. That's high praise.

The reconstituted Fairport Convention, with longtime rhythm-mates Simon Nicol, Dave Pegg, and Dave Mattacks giving their all, owes a fair amount of its potency to new fiddler Ric Sanders, the former Soft Machine dynamo who officially joined up after contributing to last year's let's-jig-again *Gladys' Leap* (Varrick 023). Sanders leads the way on the enjoyable originals and single traditional song that make up the all-instrumental *Expletive Delighted!* (There's also a perfunctory Shadows tribute featuring Thompson on guitar.) The violinist swaggers some and sometimes gets tangled in his peculiar blend of folk, jazz, and classical techniques, but overall he carries on with great facility and feeling. Listen for his Stephane Grappelli-like passages.

Nearly 17 years ago Fairport Convention—then consisting of Thompson, Nicol, Pegg, Mattacks, and fiddler Dave Swarbrick—were recorded in performance at Los Angeles' Troubadour. *House Full*, a re-edited edition of a disc

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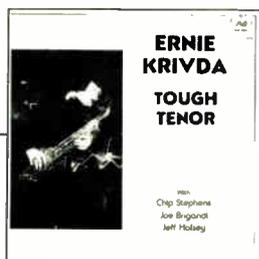
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issued in 1977, captures the group at its exciting best. Indeed, Swarbrick fiddles on the electric-folk dances as if possessed while his companions jauntily follow along. The Swarbrick/Thompson song *Sloth* receives *stunning* treatment: Thompson's guitar solos alternately express pained fury and resignation to fate, each and every note powerfully accenting the human cries behind the somberly intoned anti-war lyrics. Such majestic passion is what makes Billy Bragg, the Pogues, 10,000 Maniacs, and other contemporary artists so appreciative of the folk and folk-rock past.

—frank-john hadley



ERNIE KRIVDA

TOUGH TENOR-RED HOT—Cadence 1028: PANHANDLE HOOK; SWORD OF FIRE; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE; THE ARCHDUKE SERENADE; SARAH'S THEME.

Personnel: Krivda, tenor saxophone; Chip Stephens, piano; Jeff Halsey, bass; Joe Brigandi, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

BOB ROCKWELL

NO RUSH—SteepleChase 1219: TWICE; CHRISTMAS BLUE; ROBERTA IS BACK; HYMN FOR HER; TEN'S; EMBRACEABLE YOU; NO RUSH.

Personnel: Rockwell, tenor, soprano saxophone; Butch Lacy, piano; Jesper Lundgaard, bass; Jukkis Uotila, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

RON ENYARD/ PAUL PLUMMER

DETROIT OPIUM DEN—Resound 86002: FREDDIE THE FREELOADER; OLD FATHER CLOCK; AUTUMN IN JULY; SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE; MOLSON; GREENSLEEVES; DETROIT OPIUM DEN.

Personnel: Enyard, drums; Plummer, tenor saxophone; Tony Byrne, guitar; Steve Corn, organ.

★ ★ ★ ½

Support your local jazz musician—Ernie Krivda in Cleveland, Bob Rockwell in Copenhagen via Minneapolis, Ron Enyard and Paul Plummer in Cincinnati—and others like them. New York reigns as the jazz mecca, but there's lots of solid jazz enroute, as these records attest.

Of the three saxophonists, Krivda has the

most unusual style. "Relentless" is the word that comes to mind. Not only does he leapfrog through the arpeggios (including the falsetto range), he also structures his rhythms into distinct blocks. The effect is like a jackhammer ripping through materials of different densities. His bravura attack and robust sound inspire intensely percussive backing and solos from his accompanists. The best performances are *All The Things You Are*, a Krivda/Halsey duet full of thick-skinned yet empathetic counterpoint, and *Sarah's Theme*, a quartet romp that features Krivda all the way, including a blistering cadenza. The saxophonist covers the horn as well as anyone practicing today, but his overly structured approach to rhythm occa-

sionally leaves you numb. This is a concert recording, and the sound of the rhythm section isn't quite up to par. Otherwise, no gripes.

The Rockwell quartet comes from the mid-'60s Miles Davis/Wayne Shorter/Herbie Hancock school. Abstraction is the key word that describes *No Rush*, an album characterized by subtlety, free playing on chord changes, and a Major/minor ambiguity to the chords. Rockwell's lines lurk and dart. He shows Shorter-like tonal nuances on tenor, and his single soprano outing (*Embraceable You*) suggests the distillations of Chet Baker. Lacy is the fulcrum of the interplay between Rockwell and the bass-and-drums tandem. The pianist leans toward the saxophonist with broken-up

Critic's Choice

ART LANGE

new release: Duke Ellington, *The Blanton-Webster Band* (RCA/Bluebird). Arguably the strongest band jazz's greatest composer ever led, playing 1940-42 sides which showcase the period's vigor, vitality, and novelty as thoroughly as one could wish.

old favorite: Eddie Condon, *In Japan* (Chiaroscuro). With a dream front line of Buck Clayton, Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, and Vic Dickenson, this '64 concert features phenomenal, career-affirming solos—and three vocals by Jimmy Rushing that ooze warmth and good cheer.

rara avis: Blowzabella, *The Blowzabella Wall Of Sound* (Plant Life). Scottish jigs, Irish reels, Bulgarian horos, energetically played on bagpipes, violins, hurdy-gurdys, saxophones, and the odd darabuka or two. Kick out the jams.

scene: Hard to figure the highlight at this year's Berlin Jazztage—Sweet Honey In The Rock's soulful politicized, or Willem Breuker Kollektief's madcap mayhem, or Globe Unity's urgent arguments for freedom at all cost? Or maybe the entire, marvelously programmed week?

PETER KOSTAKIS

new release: Sonny Sharrock, *Guitar* (Enemy). Playing fistfuls of *different* feelings, the avant-guitar hand from years past makes his return pithy yet more accessible than you might expect. It's stabilized by sparely overdubbed guitar backgrounds, including a pair of mega-tough blues and (surprise!) quiet chords he lyrically solos over.

old favorite: Johnny Dyani, *Witchdoctor's Son* (SteepleChase). Now that Dyani is gone, remembering the late South African bassist and wearing out his recorded testimony is all that's left. Contrasting saxophonists Dudu Pukwana and John Tchicai are only two reasons this daring compositional stew is special.

rara avis: Francis Bebey, *Akwaaba* (Original Music). Bebey is a black African musicologist from Cameroun. His multi-layered pieces for extended voice, thumb piano, pygmy pipe, string bass, and percussion have an offbeat simplicity that shames the Western simpletons of the "New Age" movement: stasis can be fun and beguile.

scene: Eugene Chadbourne with Violent Femmes Brian Ritchie and Victor De Lorenzo shook Links Hall in Chicago with plugged-in protest songs from Phil Ochs and Mingus to Pharoah Sanders. The infamous electric rake of Eugene did some mean yard work along the way (does anybody recall The MC5's *Human Being Lawnmower?*).

GENE SANTORO

new release: Astor Piazzolla and the New Tango Quintet, *Tango: Zero Hour* (American Clavé). The liner notes by the founder of *tango nuevo* declare, "This is absolutely the greatest record I've made in my entire life." I'm not sure about that, but it's one of them—which means it's one of the best by anybody.

old favorite: Buddy Holly, *Legend* (MCA). I'm not automatically convinced when an LP carries a tag like "digitally remastered" that it's gotta outdo what I've already heard, but hearing, in this case, is believing—an old fave with some new sounds.

rara avis: Various Artists, *What's Shakin'* (Elektra). A mid-'60s compilation that includes once-in-a-lifetime tracks by the Lovin' Spoonful, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Eric Clapton, and the Powerhouse.

scene: The Apple Itself—Chuck Berry celebrating his 60th at the Felt Forum; John Zorn & Co. bringing *The Big Gundown Aka Once Upon A Time In The East Village* to BAM; the WSQ and Blood Ulmer tearing the lid off SOB's; Fela filling the Forum's stage with his troupe and unbelievable sounds; Otis Clay and the Hi-Rhythm section pumping out Memphis soul at SOB's; Buddy Guy and Junior Wells messing at the Lone Star; Tim Berne skewering Sweet Basil; Robert Cray at the Bottom Line; and Eric Clapton at the Ritz.

Blue Note

JAZZ. WHERE IT'S BEEN
AND WHERE IT'S GOING

Michel Petrucciani *Power Of Three* BT 85133 Over a year ago, a rising force of jazz piano teamed with a master guitarist for a Paris concert. The sparks and the empathy were such that they had to do it again. And in July of 1986, Michel Petrucciani and Jim Hall reunited during Blue Note Night at the Montreux Jazz Festival. They stacked the deck with the inclusion of Wayne Shorter. The result was absolute magic. The proof is in the recording: a program of originals by all three and a few tasty standards. This music swings ferociously without a rhythm section. And it doesn't get any more special than this.

The compact disc edition of this night contains the entire evening's performance, including two tunes not available on record or cassette.

James Newton *Romance and Revolution* BT 85134 Flutist Newton's Blue Note debut *The African Flower* won #1 Record of The Year in the 1986 Down Beat International Critics Poll. So this year, he decided to play it safe with the usual flute-two trombones-vibes-cello-piano-bass-drums combination and a repertoire of Mingus' *Meditations on Integration*, Ornette Coleman's *Peace* and two original works. An uncompromising, full-ranging statement of depth and beauty.

The compact disc edition of this album includes a solo flute rendition of *Tenderly* in tribute to Eric Dolphy.

James Blood Ulmer *America Do You Remember The Love* BT 85136 From the R & B chitlins circuit of the sixties to the harmelodic experiments of Ornette Coleman to the eclectic new wave of the seventies, guitarist James Blood Ulmer has established himself as an American original. Backed by his visionary peers, bassist Bill Laswell and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson, Ulmer conjures up echoes of music from every corner of America and blends them into his own unique brew. An artist to be reckoned with... an artist to enjoy.

Joe Henderson *The State Of The Tenor (Volume Two)* BT 85126 A lot of volume twos are just that. But when Joe Henderson went into the Village Vanguard for Blue Note with just bassist Ron Carter and drummer Al Foster and no chordal safety net, he went in with two carefully planned albums in mind. This album is as strong and daring as the first volume, which has been critically acclaimed as his finest work and as one of the most important albums in the entire history of Blue Note. The repertoire ranges from Henderson to Mingus, Monk, Bird and Horace Silver.

The compact disc edition of this album includes an extended performance of the standard-turned be bop classic *All The Things You Are*.

Eric Dolphy *Other Aspects* BT 85131 Just when you thought it was safe to assume that you had heard all the Dolphy that there was to hear, along comes James Newton to uncover a treasure of private recordings by Dolphy and to negotiate their release with Eric's parents. These masterworks illustrate other aspects indeed. *Jim Crow* is Dolphy's only recorded contemporary classical composition (for voice and quartet). *Improvisations And Tukras* is an Indian classical piece based on tabla drum patterns. The two flute solos entitled *Inner Flight #1* and *#2* are typical Dolphy masterpieces as is the duet with Ron Carter entitled *Dolphy-n*. This may easily be the FIND of the year, and it's still early.

Dexter Gordon *Gettin' Around* BST 84204 In the forties, when Dexter Gordon was the rising be bop pioneer of the tenor sax in Los Angeles, he was best friends with Bobby Hutcherson's brother and dated Billy Higgins' sister. Bobby and Billy were still infants at the time. A decade or so later they became Dexter's peers. And most recently, they were his co-stars in the film 'ROUND MIDNIGHT. This classic 1965 Blue Note reissue brings these three together with pianist Barry Harris and bassist Bob Cranshaw.

The compact disc edition of this reissue includes two lengthy and previously unreleased Dexter compositions: *Very Saxily Yours* and *Flick Of A Trick*.

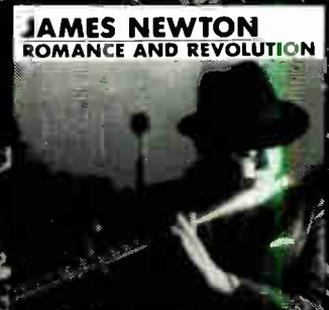
McCoy Tyner *The Real McCoy* BST 84264 An album could not have been more aptly titled. After a series of albums as a leader on another label, McCoy Tyner made his Blue Note debut in 1967 with this magnificent session with Joe Henderson, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones. Here Tyner asserted his individuality while admitting his influential debt to John Coltrane. He also made his first and one of his strongest statements as a composer, since four out of the five tunes on this album (*Contemplation*, *Passion Dance*, *Search For Peace* and *Blues On The Corner*) became living jazz standards.

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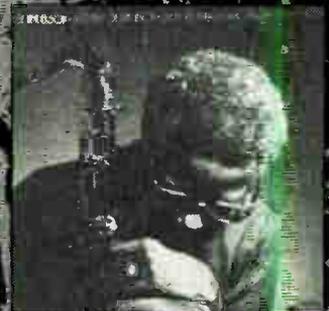
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Power Of Three BT 85133



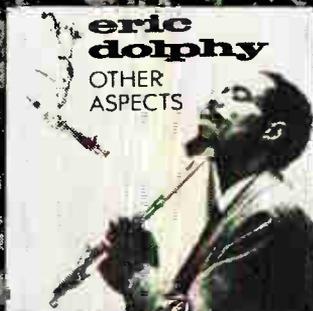
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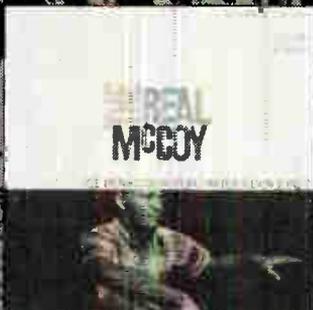
Joe Henderson
The State Of The Tenor Volume Two BT 85126



Eric Dolphy
Other Aspects BT 85131



Dexter Gordon
Gettin' Around BST 84204



McCoy Tyner
The Real McCoy BST 84264



clusters or disappears behind Lundgaard's bass lines. Like Rockwell, Lacy is a gloriously unpredictable and thinking soloist. The tunes range from ballads with strange intervals (Lacy's *Hymn For Her*) to fitful freebop (Lacy's *Roberta Is Back*). Throughout the record, the quartet deals with what's behind the scenes as much as with what's up-front—an interesting concept that may be coming 'round again, with better technique, if this record is any indication.

The Enyard/Plummer quartet appears comfortable with an even earlier era—the transition period circa 1960. The saxophonist, who recorded with George Russell in the early '60s, plays whiplashing lines and fragments reminiscent of early John Coltrane, but with less tonal density and overall fervency. He has a hollow, questioning tone and the winnowed approach of a quiet intellectual. Corn's organ recalls Larry Young's modal sound of the '60s, and Byrne suggests early George Benson. What gives this group a '50s sound is its light ensemble work, Enyard's neat combo style of drumming, and the diffused emotional content. These add up to a laidback moodiness which informs each cut. The album title seems like a pretty accurate description.

—owen cordle



JABBO SMITH

HIDDEN TREASURE, VOL. 1—Jazz Art 520699: *LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME* (2 takes); *SUNDAY* (2 takes); *WHEN A WOMAN LOVES A MAN*; *ANYTHING FOR YOU*; *THESE FOOLISH THINGS* (4 takes); *DIGA DIGA DOO*.

Personnel: Smith, trumpet, trombone, vocals; Frank Chace, clarinet; John Dengler, boss saxophone; Art Gronwall, piano; Marty Grosz, "Big" Mike McKendrick, guitar; Whitey Mitchell, bass; Bob Saltmarsh, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

HIDDEN TREASURE, VOL. 2—Jazz Art 520700: *I WANT A LITTLE GIRL*; *SWEET GEORGIA BROWN* (2 takes); *I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME*; *SQUEEZE ME*; *ROSETTA* (3 takes); *KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF* (3 takes); *I FOUND A NEW BABY*.

Personnel: Same as above.

★ ★ ★ ½

SWEET 'N' LOWDOWN—Affinity 1029: *SWEET & LOWDOWN*; *JAZZ BATTLE*; *LITTLE WILLIE BLUES*; *SLEEPY TIME BLUES*; *TAKE YOUR TIME*; *WHAT MORE CAN A POOR FELLOW DO?*; *TAKE ME TO THE RIVER*; *BLACK AND TAN FANTASY*; *LET'S GET TOGETHER*; *SAU*

SHA STOMP; *MICHIGANDER BLUES*; *DECATUR STREET TUTTI*; *TILL TIMES GET BETTER*; *ACE OF RHYTHM*.

Personnel: Smith, trumpet, vocals; Omer Simeon, clarinet (cuts 1-5); Willard Brown, alto saxophone, clarinet (7, 9-14); Lawson Buford (3-5, 11), Hayes Alvis (3, 4), tuba; Cassino Simpson (2-4, 7, 9-10, 12-14), William Barbee (1, 5), Kenneth Anderson (11), piano; Ikey Robinson, banjo (1-5, 7, 9-14); Duke Ellington And His Orchestra (6, 8).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Jabbo Smith's obscurity in the annals of jazz is largely due to two factors: the brevity of his discography during his early prime, and his defection from public scrutiny during the years when the jazz press—and, accordingly, the jazz audience—began to assume serious proportions.

At precisely the time when Louis Armstrong was revolutionizing not only jazz itself, but trumpet playing as well, Jabbo was coming up fast behind his model. In 1929, when just barely 20, the precocious trumpeter was chosen by Brunswick to front a hot combo in a series of discs especially designed to challenge Louis' remarkable string of successes on the rival Okeh label. How well the younger man did on his brief contract as leader (19 titles in all) is to be heard in part on this recently compiled collection on Affinity.

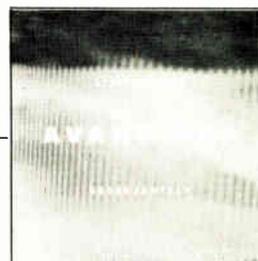
By and large, Jabbo is front and center virtually all of the time on these early recordings. Emotionally, the pitch is intense throughout, and his virtuosity will literally astound the listener with its pyrotechnic brilliance, flawless control of range, rhythmic surge, and unceasing flow of coherently seamed ideas. Indeed, his only competition for repeated interest is the New Orleans-rooted Omer Simeon, whose sparkling, broad-toned clarinet solos and ensemble counterpoint follow in logically developed continuity from his illustrious contributions to the Jelly Roll Morton Red Hot Peppers records of only a few years before.

Jabbo did not appear on record as a leader again until 1938, when he cut four undistinguished novelty swing tunes for Decca and displayed little more than his still-sumptuous technique. It was not until 1961 that Jabbo recorded again, and that session, organized by Marty Grosz, resulted in a series of rehearsal tapes that have only now come to light.

But the 53-year-old Jabbo, as good as he was, could no more compete with the long-established impression made by his vibrant 20-year-old self than could the Armstrong of the All-Stars period challenge the explosive creativity of the Hot Five and early big band Louis. It should be understandable then that Jabbo would, in 1961, reflect the inroads of passing time and long-abandoned dreams. No longer the flamboyant valve-burster and rafters-reacher of yore, to be sure, the now mellowed trumpeter found a newer, more appropriate means of expression, a voice somewhat ironically commensurate with his newly adopted role as *artiste manqué*. On these tapes, he is clearly the star, but he does receive considerable aid and relief from his frontline mates, Chace and Dengler. The former is and always has been an undeviating devotee of Teschemacher and early Russell, clarinetists who favored the hard-biting, percussive ap-

proach to playing, and who spiced their efforts with comparatively forward-seeking harmonies and rhythmic devices; Dengler, a multi-instrumentalist who here concentrates on bass sax, does ably well by his idol, Adrian Rollini, not only in tone and technical control, but in rhythmic drive as well.

—jack sohmer



LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY

AVANT POP—ECM 1326: *THE EMPEROR*; *SAVING ALL MY LOVE FOR YOU*; *B FUNK*; *BLUEBERRY HILL*; *CRAZY*; *MACHO*; *NO SHIT*; *OH, WHAT A NIGHT*.

Personnel: Bowie, Stanton Davis, Malachi Thompson, Rasul Siddik, trumpet; Steve Turre, Frank Lacy, trombone; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Bob Stewart, tuba; Phillip Wilson, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

KAHIL EL'ZABAR

THE RITUAL—Sound Aspects 011: *MAGG ZELMA*; *MAGG ZELMA (PART II)*.

Personnel: El'Zabar, drums, earth drum, shekere, voice; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Malachi Favors, boss.

★ ★ ★ ★

No matter who's being hyped, Lester Bowie remains the most expressive, inventive trumpeter around: one of too few post-boppers to remember the vast timbral richness of pre-bop brass playing. These albums show him off.

Brass Fantasy's restrained debut (ECM 1296) confounded expectations of what a brass-and-drums octet would sound like. *Avant Pop* revels in them, echoing parade bands from the Dirty Dozen to the Cotton Bowl, Machito's high-note assaults (Turre's *Macho*), and even gas from Vegas pits. Still, as last time, Brass Fantasy shows lips and sticks can do more than expected—can do all (never mind the electronic haze that may settle on Stewart's tuba). A trumpet may sound like airy flute, french horn like tailgate trombone. Fool-the-ear *B Funk* makes you hear what's not there; rhythm machine, synth bass, turntable scratching, processed vocals.

For once, a leader may be excused for hogging solo room; Bowie's microtonal shadings—Johnny Hodges blowing raspberries—transcend and transform blaring tutti passages that flirt with killer kitsch. (Patsy Cline gave *Crazy* the intensity of Dinah Washington. Here—despite ceaseless, Zappaesque re-

combinations of instruments—the melody goes round and round till you're dizzy.) Bowie has a light hand with whimsy the band en masse doesn't match. He's adopted vocal cartoon sound effects as part of his vernacular—hence his speechlike quality—but he's no low clown. He embodies high comedy, knowing comedy like tragedy can encompass all experience.

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble's Kahil El'Zabar, with Bowie and Malachi Favors, presents the kind of record AACMers don't often make anymore. Favors' *Magg Zelma* is a long unhurried trek, a classic example of free improvisation on a minimal theme. (The Art Ensemble's *Full Force* version sounds rococo by comparison.) It's audibly Chicagoan, yet acknowledges the very New Yorkish Albert Ayler/Gary Peacock/Sunny Murray trio: a band where no one kept time and yet time was kept. This *Ritual* demonstrates a million ways, simple to majestic to oblique, to fill a 16-bar (eight-bar?) framework as infinitely variable as the blues.

In Bowie's blasts, as in Ayler's, military fanfares crop up, disfigured—and subverted, for the trio marches to no tyrant's beat. Favors' beat is typically elastic, while Zabar keeps the time aloft without dictating rhythmic direction. His hand drumming smacks of Africa, and he brings the flavor of hand drumming to the kit. Hearing Bowie in his care points up that of all modern trumpeters, Lester's least tied to European and most tied to African concepts of pitch and beautiful timbre. —*kevin whitehead*

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.)

STORYVILLE: Mezz Mezzrow/Sidney Bechet/Sammy Price, Vol. 1-5 (*Out Of The Gallion, Really The Blues, Gone Away Blues, Revolutionary Blues, I'm Speaking My Mind*). Michal Urbaniak Quartet, *Friday Night At The Village Vanguard*. Niels Lan Doky Trio, *Here Or There*. Dave Liebman/Richard Beirach, *Double Edge*. Red Mitchell/Warne Marsh, *Hot House*. Warne Marsh/Lee Konitz, Vol. 3. Jesper Thilo Quintet, *Featuring Harry Edison*. Bud Powell Trio, *Bouncing With Bud*. Ed Hall, *This Is Jazz, Vol 3*. Albert Nicholas, *This Is Jazz, Vol. 2*. Wild Bill Davison, *This Is Jazz, Vol. 1*. Billie Holiday, *Strange Fruit*. Mills Brothers/Delta Rhythm Boys, *Rhythm In Harmony*. Nat King Cole/Red Allen/Sister Rosetta Tharpe/Dorothy Dandridge/etc., *Jivin' Time*. Fats Waller/Louis Jordan/Louis Armstrong, *The Headliners*. Duke Ellington/Count Basie/Lucky Millinder/Cab Calloway, *The Big Bands*.

ATLANTIC: John Lewis/Svend Asmussen, *European Encounter*. Charles Mingus, *Mingus At Antibes*. Ornette Coleman, *Ornette*. Phil Woods, *At The Frankfurt Jazz Festival*. Jimmy Witherspoon/Ben Webster, *Roots*.

FLYING FISH: Bowling Green John Cephas/Harmonica Phil Wiggins, *Dog Days Of August*. Paul Geremia, *My Kinda Place*. Free Hot Lunch, *Penguin Love*. Mark Nelson, *Southern Light*. Tom Paxton, *The Marvellous Toy & Other Gallimaufry*. Pete Seeger/Jane Sapp/Si Kahn, *Carry It On*. Magical Strings, *On The Burren*.

RCA/NOVUS: James Moody, *Something Special*. Adam Makowicz, *Moonray*. Coleman Hawkins, *Body & Soul*. Sonny Rollins, *The Quartets Featuring Jim Hall*. Charles Mingus, *New Tijuana Moods*. Bunny Berigan, *The Complete, Volume Two*. Juan Martin, *Painter In Sound*. Liz Story, *Part Of Fortune*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

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MARCH 1987 DOWN BEAT 39

HAT HUT: Cecil Taylor, *The Eighth*. Rova Saxophone Quartet, *The Crowd*. Joe McPhee, *Po Music*.

SHANACHIE: Matt Malloy, *Heathery Breeze*. Various Artists, *You Can Tell The World About This*. Shaun Davey, *Granuaile*. Stacy Phillips, *Hey Mister Get The Ball*. Dan Ar Bras, *Music For The Silences To Come*. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, *Inala*. Steve Tiltson/Peter Finger/Seth Austen, *Silently The Snow Falls*. Baby Watson Brothers, *Swing Street*. Lo Jai, *French Traditional Music From The Limousin*. I Giullari Di Piazza, *Sulillo Mio*.

CRI: Gheorghe Costinescu, *Music For The Voice*. Sue Ann Kahn, *Plays Schickele, Rochberg, Luening, Riegger*. Elie Siegmeister/Irwin Bazelon, *Piano Music/Songs*.

Carole Terry, *20th Century Harpsichord Works*. Alec Wilder/Allan Blank, *Music From Eastman*. Martin Bresnick, *String Quartet No. 2/Wir Weben, Wir Weben*. David Holzman, *Wolpe, Pleskow, Greenbaum*. Marc-Antonio Consoli, *String Quartet, Six Ancient Greek Lyrics, Saxlodie*.

JEM: Garry Hughes, *Sacred Cities*. Eddie Hardin, *Dawn 'Til Dusk*. Jeff Berlin, *Pump It!* Swans, *Holy Money*. Bill Bruford, *Master Strokes 1978-85*. Canoño, *Desperately Seeking Fusion*. Pocket Change, *Random Axis*. The Rippingtons, *Moonlighting*.

SACKVILLE: Vic Dickenson, *Just Friends*. Wild Bill Davison, *The Jazz Giants*. Jim Galloway/Ralph Sutton/Milt Hinton/Gus Johnson, *The Sackville All-Star Christmas Record*.

INTIMA: Windows, *Is It Safe?* Richard Elliott, *Trolltown*. Bob Thompson, *Brother's Keeper*.

ENJA: Attila Zoller, *Memories Of Pannonia*. Kenny Barron, *What If?* Archie Shepp, *Soul Song*. Charlie Rouse/Benny Bailey, *The Upper Manhattan Jazz Society*. David Friedman, *Shades Of Change*. Clark Terry/Red Mitchell, *To Duke And Basie*.

MCA/ZEBRA: Randy Bernsen, *Mo 'Wasabi*. David Becker Tribune, *Long Peter Madsen*. George Howard, *A Nice Place To Be*.

INDEPENDENTS: Steve Lacy, *Outings* (Ismez/RAI). Lee Konitz/Cordes Et Lames, *Medium Rare* (Label Bleu). Daniel Goyone, 2 (Label Bleu). Alexander Von Schlippenbach/Paul Lovens, *Stranger Than Love* (Po Torch). Paul Lovens/Paul Lytton, *The Fetch* (Po Torch). Kamal Abdul Alim, *Dance* (52e Rue Est). Thomas Stabenow, *Chutney* (TS). Ellen H. Band, *A Gentle Approach* (Timeless). Bjørn Alterhaug, *A Ballad* (Plateselskapet). The Quartet (Petrowsky/Dudek/Van Der Broek/Haurand/Oxley), *Interchange* (Konnex).

Jamaaladeen Tacuma, *Music World* (Gramavision). Oliver Lake, *Gallery* (Gramavision). John Abercrombie/Don Thompson, *Witchcraft* (Justin Time). Fred Houn & Asian American Art Ensemble, *Bamboo That Snaps Back* (Finnadar). Günter Christmann/Torsten Müller, *Carte Blanche* (FMP). Manfred Schulze Bläser Quintett, *Nummer 12* (FMP). Tom Varner, *Jazz French Horn* (New Note). Peter Ostroshko, *The Mando Boys* (Red House). Wishful Thinking, *Think Again* (Pausa). Uncle Festive, *Money's No Object* (Nova). Neoclassic Jazz Orchestra, *Prom Night In Center City* (NJO).

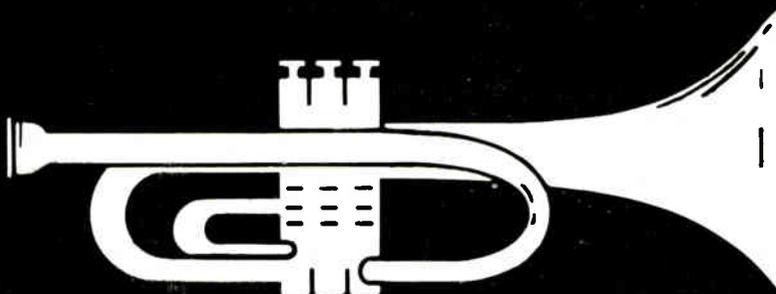
Cedar Walton, *The Trio 1* (Red). Ray Mantilla Space Station, *Synergy* (Red). David Baker's 21st Century Bebop Band, *Struttin'* (Laurel). Spike Robinson, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most* (Capri). Joanie Palatto, *Whisper Not* (Southport). Laurel Masse, *Easy Living* (Pausa). Art Monroe, *I Never Dreamed* (VSOP). Gary Wolfsey, *In Japan* (Ambi). Bad Little Big Band, *A Long Way To Go* (Morningside).

Armen Donelian, *A Reverie* (Sunnyside). Sumi Tonooka, *With An Open Heart* (Radiant). Edmund J. Wood, *Immanent Domain* (Nilva). Pete Brewer, *Dancing Visions* (Unicornucopia). Crossings, *Crossings Of The Spirit* (Iris). Various Artists, *Incarnation/Interpretations Of The Season* (Meadowlark). Various Artists, *Life Style/Sampler* (Life Style). db

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STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

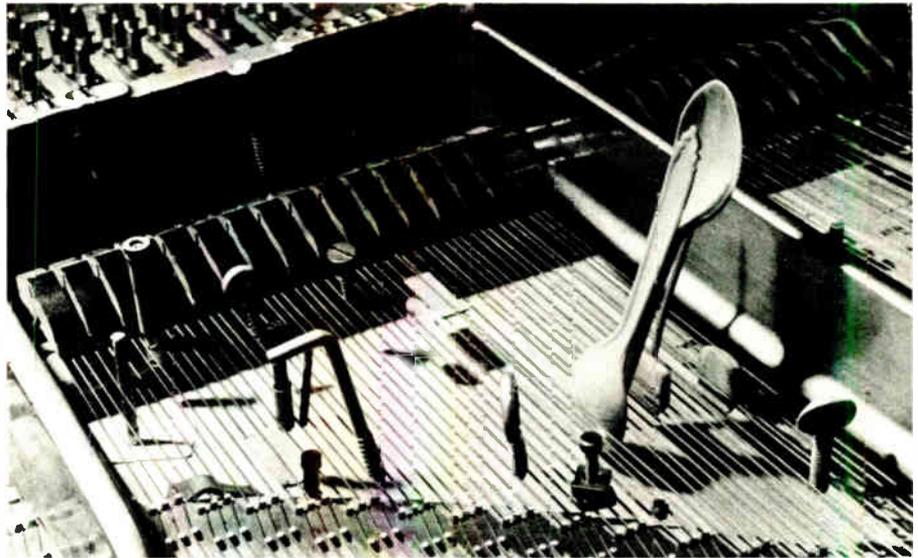
A Spring grab-bag of CDs has unearthed some likely triads: percussionists from Creative Music Products of Cologne, Germany; samplers of Rounder Music licensed to Rykodisc of Cambridge and Salem, MA, respectively; and diverse efforts from three of the more intriguing musicians in ECM's stable. Interspersed are two unusual pairings on Rykodisc—one jazz and one fusion—and a final two of new music composers—John Cage on one and six new faces on the other.

The Europeans consistently show a lot more interest and understanding of experimental new music than Americans do. CMP's another German label with a stable studded with sticks, mallets, and reedy male voices that sound like Moslem mollahs calling the faithful to prayer. While I defend to the death the right of these musicians to carve their audience, I also find little of sustaining interest in albums (commonly hourlong with CDs) of nothing but drumming and voices. Given the neo-fauvist bent of popular musicians these days, however, and the prominence of African and Eastern influences, there may be a wider appreciation for this genre than I can personally muster. In any case, I've tried to pick out favorite sounds on each album, ones which may be exceptionally enhanced by the compact disc medium.

On *Internal Combustion* (CMP CD 23, 53:42 minutes), **Glen Velez** and Layne Redmond conjure up churning Eastern rhythms that hypnotize over 10-minute tracks. The wordless vocals sound rooted in Islamic chant. Favorite sounds emanate from the much-used frame drums: fingers thrum reedy skinheads, knuckles hit rimshots, and delectable reverberations abound throughout *Pyramid* and the title track.

Mark Nauseef's *Wun-Wun* (CMP CD 25, 37:22 minutes) utilizes high nasal whines from unpredictable veteran singer Jack Bruce, here more unfettered and primitive than in his decades with Cream, Carla Bley, and Kip Hanrahan. The 6/8 marimba piece named for Nauseef's nephew *Jones* lilts along in a most attractive and evocative way. (See the LP review in **db**, Aug. '85 for a fuller account.)

John Bergamo, on *On The Edge* (CMP CD 27, 63:08 minutes), writes funnier liner notes and offers more textural and cultural variety than his fellow percussionists, though no vocalizing. Nauseef gives him a tiny bell accompaniment on *Piru Bole*, an Indian tabla piece complete with recitation, but he is on his own the rest of the way, perhaps with occasional overdubs. Bergamo



John Cage's prepared piano: art music.

gets down with saucy Celtic bodhran, bowing on aluminum tubing (space age glass harmonica enhanced by engineer Walter Quintus), and other non-African traditions. The title track is a well-sustained 13-minute suite.

The **Phil Woods/Chris Swanson** album *Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* (Rykodisc CD 10007, 35:00 minutes) was given a semi-pan (two stars) by this reviewer (**db**, Nov. '85) largely because the mix of synthesizer playing big band sounded weird and muddled on vinyl. Certainly Woods plays up a storm, as he can be depended upon to do, albeit in the short format of single choruses on the three-four minute cuts; nor does his longstanding rhythm section sit down on the rather unusual job of playing a tribute date to Charlie Parker with Kim Parker singing thinly on a few and Swanson patching in with his gargantuan electronic toy. Well, to make it short, the band backup sounds less muddy and better balanced on CD, but it's still weird. It's the quartet that makes this music happen, especially Woods and bassist Steve Gilmore, for Parker contributes too little on her vocals, and Swanson too much, with humming sax sections, squeaky trumpets, and french horn section drones (trombones?). CD technology may make this one truer, but not better.

Bill Frisell/Vernon Reid team for a fresh and peppery guitar/synth/DX drum encounter on *Smash & Scatteration* (Rykodisc CD 10006, 42:04 minutes); they seem to relish their marvelous hodge-podge of orchestrations for two, from the new rock of *Alternate Landscapes* to the bluegrass "dawg" update *Last Nights Of Paris*, not to mention reggae and West Indian country blues selections to complete the tour de force. Solo tracks, in fact, on guitar-synthesizers fall flat: Reid sounds like a watery

accordion and Frisell trots out too many tricks. But united they stand, especially on the final two ominous, voluptuous numbers, a bleeding ballad called *Small Hands* and an Armageddon out-chorus, *Black Light*.

Of the three Rykodisc/Rounder anthologies reviewed here, *Rounder Folk* (Rykodisc CD 20018, 63:03 minutes) is the toughest to get a critical grip on. Hardnosed bebop-era types may have a hard time mustering appreciation for the hardcore white American country-folk music, with those hallmark whiny American Gothic intervals, simplistic melodies, decadent sentiments and maudlin lyrics, and they are part and parcel of *Rounder Folk*. Fortunately, not a large part, however, for we get nice pickin' from John Fahey and Bob Brozman, mellifluous harmonizing and polished dude swing from the Johnson Mountain Boys and peaches-'n'-cream Cathy Fink, and a little of the English tradition from Pentangle and John McCutcheon's evocative *Christmas In The Trenches*. There are likewise pleasant instrumentals from talented guys who appear on the acoustic anthology as well, such as guitarists Tony Rice and Norman Blake, banjoist Bela Fleck, saxophonist Billy Novick. A palatable, patchwork sampler, the likes of which every hardened bebopper should sit himself down once a year and listen to, just to keep honest.

The *New Acoustic Music* (Rykodisc CD 20002, 64:46 minutes) set is mostly a ho-hum compendium of hyper-middle-class city boys with beards and banjos plucking away at count-rified blues. There's first-hand dues paid to Flatt, Scruggs, and Vassar Clements, and distant second-hand influences like James Brown, Oregon, and Bela Bartok. The level of musicianship goes from mediocre to quite good (catch acoustic bassist Rob Wasserman's solo), but the level of

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cd reviews

aesthetics rarely exceeds the banal and toothless. Lack of improvisatory effort (bad enough with vocals but inexcusable with instrumentals) is the major flaw, affecting clever writing like Tim Ware's *Bartok's Blues*, and the wasting of Novick's true wit on Russ Barenberg's corny, repetitious *For J. L.* One of the few really good tunes is one of the few not written by a leader (a common fault with most young players—until you can *really* write, play more covers!). That is Tony Rice's subdued version of Thad Jones' *A Child Is Born*, placidly and prettily rendered by violinist Fred Carpenter. Another is guitarist Pierre Bensusan's pretty, neat *Nice Feeling*.

Nothing namby pamby about *Out Of The Blue* (Rykodisc CD 20003, 62:19 minutes)—mostly gritty, hard-driving small-band blues, working on guitars and vocals. Good tracks are peppered throughout this set, like crawfish in gumbo: heartsore Philip Walker telling you to *Go Ahead And Take Her*, Johnny Copeland clearing the air over *Houston*, solid r&b from Roomful of Blues and Duke Boillard, steamy Gulf Coast rhythms from J. B. Hutto and Zydeco Boogaloo, and lots more. A good vehicle for cruising between band bars late on the weekend.

John Cage's delightfully off-the-wall pointillism never comes across better than in his intimate cameos for prepared piano, *Sonatas & Interludes* (Denon CD 33C37-7673, 60:51 minutes) where artfully inserted bolts, wires, rubber bands, and toothpicks betwixt the strings effect skewed sounds of crazy chimes and dryrot carillons. Yuji Takahashi brings oriental restraint to Cage's ant music, understating rather than rushing pell-mell, as other interpretations have it, and seeking the infinities between the twinkling stars of the notes. Takahashi's minimal approach to these bonsai sonatas mutes dynamic surprise (though *Sonata X* rages with fanfares in a teapot) and seeks not to dance (though *Sonata XI* trips a light terpsichorean shuffle), and achieves a mad hatter's complacency in the linear angularity and congenial quarter-tones (though *Sonata XII* pounds its rakish 3/4 melodramatically). It all sounds written yesterday, not the late '40s, and bears relistening at leisure.

A potpourri of new composers' works, called *Portraits* (New Albion CD 009, 60:12 minutes), puts its best foot forward and never oversteps it. The opener of the six pieces is Ingram Marshall's *Fog Tropes*, an aural collage of fog horns, brass sextet, and "ambient sounds" (sea wrack, gull cry) and it is a heartstopper: its brooding Brucknerian entities (you could envision them as lighthouses or Titanics) loom and fade in half-light, behemoths as unthreatening and majestic as blue whales. It proves a tough act to follow, as chamber works following a full symphony: Somei Satoh's little violin sonata titters harmlessly as New Age romantic

twaddle, and Paul Drescher's *Channels Passing* unfolds like pastoral and pointillist (Steve) Reichian landscapes from a train. Even a piece by the redoubtable John Adams palls.

Three from ECM conclude the tally: sophistication and grace from John Abercrombie, electronic experimentation and relentless pompousness from Jon Hassell, and rather endearing primitivism from Keith Jarrett.

Guitarist **John Abercrombie's** *Current Events* (ECM CD 1311, 48:44 minutes) shows him in a congenial frame of mind; in bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Peter Erskine he has compères who enjoy cutting a groove of romance and suavity. There's a touch of country in *Clint*, more than a nod to the shade of Bill Evans with *Alice In Wonderland*, a wistful recollection with an old original, and a couple of delightfully unaffected ballads. Choice listening.

When trumpeter **Jon Hassell** gets involved with dark wizard Brian Eno on *Power Spot* (ECM CD 1327, 48:27 minutes), drum machines burble and the galaxies spin. There are lots of patterned, cool vamps made for the lithe silhouettes and glowering miens of tomorrow's subterranean dance palaces. You might think you are cruising space bars with Luke and C3PO. In Eno's conception, Hassell's trumpet gets phased into an underwater kazoo. For serious neo-primitive mavens and thinking heads only.

Keith Jarrett continues to open himself through his music to his audience in his own way. In *Spirits* (ECM CD 1333/4, 111:06 minutes) he gives us a panoramic patchwork of his primitive pieces, played and recorded by himself in the privacy and freedom of his own home studio. These pieces, on which he plays from an array of flutes and recorders, as well as percussion (shakers, tambourine, cowbell) and strings (guitar, saz) as well as his piano, soprano saxophone, and voice, are unusually intimate, compellingly introspective, and close to the bone: this music is simple but not light, fresh and childlike but ageless and wise. There are harkings back to Jarrett's early ECM work, such as *Ruta And Daitya* (with Jack DeJohnette, ECM 1021). It is a profound and beautiful two hours, to be enjoyed and savored at peace. This music puts you in closer touch with a deep and passionate musician, and an exciting but just and noble person.

Listen to this from Jarrett's notes: "There is a fine line between what we like and what affects us. There is a fine line between what we can manipulate and what is close to us. There is a fine line between using technique and making music. We must be open to the spaces (silence) in order to fill them just right. We must *see* the spaces, inhabit them, *live* them." Give yourself with Jarrett over to the music; it is a remarkably refreshing experience.

—fred bouchard

1 IVAN LINS. *JUNTOS* (from *JUNTOS*, Philips/PolyGram). Lins, vocals, keyboards; George Benson, guitar.

Djavan? Ivan Lins? It's not that great, but it's the kind of thing I'm really a sucker for, pop-samba. It has that nice Brazilian thing where you can hear him smiling—which Gaetano Veloso does really great. This is kind of like radio music, driving in the car music. Very up and very well done, but not that personal. It's very crafty, in the way that, say, Steely Dan is. Three stars.

2 PAUL SIMON. *THE BOY IN THE BUBBLE* (from *GRACELAND*, Warner Bros.). Simon, vocals.

This is Paul Simon's new record made in South Africa. It's really a nice record. Paul Simon is kind of an annoying singer, but he really phrases beautifully over these rhythms. It's not that he has a bad voice, but his singing is so uncommitted. I'm a fan of very quiet singing, that kind of right-into-the-microphone style, very breathy, as well as the more gutsy Otis Redding style. But it's just his attitude. It can be annoying. And I'm not a big fan of his lyrics, but I admire the way he put them to this music. Four stars.

3 KRONOS QUARTET. *PURPLE HAZE* (from *KRONOS QUARTET*, Nonesuch). David Harrington, John Sherba, violin; Hank Dutt, viola; Joan Jeanrenaud, cello.

Minus one. It's not a bad idea but I just don't think it's a very good arrangement. Sorry. I could hear it better in my head even—more stops, faster, whatever. There's no passion. They're trying to imitate the tempo and dynamics of Jimi Hendrix's version. It seems like they should phrase more like strings are phrased. It would work better.

4 ASTOR PIAZZOLLA. *FRACANAPA* (from *ASTOR PIAZZOLLA LIVE*, American Clavé). Piazzolla, bandoneon; Fernando Suarez Paz, violin.

Piazzolla! The difference between this and the last song is unbelievable in the dynamics and the tightness of the phrasing. The feeling—it's just so hot. Scalding, no? This is an exceptional group. They're like the best serial music; they're so abstract yet they're so emotional at the same time. I love this violin player. Seven stars.

5 MILTON NASCIMENTO. *PORTAL DA CAR* (from *ENCONTROS E DES PEDIDAS*, Polydor). Nascimento, vocals.

Milton is great, but this is not that much better than the Ivan Lins you played. The fusion influence in Brazilian music is not something I'm particularly fond of. It ruins

ARTO LINDSAY
by Bill Milkowski

Arto Lindsay entered the world via Richmond, Virginia in 1953 before being whisked away to Brazil by his parents. There he grew up with the sounds of samba, interspersed with all the familiar American rock and soul music of the day. By age 18 he was studying theater and writing in Florida. Four years later he reached New York City, where he survived by teaching Portuguese and working as a messenger at *The Village Voice*.

Around that time the guitarist formed DNA, a seminal New York noise band that attained cult status in underground circles. In 1978, Brian Eno chose DNA, among other denizens of downtown Manhattan, to appear on the first No-Wave compilation, *No New York*. In 1979, Arto met drummer Anton Fier and joined the first edition of the Lounge Lizards, whose debut album was released in 1980 on Editions E. G. Arto continued to work with Anton's group, The Golden Palominos (appearing on their eponymously titled 1983 debut on



OAo Records and the 1986 followup on Celluloid, *Visions Of Excess*).

Lindsay's first album as a leader, *Envy*, on the Editions E.G. label, featured a hip mixture of dance-pop and samba rhythms with his band *Ambitious Lovers*. Recently, he's been performing around Manhattan with a quartet featuring guitarist Bill Frisell, bassist Melvin Gibbs (Decoding Society), and drummer Dougie Bowne (Lounge Lizards). And he continues to collaborate with his old hometown pal, Brazilian percussionist Nana Vasconcelos. This was his first Blindfold Test.

the intimacy and the unpredictability of the music. That giant drum machine sound seems to be on every record today. But it's funny, because this is a big drum sound, but it's mixed tiny. It's a good use of a drum machine pattern, but not quite as good as Nana Vasconcelos, who writes amazingly organic-sounding programs. I'll give this two stars for the song, five stars for the man. Check out his early records to really hear Milton at his best. His very first record, *Milton Nascimento*, is a masterpiece.

6 CHET BAKER. *BUT NOT FOR ME* (from *THE TOUCH OF YOUR LIPS*, SteepleChase). Baker, vocals, trumpet; Doug Raney, guitar, Neils-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass.

My man Chet! Ouch! Chet Baker is incredible. I saw him recently and his voice wasn't in very good shape, but he did some beautiful saves. I think this is what makes a musician—when you f**k up, how you pull out of it. Not just pulling off what you know you can do, but pulling out of something strange with style. And Chet would come up with these croaks here and there and manage to pull it off and fit it in. He's amazing. I like it when people just sort of go blind when they're improvising, just really play blind. And that doesn't mean just thrashing around, it means being inside the music and going into it completely. Chet does that. I first

heard him about five years ago when a Brazilian record producer told me it's impossible to understand Joao Gilberto without hearing Chet Baker. They have a lot in common, and Joao Gilberto is my favorite singer, bar none. Chet is up there too. A lot of stars. More than you've got.

7 JAMES BLOOD ULMER. *PLEASURE CONTROL* (from *FREELANCING*, Columbia). Ulmer, guitar, vocals; Amin Ali, bass; Calvin Weston, drums.

James Blood Ulmer. Great. I love this. I like his singing. Great guitar playing, great bass player. I'm not a fan of that kind of playing, but I just love Amin. I don't know why. Great band. Five stars.

8 TALKING HEADS. *LOVE FOR SALE* (from *TRUE STORIES*, Warner Bros.). David Byrne, vocals, guitar.

Neil Young? No, it's David Byrne. Like a fool, I bought this record. This is actually my favorite song on the album, but I prefer the very early David Byrne. I like *Fear Of Music*. Here he manages to sound totally generic. I guess that's the idea, right? I prefer Cole Porter's *Love For Sale*. But just because I don't listen to his records doesn't mean I don't respect him. Three stars for that. db

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STEVE ROACH

HI-TECH CIRCUITRY AND THE OPEN SPACES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DESERTS COMBINE IN THIS SYNTHESIST'S IMAGINARY LANDSCAPES.

by John Diliberto

Steve Roach is part of a new tradition, a generation that isn't classically trained, that didn't learn rock & roll chord changes in garage bands, and didn't become acolytes at the feet of jazz masters or folklorists. They are a growing coterie of artists who grew up with the music of Tangerine Dream, Terry Riley, Brian Eno, and Vangelis. To these musicians, Keith Emerson is a forefather, Wendy Carlos is an early pioneer, and Stockhausen is ancient history bordering on myth.

Roach's music is born of technology with rapid-fire, polyrhythmic sequences and sharply etched synthesized timbres. The cycling melodies have a relentless perfection on the surface, but the carefully crafted detail reveals the human artistry stoking the electronic furnaces.

Born on February 16, 1955, in La Mesa, near San Diego, Roach started playing very late in life, a possibility that would have been difficult in pre-synthesizer days. "I've been playing music and synthesizers since I was around 20 years old," says the 32-year-old Roach. "Synthesizer is the instrument that I started playing on directly. Before that I had no real previous training in music and didn't play any other musical instruments."

Instead of spending his time behind the keyboard of a synthesizer, Roach spent a wild and reckless youth behind the handlebars of a motorcross racing cycle. "I was riding these European-type race-bikes on a circuit up and down California and starting to win money and move into higher echelons of competition," explains Roach. "I had two close friends that I lost at that point, and that made a big shift in the direction of my life."

Roach left racing, but the high-speed rush of adrenaline can be heard in his music, played out in Escher-like symmetry on *Empetus* (Fortuna 036), an album of cathartic, percussive, polyrhythmic dervishes. But there's a gentler side to Roach's music too, represented on *Structures From Silence* (Fortuna 024). "I find after a session of working with the higher-energy music," explains Roach, "I go back to the other side and create this cooling out, which is like a re-entry after the sequencer compositional approach I've developed."

Roach discovered a freedom of spiritual and visual imagery in electronic music. "I think *Timewind* was the album that really hit



the switch for me," says Roach, speaking of the influential 1975 LP by legendary German synthesist Klaus Schulze. "There's a quality to the sound and a feeling that the sound gave me with synthesizers and electronic music that went so deep, it cut through so many layers. The experience of that music is so direct and seemed so familiar."

It wasn't long before he had a Roland SH-1000 synthesizer and Vox organ played through a phase shifter. Like thousands of synthesizer novices, he experimented with the drones and filter sweeps that are so easy to accomplish with synthesizers. "I guess there's several reasons for me why that happened," explains Roach. "One is I didn't have any dexterity in my fingers to play. Holding drones and chords was a very direct way to experience the music." However, he assiduously honed his skills, even practicing on a dummy keyboard at his day job in a record store. While his virtuosity is not about to give Joe Zawinul or Jan Hammer a scare, his compositions and performances have an unusually rich harmonic and melodic complexity.

Roach became part of Southern California's emerging synthesizer scene, and after only six months of playing met Doug Lynner, the editor of *Synapse*, a now-defunct electronic music magazine. After working in a few experimental groups like LEM (Live Electronic Music) they formed Moebius, an all-electronic rock band in 1978, with whom Roach recorded one eponymous LP before leaving.

Groups like Radiance and Paradigm Shift followed, presaging the more atmospheric, sculpted music that emerged on Roach's 1982 self-produced cassette, *Now* (re-issued on Fortuna 048), and a year later, on *Traveler* (Domino 101). The T.Dream/Schulze influences are evident, but already Roach was suggesting ways to go beyond them, discovering his own voice. Roach used Arp and Oberheim DSX sequencers and an Oberheim DMX drum machine to trigger, clock, and center his Arp 2600, Micro-Moog, Arp

String Ensemble and OBXa, and Roland SH3A through a maze of interlocking rhythmic and melodic patterns with an unerring cyclical momentum.

"Repetitious patterns or cyclic patterns or phasing patterns—hypnotic forms have really been elements in music that have attracted me ever since I can remember," he says. "So when I moved into electronic music and came in contact with sequencers, to me that was the most incredible device. There's such a quality of perfection in that instrument. With the sequencer I can come up with a combination of notes that have this feeling that's very deep or happy, but a feeling that you could program, and after a period of time that feeling would shift without the notes changing. That's what attracted me to the sequencer."

In his studio, Roach demonstrated his compositional technique on a work in progress with a lagging, off-center sequencer pattern. "Now the interesting thing about the DSX for me is finding techniques for recording sequences that I'm not actually playing," he explains, while tweaking and tuning machines. "I'm not actually playing this rhythm here. I played this straight into the sequencer against a metronome and then I quantized it at an odd quantizing rate in order pick out certain notes, so that it falls with this sort of spiraling push to it. When I played it back, the quantizer inside the sequencer played it back to fit inside its terminology, which was a 32nd-note quantize."

"What I'm doing is developing a technique of playing against the quantizing mode that is not really what they designed it for. But I'm developing a language between myself and that chance factor that happens when I record, because there's certain inflections that happen by playing something a little longer or shorter—and that's how you get this subtle nuance in there. The idea is that I could never play this rhythm myself anyway."

There's another, and possibly better-known side to Steve Roach, which has moved him out of the space/progressive music category and into the New Age. In 1984 he released *Structures From Silence* and immediately seduced seekers of a more meditative, ambient music. This LP's three extended compositions, recorded live to two-track tape, drift through their sweeping cadences like infinite waves. He's recently issued three follow-ups to *Structures: Quiet Music 1, 2, and 3* (Fortuna 043, 044, 045).

"When I was young and growing up I spent a lot of time in the deserts of Southern California," Roach reflects, "and there was a quality of time I felt there, the atmosphere and sense of yourself and selflessness that comes through in the desert. It's something I've really felt throughout my music and side two of *Structures* expresses that quite a bit."

Roach is ambivalent about the New Age association, even though he can talk bio-

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Woody Herman, December 1986

rhythms, fire-walking, and altered consciousness with the best of them. "In the beginning it was coming from this holistic metaphysical background and dealing with a mystical approach to sound and music and philosophy," he recalls. "But I still have a hard time with this term sometimes. As a musician, I feel best when I'm not trying to classify my music as anything but music. The New Age for me is a blanket, a way of marketing the music."

Yet Roach has been contracted by individuals and companies to make so-called self-help and meditation tapes. "In order to continue to do my personal music, I'm hired by people to do music on a certain level that is quite New Age in terms of that definition," he admits.

Many of these tapes work with subliminal audio channels, voices deep below the surface of a synthesized version of Pachelbel's *Canon* or ocean waves, urging you to relax. "Many times I feel I'm making placebo tapes on this level," he confesses, "and many of the projects themselves are still too new—as so much of this music is—to see really what is the outcome, what really is happening. It's still, to me, a guessing game, and there's not a lot of justifiable results, a lot of proof at this point to go by." Then again, it probably beats doing session work and jingles.

Roach won't have much time for these outside projects in 1987. In addition to three volumes of *Quiet Music*, he's putting together a two-record compilation/collaboration called *Western Spaces* for the German Innovative Communications label with two other West Coast synthesists, Kevin Braheny and Richard Burner. Several video projects and film scores are in the works as well. He's already done work with computer graphic artist David Em (Herbie Hancock's *Future Shock* album cover), the Synopsis video group, and some Playboy Channel documentaries.

He's also hoping to release a live album. Although his compositions are sequencer-based, Roach brings a spontaneity and exuberance to live performance that is refreshing in an era when earlier live improvisors like Tangerine Dream are relying entirely on pre-programmed concerts. Now with the addition of MIDI and an Oberheim Xpander, Ensoniq ESQ-1, Casio CZ-101, Yamaha Rev-7, Roland SDE-1000, and Emulator I, he's able to generate a high-energy, grandiose sound, coupling improvisation within a pre-programmed framework. "Because of the nature of live performance and because of the energy that's felt there, the phenomenon of playing electronic music live for me is a whole different perspective," says Roach. "The sound itself changes at the volume level I like to play it at. I'm not playing for pain, but I'm playing for that threshold of pure saturation on a physical level. I've always felt electronic music to be a very

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JIMMY STEWART

FROM STUDIO TO STAGE, THIS GUITARIST-OF-ALL-TRADES BELIEVES THAT VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF MUSICAL LIFE.

by Scott Yanow

Even after 30 years in the music business, Jimmy Stewart is full of enthusiasm about his profession.

The extremely busy studio guitarist always seems to have several projects progressing simultaneously, yet instead of becoming world-weary or cynical, the 49-year-old Stewart is still thrilled with being able to make a living at something he loves so much. "Every day is a new and exciting day for me. I love to learn, that's what keeps me going."

Recently BlackHawk Records released Stewart's first solo album in many years, *The Touch* (BKH 50301). On it Stewart displays his versatility by performing in the styles of several of his favorite guitarists. "There are a lot of thank yous on the album to some of the great players I've heard. Wes Montgomery was a major inspiration both as a person and as a player; Jim Hall, a master musician, was very nice to me when I was first coming up; and Jimmy Raney is one of my favorites of all time. For [the tune] *Gypsy '86* I remembered that Carlos Santana used to come and see Gabor Szabo play, so it's an imaginary meeting between the two."

In addition to his enthusiasm, one is also struck by Stewart's openmindedness toward all guitar styles, which was started by exposure to a wide variety of music early in life. Born in San Francisco, Jimmy benefited from both of his parents being music lovers. "My dad, who was in the medical profession, could sing both tenor and bass in church choirs, and my mother also sang. My mother started me on piano lessons early on but, although I liked it, hearing so much good music both on records and in performance led me at five or six to investigate chords instead of practicing my lessons. A guitar found its way into the house when I was seven, and I went crazy over it. It seemed to be my destiny."

Stewart developed quickly, taking extensive lessons that led him to becoming an expert sight-reader and adept on banjo and

mandolin in addition to guitar. A member of the musician's union at 15, he giggered during summers at Lake Tahoe, was a substitute guitarist with the San Francisco edition of the musical *Silk Stockings*, and still found time to attend high school. "I wanted to play my guitar in the school orchestra, but since that wasn't allowed at the time I helped out my high school teacher by learning and filling in on bassoon, tuba, and baritone horn. In return he taught me how to orchestrate and write music. I almost got into trouble because I skipped a couple of classes so I could work on writing out parts.



RHEUBEN ALLEN

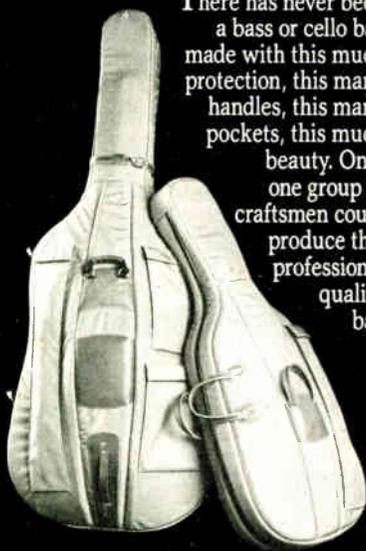
"After I graduated I went to the College of San Mateo because they had a fine dance band program; I got to work on commercial writing and orchestration. During those days I landed a job with Fun Unlimited, a booking agency that put groups together. One job I had was doing a banjo act with Terry Riley, the composer. I used to sit on top of his piano playing banjo as we did sing-a-long stuff. When no one seemed to be listening we'd really get out there, playing everything from *Green Dolphin Street* to Mahler, until the boss would find out and complain."

By the time he was 20, Stewart was the musical director for actress Ginny Simms. This gig was to pay future dividends when Jimmy was drafted, as his association with Ms. Simms led to his being put in charge of organizing shows for the Army. He later learned a great deal about the recording process acting as a radio producer for the 1959 Playboy Jazz Festival in Chicago.

"After the Army I went back to San Francisco. Andy Williams' office gave me a call and I was glad to join up, although after he landed his tv show I had to commute between L.A. and Frisco constantly, since I was doing so much work in the Bay Area, including commercials, radio, tv shows, and work with the San Francisco Opera playing mandolin and banjo. I was busy around the

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clock, loving every minute of it."

Was Stewart able to get much fulfillment playing as an often-anonymous background musician? "Yes. It's very exciting of course to do your own thing, but to be accepted among the elite is also a thrill. Fulfillment can be reached on several levels. There is a great excitement in performing alongside someone who is very visible to the public, particularly when the players and the technical people are among the best in the world. There is a fulfillment within yourself in doing a good job, being part of a team effort."

Stewart's artistry was most visible to the public during his period with guitarist Gabor Szabo (1967-70). "We'd been acquaintances earlier and knew of each other's playing. We hooked up eventually in Reno, played two notes together and knew that there was magic. I really wanted to play with him, even though it meant giving up some lucrative work. It was an unusual group with his electric guitar, my classical guitar, Al Stinson on bass, and drummer Jimmy Keltner. Gabor and I would play lines back and forth, both of us with different sounds. We never even talked about songs we were going to play—on some recordings we just made up the songs on the spot. It was one of my best experiences in music."

Unlike many other jazz guitarists of his era, Stewart always enjoyed rock. "As long as there is guitar in it I like all styles of music. I played a week opposite Jimi Hendrix when I was with Gabor at the Fillmore West. I got to talk to Jimi; he liked Wes Montgomery. His amplifier was louder than any amplifier I'd ever heard before, but the notes were there.

"I've always practiced all types of music. I guess my gift is that I can grab the essence of a style and find out how to do it, how it goes together. If you only copy a style, then you end up just imitating a few licks, and you cannot be creative in that idiom. The important thing is to find out why it sounds good. A funny thing happened to Jim Crockett of *Guitar Player*: I did a lecture tape on which I played a song just like Hendrix, and when it was played for Jim he couldn't believe he hadn't heard this Hendrix record before!

"At the same time, knowing the history of music makes playing music so much more fun, for you can put in different periods. Someone like Ernie Watts can play Coltrane solos off the record, and Chick Corea one evening played for me Bud Powell solos for an hour. The public sometimes thinks that these guys are good in just one bag, but Chick Corea didn't get where he is by just playing his own music and not knowing about the past."

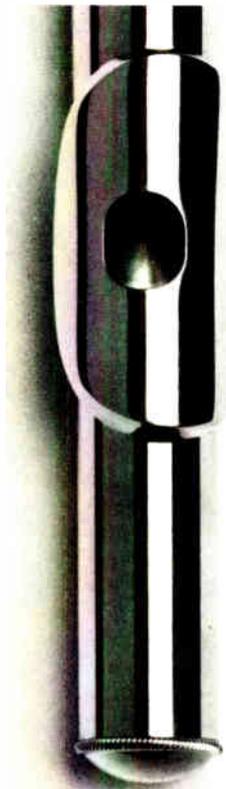
In addition to his studio work, Stewart wrote a monthly column in *Guitar Player* for 10 years, currently writes highly technical articles for *Recording Engineer Producer*, and has authored 17 books for guitarists including *The Wes Montgomery Jazz Guitar*

Method, A Tribute to Classical Guitar, and Rock Guitar. "For a guitarist just getting interested in jazz, I would recommend my new book, *The Evolution of Jazz Guitar*, since it has a cassette tape along with the text and background on the players.

"*The Touch* LP came about because of the new book. In recording a tape I wrote pieces in the styles of several players. I'd known Herb Wong for a long time, and when I called

him up and told him I'd like to join his label he was very enthusiastic. Herb allows me creative freedom, but he also guides me into marketing myself."

Stewart has had many private students through the years, including Lee Ritenour, Jerry Hahn, and Linda Ronstadt. "Linda wanted to learn about reggae music and Chuck Berry. She loves to learn—she was like a sister to me in that respect. She has a



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tremendous feel and learns fast. She likes to master new levels of music, as one can tell from her recent jazz recordings.

"With Lee Ritenour, his father called one day and asked if his son could sit by me and watch me work. Since I was on a date that wasn't high-pressure, I said sure. So Lee—at 15—sat next to me and asked questions. The next time I saw him it was at a rehearsal for a recording session. We played together and he just knocked me out. Since it turned out I couldn't make the gig, I gave it to Lee! I think it was his first recording date."

Considering his reputation among musicians, it is surprising how few jazz recordings Stewart has appeared on. "I'm a little surprised about that too. I was on a Sonny Stitt album, *Partners*, that was only released in Japan, a Gary McFarland session featuring signs of the Zodiac, and a few unreleased sessions including one with Ray Brown. Maybe some people don't think I'm available. I'd like to get much more active in making records—in fact, I hope to make at least four more records for BlackHawk. I'd like to make a classical-oriented album for a symphonic synthesizer orchestra, a record with my originals and vocals, a mainstream jazz album like we used to do them [recorded in one day], and a straight classical guitar record."

Although Stewart has accomplished a great deal during his career thus far, he has many goals remaining. "I would like to get involved in doing a movie score—that's high on my list. Among the players I'd like to someday record with are Andre Previn (a fantastic player in both jazz and classical), Ernie Watts, Pat Metheny, Lee Ritenour, and Stan Getz, who has a real affinity for guitarists. I want to eventually put the guitar in every possible situation. It's Segovia's dream that a guitar should be in every orchestra, and I like to think that my generation has helped to move it in that direction." **db**

RANDY AND JORDAN SANDKE

THESE TRUMPET-WIELDING BROTHERS SLIP EASILY FROM CLASSIC JAZZ TO SWING TO BEBOP.

by Chip Deffaa

Since Giordano calls them "those famous Sandke brothers." And if they're not actually famous yet (outside, perhaps, of New York's jazz com-



NANCY MILLER ELIOTT

munity)—well, their careers are definitely on the move. Randy Sandke ("a virtuoso," to quote John S. Wilson of the *New York Times*) first attracted attention as trumpet soloist in Giordano's Nighthawks, a spirited 1920s-oriented big band. Jordan Sandke ("a young star," to quote Mr. Wilson again) first attracted attention as trumpet soloist in the Widespread Jazz Orchestra, playing music of the Swing Era. The brothers have developed along similar-enough lines that they can—and often do—sub for one another on gigs. And they have played alongside each other, at times, in both the Nighthawks and in the Widespread Jazz Orchestra. (Both Sandkes, in fact, can be heard on the last Widespread album, *Paris Blues*, Columbia 40034.) In the past, Randy has been featured, too, in Benny Goodman's Orchestra (and was prominent in last year's Goodman PBS tv special). He's worked with George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars (subbing for Warren Vaché). Jordan's been busy, also, as a member of Jaki Byard's Apollo Stompers, and getting his own career as a small-group leader going. He recently released his first solo album (*Rhythm Is Our Business*, Stash 259). And Randy Sandke's first solo album *New York Stories* (Stash 264), features Michael Brecker on tenor sax.

Both brothers started as dedicated admirers of Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong (which you might infer from the love for melody and the bright, rounded tones that they bring to whatever they're playing). In both Randy's Brooklyn brownstone and Jordan's apartment in Little Italy, you notice pictures of Beiderbecke on the walls. And yet they're both also ardent fans of bebop. If you catch Jordan leading a small-group set, say at the Cornerstone in New Jersey, you might hear him call up Fats Navarro's *Nostalgia* first, follow it with Louis Armstrong's *Cornet Chop Suey* (from 1926)—and follow that with a brand-new hard-bop orig-

inal. His solo album includes classic jazz, Swing Era sounds, and bebop. "It's all me," Jordan says simply. "I have eclectic tastes."

Randy's debut album consists entirely of bebop-oriented material, with sidemen including Brecker, Stan Getz' pianist Jim McNeely, and Kenny Washington. After having recorded a couple of albums with Benny Goodman, he says he's anxious to avoid being pegged as primarily a swing musician—he enjoys everything he plays. Many beboppers seem to look down on the older styles of jazz, dismissing it as simplistic, outmoded. But not Sandke.

"Since the '40s, there's been a lack of respect for the older styles," Randy notes. "But to me, it's harder to make good music playing that stuff. I don't regard it as corny. It's harder for me to play good dixieland or swing than bebop. You have to think more melodically. You don't have the harmonic intricacies to fall back on."

Eventually, though, Randy hopes to become primarily known for a distinctive, unclassifiable kind of new music that he is working on in his free time. He has devised his own system of improvising melodically over dissonant chords—bringing a lyricism in the Beiderbecke tradition smack into the world of atonal contemporary serious music.

"I've worked out a harmonic system—my own chord system for a lot of chords that are more dissonant than are generally used in jazz. All improvising up till now has been scale-based. Everything up through Coltrane has been relating scales to chords, but this is like using pitches from three chords that together make up the full chromatic scale," he says. He hopes to eventually make his mark with this kind of new music. In the meantime, however, both Sandkes are busy around town, moving freely from classic jazz to bebop to swing.

As boys growing up in Chicago in the early '60s, the Sandkes were initially hooked on

jazz of the '20s. Jordan was 13 and Randy was 10 when they discovered Bix and Louis. ("Their music really touches you. The solos were perfect in their own way," Randy notes.) They saved their money to buy old 78s. And when they played their trumpets, they tried to emulate the masters.

Jordan was the first one to break out of the traditional jazz camp. He remembers, "That was the only thing we disagreed on when we were growing up. One time Randy wanted to buy me a record for my birthday. I wanted to check out Miles Davis. And he was ticked off!" Randy interjects, "Today, I think it's a great record."

By the time they were in college (University of Chicago for Jordan, Indiana University for Randy), they were both as passionately interested in bebop as they had been in classic jazz. And they were also branching out into rock & roll and the blues.

Randy was in a rock band in college when he got an offer to join Janis Joplin's backup band. But he herniated his larynx ("I was playing too loud and under too much stress"). And after an operation to fix it, he gave up the trumpet for 10 years, switching to guitar instead. Jordan tried a bit of everything, musically. His horn is even heard

backing up Howlin' Wolf, Eric Clapton, and Ringo Starr on Wolf's *The London Session* (Chess 515004).

Jordan studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where pianist Jaki Byard took him under his wing. In 1978, he hit New York. He enjoyed occasionally playing alongside of, and eventually subbing for, Roy Eldridge at Jimmy Ryan's. In 1979, he joined the WDO, while still studying trumpet with Bob McCoy. Randy, meanwhile, returned to trumpet again in 1979, studying with Vince Penzerella. Vince Giordano soon discovered him. Bob Wilber made him a regular member of his Bechet Legacy band, and used him for *The Cotton Club*. On the Grammy Award-winning soundtrack album (Geffen 24062), you'll hear Randy on *Drop Me Off In Harlem*.

Both brothers have similar tastes in music today. "I think Wynton Marsalis is great, but there are other people out there that deserve to be heard," Randy says. Asked to name trumpeters he likes, Randy notes, "There's a whole kind of neo-bop school, who aren't getting recognition. John Marshall, Brian Lynch, Richie Vitale, Tom Kirkpatrick, Jim Powell."

Jordan agrees 100 percent, adding that

other trumpeters they admire include Irvin Stokes, John Eckert, Terence Blanchard, Spanky Davis, and Barry Lee Hall. Both brothers say that jazz festivals tend to promote the established headliners, but since someday these older players will be gone, concert promoters and record companies should be building the careers of more of the promising young players.

Other dislikes? "The club scene is really in trouble in New York. Ten clubs I played in closed in the last year," Randy says. "Between the city's archaic cabaret law [since modified—see Potpourri, Oct. '86] and rising real-estate prices in New York, a lot of the jazz clubs are threatened."

"And the record companies," Randy adds. "Musicians are not in charge. The music business has turned into puffed rice—"

"Twinkies!," interjects Jordan.

"A generation's been raised with bad music, so taste has gone down," Randy says. "I wish there were some small part of the market with quality. It can cost a jazz musician \$5,000 to produce his own album. That's a fortune to an individual, but really only a small sum to a record company. I would like to see those in a position of power trust musicians."

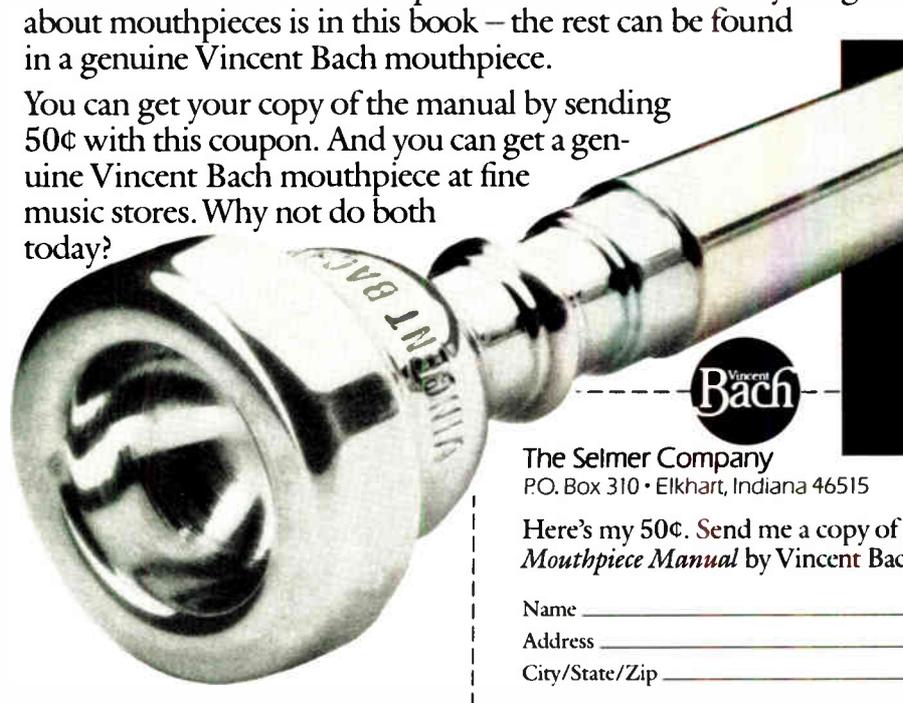
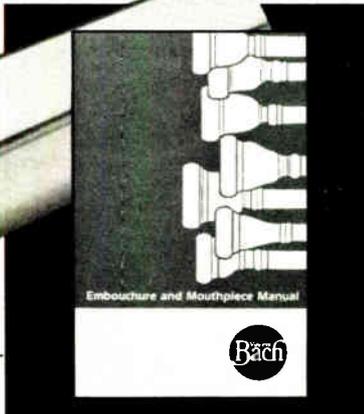
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TOMITA BATTERY PARK/NEW YORK

Billed as "More Than A Concert/A Total Experience," this multi-media extravaganza masterminded by the Japanese techno-whiz Isao Tomita was truly an amazing event.

Utilizing an ingenious interplay of sound, lights, and water, Tomita's *Back to The Earth* held curious onlookers in awe. They entered Battery Park, located at the southernmost tip of Manhattan island, to strains of Wagner's *Tristan And Isolde* pouring forth from huge speakers situated throughout the park to create what Tomita calls a "Sound Cloud," enveloping the audience from all sides.

Special barges anchored in New York's bay, where the Hudson River and East River meet, held additional speaker and lighting towers to pipe in sound and lights from the water. Other floating barges were equipped with an assortment of smoke effects and elaborate fireworks displays choreographed by Kase of Japan. And this is only the beginning.

Two towers situated several hundred feet apart at opposite ends of the park shot green laser lights into the night sky, bouncing them back and forth and creating a dazzle of patterns during a rendition of *Mars* from Holst's *The Planets*. On Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue*, Russian pianist Nikolai Demidenko performed on a barge slowly floating by the main viewing area. During a rendition of the fifth movement from Mahler's *Symphony No. 3 In D Minor*, the entire choir of the Cathedral Church of Saint John The Divine floated by on a passing barge. And on Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 1*, Mariko Senju of Japan came floating by to perform her featured piece, hauntingly backlit by light barges.

But perhaps the most amazing spectacle of all was a rendition of John Williams' *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, in which a helicopter carrying a huge platform of speakers dangling some 50 feet below came flying over the awestruck crowd. Bedecked in colored lights and piping out the familiar five-note theme from that piece, this hovering mothership engaged in a call-and-response with Japanese violinist Senju. Too much.

Presiding over it all was the enigmatic Tomita himself, locked inside a transparent plexiglass pyramid suspended over the main viewing area. This was his fortress, equipped with an arsenal of synthesizers, switches, and all manner of hardware with which to control the proceedings. Given the sprawling nature of such a mammoth production, you'd expect a few glitches here and there. Amazingly, everything ran smoothly, from fanfare to finale (Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*).

Hats off to the genius of Tomita, the Casio Corporation for sponsoring such a progressive project, and the New York City Department Of Parks And Recreation for providing the playground.

—bill milkowski

FELA THE FELT FORUM/NEW YORK

It promised to be an Event as well as a concert, what the tickets billed as the New York debut (it wasn't—he'd played here in 1970) of Afro-Beat originator Fela Anikulapo Kuti; and the coiled expectations of the combination black-and-downtown-scene crowd filling the 2,500-seat Felt Forum were more than met in both departments. Following tradition, the 20-piece band (five brass, four saxes, four

some band work a groove for whatever time it takes to simmer things to a boil, and so in the course of a three-hour set they performed only four tunes. The basic attack remains constant: the musicians dig into a vamp, there's a solo or two, then Fela's coarse, leathery voice slingshots the lyrics out, followed by more vamping, more soloing, more singing. But what tunes! The opener, *Just Like That*, uncorked some treacherous triplets and pitted sections of the band against each other in 3/4 and 4/4 time, while Fela sang of Africa's need to shape its own destiny. *Confusion Break Bone* loped to a fundamental 6/4 beat strewn with tribal polyrhythms and overlaid Major and minor tonalities to create a stunning, serious feel; guest vibraphonist Roy Ayers unleashed a twisty, feisty solo as Fela prowled the stage and periodically sprang in a shamanistic leap.

Following a 15-minute intermission he returned, stripped to the waist and with his



DONNA PAUL



DONNA PAUL

guitars, bass, timbales, trap set, three hand-held percussionists, and keyboardist, later augmented by four female backup vocalists and a half-dozen outrageous women dancers) took to the stage to heat things up for the bandleader while the audience continued to pour in.

After about half-an-hour of the band's insistently rhythmic vamping under jazz-tinged solos buttressed by horn-section swells, the man himself hit the stage, dressed in what looked like an African-style Nudie suit. But if his clothes made him appear a Nigerian Elvis, his comments throughout the night left no doubt that 18 months in a Nigerian jail on trumped-up charges had not taken the fire out of either the lithe, muscled Fela, who danced and stalked around the stage like a cat, or his intensely danceable, intensely political Afro-Beat music. Compounded from elements of James Brown's funk, Nigerian juju and highlife, and American jazz, Afro-Beat adds Fela's own inimitable pronouncements—part autobiography, part politics—as lyrics.

Those pronouncements have plenty of time to unfurl. Like JB, Fela lets his awe-

face painted, to an intro that heralded him as "African President." After a sardonic aside that somehow equated American unions and Washington politics (prompted by the 11 pm finish imposed by union regulations and the hall rental agreement), Fela lightened the musical tone if not the lyrical content with *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*. On this excursion the band exchanged its honed heaviness for a Caribbean-inflected lilt that at times recalled the more effervescent juju of Sunny Adé or Nico Mbarga, though the horns still wielded considerable funk and Fela's own sax solo squallied with true r&b grit. Finally came *Beast Of No Nation*, which Fela announced was the first song he'd written since his release from prison, describing it as "a song about leaders of the world who are animals." Propelled by two bass guitars—the first time Fela has employed that combo—its highlife beats bubbled up into stabbing horn riffs and call-and-response background vocals, while at the stage's lip six women dancers waggled at the appreciative audience. Then Fela danced, raised his two fists in solemn salute, and was gone.

—gene santoro

PRACTICE DISCIPLINES

by John Novello

In this unpredictable world of changing everything (computers, synthesizers, software, hardware, MIDI, you name it) I have observed one stable datum: those who know *how* to practice progress the fastest. But what is practice? Is it just sitting down at your instrument and playing? The answer is that although it varies to a certain extent with your goals and interests, in general practice should consist of working on your weak points. How many of you practice long hours and never seem to get over those humps? Well, you're not practicing—you're probably just playing things you already know, not confronting the real problem areas. This is why some people need teachers and some don't. Those who don't simply have an inherent ability to perceive their own weak points, confront them, and work on them until they're conquered.

I would go so far as to say that what we call talent is simply our way of saying, "That guy did it. Boy, did he do it! Wow! He's talented!" Well, yes, he did do it—but usually through a lot of hard work. This is true even with the cats who say they never studied. Maybe never formally with a teacher, but they did study by listening to records, going to live gigs, reading books, and spending hours at their instruments. I don't believe we just do something incredible without some kind of practice in the basics—if people think they're going to become the next Chick Corea, Bill Evans, or Herbie Hancock overnight, they're in for a big letdown. And thinking this can really lead people astray, for it's very easy then, when they do fail, for them to introvert and invalidate or give up on themselves and their creations. No, it actually takes real conviction. Real practice. Real confrontation. Then, when you have attained your goal, it does seem easy—that is, to *you*—because you did it.

So realize that you must ignore any worries you have about time and how long it's going to take. You have to be willing for it to take as long as necessary. Worrying about time uses up both mental and physical energy and might lead you to start practicing glibly or doing other things that can hang you up (like compromising with your musical goals). To the degree that your attention is on time, money, success, ego, or anything other than developing your ability, it's *off* confronting and practicing. On the other hand, if you put all your attention and energy into achieving your goals, it may actually speed up the process for you.

As far as the audience is concerned, an incredible song or performance is just perceived as incredible—who cares if it

took five years to create? Nobody says, "Well, hey, that can't be incredible, it took too long to create." All they care about is how good the final result is. The business world, on the other hand, is totally concerned with marketing, PR, money, sales, and the "hurry up and be great" attitude. Don't let that send you down the wrong path. It usually does take a while to

create good effects—but when you do, they're timeless.

All of this talk is useless, however, unless we can do something with it to improve your ability to practice effectively. I have developed a standard procedure for practicing for those who feel they're weak in this area. But first there are a few terms I use that I'd like to define:



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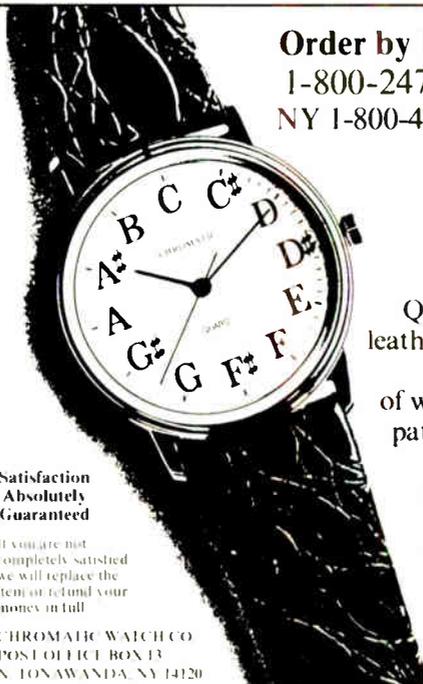
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pro session

Pre-practice: the period right before actually practicing, where you set the goals for the session.

Practice: The actual "doing" where you try to achieve a certain ability through repetition, evaluation, attention to detail, reevaluation, comparison to the ideal scene—in general, a time to "think."

Post-practice: The time for comparison of what you have just done in the practice session with what you intended to do, so as to determine what the next session's content should be.

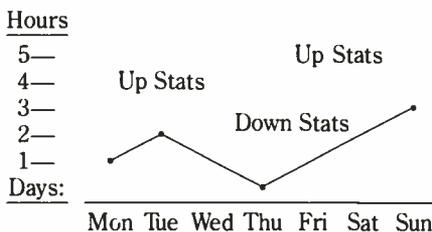
Playing: Simply playing. It is using whatever technical expertise you have to express yourself to the audience. If there is any kind of "thinking" going on, then to that degree you are not playing.

Objective self-criticism: Becoming self-sufficient at being your own critic. This ability allows the student to eventually cut the ties to his or her teacher and free himself or herself as an artist.

After making sure you understand these definitions, you should read and carry out the following steps for organizing practice sessions:

- 1) Form an honest conviction toward achieving your goal or goals.
- 2) Decide to set aside a minimum amount of time each day for practice. Start low and gradually increase the amount of time per day.

3) Each day, graph your "honestly done practice hours" in order to keep an accurate record. This is important because you'll want to know—or *should* want to know—if your statistics are rising, staying consistent, or falling. If they're falling, you'll need to reorganize your time. (See illustration of graph below.)



- 4) Create your day the night before. This simply means to plan a time schedule of your whole day and include, of course, your practice time.

The above four steps allow you to organize and create time so you can get on with the business of practicing. What follows is a standard procedure for practicing itself.

Practice Procedure

- 1) If possible, leave your problems outside the practice room. If that is not possible, then it's probably better that you handle whatever your attention is on before you practice; otherwise, the practice session might be very glib—in other words, you might not really get anything

from it, but just be going through the motions.

- 2) Shift your attention to the goals you have created for the session, and when you feel ready to start, then say out loud or to yourself:

3) "START!" I have found that most students never *really* start the practice session. Simply sitting down and playing around the piano is not practicing. Therefore, giving yourself a mental or verbal start makes the session a little more real and important.

- 4) Organize your allotted time by practicing the most difficult things first, when you're fresh, and the easiest things last. Also make sure you cover everything you planned—especially if you have a limited amount of time. If you don't cover everything, mark your place and begin there at your next practice session.

5) Be aware of your emotions, for they can get in the way. Boredom, anger, depression, grief, etc. can take the "attack" out of the session. If you become aware of negative emotions, get up and take a five-minute break and then resume. Enthusiasm is the emotion necessary for successful practice sessions. If you take your time and practice things gradually—that is, progress gradually—you won't stir up these negative emotions.

- 6) When you've either completed your targets or your allotted time, end the practice part of the session and give yourself a "well done" (mentally or out loud). But there's still one more very important step . . .

7) Now play! Play anything! It may or may not be related to your lesson, but just play. Always play after you practice because that's what you're there for—remember? Now, playing has no "thinking" associated with it—no evaluation or consideration of how you're doing. That part of the session is over. Just imagine you're playing for an audience and simply play! Don't stop, even if there are mistakes. Playing is the real thing and a professional performance means you're in control. If you ever get a chance to ask a great artist what's going on while he's performing, you'll find he usually can't explain it. That's because there's nothing going on. If the artist is prepared—meaning he's done his homework—then the only thing going on is "playing." So play on, maestro!

If applied honestly, this practice procedure will pave the way for the student to advance rapidly and realize his or her potential in a relatively short time. It is not true that it *has* to take eight or 10 hours per day and 20 years to become a real professional. With good guidance and diligent, organized practice, you can become quite adept in a relatively short time. Practice makes perfect—or better put, *correct* practice makes perfect. db

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book reviews

SWEET SOUL MUSIC by Peter Guralnick (New York: Harper & Row, 1986, 438 pp., \$14.95, paperback).

Let's get right to the point: this book warehouses an astonishing amount of information. While various bits of the history chronicled here have surfaced before, nowhere else have they been sifted, collated, and lovingly placed into such resonant, evocative contexts. In *Sweet Soul Music*, Peter Guralnick—author of *Feel Like Going Home*, *Lost Highway*, *Listener's Guide To The Blues*, and *Nighthawk Blues*, as well as numerous articles for the likes of *Rolling Stone*, the *Village Voice*, and the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*—paints an extensive picture of the origins, emergence, apex, decline, and final collapse of this rich music that, for a few years at the end of the '60s, became one of the dominant sounds in American culture.

Beginning at the beginning, with the roots of soul in r&b and gospel, Guralnick traces the development of the form through the development of key performers like Ray Charles and Sam Cooke, whose crossover successes inspired others to mix the sacred and secular in their music. Along the way, he discusses (and wherever possible furnishes abundant quotes from) such giants as Solomon Burke, James Brown, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, Joe Tex, and Aretha Franklin, and includes in addition such relatively unsung seedbearers as Don Covay, Arthur Alexander, Dan Penn, O. V. Wright, and James Carr.

This is not, however, a case of history-equals-biography. Rather than writing a series of profiles, Guralnick has more than done his delving into background—five years of research and over a hundred interviews—and he makes generous use of what he's learned on those forays to contextualize his occasionally revisionist insights into the nature and shape of soul music. What results is the weaving of a textured, complex story with a multiplicity of fascinating angles. The business side alone of this '60s phenomenon furnishes a wealth of material for Guralnick's discerning reportorial eye: the rise and fall of mighty Stax-Volt, with the intense internecine squabbling that led to defections and consequent rivalries with various defectors' own Southern soul projects, like Muscle Shoals and Fame Studios—not to mention the ambiguous role played in all of this by Jerry Wexler's Atlantic, then the behemoth of r&b, having various contractual and distribution arrangements with nearly all the small Southern labels and studios at one point or another. As a friend of mine never tires of pointing out, there are two words in "music business;" as Guralnick amply demonstrates here, the interaction of those two words can produce both incredible sounds and an enthralling, twisting tale.



Ray Charles: mixed sacred and secular.

For, best of all, this book becomes no dusty treatise, but rather flows with the exuberant detail and fine-tuned style that makes it not only informative but also scintillating to read. And to look at—some of the striking and rare photos from private collectors shed their own sideights on people and events depicted in the text. Someday, when "popular" culture is no longer treated like a second-class citizen by the denizens of academia's rarified realms, the pros will start tripping over their robes to churn out turgid and ponderous tomes defining the quintessence of explosive, creative periods like the late '60s. When they get to Southern soul music, like the rest of us they'll have to start right here.

—gene santoro

IN THE MOMENT: JAZZ IN THE 1980s by Francis Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, 258 pp., \$18.95, hardcover).

Even in the heat of the moment, deadline writer Francis Davis takes the long view. An incisive interviewer and rethiker, he's mindful of the '80s' place in jazz history, and jazz' place in the larger schemes of American culture and artistic modernism. He connects Ran Blake with New England transcendentalism, and likens Ornette's elusive harmonic theory to the plot-sparking McGuffin in Hitchcock's movies; you don't need to understand the mechanism to enjoy the romp.

Davis is a shrewd student of racial and sexual politics, market factors, and critical over-enthusiasm. He sees Miles as "trading

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on credit for far too long," and questions a neo-classicism that forgets everything but bop. "One of the curiosities of jazz mythology is that the further Birdland and Minton's recede into history, the more they are discussed as belonging to the day just before yesterday. By contrast, Storyville and the Savoy Ballroom might as well belong to antiquity."

He values pre- and post-bop because he values structure; its development drives the

music forward. He was almost clairvoyantly quick to hear Anthony Davis' formal daring, and prizes Sonny Rollins' blowing for its spontaneous elegance. Of the Art Ensemble's members, he focuses on heady conceptualist Roscoe Mitchell—yet he also loves Bobby McFerrin's multi-layered goofiness.

Davis displays a too-common reluctance to deal with the nuts and bolts of the structures he celebrates, but his impressionism can be razor-sharp. On the hostile reception

that greeted Ornette in New York: "His ragged, downhome sound cast him in the role of country cousin to his slicker, more urbanized brethren"—an embarrassing reminder of urban music's rural roots.

But formalist bias occasionally skews Davis' perspective. He deplores the '70s' lofted solo concerts, overlooking their crucial role in codifying soloists' vocabularies after '60s upheavals, and in anticipating the '80s' stylistic regrouping. (The progression from David Murray's solo recitals to his big band work isn't hard to chart.) Ornette established a "permanent avant garde," yet post-Coleman free play is barely mentioned, despite spontaneous composers' increasing awareness of structure and development of a common language. Francis has rightly chided fellow critics for neglecting developments far from home, yet the only non-American musician discussed at length is the Vienna Art Orchestra's Mathias Ruegg; most everyone else lives between Philadelphia and Boston.

In *The Moment's* problems are structural, stemming from its piecemeal nature. (Most of the pieces appeared before in various journals, including *db*.) Intriguing connections are hinted at but unexplored—kinship between John Lewis and Anthony Davis, for example. Other connections go unmade: kinship among Henry Threadgill's, Anthony Davis', and David Murray's flexible midsize ensembles.

I wish the economics of publishing allowed observers as perceptive as Davis and Gary Giddins to stitch their deadline pieces into tighter packages, instead of letting them stand as souvenirs of the moment. I'm less interested in how Davis was caught up in the hype surrounding Arthur Blythe in 1981—to which he now pleads guilty—than in knowing how he views Blythe in '86.

One suspects that Davis, taking the long view as usual, has envisioned a book that would endure as decades go by: a collection as useful to future generations for how it captures this moment in musical evolution as for how it alters our vision, now.

—kevin whitehead

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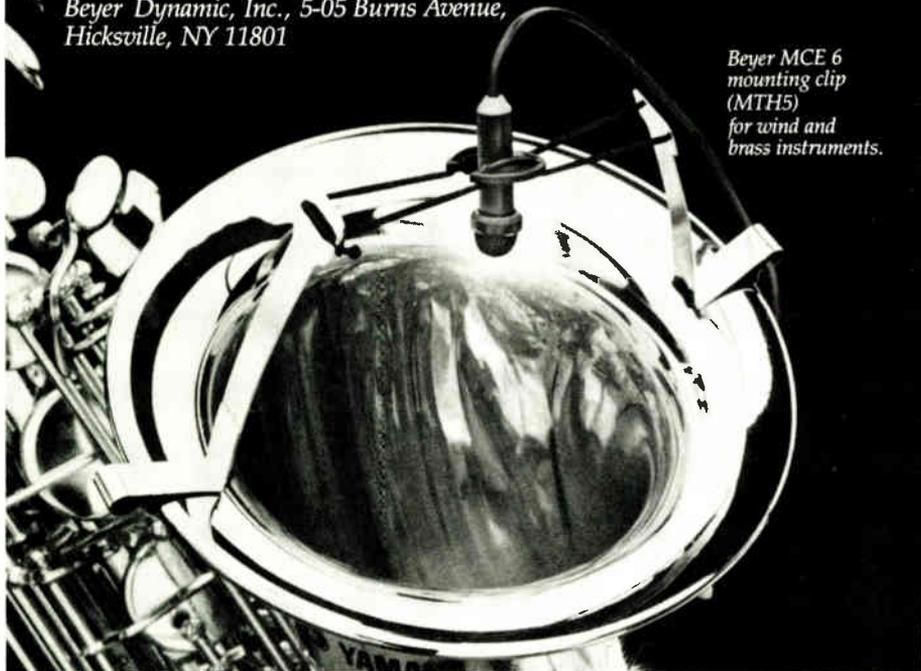
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IMAGINE THE SOUND: PHOTOGRAPHS AND WRITINGS by Bill Smith (Toronto: Nightwood Editions, 1986, 198 pp., \$16.95, paperback).

Well-read jazz lovers know Bill Smith as the editor, designer, and co-publisher of Canada's erudite and handsome *Coda* magazine, where hundreds of his photographs have appeared in the last two decades. Almost 100 portraits are included in *Imagine The Sound*,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



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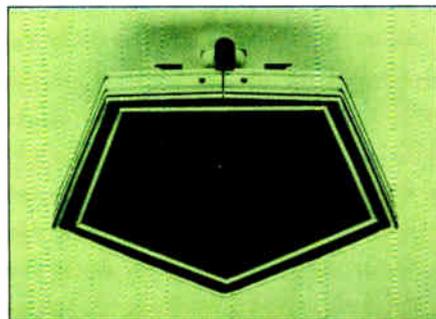
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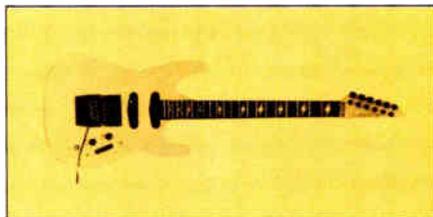
Hss Inc. (Richmond, VA) is offering the Performer Plus drum set, designed for young drummers looking for a beginning set of professional quality. The Performer Plus comes in three gloss lacquer finishes: creme, red, and onyx black. It features a newly designed, thicker, nine-ply wooden drum shell. The Performer Plus is equipped with Ambassador heads, top and bottom, and with a black resonator head on the front bass drum. The bass drum also has 10 tension lugs.



DYNACORD'S DUOPAD

EUROPA TECHNOLOGY INC. (Venice, CA) is offering the Dynacord Duopad, which features two completely independent sensors—one on the surface and one on the rim, each driving separate output jacks. Two different sounds can be generated with the Duopad (e.g. snare on the percussion surface and rimshot on the rim); to heighten that snare feeling further, the Duopad includes a transition control that allows the coupling between sounds to be infinitely adjusted. Other modules that can be used include cowbell, woodblock, electrified snare, and reggae snare. Duopad groups are also possible: natural toms on the percussion surface, electrified toms at the rim; timbales on the surface, bongos on the rim.

GUITAR WORLD



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NADY SYSTEMS INC. (Oakland, CA) is offering its Lightning 2 wireless guitar with a Nady 49 Transmitter for use with the company's 49 GT Receiver, also included. The guitar features a Strat-style body; a thin, fast-action bolt-on maple neck; and a 22-fret rosewood fingerboard with jumbo frets. Pickups are double-humbuckers in lead, single coils for neck and mid-range, controlled by a five-way switch. Volume and tone controls are included, and the Lightning 2 can be upgraded to a VHF wireless system with a user-installable kit available from Nady. The instrument weighs seven-and-one-half pounds and is available in white, red, and black.

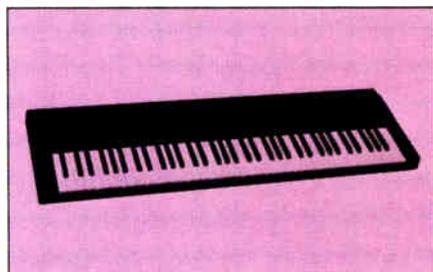
ELECTRONIC GEAR



POLYTONE'S BABY TAURUS

POLYTONE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (North Hollywood, CA) has introduced the Baby Taurus, a 40-watt RMS open-back amplifier using a heavy-duty eight-inch speaker and featuring studio-quality Hammond spring reverb circuitry and switchable clean and distortion channels. Other features include solid plywood construction; individual bass, mid-range, and treble controls; and a tough 28-ounce Boltaflex covering that comes in black or red. The amp's endorsers include George Benson, Joe Pass, and Roy Clark.

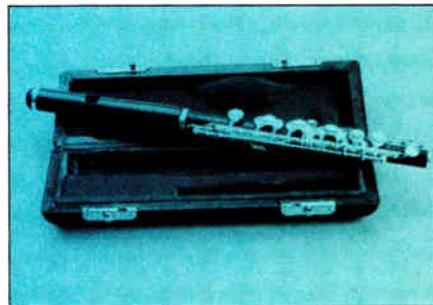
KEYBOARD COUNTRY



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KORG U.S.A. (Westbury, NY) has introduced its DP-80 Digital MIDI Piano, featuring a six-octave touch-sensitive keyboard, 16 built-in voices, built-in stereo speakers, and full MIDI capabilities. The DP-80's 76-note velocity-sensitive keyboard features full-size weighted keys for fully expressive playing. The two built-in speakers allow for playing at home or on the road; external output jacks and stereo headphones allow for private practice. The DP-80 also has built-in stereo chorus, key transpose, and such MIDI implementation as separate transmit/receive channel selection, omni on/off, local on/off, and external program select capabilities. The DP-80 includes a "Music Box" automatic demonstration that performs four built-in musical pieces. The performances can be played via MIDI on other external keyboards.

WIND WAREHOUSE



EMERSON'S PC 8 PICCOLOS

EMERSON MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS (Elkhart, IN) has introduced a grenadilla wood, conical bore PC 8 series piccolo line. State-of-the-art headjoint-to-body "bubble style" coupling is available with a grenadilla wood headjoint, a sterling silver headjoint, or in a case offering both headjoints. The outfit includes a leather-covered French-style case, cleaning rod, and a black nylon, shearling-lined case cover. db

and it becomes an extremely human thing," says Carlos. "I express my humanity and it gets it out of my gut and onto the tape and out of my system and you exorcise the spirit inside you and then you find another spirit that you have to exorcise next so you're never done, but it is cathartic and it's healthy to do this. And that's a very Freudian way of talking about creating arts and music—but I don't mean it literally anyway."

And where is Carlos' legendary Modular Moog system amidst all these non equal-tempered tunings, digital sound, and MacIntosh MIDI sequencing? As I looked at it sitting in the corner of her studio, I asked if it hadn't become kind of a museum piece. "Don't be so sure of that," she replied craftily. "I've pushed it there and it sulked for a whole year. Then when I got into this record, wouldn't you know that I needed certain low-pitched vocoder sounds—I wanted these low droning voices of the Tibetan monks and you can't have the monks sounding as though they were talking over a telephone. It's got to have the bottom end on it. So I went and I patched in two of the modules from the old vocoder from the Moog and paralleled it to the new vocoder so I had this funny kluge of patchcords and dials and everything set-up here and it was a monster. But it worked. Since that record was done, Bob Moog added the filter so I no longer have to do that stunt.

"On the other hand, for the trumpets on *Incantation*, there is a voltage-controlled filter, the 904A here. It turns out that for having a controlled 'whoa ah' [imitates trumpet dynamic swell], that trumpet effect can't be done digitally with the present instrument. In principle it can be, but no one has opened up a way to speak to the micro-processor to access that particular bite of code to move it continually in time while the processor is busy updating all the envelope points. I can patch this in on the output of my fancy digital machine, and when I need to have continuous change of the upper harmonics of a sound I do it with the old Moog, turning the dial manually. Embarrassing as that might sound, that's how I did it."

Wendy Carlos is nothing if not passionate and committed. Holed up in her intimate quadraphonic studio in New York, she'll spend years creating a super orchestra of sounds for her LSI, and a few years again generating new tunings for *Beauty In The Beast*. While most musicians are content to go where the technology leads them, Carlos is constantly trying to expand the instrument's capability for performance and expression. "I have the technology at my fingertips to go places to discover sonic beauty and to sculpt a little bit of it myself, to put my own thumbprint on it," says Carlos. "Which is something that's very human." db

to illustrate Bill's autobiographical impressions; the text focuses on his own "unfolding" toward the music, from hearing scratchy 78s in grim postwar Britain, to discovering his own musical voice through friendship with Anthony Braxton and others.

Smith deftly balances text and image; here, text is scant and images predominate. A short chapter on Cecil Taylor is laid out like a children's book: a sequence of full-page action shots of Cecil at the piano face individual lines of large-print verse on opposing pages. ("Jumpin' Jack Flash/Could never move this fast/Lithe, eloquent gazelle. . .")

Smith's English prose may be drollly witty—in his drab boyhood housing tract, "the first utility that evolved was a pub." Yet it's his black & whites of everyone from Red Allen to Joseph Bowie, and his talk of practical constraints on jazz photography, that are most illuminating. The problems of shooting black musicians in dark clubs without an intrusive flash necessitate overdeveloping underexposed film, to bring out faint detail. His most striking photograph here—a conspiratorial whisper from David Murray to Julius Hemphill—smacks of film noir's grainy expressionism (recalling,

harmlessly, the cliched links between jazz and gangster movies). But Smith's most telling photograph is a paradigmatic history lesson: sideman Buddy Guy soaking up the words of testifying elder statesman Lonnie Johnson.

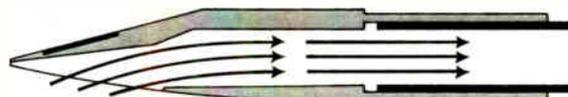
Smith sees himself as a "musicartist," a term encompassing his activities as photographer, writer, record producer, saxophonist. What he says about one role is equally true of the others: "Photographers cannot imagine what they are looking at, they can only imagine what they can do to change what is already existing as a subject, into a personal viewpoint." In this light, *Coda's* wee lapses in judgment—chiefly plugs for Bill's own groups—make perfect sense, stemming from the editor's passionate involvement with what he chronicles. *Imagine The Sound's* perspective makes it easy to forgive such human failings; it traces one observer's seduction by the music that seduces us all.

Imagine The Sound is available by mail (plus 10 percent for shipping in Canada, 15 percent outside) from the publisher, P.O. Box 5432, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1N6.

—kevin whitehead



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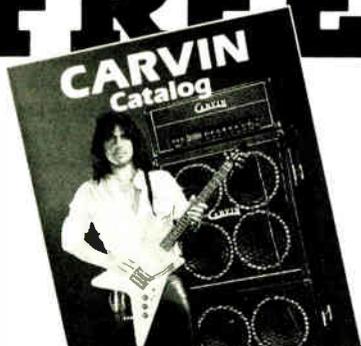
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REGGAE OR NOT: JAZZ GOES DREAD?

by Norman Weinstein

Caribbean music has a long and not often recognized place of honor in terms of its impact on jazz. Think of Dizzy Gillespie's romance with Cuban rhythms, or Sonny Rollins' playful permutations of calypso. In recent years there has been a steady increase in utilizing Jamaican reggae sounds, a synthesis bringing together a far-ranging assortment of talents: Oliver Lake, Leo Smith, Miles Davis, Arthur Blythe, Kuzumi Watanabe, John Abercrombie, Jack DeJohnette, Don Cherry, Lester Bowie, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. One can note this reggae influence and leave the matter at that—or one can use the occasion of this new synthesis as an opportunity to ask: can a language be developed to help us better comprehend the manner in which these musicians are absorbing, modifying, and transforming established reggae forms? And can these examples from a reggae/jazz merger also illuminate the manner in which other musical styles are synthesized with jazz?

These questions were inspired by repeated listenings to recordings by Oliver Lake's Jump Up reggae-funk-jazz dance band. Lake grew dreadlocks and donned Caribbean costumes for his shift from avant garde jazz to reggae. The albums both delight and disturb, revealing how much more than an image shift is required to move into reggae. Jump Up's rhythm section established an authentic-sounding reggae groove—yet a vital spark was missing. Lake's sax solos were unadventurous, brief, desultory, particularly when compared to solos by Jamaican pop-jazz saxophonists like Tommy McCook and Roland Alphonso. The point here is not simply to discredit the dimensionality of Lake's understanding of Jamaican pop music. It is to identify what occurs when an American jazz player of distinction steps into a tradition outside of his immediate experience and borrows surface elements (the conservative regularity of reggae's rhythmic groove) without delving into more subtle deep structures of style. There is no question that the tales drums and bass overwhelmingly tell are a cornerstone of reggae. But what lies beyond this force in the musical style, and how much more reggae can contribute to jazz, is best discovered by listening to the recent music of trumpeter Leo Smith.

Smith wears the superficial trappings of the American jazzman gone dread: natty hair and Ethiopian colors. But Smith's art readily transcends these visually chic clichés. He is



Oliver Lake and Jump Up

an active believer in the faith of Rastafarianism, that visionary brew of pan-African millennialism that has been the living faith of so many stirring reggae composers, including Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. Smith brings this spiritual perspective directly into the heart of his recent compositions. *Rastafari* (Sackville 3030), *Jah Music* (Kabel 5), and *Human Rights* (Kabel/Gramm 24), are outstanding recordings of Smith's work in this mode.

Rastafari's title cut demonstrates a musical approach radically different from Lake's. The drums and bass which are so crucial traditionally in both reggae and Rastafarian worship music are entirely eliminated. The composition opens with Smith chanting the word "Rastafari" with the piece then segueing into a series of long flowing lyrical lines executed by Smith's trumpet and David Prentice's violin, their crosstalk a passionate dialog about despair and faith—a metaphysical reverie evoking an American Transcendentalist composer like Carl Ruggles just as surely as Marley. Smith's uncanny feel for reggae's essence—even without a rhythm section in his ensemble—is actualized through an exacting arrangement of various intermeshing instrumental timbres, which creates a sense of spaciousness and rhythmic syncopation.

Smith's *Jah Music*, a seven-song cycle by an eight-piece band, does utilize bass and drums marking time. Once you overcome any uneasiness about Smith's meager singing skills (a fault he shares with Lake), you are treated to an astonishing amalgam of jazz, reggae, and rock (enhanced by James Emery's bold guitar solos) in which these musical styles seem to fuse seamlessly. This musical triumph seems to have emerged as the result of Smith's total immersion into both reggae's musical vocabulary and the spiritual system which inspired the birth of reggae.

Between Lake's borrowing on a superficial level of reggae's obvious surface traits and Smith's total involvement with the music's deep structures are a spectrum of musicians who move on a continuum from a rare experiment with a single jazz/reggae composition (John Abercrombie's *Night* and Jack

DeJohnette's *Inflation Blues*) to an ongoing infatuation with reggae/jazz intersection points (Kuzumi Watanabe's *Mobo* series, Bowie's work with AEC and *Brass Fantasy*, Blythe's as yet unavailable live sessions with The Skatalites at the Village Gate). Guitarist Watanabe, like Lake, chooses a most obvious feature—the steady rhythmic groove—but chooses to record with the most sophisticated reggae rhythm section in the world: Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare. Trumpeter Lester Bowie has brought Jamaican song to the Art Ensemble of Chicago with *Jah* on the *Nice Guys* album and *Coming Back Jamaica* to the record made by his own brass band, *Brass Fantasy*. The humor and ease in these pieces might stem from his time in Jamaica jamming with many of the island's finest reggae and jazz musicians.

Let's shift now from this brief survey of reggae/jazz mergers to my original point of inquiry: can a language be created to precisely talk about how jazz players interact with an influence like reggae? The jokester in me will suggest (with tongue planted firmly in cheek) that Lake is "less than dread," Smith "dreadier than dread," and the rest various "dreadful" variations between these poles, "dread" being a multipurpose word in the Jamaican vocabulary somewhat similar to the positive use of "bad" in American black English. A less impressionistic language for analysis might surface if we begin considering whether musicians are content to borrow merely surface elements of a musical style or are seeking to utilize deep structures. Another pertinent question to ask: are musicians borrowing from a style simply to introduce exotic tone colors or rhythmic configurations on a one-shot basis, or is there an ongoing commitment to keep mining a style for new directions? Smith's music even raises the thorny question of whether a musician can or should practice the spiritual faith underpinning a particular style, a question only the Divine Bopper can answer, whether they're reggae or not. Improvisations triggered by these questions will hopefully lead toward creating a new tongue to describe what sparks fly at the intersection points between jazz and other styles. db

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ZARAK SIMMONS 21-year-old Olympia, WA, native, is the drummer son of trumpeter Barbara Donald and saxophonist Sonny Simmons. His musical ability, he says, was brought to the surface by his mother's instruction and the number of outstanding musicians he has performed with. On his first job as leader, for example, he was backed by trombonist Julian Priester and bassist Gary Peacock. His drums were given to him by Billy Higgins, who he assisted in giving drum clinics in Los Angeles in 1984, with Philly Joe Jones, Lawrence Marable, Tuttie Heath, Papa Jo Jones, and Shelly Manne also taking part. Other all-stars that Simmons has sat in with include Wynton Marsalis, Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard, and Jack Sheldon.

Simmons performed with his mother's band, Unity, at the 1984 Kool Jazz Festival/New York, and was praised by Stephen Holden in the *New York Times* for his "taut accelerated drumming," which Holden said helped give "the music an exuberant drive that complemented the rugged optimism of Miss Donald's style."



GAYLA STEELE, 22-year-old guitarist/singer/songwriter from Marion, Iowa, began a career performing Irish music and her own songs at age 17. She began playing guitar at age five, took lessons for a year at eight, and by nine was performing bluegrass with her parents in nursing homes. After touring with her parents during her early teen years, she took a

year off at 16, then began performing again after becoming interested in Irish music.

Steele's music has taken her to Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, and throughout Iowa, and she's been a regular guest on Cedar Falls' public radio station KUNI. In June 1985 she appeared on "The Flea Market," a nationally broadcast show originating at Chicago's WBEZ. Steele was a founding member of the four-piece band Too Long In This Condition, which performs traditional Celtic music around Iowa, and she also performs occasionally with Timothy Britton. She spent much of 1986 working to complete her debut album, *Look Out The Window*.



BRADLEY SOWASH, 26-year-old Ohio-born composer/keyboardist, has been writing and performing music since he was 15. After earning a music degree from Ohio State University, he moved to New York City, and has since toured solo piano concerts of original works nationally. Supported by three Meet-the-Composer grants, his New York performances include Dance Theater Workshop, Performance Space 122, and the Celebrate Brooklyn Festival. As keyboardist for Meredith Monk he has performed at LaMama and the Kennedy Center, and his compositions have been presented at Buffalo's North American New Music Festival and at Ghent, Belgium's Logos Foundation.

The creator of scores for such choreographers as Senta Driver, Chris Pilafian, and longtime collaborator Susan Hadley, Sowash also handled the sound design for Richard Foreman's *Africanus Instructus*. In 1986 he presented *Caught In The Middle*, a collaborative work of music, dance, and visual art, about which Burt Supree wrote in *The Village Voice*, "Sowash's music powerfully conjures the moods throughout the piece."



DAVID BIXLER, 22, began playing alto saxophone while in elementary school, and has since then gradually added other woodwind instruments to his repertoire. The Racine, WI, native is currently studying with David Baker and Eugene Rousseau at Indiana University in Bloomington, where he is lead alto in the Indiana University Jazz Ensemble.

This past summer, Bixler studied with tenor saxophonist George Coleman under a National Endowment for the Arts grant. This fall, he played with trumpeter Johnny Coles in Bloomington. Bixler's other accomplishments include winning numerous awards while in high school, among them being selected for the McDonald's All-American Band and the McDonald's Jazz Ensemble. Bixler's influences include Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane, and Joe Henderson.



KEITH ROGERS, 28, began playing guitar less than four years ago. "I never planned to be a musician or dreamed of it," he writes. "One night at a friend's party they had guitars out, and I picked one up and started playing instantly by ear. From there I got serious and taught myself." One year later, in September 1984, Rogers played lead guitar and harmonica with Jeff Jay and the Urban Buddha Band at the 17th annual Detroit Blues Festival, and the following year he played with the same band at Detroit's International Freedom Festival.

Since taking up guitar, Rogers

has also taught himself to play drums, keyboards, and bass as well as write songs. He produced an instrumental 45 rpm record in December 1985, on which he played all of the instruments, and he plans to release a second 45 sometime early this year. Rogers plays all styles of music, favoring blues, jazz, and rock; his main influences are Jimi Hendrix, B.B. King, and Johnny Winter.



JOHN GOVE, 21-year-old composer/trombonist, earned three *down beat* Student Musician Awards in 1986, with wins in the college Composer and Arranger categories and an outstanding performance as a trombone soloist. The San Francisco Bay-area native split lead trombone duties with the Eastman School of Music Jazz Ensemble, which was named top college jazz band. Gove also recently did a three-month tour with the Broadway musical *Pippin*, which starred Ben Vereen.

Gove began his music studies on piano in the first grade, took up trombone in the fourth grade, and started composing in earnest as a junior in high school; his teachers have included Van Hughes, Dan Livesay, John Marcellus, Brian Cooke, Mark Levine, Bill Dobbins, Ray Brown, and Ray Wright. He's played gigs with Tom Harrell, Jeff Beal, Larry Schneider, and Eddie Marshall, and prior to enrolling at Eastman in 1984 he earned such honors as principal trombone with the California State H.S. Honor Band, lead trombone in the H.S. Honor Jazz Band and the Cal State Junior College Honor Jazz Band, and a best big band composition award at the 1984 Pacific Coast Jazz Festival. **db**

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