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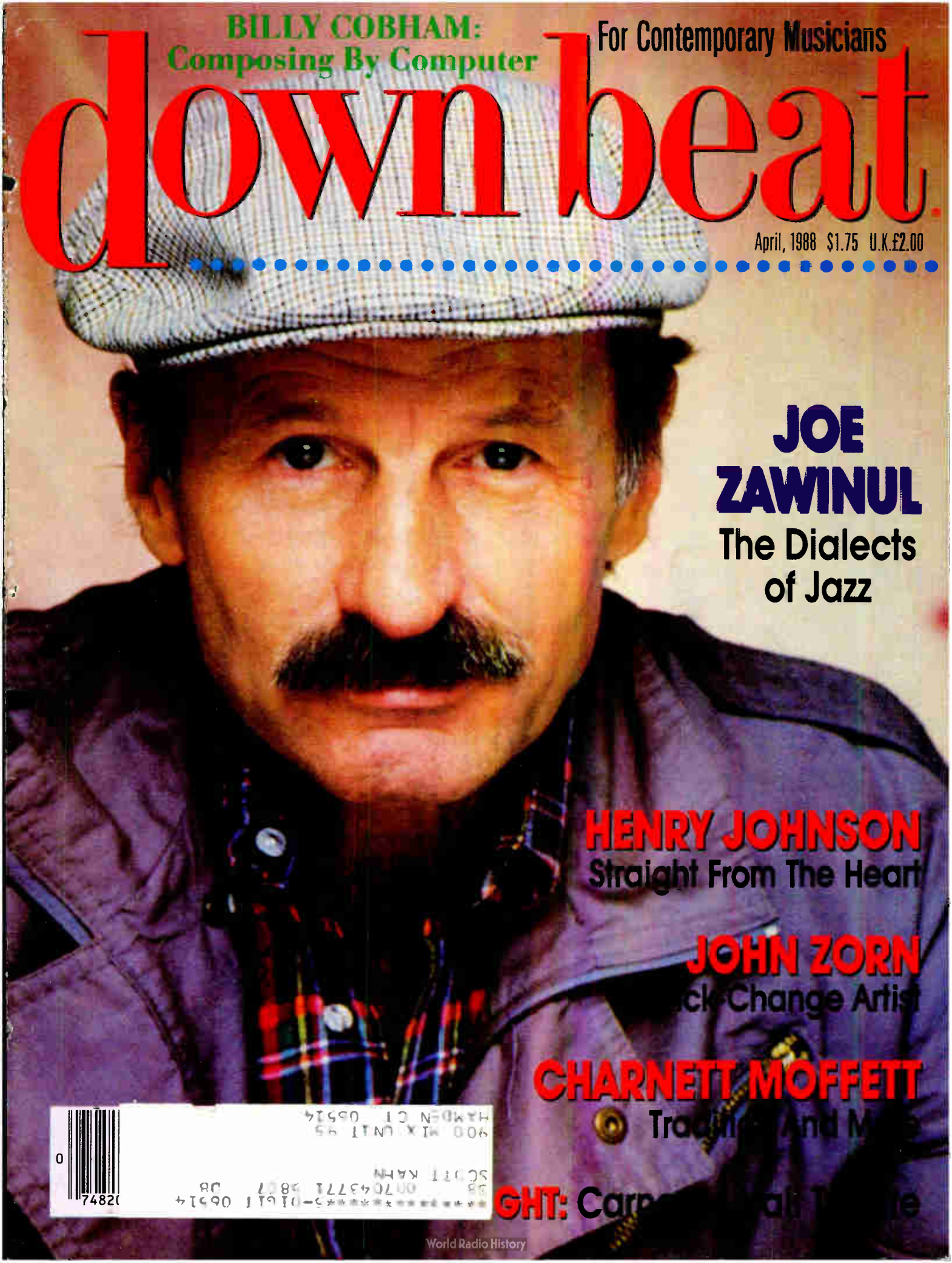

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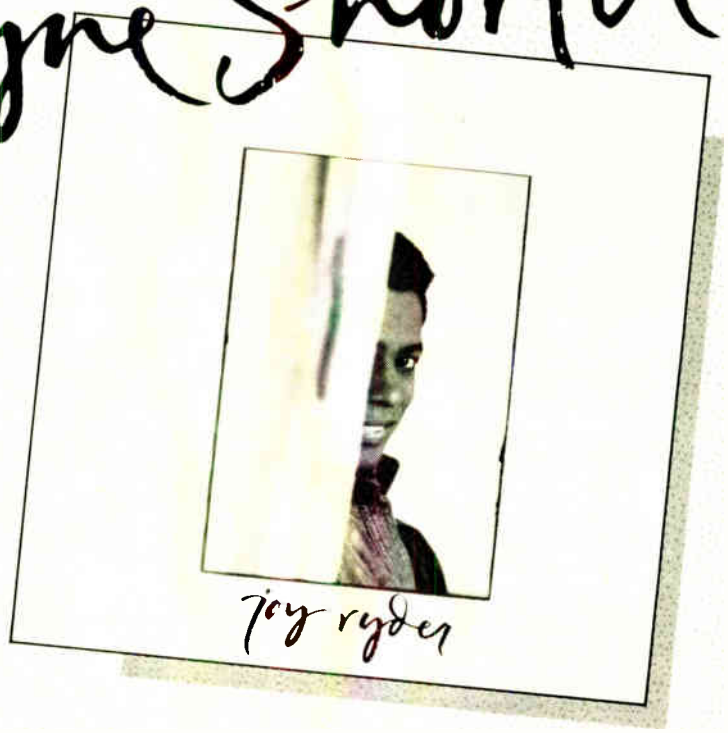
THE FIRE STILL BURNS....

Wayne Shorter



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For Contemporary Musicians

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RECORD REVIEWERS: Alan Axelrod, Jon Balleras, Larry Birnbaum, Fred Bouchard, Owen Cordle, John Diliberto, Elaine Guregian, Frank-John Hadley, Peter Kostakis, John Litweiler, Howard Mandel, Terry Martin, John McDonough, Bill Milkowski, Jim Roberts, Ben Sandmel, Gene Santoro, Bill Shoemaker, Jack Sohmer, Robin Tolleson, Ron Welburn, Pete Welding, Kevin Whitehead

CONTRIBUTORS: Jon Balleras, Larry Birnbaum, Michael Bourne, Tom Copi, Lauren Deutsch, John Diliberto, Leonard Feather, Andy Freeberg, Art Lange, Howard Mandel, John McDonough, Bill Milkowski, Paul Natkin, Herb Nolan, Gene Santoro, Mitchell Seidel, Pete Welding

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John Maher, Advertising Sales
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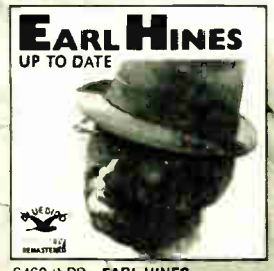

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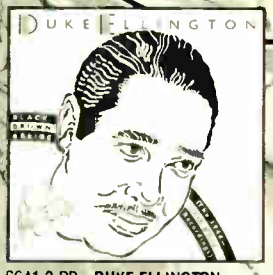

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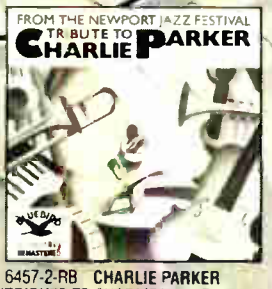

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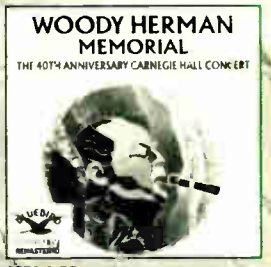

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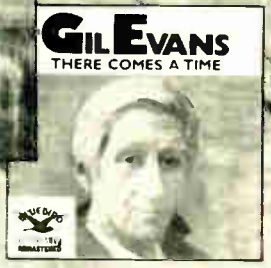

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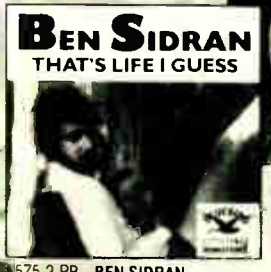

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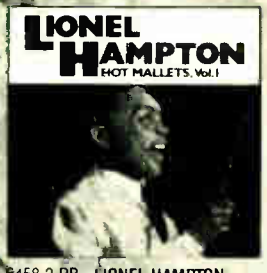

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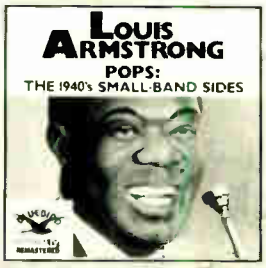

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LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL

by John McDonough

The New Jersey Jazz Society and the Bob Wilber orchestra recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of Benny Goodman's 1938 jazz concert in Carnegie Hall. Goodman's concert was an event of multiple precedents . . . multiple fates. Beyond its cultural symbolism, it would also play a key role in the opening of the recording process to live performance.

By the 1930's, recording music had become a ritualistic process. Artists knew the special immortality a recording afforded; that it would speak in their name to posterity throughout the ages. So they yielded to the temptation to "touch up" reality. The recording studio became a controlled, insulated, and sometimes neutering laboratory. It could correct for the "distortions" of natural environment. It sealed the artist off from the tensions of performer-audience confrontation. The studio became to the performer what steriods are to the athlete.

Maybe the first to sense that missing tension was Lionel Mapleson (1865-1937), librarian of the Metropolitan Opera. In 1901 he took his Edison Model A cylinder recorder and crowded into the prompter box on the Met's stage. Mapelson thus became the first to record live performances before an audience.

Audiences became routinely familiar with live audience music and entertainment via radio in the '30s and '40s. It was through this radio infrastructure, in fact, that Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert came to be recorded, via a live CBS "wire" that was permanently in place in the Hall to carry the network's New York Philharmonic programs. Reference recordings were common, but it never struck anyone that such performances might be griss for commercial release. It would be 12 years until the recordings of Goodman's concert (recorded by Albert Marx, today producer of Trend and Discovery records) would be issued.

But something happened between 1941 and 1945. During the war, the government went into the record business, producing millions of V-discs for the armed forces. Desperate for material, V-discs issued broadcast and concert performances. Parts of the 1944 Esquire concert at the Met were recorded and issued. V-discs ligitimized live performances on records; but they were not commercial recordings.

The breakthrough for live jazz on commercial records came when Norman Granz began issuing his early Jazz At The Philharmonic concerts in 1945. The artist-audience tension was instantly, often boisterously, palpable. JATP posed a basic question: do live audiences inspire musicians to play better than the four walls of a studio?

The Goodman Carnegie Hall LPs—discovered and released in 1950—sharpened the issue even further, since many of the performances could be compared directly with studio versions. And the studio versions frequently suffered by comparison. Live audiences put performers at risk. And risk *did* inspire musicians to reach for their best. It humanized performance.

From then on CBS and Victor rushed to assemble "live" alternative collections of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

I thoroughly enjoyed your interview with Art Farmer in your January issue. Although it was not as long as many other interviews printed in your publication, Mr. Farmer was able to speak volumes in the short space allotted him. As he has demonstrated in his music, straightahead is usually the best way to make a point. For decades now, he has been making his musical point, playing some of the most thoughtful and elegant solos the ear could hear or the mind perceive. Each solo tells a story, a flowing tale. Art's dedication to excellence is an example to anyone aspiring to achieve the highest possible level of performance, regardless of the medium. He once wrote: "If you can only play 10 notes, make them the best you possibly can." Although he plays considerably more than 10 notes, each one is a statement unto itself. When so many musicians today, young and old, are immersing themselves in artificially produced sounds and effects, Art Farmer is living proof of the beauty of the natural sound. Thank you, Art, for upholding the integrity of jazz, and for passing along your legacy to others. In your hands, it truly is an ARTform.

Leon F. Washington
Menard, IL

MAD ABOUT METHENY

I read with much chagrin Frank-John Hadley's discouraging review of the Pat Metheny Group's latest effort, *Still Life (Talking)*. While the three-and-a-half stars must certainly mean that Mr. Hadley feels the record is *almost* very good, the tone in no way gives off that impression. An avid Metheny fan since the groundbreaking "white album" of 1978, I find it rather disheartening that a critic seems to find fault with the Group's decision to explore the music from "down Brasilia way," as if a wildly imaginative midwestern boy has no business searching with relatively foreign rhythms and harmonic structures. It is also telling to notice the incredible irony that in the same issue (Dec. '87) we find that Pat won the Readers Poll honor for guitar by no less than 111 votes—a feat which should obviously make Mr. Hadley take notice; after all, jazz fans have long known that critics often tend to be a tad too non-emotional in their appraisal of technically complex musicians. Metheny, in *all* of his endeavors, remains one of the most emotionally hot guitarists in the business.

After catching Pat and the Group in St. Louis on their recent tour, I was more than ever convinced that they are still in complete control of their experimental and improvisational leanings. The Group's sound is becoming more and more expansive. Perhaps Mr. Hadley would do good to catch Pat live or at least read Fred Bouchard's wonderful review in "Caught" (Jan. '88). Then, he might notice that Pat is not "pining for a simpler, a friendlier time and place"—he's there in every note that he plays.

Neil S. Steffey
Carbondale, IL

BOP BLIP

Re: my review of Branford Marsalis' *Renaissance* (**db**, Feb. '88)—the assertion that "his chops were restored to pre-*pop* shape" was glitched to read "pre-*bop* shape," which is something else. While the Marsalises may be accused of turning back the clock, they haven't turned it back that far.

Kevin Whitehead
Baltimore, MD

SILVER'S WORTH

Concerning Matthias Baumann's letter to the editor (Dec. '87), Horace Silver has been recording regularly on his own label, Silveto Records (P.O. Box 700-306, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274). Unfortunately, Silveto Records, being a small record company, does not have wide distribution. However, this should not be used by **down beat** as a reason to ignore Mr. Silver's most recent records in its record reviews.

Mr. Silver is, without any doubt, one of the great jazz composers and bandleaders. Neither **down beat** in its bliss nor anybody else can take that away from him, Hall of Fame or not. **down beat** would do better by jazz fans if it devoted more space to such jazz pillars as Mr. Silver, instead of rock or fusion musicians with not even ½oth of Mr. Silver's talents.

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ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME DINNER

WILLIAM SOSIN

Bob Dylan

NEW YORK—In a gesture that reminded all that rock & roll will never die, especially if Atlantic Records chairman Ahmet Ertegun and *Rolling Stone* publisher Jann Wenner have anything to do with it—and they do!—the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation paid tribute to rock's second generation with a glittering fundraiser and induction dinner.

This was the third-annual hall of fame ceremony, a black-tie affair held at the Waldorf Astoria. The inductees included Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Beach Boys, Supremes, Drifters, Motown Records founder Berry Gordy, Woody Guthrie, Huddie (Leadbelly) Ledbetter, and Les Paul.

Most of the celebrants still living were present, milling about the grand ballroom and adding an unmistakable air of royalty to the evening's tributes, speeches, and closing jam session. During the ceremonies each was introduced by a celebrated devotee, or, in some cases, a spiritual heir. The highlights were many.

Pete Seeger paid homage to Leadbelly, thanking in the process archivists John and Alan Lomax for their work in preserving the songs and recordings of the folk-blues legend.

Neil Young presented Woody Guthrie's award to son Arlo Guthrie, who was predictably irreverent. Eyeing the glitzy audience and surroundings, he accepted the tribute and said, "I am sure that if my dad were alive today, this is one place he wouldn't be."

Ertegun cited Les Paul's place among modern music's great guitarists and his technological innovations in multi-track recording and instrument design. "Without him," the foundation chairman said, "it would be hard to imagine how rock & roll would be played today."

Billy Joel acknowledged that the music of the Drifters, especially the magical urban imagery evoked in their hit *Up On The Roof*, inspired much of his own work. He presented awards to the group's seven lead singers including the widow of founder Clyde McPhatter.

Bruce Springsteen waxed eloquent when he shared his remembrance of first hearing Bob Dylan on the radio. "The way Elvis freed your body," he said, "Dylan freed your mind."

Mick Jagger presented awards to fellow British invaders, the Beatles. Accepting on behalf of the group were Ringo Starr, George Harrison, and Yoko Ono with John Lennon's two sons. Paul McCartney was conspicuous by his absence.

Elton John unabashedly declared his affections for the Beach Boys. Though Mike Love accepted his award ungraciously and belligerently (the evening's only sour note), Brian Wilson righted the situation with his heartfelt reminder that, "Music is God's voice."

The loose jam that followed the presentations featured inductors, inductees, and anyone else who took the stage. Paul Shaffer's "Letterman" band, augmented by saxophonist David Sanborn, anchored the ragged but uplifting set. Les Paul cut loose a dazzling intro to Dylan's *All Along The Watchtower*. Springsteen and Harrison swapped vocals on *I Saw Her Standing There*. And Jagger tore off a *Satisfaction* that had everyone standing on chairs.

Aging rock & rollers, heeding the advice Dylan Thomas gave his father, do not, ". . . go gentle into that good night." —*jeff levenson*

Potpourri

Music money: the **Money For College Catalog** lists thousands of awards for high school, undergrad, grad, and postgraduate students, including overseas study. For more info: send $1 to Financial Aid Finders, 77 Gristmill Rd., Randolph, NJ 07869 . . . music schedule: jazz composer/educator **Dr. David Baker** of the University of Indiana is having a number of his compositions performed this spring at the university. Concerts continue through March and into April. Contact the Indiana University School of Music at 812-335-8546 for more info . . . going public: **WNET/New York** is producing *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*, a two-hour special celebrating 1950's and '60s rock'n'roll, scheduled to air during public television's 1988 "Festival" of special programming . . . summer jazz: the fine Arts Center at the **University of Massachusetts** will present the 11th Annual Jazz in July workshop to be held on the Amherst campus 7/11-22. The two-week workshop focuses on jazz improvisation and is open to high school through adult instrumentalists and vocalists. The '88 artist/faculty line-up includes **Sheila Jordan**, **Yusef Lateef**, and **Jimmy Owens** . . . music awards: **Ornette Coleman**, the **Kronos Quartet**, **Morton Feldman** (posthumous), and **Vincent Persichetti** (posthumous) were recently awarded by the American Music Center Letters of Distinction. The Letters of Distinction are given each year by the American Music Center to individuals and organizations whose prominence and achievements have been instrumental in the advancement of contemporary American music . . . words of fire: Warner Books plans to release "the definitive biography" of **U2**, *Unforgettable Fire*. A March date is set . . . jazz media confab: **down beat** and Arts Midwest are co-sponsoring a **Jazz Media Conference** 5/20-22 at the University of Illinois' Chicago Circle campus. Panels will include topics for both electronic and print media. The conference is concurrent with the University's jazz festival. For more info contact Willard Jenkins at Arts Midwest, 612/341-0755 . . . new jazz series: the **Smithsonian**'s **Resident Associate Program** and **District Curators** have joined forces to launch a semi-annual New Jazz/Big Band Series at the Smithsonian. Their inaugural offering was a sell-out concert featuring **George Russell** and the **Living Time Orchestra** . . . new NEA director: **William Vickery**, formerly Executive Vice President of the Aspen Music Festival, has been named to succeed **Edward Birdwell** as the National Endowment for the Arts Music Program Director. An outstanding trombonist with extensive orchestral experience, Vickery is a recipient of the prestigious Yamaha International Award. He has been an orchestra manager and guest lecturer at the Julliard School of Music . . . NEA grants: the **Artists Collective** (Hartford, CT) received $175,000 through the NEA Challenge Grant Program. Founded in 1975 by saxophonist/educator **Jackie McLean**, the Artists Collective was the only jazz organization

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

JAZZ ME THOSE SOVIET BLUES

MOSCOW—Sang flutist Maureen Royce: "I can't give you anything but love!" Like they say in politics, the feeling was *reciprocal*. When the Peabody Ragtime Ensemble went to Moscow last November, Soviet audiences gave them the kind of welcome rock stars usually get. Headed by tuba player Edward Goldstein, the Ensemble was formed when its members were fooling around one day in their music education class at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, back in 1974.

Since graduated and now a fully professional group of seven members (Ed Goldstein, tuba; Maureen Royce, flute, piccolo, and tenor sax, vocals; David Stambler, clarinet; Al Patacca, trumpet; Bill Taylor, trombone; Lawrence Cione, piano; and Kevin Hayes, drums), the Peabody Ragtime Ensemble has become one of the most popular groups in the Baltimore/Washington area, scooping numerous awards and citations and representing the City of Baltimore as its official ambassadors abroad on occasion. They play all-American music from the 1880's to the 1940's—dixieland, big band, blues, and novelty selections as well as rags and Sousa marches. "Watching a Soviet audience stomp and clap along with *Stars And Stripes Forever!*," says Bill Taylor (an ex-Navy man) "gave one hope for U.S./Soviet relations."

When *Goskontsert*, the official Societ Concert Agency, invited the Peabody Conservatory to perform programs of American music in Moscow, the Conservatory decided that in addition to its Peabody Symphony Orchestra presenting Bernstein, Copland, Harris, Ives, and other symphonic staples, the Soviets should be exposed to the popular American music that influenced those composers and gave them their distinctive style.

Who better to do that than the Ragtimers, who are dedicated to preserving the roots of American jazz through research, arrangement, and performance of the vintage repertoire? "But don't underestimate the Soviets," warns Al Patacca, "when it comes to the classics of the jazz repertoire, the Soviets are no slouches. Whenever we broke into old favorites like *Take The "A" Train* or *Jazz Me Blues* you could feel the ripple effect from the audience."

"Even the eight and nine-year-old kids at the Zamoskvarechiye Palace of Culture," recalls flutist Maureen Royce, "were improvising their own versions of *Sweet Georgia Brown*."

And when the Ragtimers were invited to join a jam session in this Palace of Culture, whatever they proposed to play, the Soviet jazzmen knew it. "Four pieces were chosen in just half a minute," grins Larry Cione.

The Ragtime Ensemble's first official engagement in the Soviet capital was technically on U.S. soil—the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, Spaso House. "Eubie Blake would have been tickled pink," remarks Ed Goldstein, "if he could have heard his *Baltimore Todola* echoing round this crystal-chandeliered reception salon." Eubie Blake is, of course, a compatriot of the Ragtimers. It was the notorious Baltimore red-light district, the Block, which first heard his compositions. The Ragtimers had the honor of playing live with Eubie before his death a few years back.

The Ragtime Ensemble racked up quite a few prestigious firsts during their two weeks in Moscow and Vladimir. They were the first foreign artists ever to be invited to perform at the Moscow House of the Cinema, usually reserved for film premieres, and they did so before an invitation-only audience of elite cinematographic workers (in the Soviet Union film stars are labeled cinematographic workers, too). And every one of the hall's 1500 seats was filled, with an overflow audience scrambling for tickets on the street.

Even more prestigious was an invitation to a jam session at the famous jazz club in the House of the Medical Workers on Herzen Street, a few doors down from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music just off Red Square. This is where Dave Brubeck played on his Soviet tour. In pre-*glasnost* days the Club was closed down for a while but in the Gorbachev era invitations to its Friday night jam session are eagerly coveted—you can squeeze about a hundred people into its tiny bar, which serves fruit juice and Pepsi only. Although the Ragtimers couldn't get there till nearly 11 o'clock, they were followed in by an NBC film crew anxious to capture the jam session as evidence of a pre-summit warm-up in Soviet/American relations.

Further down the street, the Moscow Conservatory of Music (thanks to the generous hospitality of its Rector B. I. Kulikov) became a kind of home away from home. Moscow Conservatory tuba students were fascinated when Goldstein demonstrated the capacities of his tuba as a solo instrument.

And what further proof could there be of the Ragtimers' impact on the Soviet capital than a write-up in the government newspaper *Izvestiya*, which usually devotes its pages to harder political news. Under a photo and description of the group, *Izvestiya* demonstrated its musical sophistication by quoting Louis Armstrong, who when asked: "What is jazz?" is held to have replied "Man, if you've got to ask, you'll never know!"

Especially memorable was the Ragtimers' concert in the House of Artistic Workers, tucked down a narrow side street beside Moscow's famous children's toy store Detskiy Mir. An invitation-only audience in its tiny hall included many of the artistic elite of the Soviet capital. Following the concert, members of the audience entertained the Ragtimers at a late-night party in a cellar room under the concert hall. Traditional Russian folk songs to balalaika accompaniment contrasted with a stirring rendition of *The Bells Are Ringing For Me And My Girl* delivered by a famous 87-year-old Soviet war veteran and playwright, Josef Prut, who proudly displayed a row of First World War medals on his chest. The blizzard-swept street outside might be littered with stalled cars, but inside the Ragtimers were experiencing Soviet hospitality at full throttle.

—anne garside

Peabody's Director of Public Information, Anne Garside, who accompanied the Ragtime Ensemble to Moscow, has a degree in Russian, and has made numerous visits to Moscow.

The Peabody Ragtime Ensemble jams with Soviet jazzmen at the Zamoskvorechiye Palace of Culture in Moscow.

POTPOURRI . . . among 87 cultural institutions sharing in $27.5 million in challenge grants for FY '87. Currently directed by **Dollie McLean**, the Collective provides both concerts and training to aspiring artists. It will use the grant to establish an endowment and to purchase equipment . . . jazz on CD: the famed Jazz At Massey Hall concert of 1953 including **Charlie Parker**, **Max Roach**, and **Charlie Mingus** is now available on CD: Debut JCD 707 124 . . . noteworthy: **Eliane Elias**' album *Illusions* (Blue Note) is available on Denon CD(33CY-1569). **Peter Erskine**'s *Transition* (Passport) is also available on Denon CD (33CY-1484). Both contain additional music . . . Ducal discovery: **db**'s Jan. '88 issue mentioned **Duke Ellington**'s composition *The River* as never having been heard prior to the recent release of the recording of it. In 1983 it was performed and recorded by the **Louisville Orchestra**, 609 W. Main Street, Louisville, KY 40202 . . . still more campus jazz: the **William Paterson College** of New Jersey will be holding their 10-year celebration during the 1988-89 season. Upcoming performers include **Ralph Towner** with **Horacee Arnold, Rufus Reid**, and **Tito Puente** (phone 201/595-2314 for more info) . . . NEA honors: **Dr. Billy Taylor** recently received the 1988 Jazz Masters Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts Music Program for $20,000. Past jazz musicians to receive this prestigious award are Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Miles Davis . . . info need: Dr. Lewis Porter, jazz scholar and performer, is compiling data about the current state of American jazz for the NEA report to Congress. If you have statistics about musicians, audiences, jazz organizations, magazines, radio listeners, etc., and would like your information included in the report, please contact Porter *before* March 30 at the Music Dept., Rutgers U., Newark, N.J., 07102 . . .

KEVIN DOUGHERTY

HAPPY REUNION: Alligoter Records recording ortist A.C. Reed wos reunited with longtime friend Bonnie Roitt when their respective touring schedules found them crossing poths in Steomboot Springs, Colorodo. Soxophonist/vocolist Reed oppeored on Roitt's very first olbum, ond she belotedly returned the fovor by guesting on severol tunes on Reed's new olbum, *I'm In The Wrong Business!* A.C. joined Bonnie cnstoge to reprise their vocol duet on *She's Fine* from his olbum.

Final Bar

Al Hall, jazz bassist, believed to be the first black musician to play in a Broadway theater orchestra and whose career spanned half a century, died of cancer January 18 at a hospital in New York. Starting in 1936, Hall was playing the New York big band circuit, joining Teddy Wilson's band in 1939. Later on he was to play with Count Basie, Erroll Garner, Eubie Blake, Dexter Gordon, Billie Holiday, Eddie Condon, Ben Webster, and Harry Belafonte.

• • •

Joe Albany, 63, died January 12 of upper-respiratory failure and cardiac arrest in New York. Known for his association with Charlie Parker, Albany was one of the first jazz pianists to embrace bebop in the '40s. Having a career that spanned four decades, he also worked with Lester Young and Charles Mingus, among others. Working and recording mostly in Europe in the '70s, he returned to the U.S. in 1977. He recorded his last album, *Portrait Of An Artist*, in 1982.

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Musky Ruffo, lead alto saxophonist with the original Gene Krupa band, died January 15. He was 72.

• • •

Eugene R. "Gene" Rodgers, pianist/arranger, died October 23 at his home in St. Albans, New York. He was 77. Playing the piano from age 14 on, he went on to lead his own bands as well as play with such greats as Chick Webb, King Oliver, Benny Carter, and Erskine Hawkins. During the late '30s and early '40s, Rodgers played and arranged for Coleman Hawkins' Big Band and arranged for Fats Waller's Big Band. Living alternately in California and New York, he did widespread touring as a solo performer throughout the world.

TURTLE ISLAND STRING QUARTET

Violinist Darol Anger is one of those guys who will try anything. And in so doing, he keeps pushing the boundaries of his instrument a little further. With the Turtle Island String Quartet, he has joined an aggregation of fellow string players from diverse backgrounds. Cellist Mark Summer and violist Irene Sazer have strict classical backgrounds. Principal composer and arranger David Balakrishnan has a penchant for Beethoven-like structure yet can burn on a bluegrass breakdown or improvise with the heartfelt passion of a jazz master. And Anger adds his own inimitable, undefinable touch to the proceedings.

On the surface, this all may seem like a Kronos Quartet clone. Well, yes and no. As Anger says, "Kronos is a very powerful group. They've done incredible things to promote the concept of string quartet. Yet, we still felt there was a space for a real improvising, grooving, swinging string quartet. And as far as we know, no one's doing any of that."

On their Windham Hill Jazz debut (WH 0110), the Turtle Island String Quartet swings with distinction on some classical jazz vehicles—Bud Powell's *Tempus Fugit*, Miles Davis' *Milestones*, Dizzy Gillespie's *Night In Tunisia*, and Oliver Nelson's *Stolen Moments*. Despite the lack of traditional piano/bass/drums backing, the rhythm is solid on these tunes, partly due to some of Anger's innovative ideas. As Balakrishnan explains, "Darol pioneered ways of creating rhythmic contexts on string instruments. He figured out ways to play percussive effects that sound kind of like a snare drum. You can hear it on *Stolen Moments*, for instance. And I incorporated some of those techniques into the original pieces I wrote for the album."

While Balakrishnan is a so-called serious composer, having received his masters degree in composition from Antioch University and recently being awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to compose a piece for string orchestra, he still considers himself, in his heart of hearts, to be a jazz player.

"Hopefully, when you hear our music you would feel the phrasing to be authentic and real, coming from the gut," he says. "The Kronos Quartet has done a wonderful thing in showing the breadth that a string quartet can accomplish, so I can't help but feel grateful to them. But they're staying in the classical framework. We're showing a different side of what a string quartet can do. When you think of the Kronos Quartet you don't really think of the individual players. You think of the group as a whole and how they interpret other composers' music. But with this group it's really four improvising, composing musicians playing in a string quartet, so you hear each person's character come out."

—bill milkowski

IRENE YOUNG

From left to right: Irene Sazer, viola, violin; David Balakrishnan, violin; Darol Anger, violin, octave violin; Mark Summer, violincello.

YANK RACHELL

Yank Rachell plays blues on a mandolin. Almost 80, he first heard a mandolin when he was a boy of eight or nine walking down a country road in Heywood County, Tennessee. Fascinated by its sound, he wondered how he could have it. Its owner, Augie Rawls, wanted five dollars. Yank offered the baby pig his mother had given him and his brothers to raise.

That was 1918. In the late '20s, Yank played with guitarist Sleepy John Estes, recording for RCA's Ralph Peers in a makeshift stud'o in Memphis. In the late '30s, he travelled with Sonny Boy Williamson, recording for RCA's race label Bluebird. Yank started playing an electric mandolin in the mid-'50s, but soon gave up playing altogether at the request of his wife. After the rediscovery of Estes in the early '60s, Yank was also sought. To accompany his old partner, Yank was given an acoustic mandolin but he still preferred playing electric. He has played a Harmony F-style electric for the past 12 years, plugging it into a Polytone amp.

A recent album, *Blues Mandolin Man* (Blind Pig 2344), pays tribute to his early mates with songs inspired by Hambone Willie Newberg, *Dreamy Eyed Woman*; Estes, *My Baby's Gone*; and Williamson, *Moonshine Whiskey*. Two numbers, *She Changed The Lock* and *Cigarette Blues*, are acoustic, done in the style of the '30s with Pete Roller on guitar and Pete "Mudcat" Ruth blowing harp. On the others, Roller switches to electric guitar joined by Yank's granddaughter Sheena on bass and drummer Leonard Marsh Jr.

"Yank doesn't want a super clean sound," explained Pete Roller, the producer of Yank's latest album, head of apprenticeships in the Florida Folklife Program, and author of a doctoral dissertation on Yank. "He wants an electric sound, not at all an acoustic mandolin sound. He's really attached to his Harmony, too. With some of the grant money we got for the album we wanted to buy him a vintage Gibson. He wouldn't have it. 'That's old as my mammie,' he told us."

Yank plays the standard blues scales, with their flatted 3rds and 5ths, with a short, percussive motion, almost jabbing at the strings. His style features a lot of tremolo as well as single note runs. Like any bluesman, he is adept at bending strings, a task made easier by both the medium-to-low action of his mandolin and the lower tuning. The syncopated rhythm is made easier by his habit of playing chords on both the down and the up stroke. Yank's latest album is *Chicago Style* (Delmark 649).

—dave helland

ANN NESSA

ED BLACKWELL

H L LINDENMAIER

"I have this picture—this fantasy about dancing in my head, and I think that's the thing you notice about most drummers from New Orleans; they have a distinct dancing style," says Ed Blackwell. It's a style much in demand. In recent months Blackwell toured England, Scotland, and the Caribbean with the group Nu (Don Cherry, Carlos Ward, Nana Vasconcelos, and Mark Helias or Bob Stewart) and was feted at a three-day Ed Blackwell Festival in Atlanta that reunited colleagues Ornette Coleman, Old and New Dreams, and the American Jazz Quintet.

Ed Blackwell's sound—an infectious synthesis of Baby Dodds, parade rhythms, African polyrhythms, and bebop—comes in part from New Orleans, where he was born in 1929. He played r&b in various groups until striking out for California, where he scuffled for jobs with roommate Ornette Coleman. He returned to New Orleans and formed the American Jazz Quintet (including Ellis Marsalis and Alvin Batiste), spent a year with Ray Charles, and in 1960 joined Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, and Charlie Haden for a legendary nine-month engagement "bringing joyful noises" to the Five Spot in New York. "We were this strange phenomenon," recalls Blackwell. "Everyone was talking about this cat."

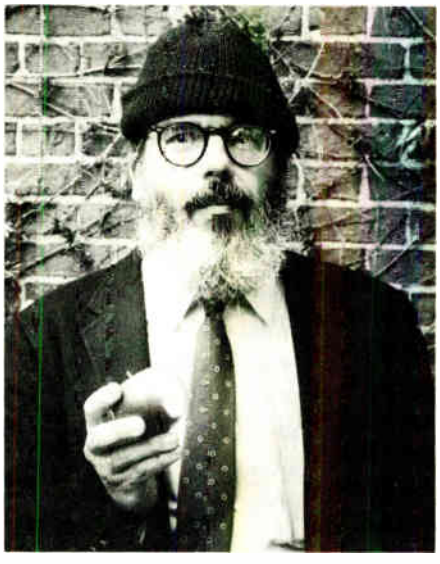
After leaving Coleman, Blackwell worked briefly with the Eric Dolphy/Booker Little quintet. He toured Africa with Randy Weston and was profoundly influenced by the drummers he heard there—by their conception of the "family" relationship among drums, and by their use of rhythmic themes and variations.

In the late '60s and early '70s Blackwell again worked with Ornette, but as Coleman devoted increasing attention to his electric group Prime Time, Blackwell banded with Charlie Haden, Don Cherry, and Dewey Redman to form Old and New Dreams, a group devoted to further exploration of Coleman's acoustic ideas.

"I've been very happy in being able to survive playing the type of music that I love to play and never having to compromise my talent for anything that I didn't want to do," maintains Blackwell. This year he'll perform with David Murray, with Nu, and with the reunited American Jazz Quintet at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. He continues to teach at Wesleyan University and can be heard on recent recordings by the Mal Waldron Quintet (Soul Note 1118) and with Karl Berger and Dave Holland (Black Saint 0092).

—robert gaspar

BUELL NEIDLINGER



DONNA PAUL

"I came up with the idea of forming the group Thelonious after hearing some of the atrocious Monk tributes that seem so common these days," recalls Buell Neidlinger. "When I was a kid it was a pastime to go and sit on Monk's stoop and listen to him practice. I was fortunate to play with him a few times because I lived right around the corner from the Five Spot and sometimes Wilbur Ware was late. Playing with Monk was not difficult unless you didn't know the tunes. I think he was probably the greatest American musician."

Bassist Buell Neidlinger has had a long and varied career. In the early '50s while still a teenager he performed regularly with veteran swing/dixieland players including Eddie Condon, Rex Stewart, and Vic Dickenson. And yet he is still best known for being Cecil Taylor's first regular bassist, playing with the avant garde master on and off during 1955-61. During the 1960's Neidlinger's main musical focus was in classical music, including stints with the Houston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and the Boston Symphony; but he never stopped playing improvised music.

"In the fall of 1970 I was offered a job with the California Institute of the Arts. I met Marty Krystall shortly after I came to L.A. and we've been playing together ever since. Marty was trained as a classical clarinetist and he knows a lot about all types of music. His tenor sax playing is unique and I like unique musicians. He has a lot to say and it's quite energizing playing with him."

Neidlinger and Krystall are not only musical partners in Thelonious but also head the label K2B2 Records which has documented the four main groups they have co-led since 1970. One of them, Krystall Klear and the Buells, with drummer Peter Erskine, started playing some Monk tunes, including *Little Rootie Tootie*, which was the genesis of the Thelonious band.

"The next group, Buellgrass, started after I made the Richard Greene album for Rounder called *Rambler*. I liked very much playing with Richard's violin and Andy Statman." This unusual unit boasted Greene, Statman on mandolin and Klezmer-style clarinet, Krystall's reeds, Peter Ivers' harmonica, Neidlinger, and Erskine on drums. Most of the group's repertoire was Ellington and Monk tunes, making the transition to Thelonious quite natural.

"We formed a quartet like Monk used to have to play his music for real," states Neidlinger. "Thelonious was formed in 1985. We know about 45 Monk tunes now; there are about 200. The album *Thelonious* (K2B2-2569), which includes eight of his little-played songs, was made in five hours with no editing or overdubbing. Billy Osborne is our drummer, but our original pianist John Beasley, who did a good job on the record, has been replaced by Brenton Banks, a 65-year-old unknown genius. He doesn't sound exactly like Monk but he's from the same generation and has some of the same influences."

—scott yanow

Joe Zawinul

The Dialects of Jazz

by Josef Woodard

CHRIS CUFFARO/VISAGES

Few liaisons in the jazz world have much permanence, which made the long-standing legacy of Weather Report so unique. Here was a band turning out albums like clockwork, creating a gold idiomatic ethos, recruiting young titans and maintaining a cogent sound and fury even through multiple personnel changes. While the urgent fire of '70s and early '80s fusion fizzled and burned out, Weather Report consistently rose above the din with new concepts, improvisatory zeal, and rugged integrity. Electricity never sounded so organic.

Through it all remained the curious bond of Josef Zawinul and Wayne Shorter, the imperious keyboardist from Austria and the mysterious traveller from Newark. After 15 albums in as many years together, the pair finally went separate ways two years ago, although neither will claim final severance. Nothing is forever in love, life, and music. Only the soul survives.

Now, with the release of *The Immigrants*, Zawinul—as ringleader of the Zawinul Syndicate—breaks an almost two-year silence from the recording ring: by his standards, a long hiatus. Zawinul has coralled a new band of mates, and, of course, applied generous deposits of his own signature keyboard conceptualism to the job. Although peppered with Weather Report-like sonorities, the Syndicate album extends the reach of that aggregate, most notably via the guitaristic input of Los Angeles-based Scott Henderson.

For the sessions, he also drew on one-time Weather Report drummer Alex Acuna, bassist Abe Laboriel, drummer Cornell Rochester (who, along with bassist Gerald Veasley will be in the live rhythm section). We also hear cameos by Mr. Mister vocalist and lyricist Richard Page (on the ballad *Shadows And Light*) and the four-voiced Perri sisters (on *No Mercy For Me*, a swampy rereading of Zawinul's Cannonball Adderley-era hit *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy*). In the case of *Criollo,* vocalist/percussionist Rudy Regalado sang a chant based on the historical hero Simon Bolivar, who liberated five Latin American countries in Napoleonic times. "I put on a chord structure and made a hymn out of it, because of the significance of the song. I played a real hip bass line on it," says Zawinul, never one hindered by false modesty. "I think it's going to scare most bass players."

Since Weather Report's official dismantlement, the ever-prolific Zawinul has ventured into new artistic terrain. His 1986 solo project, *Dialects*, proved an enticing collage of self-generated ideas on his wrap-around synthesizer arsenal: ethnic jazz concepts artfully wedded to a deft electronic musical instinct. Following a tour with a band he dubbed Weather Update (guitarist Steve Khan assumed Wayne Shorter's role), Zawinul veered away from the domestic public eye, spending a good deal of time in Europe playing various concerts with his Austrian compatriot, piano virtuoso Friedrich Gulda.

Aligning himself with Gulda served as a sort of homecoming for Zawinul. Gulda, whose considerable reputation on the continent straddles classical and jazz veins, is a fellow Austrian with a penchant for razing musical boundaries. Zawinul remembers: "Every music student—including myself—put him up on a

pedestal, he was almost a god-like figure. We became friends from the moment we met. We played four-hand piano. We always played together, for years. He had a deal with a radio station to compose 90 songs and he gave half of the assignment to me. That's where I first started writing. He always had great trust in my ability. He's a real Austrian from the head to the toes. What we're more or less doing is playing Austrian music."

In 1986, Zawinul and Gulda performed numerous European duet concerts and a trio concert with Chick Corea—who has also performed fairly extensively with Gulda. Through the reunion with Gulda, Zawinul rediscovered the beauty of the acoustic piano, and the inspiration of the classical repertoire. "I never will be a classical piano player," he confesses, "but Gulda thinks that the way we played the Brahms (*Variations On A Theme By Haydn*) was never played better by anybody, the reason being that particular piece is a peasant type of piece, and that's where my heart is. We played the hell out of this piece. That's going to be on the next Syndicate record."

Zawinul has also been in transit in 1986, moving from his sprawling property in Pasadena (a holler from the Rose Bowl) to Malibu (a spit from the Pacific Ocean). We met just after Southern California had been hit with a token storm, replete with the gusty winds, pounding surf, and heavy rains that make locals nervous. Malibu is a perenially vulnerable spot, given to landslides, especially under houses on bluffs such as Zawinul's. Does that make him nervous? He shakes his head. "If it slides, it slides. How can you beat that? I'll take a chance at anything. If it goes, it goes. We're on the street. So what. What a way to go, man," he laughs bravely.

JOSEF WOODARD: *What significance does the title of the new album have?*

JOE ZAWINUL: It's called *The Immigrants* because I realized that everybody, except for Scott and Cornell, is an immigrant. I'm an Austrian citizen. Acuna is a Peruvian Indian. Abraham Laboriel is from Mexico City. Rudy Regalado is from Venezuela. Often it deals with the restlessness where you want to go to other countries to see what's happening. That was my thing. I always wanted to go to America right after the war, trying to find a way to go to America and I finally did.

JW: *Why did you decide to drop the Weather Update concept? Was that just an interim project?*

JZ: Everything happened so fast. Wayne fired the management and had his solo thing. Our record contract was over with in '85, but CBS came up with this extra, optional record we owed them. So we made *This Is This* real quick. I think it was a pretty nice record. Then I wanted to support that album and I thought we could go out and find a way to call it Weather Report. But Wayne's management said we couldn't do that. I understood that. I wouldn't have wanted Wayne to go out and call his band Weather Report; it was *our* thing. But the promoters in Europe at that time got a little scared. I said, 'Well, call the band Weather Update.'

JW: *After you parted ways with Wayne, did you have in mind to find another horn player foil? Or did Scott Henderson fill that role in your mind?*

JZ: I never thought I'd have somebody to replace Wayne. I don't think I'll ever have a saxophone player, because now with this instrument I have [his self-designed Pepe: see instrument box], I have a soprano sound that will floor you. But I have a real right hand now, just as powerful. It's not the same thing; it's another kind of power. Scott's got it all. He can play the blues authentically. He plays the blues like we used to in the older days with Dinah [Washington], like those guys down in Texas and Louisiana play the blues, but with that modern mind.

When I was looking for a bass player in 1982, I went to hear Jeff Berlin, and who really caught my attention was the guitar player, but there wasn't a need for one yet. He has all the elements. He has the personality. He's a really outgoing, wild kid. That's why I like him. I don't like shy people. That's why I liked Jaco, because he had that thing I have. I'm an old man now, but I still have that sense of fun, that youth energy. Once you have that, you never lose it. That doesn't change with your age.

That boy here, he's got it, that fire. And he can play. He's almost got McLaughlin's chops. His soul is happening.

JW: *Did you sense that energetic quality in Jaco when you first met him?*

JZ: I was impressed by the way he approached me. I was standing with two ladies on the corner by the Gusman Theater in Miami. This kid came up and said 'Excuse me, Mr. Zawinul, my name is John Francis Pastorius III and I am the greatest bass player in the world.' I said 'Get the hell out of here, man.' He said 'Really, I wish we could get together and show you what I got.' I said, 'That sounds good to me.' The next day, he came with his brother to the hotel.

I liked Jaco from the beginning, because I liked his personality. Okay, it's a little crazy to a lot of people. But you know who always feels a draft about people like that? The people who ain't got it. They always feel, 'Well, he's opening his mouth. He's leading with his lips. It's not nice to brag,' and all that. He was not bragging. Facts, that's all.

The less talented don't have a feeling for that and they'll always put down people like Jaco. I always was put down. When I grew up, I used to say 'I'm the greatest, man.' I heard people play and said 'If this is great, then I am the greatest.' And people resented that. When Ali came out as young Cassius Clay and said he was the greatest, I cracked up because I liked that. The cats in Cannon's [Cannonball Adderley] band would say 'Hey, that young punk—he thinks he's bad.' And so it is.

I'll tell you something; until about a year before the end, I didn't know that boy was doing all that heavy messing around with drugs. He had the greatest PR I've ever seen. He did all the right things; he jumped into the Emperor's lake with his bass and rode his motorcycle through the hotel and all that. This is the baddest PR. You cannot do better. You can do all that, but at performance time, you've got to be on.

The only mistake was when it came time to perform later on in his life—but not with our band. He had a lot of respect for Wayne and me. With our band, he was sometimes drunk, the drug thing was minor. He was only actually incapable of playing good maybe four times in all the years with Weather Report. We all did wild things. It's hard to really say, because I can't really put anybody down. Everybody has their own character and their own route of growing up and their own M.O. I'm wild myself, I can't put anybody down. I still drink. I like to drink. I was always a little crazy, but I never was sick.

JW: *When Jaco joined the band, the group really crystallized all of a sudden; the collective presence solidified right around the time of the album* Heavy Weather.

JZ: That was a very powerful group before that. [Bassist] Alfonso Johnson was incredible. [Drummer] Chester Thompson and Acuna playing percussion . . . it was powerful in another way. But Jaco was in a space all his own. He was so different than all the other guys.

We were a black band; in spite of me not being black, it was always a black band, more or less. But with Jaco coming in, there was also a change in the audience. He brought the white kids in. He had that Americana element. He was all of a sudden a real white All-American folk hero.

I loved Jaco. Everytime I think of him, I smile. He was one of the nicest people I've ever known and he did things nobody ever did. When my parents had their Golden Wedding Anniversary, in the tiny village where I come from, he and Ingrid sent the biggest flower arrangement you've ever seen. He bought me an accordion one birthday. He was a very thoughtful human being. He had a good soul and good character. Something in his head was strange when he took alcohol and then, of course, drugs really made it worse.

The last time I saw him, I had my solo concert in Carnegie Hall and he was so helpful. He was healthy, in shape. He was running up to the second balcony to check my sound and work on the bass drum sound. He was a total gentleman, and I thought he was going to get it together. I miss this guy.

JW: *Did you ever have unrealized plans to do more work with him?*

JZ: Yeah. It would have taken awhile, but I had this incredible offer from Italy. The guy who did the concert with Gulda and I in Parma wanted to put on a return of Weather Report. We would have made a killing and I was seriously thinking about it. I got back August 28 and there was a birthday card on a ripped-up paper bag—but very neat, not funky, and well written. It said 'Happy Birthday, Maestro.' He was living in the park already, but he never forgot my birthday.

JW: *Despite the liberation of the instrument over the last few years, bass is really the unsung hero in jazz. Where would the music be without it?*

JZ: And not only in jazz. There is an old Czech saying. To put it into English: If I don't hear the bass, to hell with the melody. You need the bass.

JW: *In a tune like* A Remark You Made, *the very tone of the bass makes the melody sing.*

JZ: I'm a composer who works with sound. If you drop a dime, I can write a song based on the tone. When I heard Jaco's tone, I immediately began to write a song, based on him and the saxophone and my little jive. That's where I'm coming from. I dial myself up a sound on my synthesizer and turn on my tape recorder and that's for sure a song. I live from sound, and he had a sound for all time. Nobody had a better, cleaner sound.

JW: *Do you find yourself adapting to the Duke Ellington concept of targeting music for specific players, whose sounds you have circulating in your head?*

JZ: Very much so. First of all, I bring them into my world and teach them. Then I learn from them and see what they have come up with. Therefore, I had to do a few things on my new record myself, because there wasn't enough time to teach everybody my concept. We talked about it and we rehearsed. They were great throughout. It really feels like a band. On *The Devil Never Sleeps*, Abe Laboriel plays some bass that's some of the best bass playing I've ever heard. It's a very fast waltz, an Afro-cajun type of thing. Alex plays tremendous stuff, Scott and Cornell, everybody.

Then there's this song I did called *You Understand*, a bebop ballad, scat style. You don't understand a single word, but when you feel it, you understand it all. In other words, language becomes obsolete. I've got a sound of a train station announcer and a passing train I taped with my walkman in Italy on the song *From Venice To Vienna*, and it gives the song its meaning.

For me, music is nothing but what we're talking about now. It's a story of the human condition or the condition of things, maybe a landscape or a portrait. If I could paint, maybe it would be easier. So I try to paint it with music.

JW: *Your series of solo concerts after the release of* Dialects *was a daring departure. Judging from the mixed reaction in the concert I saw, some people might not have been ready for it.*

JZ: I got a book of 500 bad reviews given to Richard Wagner. It's so much fun to read. It's amazing. They called him an idiot, a clown. I myself have never been bothered by a good or bad review. I don't have that much respect for critics' opinions in general. I never asked anyone yet to find a musician for my band. The only thing that ever bothers me was falseness.

JW: *Are you now feeling more inclined to play with other musicians, as opposed to when you were locked into the Weather Report regimen?*

JZ: I always wanted to do that, but I wanted to do it more or less under my conditions. There are a few people I want to do something with—John McLaughlin, Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz. I want them to play my music, because I've got the music. I've got the key and I think these people could express what I want to do. Maybe Miles and me one day will do something. We are still kids. And Wayne, of course—the baddest.

JW: *Is it likely that you'll play together again?*

JZ: I hope so, because the duet things we're playing were just amazing. Never anything prepared, never anything talked about. Wayne and me have very seldom spoken outside of being on the road, because we actually don't have to. It's another spirit taking over. We don't have to call each other.

JW: *You were mentioning that you're interested again in the acoustic piano.*

JZ: No, I'm not saying that I am more into the piano. I'm just saying that Gulda rekindled my love for the instrument. My greatest love is the accordion and its relatives: those are synthesizers. That's all they are. An accordion is nothing but a synthesizer, but manually operated instead of electronically. That was my first instrument.

JW: *Jazz is reputedly in a renaissance period, in which the forces of the music are making their presence known on a wide scale again. Is that a valid claim or so much hype?*

JZ: Jazz will always be here. My wife said something interesting the other day. She said 'Jazz is always alive. It's the musicians who are dead.'

The movie *'Round Midnight* was such an opportunity to really turn a lot of people on to jazz music. Maybe that was not the purpose, but I felt it could have done that. The stage was set. Jazz, in other words, was not shown at its best. There was so much talk about the lead character being such a genius, but that was never apparent. That's what bothered me about the movie. There could have been a couple of songs that were devastatingly mean—all of those guys are capable of doing that—especially the main character.

I liked the movie. The acting was good and there was a real nice feeling to it. But not once, either from spoken word or, more importantly, in the music, did I ever have the impression of his being a genius. It was supposed to be a dedication to Bud Powell and Lester Young, but these guys, in spite of their habits, played amazing music. Unfortunately, that class of playing wasn't in the movie; there were too many out-of-time ballads and sloppy at that.

In a way, I felt bad for Herbie. I was happy that he won the Oscar, of course, but I believe it was the first time a jazz musician won an award like that. It brought a lot of people into the theater and it would have been the right time to turn on a lot of people.

JW: *A lot of the jazz records coming out now are reissues, the jazz of 20 or more years ago on the rebound. It's good on the one hand, archivally. But where's the jazz of now and of the future?*

JZ: It's good to remind youngsters, because a lot of people think that Kenny G is the first saxophone player who ever lived. A lot of kids don't know about what was happening. It's very important that they know what Duke Ellington and the other masters did. Louis Armstrong, to me, is still the king of jazz. He had it, the character. He was out there. We have a few here today, too. As history goes on, things collect. Over a period of 80 years, a lot of great musicians came through. Charlie Parker, Art Tatum, Dizzy, Miles, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Paul Gonsalves, Coltrane, and so on. It always will be somebody.

JW: *In some way, you're very much a front man, putting your ideas forward without restraint. But there's also an angular quirkiness to your solos and chord progressions that brings Monk to mind.*

JZ: He was one of my all-time favorites. Thelonious and I used to take walks and talk. He and I went for a walk once at the marina near San Diego, when Cannonball's and Monk's groups were touring together. I always loved the way he played. He liked the way I played, I guess. I was doing some experimenting, never playing the changes in a normal way.

It was a nice Sunday afternoon. He says to me, 'Man, check this boat out. It would be nice to be on one of those boats.' So we go there and I see signs that say 'Private. No Trespassing.' Monk said 'We'll go anyway.' Monk looked like an African king. He had his cap on and expensive clothes. We walked through there and I thought 'I know some dude is going to come up and say something.'

And it was totally the opposite. People looked out and said 'Oh, please, would you come on our boat?' When they found out it was

JOE ZAWINUL'S EQUIPMENT

Despite the fact that Zawinul has long been associated with the pursuit of better and more musical technology, he sincerely clings to the inspiration of his first instrument love. It was that love that led him to devise the one-of-a-kind Pepe, put into technical terms by Ralph Skelton and manufactured by Korg. "Originally, I was an accordion player and it was always my dream to have an instrument like the accordion. It looks like a bassoon mouthpiece, but I used a mouthpiece from a Melodica. On the right hand side, it's an accordion with buttons. It's very difficult to learn the accordion with two notes on each button, but with the Pepe's *six* notes, it becomes a real head trip.

"I know where the six notes are. It's like a boxer, you know, after a while, you just move. You don't think, 'Okay, I have to raise my right hand now.' You just let it hang out."

Defying factory sound consciousness and relying on intuition has long been Zawinul's program in terms of synthesizer gear. His present set-up of electronic gear is a judicious mix of digital and analog equipment. For drum/percussion sounds, he uses the Korg DDD-1 drum machine along with the Oberheim DX, the Korg DDM 110 Drums and DDM 220 Percussion machines, and his latest addition, two Simmons Pads—to store sampled cymbals. Tonally, his set-up at various times has included an Oberheim Expander, Prophet T8, Prophet 5, Korg DW-8000, Casio CZ-101 (which he placed *inside* a grand piano on his dates with Freidrich Gulda), a Korg DSS-1 sampling unit, and the new DSM-1 rack mount sampler. He often blends live vocals with the synthetic source from his Korg DVT Vocoder, as on the new song *You'll Understand*. Zawinul is also an instrument collector, which extends from his broad assortment of ethnic instruments to such "outdated" and unavailable electronic keys as a Chroma Polaris with a Chroma Expander and an Arp sequencer. Connecting his maze of keys are a dozen volume pedals to route the sound.

JOE ZAWINUL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

THE IMMIGRANTS, ZAWINUL SYNDICATE—Columbia 40969
DIALECTS—Columbia 40081
ZAWINUL—Atlanta 1579
CONCERTO RETITLED—Atlantic 1604
RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD STREAM—Vortex 2002

with Miles Davis

IN A SILENT WAY—Columbia 40580
BITCHES BREW—Columbia 40577
LIVE-EVIL—Columbia 30954
BIG FUN—Columbia 32866
DIRECTIONS—Columbia 36472
CIRCLE IN THE ROUND—Columbia 36278

with Ben Webster

SOULMATES—Fantasy OJC-109

with Cannonball Adderley

IN EUROPE—Landmark 1307
COAST TO COAST—Milestone 47039
JAPANESE CONCERTS—Milestone 47029
MERCY, MERCY, MERCY—Capitol 16153
BEST OF . . .—Capitol 16002
JAZZ WORKSHOP REVISITED—Landmark 1303

with Weather Report

THIS IS THIS—Columbia 40280
SPORTIN' LIFE—Columbia 39908
DOMINO THEORY—Columbia 39147
PROCESSION—Columbia 38427
WEATHER REPORT—Columbia 37616
NIGHT PASSAGE—Columbia 36793
8:30—Columbia 36030
MR. GONE—Columbia 35358
HAVANA JAM I—Columbia 36053
HAVANA JAM II—Columbia 36180
HEAVY WEATHER—Columbia 34418
BLACK MARKET—Columbia 34099
TALE SPINNIN'—Columbia 33417
MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER—Columbia 32494
SWEETNIGHTER—Columbia 32210
LIVE IN TOKYO—CBS/Sony 40AP 942 3
I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC—Columbia 31352
WEATHER REPORT—30661

Thelonious Monk, we were invited on six or seven different boats. Some people knew my music. *Mercy, Mercy* was a big hit. When we left, we were drunk.

Monk had a really unique concept. I learned a lot. I used to take music down from his records, to learn what he was doing. I wrote down *Little Rootie Tootie* and *Crepusule With Nellie* and (starts scatting the melody to *Monk's Mood*). He was a great one. I loved him. He was a nice human being, too. He travelled with his whole family.

JW: *Given that he was always stretching attitudes—even though basing his concept in the blues—I wonder if he would have warmed up to electronics eventually.*

JZ: Duke did and that's where Thelonious is coming from, more or less. Right after I got an electric piano, Duke got one. They were both orchestral musicians. And for an orchestral mind, that's the perfect playground. That doesn't mean that you use it all. Of what I saw at the NAMM show, for instance, 80 percent was bullshit. But that 20 percent . . . watch out.

JW: *Is there any validity to the claim that electronics and jazz occupy separate corners of the musical impulse?*

JZ: In the electric culture, everything can be applied to it. It doesn't mean that you have to be a jazz musician or a non-jazz musician to play with electronic instruments. All this is an arena which gives you an opportunity for using what you want to use. It's like you're in a gigantic kitchen and you brew up some things. Or you're in front of an orchestra and this orchestra, instead of 104 people, can be 10,000.

JW: *The problem is, if it's a kitchen, too many people read straight out of the cookbook instead of writing their own recipes.*

JZ: That's always the difference. There are so many opportunities now because you have people who are maybe not that gifted as jazz players, but who are tremendously talented in theatrical ways—how to make a drama. I listen to Laurie Anderson. I saw a show of hers the other day and it's wonderful what she's doing with this stuff. She probably can't play a great fast solo, but so what? She's using space so well and so perfectly in the context of this environment she's creating, it's unbeatable.

JW: *Maybe the secret with her and yourself is that you started with the conceptual strength and brought that to the equipment instead of the other way around.*

JZ: You use what you want to use and then come up with a personality.

JW: *For a young musician who comes up today in the cradle of the electronic world, that's his or her culture. If you came up with Slavic folk songs in your head, this modern person has sequencers dancing in his head.*

JZ: Instruments, electric or acoustic, don't have culture. They are merely tools. In other words, a hammer and a nail don't make a table.

You know what, man, when I came up and played the accordion, I immediately started playing with the instrument. I took the soundboard off and glued felt into it. I got the sound of *Black Market*. I did the same thing on the bass side, where the buttons are and then I reversed the whole thing, to get the melodies with the bass notes. Imagination had limits in the older days. Now it doesn't.

JW: *That can be dangerous if you don't have a strong sense of creative self.*

JZ: Not really. I like when people are doing this wild stuff. I like Sun Ra. He doesn't know what he's doing, but he knows exactly what he's doing. That's what it is. There's no danger to imagination. What about Cecil Taylor playing the piano? There's no danger, and there was no danger with what Count Basie was doing.

JW: *I'm referring to the danger of letting the machines do the talking and the walking.*

JZ: Then you don't use your imagination; you use the machine's. A lot of people don't know that yet. In the new generation coming up, there are going to be some real great ones, because of the immensity, the amount of people doing it, there's always somebody here and there who will come up with some nice stuff.

JW: *It seems like there is this whole new crop of young musicians who are better and more rounded than they were 10 years ago, when the jazz-rock phenomenon bred a sense of quick-lick fever. I'm thinking of Scott Henderson. Have you noticed that in the generation coming up?*

JZ: Oh yeah. There are much better schools today. But there's an old saying: first you learn your instrument, secondly, you learn music, and then you throw all that away. A lot of times, you still hear all these chops, on all instruments. I'm not putting it down, because that also takes a lot of dedication.

But you'll always see that very rare individual come up. I don't care if there are millions and millions who play, those one or two guys will always be there, a little further along. They're the ones who make it sing, who are telling the story the right way. You've got your Robert DeNiro and Marlon Brando and you've got Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. I don't care how much anybody plays, Louis Armstrong ain't never going to lose his spot. Neither will Miles, and, as a matter of fact, neither will I. I'm not worried about anybody. I'm helping them if I can. I'm making it more pleasant when you turn the radio on. For that reason alone, I would like to help. **db**

Henry Johnson

A Guitarist Is Born

By Bill Milkowski

We're sitting around his hotel suite in Manhattan, just me and Henry. It's a few hours before his gig at the Village Gate with Ramsey Lewis, so we're killing some time. It's supposed to be an interview but it turns out to be more of a solo recital. Henry's breaking in a beautiful new Heritage Golden Eagle guitar and he just can't seem to put it down for a minute. No problem here. I just love to hear him play.

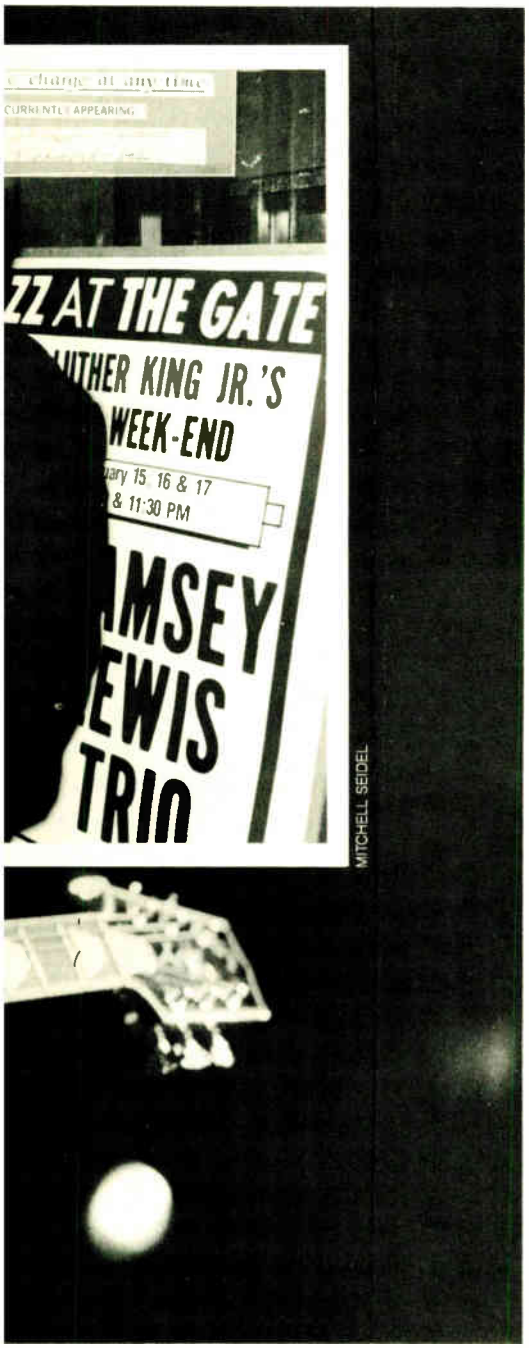
I'm calling off tunes and he's running them down. *Old Folks*, *Over The Rainbow*,

MITCHELL SEIDEL

Days Of Wine And Roses, What's New. He's got it covered, seguing from one standard to the next without breaking stride. You can't stump Henry. Years and years of sideman work with the likes of Sonny Stitt, Shirley Scott, Jack McDuff, Hank Crawford, Groove Holmes, Joe Williams, and mentor Ramsey have imprinted all these standards on his memory banks. The guy's knowledge of the standard jazz repertoire is complete, his love of jazz guitar obvious.

Listen to him play with Joe Williams or Ramsey Lewis these days and you'll hear the whole lineage of jazz guitar. A Charlie Christian phrase here, a Grant Green chord voicing there, some Wes Montgomery octave work, a couple of quotes from Kenny Burrell's bag.

But standards don't fully express what Henry Johnson is all about. As much as he loves those tunes and those great jazz guitarists, he's got his own thing to do and it ain't strictly in the mainstream. It reflects who he is and where he's been.



MITCHELL SEIDEL

Born in Chicago and raised in Memphis before resettling back in Chicago, you know he loves the blues. "Henry," I say, while watching him chord yet another melody, "I believe you could make Paganini sound blue." He laughs and launches into one of the *Caprices*, adding a bent-string note here and there to prove the point.

Being just 33, he was exposed to a lot of rock and funk and soul music before he ever came across Wes Montgomery or Charlie Parker. He's a young man who is steeped in the tradition but is also aware of what's going down around him. He grew up with Sly & The Family Stone, he digs Stevie Wonder, and he idolized the late Donny Hathaway, with whom he toured in the late '70s before the singer's untimely death.

He's not afraid to call himself a jazz guitarist. But you listen to his MCA/Impluse debut, *You're The One*, or his fine followup, *Future Excursions*, and you hear that he's also incorporating his other influences. There's slap bass and bright-sounding digital synthesizers on *Someone* but lots of warm Wes-type octave work to balance it off. He spins off flurries of fluid 16th notes over the churning latin groove of *Future Excursions* and gives the Thad Jones classic, *A Child Is Born*, a fresh coat of paint with a very contemporary arrangement while maintaining the soul of the song through his own expressive playing. On *Good With The Bad* he reaches back to the church for some soulful, gospel-tinged singing. And on two cuts, *75th And Levy* and Jimmy Smith's *Ready And Able* (CD only), it's strictly straight-ahead: upright bass, acoustic piano, drums, and guitar laying it down like in days of yore.

So what to call such an album?

"I don't know, man. All I know is it makes me feel good when I play it," says Henry. "Whatever good music is, then that's what I play. If it's music that touches people, makes 'em feel good, then that's what I play. You can call it whatever you want. Is it pop or is it jazz? I dunno. It's like the beer fights, you know? Tastes great! Less filling! Who cares? They both drink beer, right?"

Hard to imagine from that warm, mature sound you hear on his albums or on gigs with Joe Williams and Ramsey Lewis, but there was a time when Henry played Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters, just like most kids his age during the '60s.

"I played a Strat when I was 14 or 15," he recalls with a grin. "That's when I was playing in this Top 40 band that went on to back up Isaac Hayes down in Memphis. Then the next year I got a Telecaster, a blue one with flowers on it. Then after that, I saw this picture of Wes Montgomery. It was the cover of the *Tequila* album. I saw that fat-bodied guitar on that cover and I said, 'Man, what is *this*?' I mean, back then in Memphis, nobody played a guitar like that. You never saw them in the music stores around town so I had to go out and search for one, just to check it out.

"And finally I went way out to this music store and found one. I asked the guy if I could check it out and as soon as I grabbed it and started playing on it I fell in love with it. I could feel the vibrations on the back, vibrating on my body. It made me feel real close to the instrument, and that kind of feeling has always been with me ever since."

He got rid of his solid-body soon after that encounter. It was 1969 and Henry Johnson was just beginning his jazz education.

"That album with Wes on the cover was the first time I came in contact with jazz in any form. I didn't even know what it was. I was playing stuff like Sly & The Family Stone and Booker T & The MGs. I was into all the music happening at Stax. I was a teenager. I didn't know nothing about jazz.

"Then one day the bass player in the band gave me this record. He said, 'You think you're so hot, check this out.' I took that record home and studied it. The strings and the horns I could understand but couldn't understand anybody playing octaves at that speed where it sounded like single notes. And the longer I had that album the more it drove me crazy. It made me realize that I really didn't know nothin' about the guitar. I mean, here was this guy playing all this incredible stuff . . . and that's when I really started getting serious about playing the guitar. I wanted to find out what could be done on it. Before then all I did was accidental ear training, just playing along with the popular 45s of the day, memorizing the tunes, and learning the licks. And I tried to do the same thing with this Wes record but it wasn't so simple."

That Wes album on Verve was a revelation to the young guitarist. He eagerly grabbed the next one, *California Dreamin'*, and became hooked on that sound. "But it was more than the sound," he says. "It was the choice of notes and the timing of everything. It all just seemed to fall into place, and there was enough space to let you hear what each note was saying. He always let you catch up to him. Most good jazz soloists take their time and phrase everything. Miles is another good example. I mean, after a point you get beyond being able to play a thousand notes a minute, and what is that saying musically? Nothing! Because then it's only all about technique.

"But I want to be able to make a statement, and a statement to me is a musical phrase that has some sort of

HENRY JOHNSON'S EQUIPMENT

"The first time I came to New York, in 1976, I was playing a Gibson 335. I went down to Sam Ash on 48th Street and traded it in on a Guild X-500. I took that on the road with Jack McDuff and played it for the next 10 years. And I've been playing strictly hollow-body ever since."

On his 1987 MCA/Impulse debut, *You're The One*, Henry is pictured with a handsome Ibanez GB-10 (George Benson model), which he revamped slightly, adding a new fingerboard, Bartolini pickups, and Schaller tuning pegs. Just after the album came out, Ibanez sent him a new FG-100, which he continued to play with Ramsey Lewis and Joe Williams throughout '87.

Recently, he acquired a new guitar made for him by luthiers at The Heritage Company in Kalamazoo, Michigan. "Those are the old Gibson guys," Henry explains. "When Gibson left to relocate their business in Nashville, these guys, who had been working for Gibson for 27 years or more, basically said, 'We're not gonna upset our homes and our families just to move down to Nashville.' So they bought the factory and formed this new company. These three guys are the same cats who were making the L5s and all that stuff way back in the old days of Gibson. And now the guitars they're making are of very high quality. It's all custom-made on order.

"I met them at a NAMM show in Chicago and played on one of their guitars and I loved it. So I got together with them and worked up some designs and things to my specifications. The fingerboard is measured for my hand. The width of the neck is a little thinner so I can do those double octaves easier [check out the intro on 'Good With The Bad']. It has big frets. The headpiece is longer just to stretch the scale of the string out. And it has a Rollomatic bridge which keeps the string tight so it won't rattle. It has custom pickups that sound real acoustic but can cut through anything."

This beautiful blonde axe, dubbed the Golden Eagle II, rings out clear and true. And there's no mistake about who's playing it. Emblazoned across the pickguard in bold white letters is: HENRY JOHNSON.

As the guitarist says, "It's the only instrument for me."

HENRY JOHNSON DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

FUTURE EXCURSIONS—MCA/Impulse 42089
YOU'RE THE ONE—MCA/Impulse 5754

with Ramsey Lewis

THREE PIECE SUITE—Columbia 37153
LIVE AT THE SAVOY—Columbia 37687

with Donny Hathaway

BEST OF—Atco 38107

meaning to it. So I'm at the point now where I think of what notes I want to choose more than 'Can I play this run I learned on C7?' I hear things now and I can go in the direction of the music. It's more musical to me than to just challenge somebody with chops. 'Cause anybody can have chops."

Sure, Henry does flaunt his considerable chops on his second MCA/Impulse album. But it's always balanced with taste, finesse, and the kind of elegance in phrasing that he must've picked up from being around Ramsey Lewis for so long [since 1979].

From that initial encounter with Wes on record, he went on to Kenny Burrell, then Grant Green, then Pat Martino. "And then I started hearing about George Benson," says Henry. "And I found out that the people he listened to were the same ones I listened to. I didn't hear about George until '75 or '76. That's when I started hearing things about him from other musicians and picking up his records. But in the meantime, I got pegged as being a Benson copyist or some shit. You know, the sound of the guitar with hollow-body and reverb. And quite naturally, if I have a lot of speed, people are bound to say, 'Well, he sounds like George.' But I can't play his lines. I can only do what I do. I don't have to copy anybody. It's a waste of time 'cause you can't remember his stuff anyway."

Like Benson, young Henry broke into jazz with organist Jack McDuff. "I went on the road with Jack for about a year, around '76. That's really where I got the blues stuff happening. And it was great for getting my chops together. You really had to be on your toes for that gig. He'd be acting like he was half asleep just before the set, then we'd hit and he'd call off . . . 'Right, *Four Brothers* . . . one, two, three, four.' He just loved to catch you off guard. I remember one time I was not ready and he called *Four Brothers*, man, and they just ran over me. I felt like a train had run over me."

Henry came up at the tail-end of the organ trio phase, after Pat Martino and George Benson had done their time with McDuff. "People started cooling off on organ trios, jazz rosters were starting to shrink and people were being let go from record companies. So I kinda felt like it wasn't going to lead anywhere. I stuck around Chicago for about a year before getting called by Donny Hathaway."

That was an inspiring period for Henry. He stood in awe of the soul singer and came away with some valuable lessons, some of which he applies to his current album, notably on ballads like *Let's Fall In Love Again* and *When Did You Leave Heaven*? "When I was 15, I used to sing like Smokey Robinson 'cause I had that high falsetto voice," he says. "I guess I'm coming out of a gospel root. That's why I love Donny Hathaway. He had such an incredible voice. He would have people in the palm of his hand night after night. He'd do *For All We Know* and make people cry. Perfect pitch, great range, and an incredible piano player as well. Just to be working on the same stage with a great talent like that night after night . . . I was very fortunate."

In 1983, after a four-year stint with Ramsey Lewis, Henry returned to Chicago and scored a local hit with *Johnsonation*, a locally-released 45 with his Henry Johnson Quartet. He sent out demos to all the majors and eventually got a ring from Ricky Schultz, who was just in the process of starting up the Zebra label.

"I sent him some stuff, he dug it and said, 'Look, man, we're gonna have to sign you up.' I stayed in touch and then about a year later he came back with, 'Look, man, I can't sign you to Zebra. I think something better is gonna be happening.' Then a couple of months later he called back and said, 'What do you think about signing with Impulse?' So it all worked out great for me. I guess I was just very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time."

Johnson is currently managed by the legendary John Levy, who also coincidentally managed Wes Montgomery's career. Henry dedicated the swinging, bluesy *75th And Levy* on his latest Impulse album to his manager. "I wrote it for him on his 75th birthday," confides the unassuming guitarist.

On another cut from the album, *A Child Is Born*, Henry features his doctor on fluegelhorn. And the good Dr. Odies Williams can indeed blow. "I was trying to get Freddie Hubbard to do that tune but he was out of the country or something when I was in the studio. So I just called up my doctor and asked him to come on by with his horn. And we got some real nice stuff out of him."

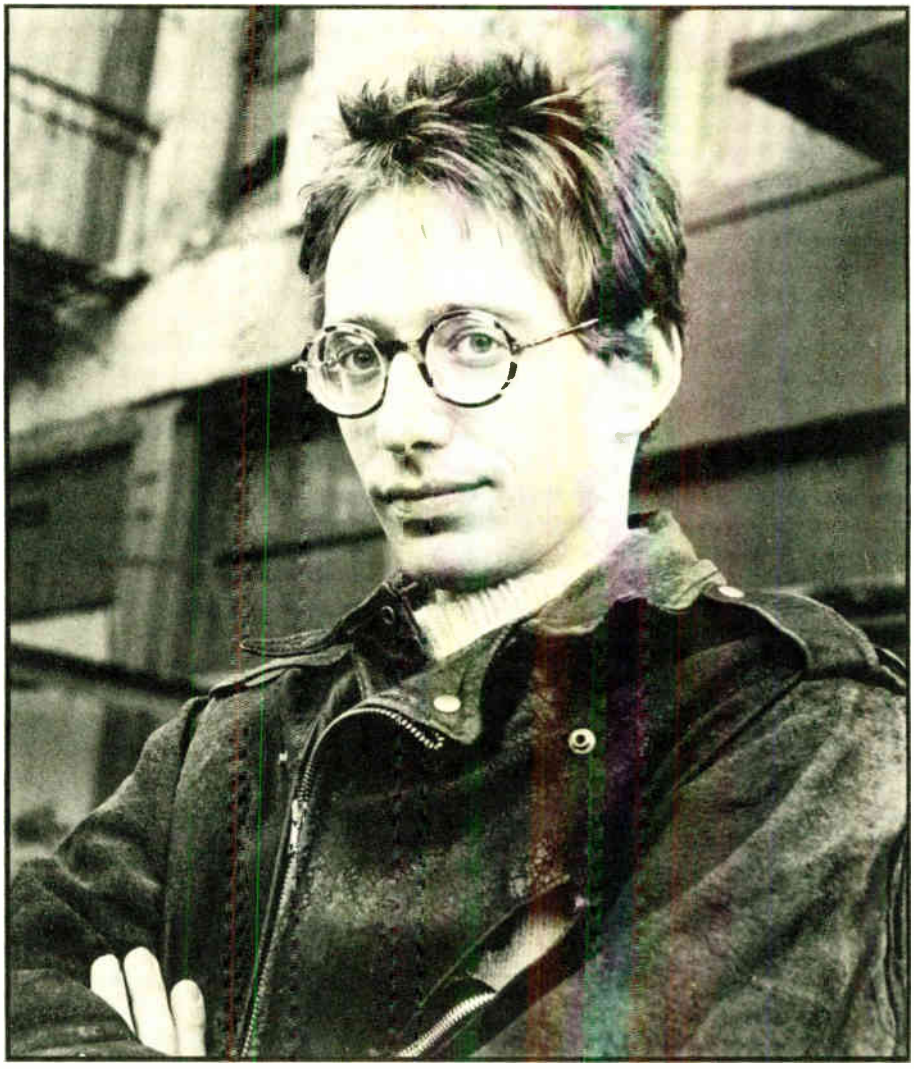
Of the contemporary arrangement on that Thad standard, Henry says, "I just wanted to do something that was a little different. I love that song. It's a beautiful song and I thought maybe I could turn some other people onto the song by giving it a more contemporary flavoring. But I didn't want to butcher the song and make Thad turn over, you know? So I didn't stray too far from the melody and yet it has that sound that might appeal to young people today. And to me, that's important because young people today don't have any place to get the roots from. They won't go back and buy this old album or that old album. They say, 'Well, let's get Kenny G's new album and learn all his licks.' Well, where did Kenny G get his licks from? He had to listen to somebody. And if you don't do the research, you miss out on a lot."

Henry Johnson has done the research. He's paid the dues. He's put in his time with the cats. And now he's getting his chance to do his own thing with Impulse. Call it whatcha wanna, he's playing it straight from the heart with everything he's got.

"My only plan," says Henry, "is to continue playing and recording high quality music. I don't want to give nobody no bullshit. I'm serious about music, I'm serious about improvisation. I'm not going to try and cross over into the pop market with the drum machines and the very commercial, slick-sounding arrangements. That's not where my head is at. My head is in the music. And the basis of all my records is always gonna be about blowing.

"I've seen guys try and cross over before and they're obviously uncomfortable with it. If you play something that you're not, it comes out and people know it's fake. So I just do what I know is me." **db**

JOHN ZORN



MICHEL DELSOL

Quick-Change Artist Makes Good

By Gene Santoro

"What's coming out of this scene down here is definitely hybrid music: it's the result of people growing up through the '60s and '70s, listening and being exposed to music from all over the world for the major portion of their conscious lives," says composer, arranger, and musician John Zorn. After walking back from Finyl Vinyl, an East Village specialty record store where we both regularly feed our weirder cravings, passing through several socio-economic worlds for the few blocks on our way, we're sitting Japanese-style, shoeless in his tiny living room. The futon's rolled back, and the records and tapes that testify to his dogged search for sounds line all four walls from floor to 10-foot-high ceiling. They include early music, Ives, Stockhausen, country blues, shamison delicacies, bebop obscurities, classic Blue Note discs, rockabilly ravers, hip-hoppers, Okinawan reggae, and Japanese heavy metal.

He continues, "At the same time, the collaborative environment that I use for my work is a real American tradition that's ignored, because the European aesthetic, the big Romantic myth, is so oriented toward ivory-tower composers—the Beethovens, the Mahlers. It's bullshit: all those guys had collaborators. But now it's something that I see happening all over, something that's more and more prevalent because of the time we're living in. And because of the availability of music from all over on recorded disc, a lot of people are more open to different things and aren't afraid to mix them together. The average person doesn't get to hear all this (gestures around the room) on the radio, it's true; but people who are outside of the mainstream do share this love of information, the need to devour as much of it as they possibly can."

At age 34, a dozen years after he began playing his music around the East Village, Zorn may still be living on the economic margins, but his methods of music-making, his generic border-hopping and the hybrids he's bred, demonstrate how pop music from around the globe is being transmitted across cultures and then appropriated and reshaped into new unrecognizable forms. This is not vapid New Age-ism: no transcendentalist goals lurk in Zorn's closet, and his plugged-in feel for noise and speed and form preclude him from dwelling on the inexorable beauty of pentatonic pablum. Eclectic is far too weak a word to describe his

demanding yet playful sonic assaults, which raise questions and rearrange expectations about how music can go about being whatever it is.

"Wow, you *really* want to go back to the beginning," laughs Zorn when I ask about his early musical days; but his trajectory is typical enough of many musicians his age. Hearing the Beatles switched him from classical music, the piano, and learning to read orchestral scores "by listening to the records and watching how the music moved on paper across the different instruments" to strumming the guitar and writing tunes. High school found him playing different axes and starting formal composition studies, while college launched him on the sax. "I began putting in a good 10 years of playing eight to 10 hours a day on that instrument. Then one day about five or six years ago I woke up and said, I am *not* going to spend the day playing the saxophone [*laughs*]; I knew if I ever felt like that it would stop completely, and it stopped completely—I haven't practiced a minute since."

Zorn's Webster College days were crucial in other ways. "Oliver Lake was teaching there at the time, so a lot of great musicians, like Luther Thomas, were hanging around. That was around 1971-73, when the Black Arts Group and the AACM in Chicago were really hot. So I got exposed to improvisational music. It made a lot of sense to me, when I heard the stuff that Anthony Braxton and Leo Smith and Roscoe Mitchell were doing. I liked the energy those guys were working with, but I also liked the fact that they had a strong concern for structure. It was a real inspiration that helped me break free of the traditional classical mold, and I began incorporating improvisation into some of the structures I'd been working on, which ranged from traditionally notated stuff like Elliot Carter- and Charles Ives- and Edgard Varese-influenced pieces to improvisational works coming more from John Cage or Earle Brown or Stockhausen. There are so many ways of approaching mixing improvisation and composition. They *are* just elements to make music; one isn't better than the other, they're just different."

After a brief layover on the West Coast, where he met like-minded musicians like Philip Johnson of the Microscopic Septet, Zorn doubled back to the Apple in '75. It was during that early ferment in the East Village that Zorn began hooking up with downtown experimenters like guitar lunatic Eugene Chadbourne, whose shockability mixed sharp-edged cornpone and psychedelic noise; cellist Tom Cora, part of axman Fred Frith's irrepressible Skeleton Crew; and Arto Lindsay, master of guitar skronk and the strangled cry. "I could just give you a string of names to show you how I've progressed from 1976 to today," grins Zorn. "As I met new players, my music grew and changed."

Less by accident than by design. "It's partly because when I meet these different people, especially guitarists, I meet them at times when I'm getting interested in different things that interest them too. Like when I met Arto, I was beginning to get into the rock thing, and so that collaboration came about naturally. These last couple of years I've been much more interested in blues music, and meeting up with Robert Quine [famed not only for his edge-city guitar work with Richard Hell and Lou Reed but for his encyclopedic knowledge of blues and rock guitar discographies] got me further into that."

Those combinations—of personalities, of musical styles from the blues to noise, and of basic conceptual elements like composition and improvisation created the "game" structures Zorn used in pieces like *Archery* and *Cobra* to decenter both the process of improvising and the composition itself. "The game pieces are meant for improvisers working in a live situation. They're like a sport—it's an exciting thing to see, it's very visual when all the musicians are making signs at each other, trying to get each other's attention. With this system, you can give a downbeat and have no idea what's going to happen—you might be playing with no one or one person or 10 people—or you might give a downbeat where you'll have a pretty clear idea *who* you'll be playing with but no idea of what kind of music is going to happen, or you can give a downbeat and have a clear idea of what's going to happen musically by using different modifiers like fast or loud. My role there was to set up rules so that the people in the band have to make decisions, have to communicate. All I'm concerned with is that people make the most possible decisions in the smallest amount of time, so that everything is jam-packed and the music changes incredibly fast."

Speed and collaboration mark all Zorn's approaches to the nexus of improvisation and composition. He calls the group of players he collaborates with his family, and wants their special talents and insights to reshape and fill in the outlines he's sketched. This rebirth of the band concept—which owes a lot to rock's influence on this generation—not so coincidentally cuts to the heart of what composition can mean.

Zorn explains: "In the studio it's just pieces of tape that you can splice or not splice together. So the way I work in the studio now is by creating a collaborative environment with the band I've picked for this piece. The way the piece is written is unusual, in the sense that I write images and ideas down on filing cards, order them, and that's basically the composition. Then it gets scored: I decide this card will be a solo for the guitar, and the card following it will have the full band, and the card after that will be the two drummers—see what I'm saying? That scoring doesn't really get committed until I'm in the studio and I hear what's going on. As all the musicians are working and coming up with their own ideas, throwing them into the pot with mine, I realize, 'Well, that next section that I thought was going to be so good has to get ripped up and thrown away because now that this happened I've got to go right to the card after that.'

"It's the same way Duke Ellington worked with his band: he'd bring in a head chart, or just play the piano and everybody would find their note; and so it would just kinda *happen*, because he'd hired an incredible band that worked that way, and they knew each other and the music. I'm sure he heard melodies the guys were blowing and took them, but they were on salary to him, and he was the guy who was putting it all together. That's why I say it's a collaborative environment, and I call the musicians a family, because through working with me on these different pieces everybody has learned their different roles. Each musician has his own musical world in his head so that, whether he likes it or not, as soon as he gets involved with something, is interested and excited, he's gonna add his world to it. That makes my piece, my world, deeper. I think that's what helps give my music a kind of filmic sweep." One way Zorn makes sure those minds will interact with his more than once is by cutting the musicians involved in his projects equal slices of the artists' royalties.

The sheer relentless speed driving the late 20th century is Zorn's other main musical tool. His art of the quick-change and the juxtaposition of the apparently incongruous from literally around the world—a baroque harpsichord flourish next to a spew of guitar screeches, a circus motif, a strangled human cry, or computer-generated bleeps, a rumba pattern alongside a bit of shakuhachi, a Brazilian *batucada* ensemble, or diced-up fragments of Beethoven's *Für Elise*—mimics the jumpcuts and channel-hopping so natural to the first generation that grew up on tv. Think of what Firesign Theater did with that conceit on record, and you'll realize what you're definitely *not* hearing in John Zorn's music is a bored lack of attentiveness, a self-indulgent and superficial meandering. Just the opposite, in fact: it's a provocative representation of the challenge to being bombarded by atomized information.

With those emphases in mind, it's clearly no accident that Zorn's most recent recordings, last year's *The Big Gundown* and this year's *Spillane*, in a certain sense spend their time at the movies and watching tv. The first LP taps key players on the East

Village scene—guitarists Quine, Frith, Lindsay, Jody Harris, Bill Frisell, and Vernon Reid, turntable-mixer Christian Marclay, altoist Tim Berne, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, bassist Melvin Gibbs, keyboardists Anthony Coleman and Wayne Horvitz, and percussionists Bobby Previte and Anton Fier among them—for brash reworkings of spaghetti-Western scorer Ennio Morricone. Zorn takes the Italian's brooding, twangy atmospherics, themselves witty reworkings of Duane Eddy and the Ventures, and skews them into scorching surrealism, redistributing the voicings of the original charts over utterly different instruments and players. You can get some idea of how apocalyptic these renditions are from the album's working title, *Once Upon A Time In The East Village.*

The way Zorn sees it, "People have called that re-composing rather than arranging. I just look at it as really good arranging [*laughs*]. I mean, arranging is more than just saying this instrument does this, and that instrument does that. It's several things. It's knowing, for starters, what an instrumentalist can do, and putting him in a context that's gonna make him shine. On the Morricone record, deciding who did what was more than just deciding that this should be two guitars; it was deciding that I wanted this to be Quine and Jody Harris, because they're two people who have worked together, developed a certain rapport. So it's a matter of players and personalities.

"Then it's also a matter of understanding what the piece is all about, where it came from, and trying to bring it into sharp focus, maybe in a better way than was originally done. But they're still arrangements he could have thought of, if he lived here on the Lower East Side and had access to these musicians. That's where the connection to Morricone is really strong: not in the melodies or harmonies, which are there, of course, but it's beyond the black and white music on the page. It's the feeling and the essence of what he tried to accomplish with this musical piece. So I went back and saw a lot of the films, because I wanted each little piece to be a depiction of the film. In other words, I looked at what he looked at when he came up with that melody, then I said, 'This is what I'm going to come up with,' and mixed it with what he came up with; so it works with the film, it works with the notes on the page, it works with the people I'm working with here in the studio, and yet it stays faithful to my own musical world."

Hot on the heels of *The Big Gundown* is the equally ambitious *Spillane*, with three distant pieces diced and tossed into shape. The mosaic of a title piece—it charges through 60 sections in its 25 minutes—deals mainly in the moody *noir* sounds that graced B-movies and tv detective shows in the '50s. It grew from several Zorn obsessions: detective fiction, New York, sleazy soundtracks, and jazz. "That was actually recorded over a year ago," notes Zorn. "I had done this *Godard* tribute and wanted to do another one to develop the orchestral-band sound I'd begun working on with *Godard.* That was maybe 75 percent improvisation and 25 percent composition, which were the segues; I wanted to switch that for *Spillane* and make the improvs the segues for written material. But I also wanted to explore this method of working, where I'd have maybe one line of music and a couple of chords, and then arrange in the studio."

Another species of Zorn composition is represented here by *Two Lane Highway*, the "portrait" of blues guitar great Albert Collins that teams Collins with Zorn family members Quine, Gibbs, Horvitz, and Previte as well as keyboard master Big John Patton and drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson. "There's something about his style that's so quirky, something about his open ear for sound and effects that are incorporated so well into the playing, that of all the blues players I know he was the one that I felt some kind of kinship with. I knew I could put him in a context and stretch him and have him respond. And he did—he went OUT! [*laughs*]. See, my whole plan was to set him up for each of those attacks. First I would give him a groove that he could blow on and feel real comfortable with, then I'd punch it to him, and he'd be in outer space; then I'd bring him back in, give him another one where he could burn, then I'd punch him into outer space again; and then I'd repeat it again. That's the flow of the piece." And it was done live, not by tape editing, though the process of recording blocks of the piece's sections and taking breaks between yielded the same effect. As Zorn grins, "Nobody saw it as a whole except for me; they just concentrated on sections."

While Zorn may be best known as a composer/arranger, his alto sax playing is as chameleonic and supple as his writing. There are the duck calls and squeals (often generated by his literally deconstructed sax) on things like *Ganryu Island*, his alternately melodic and raucous duo with shamisen master Michihiro Sato. (Zorn lives half the year in Tokyo and finds the hybrid Japanese culture fascinating, which is why he brought some of its on-the-edge performers to the Kitchen for The Hidden Fortress series he curated in late 1987.) Then there are the freewheeling Ornette Coleman tributes Zorn stages with fellow altoist Tim Berne at clubs like the Knitting Factory.

Or there is the bop-based but idiosyncratic fluidity of The Sonny Clark Memorial Quartet/*Voodoo*. "People don't realize Wayne (Horvitz) and I had been playing Sonny Clark's music for years before we cut that record," he complains. "It was exciting because nobody thought I could play saxophone like that; I figured people would think somebody else must have done it [*laughs*]. Even my hero Anthony Braxton was funny to me about it, because he'd never heard me play, uh, regular until the Next Wave Festival in Amsterdam this past fall; he came up to me and said, 'You really *can* play the saxophone' [*laughs*]. I just play what I hear; I don't intellectualize it the way many people do, maybe even the way they did back then. I just play it in a way that feels natural to me, which means I play in a singing kind of way that is a distillation of people like Ornette and Lennie Tristano and Jimmy Giuffre and lots of others—just like any musician. That music is ultimately a very natural music that comes from what you hear, and that's how I play it, because otherwise I'd over-intellectualize it and take the feeling out of my performance."

Early 1988 will see *News For Lulu*, a trio date where Zorn, guitar genius Frisell, and trombone great George Lewis tackle tunes by boppers Hank Mobley and Kenny Dorham. Along with innovators like Henry Threadgill, whom he admires a great deal, Zorn has no use for pseudo-traditionalism. "It's really music the way it should be played today—exciting, on the edge. Bebop is not just running changes the way Sonny Stitt or Bird did; there's no point to just copying that, you can take out the record and play it if that's what you want to hear. It's tunes and changes and a certain tradition that needs to be updated to keep it alive. I think that music is great today, and I'm trying to play it today." **db**

JOHN ZORN'S EQUIPMENT

John Zorn's alto sax is a mid-'60s Selmer Mark VI; he has two basic setups for it. The first uses a #6M Dukoff metal mouthpiece and a Van Doren #2 reed. The second uses an old metal Brilheart mouthpiece with a Rico reed.

JOHN ZORN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

SPILLANE—Elektra/Nonesuch 9 79172-1
COBRA—hat Art 2034
THE BIG GUNDOWN—Icon/Nonesuch 9 79139-1
GANRYU ISLAND—Yukon 2101
THE CLASSIC GUIDE TO STRATEGY VOL. 2—Lumina 010
THE CLASSIC GUIDE TO STRATEGY VOL. 1—Lumina 004
LOCUS SOLUS—Rift 007
ARCHERY—Parachute 17/18
POOL—Parachute 11/12
SCHOOL—Parachute 004 & 6

with the Sonny Clark Memorial Quartet

VOODOO—Black Saint 0109

with Derek Bailey/George Lewis

YANKEES—OAO/Celluloid 5006

with David Moss

DENSE BAND—Moers Music 02040
FULL HOUSE—Moers Music 02010

with Jim Staley

MUMBO JUMBO—Rift 12

CHARNETT MOFFETT

taking risks within the tradition

BY **JEFF LEVENSON**

Charles Moffett, drummer, trumpeter, composer, educator, one-time chief percussive engineer for the Ornette Coleman Trio, and father of five, is putting together a family band. The year is 1975. Everyone—well, almost everyone—has an instrument picked out. Mondre, the oldest of the Moffett children, will play trumpet; Charles Jr., the next in line, likes blowing saxophone; Codaryl, following dad's lead, takes up the drums; Charisse, lone female in the group, will handle vocals; and then, there's . . . well, there's Charnett, . . . and he'll play . . . .

"Daddy, I'll play bass," chimes the young volunteer, sacrificing his fantasies of the spotlight for the betterment of the group.

"Good," concurs ol' man Moffett, measuring his eight-year-old's enthusiasm against a half-size instrument. "We're goin' to Japan."

"There I was," says Charnett, 12 years and 17 recordings later, recounting with a smile his baptism by fire, "a little kid in the Far East trying to be heard over two drummers. I didn't know what I was doing, but at least I learned to count off in a foreign language."

Charnett Moffett is a card-carrying member of this generation's jazz rat pack, a collection of fashionable youngbloods surfacing in Wynton's wake and flaunting a free-wheeling spin on tradition that treats music and influences like high-end Italian sportswear—mix and match. Moffett became a member of Marsalis' band at the age of 16; two years later he joined (and remains a member of) Tony Williams' quintet; and late last year, at 20, he issued *Net Man*, his first album as a leader. Additionally, the bassist has graced albums by other celebrated jazzmen, such as John Stubblefield, Branford Marsalis, Stanley Jordan, Wallace Roney, Mulgrew Miller, and Frank Lowe. His achievements are considerable by most musician's standards, yet moreso coming from one just exiting adolescence. He owes it all to a musically rich home life.

"I grew up playing Moffett Family music," he says, citing the oft-neglected blood-genre of jazz practiced, at last count, by six musicians. "I'm not even sure what that is. It had to do with the things my dad used to say to us when we were growing up. During that time he was preaching freedom with discipline. He didn't get into scales or reading—just playing! He'd say, 'Just go ahead and play and what comes out, that's you. Don't try to be anything else but what you are inside.' That was the freedom part. And I was able to develop a natural style from that.

"The discipline part involves practicing so you can be an educated musician. Freedom with discipline means you can play free, but you must know your instrument. That's the great thing about the Ornette thing in the '60s, which is a very important period to me, or Miles' thing at that time, or Coltrane's thing. They were playing free, playing with melody, harmony, and rhythm, all very musical, all very free."

None of the greats Moffett invokes comes as a surprise, least so, Ornette. Father Charles had worked with the master saxophonist between the years 1961 and '68, and had provided the incendiary percussion documented on *Ornette Coleman At The Golden Circle, Vols. 1 & II*. Ornette had, in fact, lent his name to the young bassist (Charles + Ornette = Charnett), and was a regular visitor to the family's household in the Bay Area. The youngest Moffett enjoyed his company and that of other illustrious musicians associated with his dad. All communicated an unwavering commitment to music that shaped the youngster's attitudes about life and career.

"My father exposed us to the right things and pointed us in the right direction," he says with obvious pride. "No one can force you to practice, or force you to take your studies seriously, but they can create the right atmosphere for you, so that you want to play—not for them, *for you*. That's what my father did."

After the Moffett family moved to New York, Charnett enrolled in the prestigious High School of Music and Art; classical studies at Mannes and Juilliard soon followed. During this time he befriended numerous musicians, among them, Wynton Marsalis. Bonded by age and music they developed a close relationship and within two years he joined the trumpeter's group.

Moffett's work with Wynton, including his contributions to the critically acclaimed album, *Black Codes (From The Underground)*, immediately placed him in the jazz public's eye; he rose to a new level of musicianship and acceptance that helped produce other work opportunities. Yet, the bassist was all of 16, precociously skilled on his instrument but not fully prepared to travel in what amounted to fast company.

"I wasn't truly aware of what was going on around me," he remembers. "It happened so fast. Wynton and I had been friends. One minute I'm going to his house to play, the next minute he's calling me to join the group. I didn't think it was a big deal. I thought he was just doing some gigs and he wanted me to play. It really didn't matter to me that my friend was getting all this attention and that he was on the cover of all these music magazines. I didn't give it a lot of thought. I was just trying to keep up with the guys in the band.

"By the time I went with Tony," he continues, eager to convey the newfound maturity and confidence he felt two years later when he joined Williams' band, "I felt comfortable right away. I had gotten a little more experience under my belt and I was able to relax more."

It is hardly surprising that Moffett's kinship with the drummer gained immediate expression. Having been weaned and schooled by an educator-father with a percussionist's sensibility, rhythm always played an important role in defining the bassist's conception. The evidence can be heard on Williams' *Civilization* and in performance where Moffett steadies Williams' tenacious attacks, tethering the other players' sound to that of the drums. "My role with this group feels different than anything I've ever done," he says, "because I've grown some, discovered more of my own direction. Tony is one of the innovators of this music and working with him forces me to be on my toes."

It has also expanded his interests and promoted an adventurous side to his nature that he himself is just now discovering. On his record, *Net Man*, he flirts with this kind of controlled experimentalism, mulling his various options and taking them in unexpected directions. Electronics, in particular, reinforce his fundamental disposition towards investigating new sounds.

He moves easily from acoustic upright to electric five-string. ("They are two separate instruments," he says, "and playing one helps me to play the other.") He uses synthesizers and drum machine, employing them variously on his six originals. And the inclusion of two standards—*Mona Lisa* and *Softly As In A Morning Sunrise*—mirrors his traditionalist ways. The total package is a serious attempt at demonstrating versatility and avoiding the trappings of any one creative bag.

Like many of his fellow youngbloods, the music he hears and chooses to work with comes from disparate sources. Moffett feels that as a working musician he is obligated to stay open to new sounds and alternate ways of thinking. At the same time, he must draw on the music he knows. Sticking to any one style defies the challenges inherent in his profession. He

enjoys taking risks.

"If you knew me well," he maintains, "you would say my record describes me perfectly. Some people might disagree and say, 'He could have done a more straight-ahead record, he could have stayed in his Paul Chambers bag.' But I did what I felt. Initially, I fought with myself, saying I can't include *this* tune, I can't include *that* tune. But I realized you can't make everybody happy. If you try, you'll go crazy. Someone will always criticize what you do. You have to make *yourself* happy. My album came out exactly the way I wanted. My strategy was to be true to the music that I heard in my head.

"I don't want to be limited as a bass player," he continues. "I'm here trying to help to keep this tradition going. But I am also influenced by the music of today, because I am *here* today. That's why my album is a diverse album. Everything I have heard is an influence—my father's music, Miles, Weather Report, Stanley Clarke, Bach . . . you can cop great walking from him. Everything. It all interests me. And what's going on right now interests me the most.

"The next time around I may decide to do a pop record with my sister Charisse. Or I may decide to do a classical record. I may do more things with my brothers [two of whom appear on *Net Man*, Codaryl and Charles Jr.]. I can't worry about whether people are ready for it. You have to take chances."

Clearly Moffett is already thinking about new projects and group configurations. Working steadily with one band has proven tremendously gratifying, yet restricting, limiting his exposure to other musical attitudes and requisite styles of play. "Its good for me to be in one consistent environment," he insists, alluding to the benefits of group membership, "that's why Tony's band and Wynton's band were so valuable to me. On the other hand, playing with different artists is a great experience and it enables you to learn a lot about maintaining the tradition.

"I've been working in trios with Monty Alexander, and he's helped me a great deal, because in trio work there's an emphasis on the bass you don't have in other group contexts. It's a whole other way of approaching the instrument. I call it the Ray Brown School of playing, and Monty has helped me to appreciate it. Learning from him allows me to become a better musician. That's why I'd love to play with other piano players, guys like Herbie Hancock or Keith Jarrett or Tommy Flanagan or Hank Jones. These are guys who can teach you something."

Given his proven talents and willingness to learn from respected elders, one can assume that Moffett will always jump at the opportunity to work alongside players of the caliber he admires. And that probably they too will welcome his creative input. And should any of them invite the bassist overseas, to tour in some distant land playing music totally unfamiliar to him, they can sleep easy knowing that even if he's bewitched and bewildered by the hype and the hoopla, at the very least, in the midst of his panic, he'll see the first tune coming and he'll start counting off in that foreign language. He's a quick study that way. **db**

MITCHELL SEIDEL

CHARNETT MOFFETT'S EQUIPMENT

Moffett's upright bass is a Pullman with Underwood pick-ups. It is made in West Germany. He uses Spiro Core strings, orchestral guage.

His two electrics are: a Fender Jazz bass with EMG pick-ups, played with Roto Sound strings, standard guage; and an Aria five-string (with additional high-C) with its own pick-ups, played with Roto Sound strings, light gauge.

CHARNETT MOFFETT SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

NET MAN—Blue Note 46993

with the Moffett Family

THE CHARLES MOFFETT FAMILY VOL. 1—Charles Moffett Recording 6142

with Wynton Marsalis

BLACK CODES (FROM THE UNDERGROUND)—Columbia 40009

with Tony Williams

CIVILIZATION—Blue Note 85138

with Stanley Jordan

MAGIC TOUCH—Blue Note 85101

with John Stubblefield

BUSHMAN SONG—Enja 5015

with Frank Lowe

DECISION IN PARADISE—Soul Note 1082

with Wallace Roney

VERSES—Muse 5335

with Mulgrew Miller

WINGSPAN—Landmark 1515
WORK—Landmark 1511

with Sadao Watanabe

PARKER'S MOOD—Elektra 9 60475 1

with Branford Marsalis

SCENES IN THE CITY—Columbia 38951
ROYAL GARDEN BLUES—Columbia 40363

with Manhattan Jazz Quintet

MANHATTAN JAZZ QUINTET—Projazz (CD only) 602

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

MILES DAVIS/ MARCUS MILLER

MUSIC FROM SIESTA—Warner Bros. 25655-1: *Lost In Madrid, Part I; Siesta/Kitt's Kiss/Lost In Madrid, Part II; Theme For Augustine/Wind/Seduction/Kiss; Submission; Lost In Madrid, Part III; Conchita/Lament; Lost In Madrid, Part IV/Rat Dance/The Call; Claire/Lost In Madrid, Part V; Afterglow; Los Feliz.*

Personnel: *Davis, trumpet; Miller, all other instruments except: John Scofield, acoustic guitar (cut 2); Earl Klugh, classical guitar (9); Omar Hakim, drums (2); James Walker, flutes (10); Jason Miles, synthesizer programming.*

★ ★ ★ ★

The first Miles Davis/Marcus Miller collaboration, *Tutu*, was praised in some places (including this magazine) as a late '80s updating of the great Miles Davis/Gil Evans albums of 30 years ago. This album, at first hearing, sounds like *Tutu II*—modelled on *Sketches Of Spain*.

There are certainly a lot of parallels: the slow, insistent trumpet solos; the Spanish tinge of the backdrops; the way the martial beat of *Siesta* echoes *Saeta* from *Sketches*. And the album is dedicated to Gil Evans.

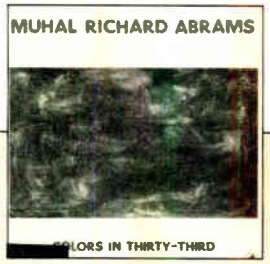
Horrified purists will be quick to point out that Miles was backed up by *real* musicians playing *real* instruments on *Sketches*, while the settings this time were created by Marcus Miller's electronic orchestra. But that's not really the major difference between the albums. Miller has softened his synthesized textures by blending in acoustic instruments and acoustic-like timbres, and the effect (if not the actual sound) is very similar to what Gil Evans did in 1960.

The real difference is this: *Sketches Of Spain* was conceived and recorded as an independent work while *Music From Siesta* was written as a film score. This limited Marcus Miller, as composer and arranger, in ways that Gil Evans didn't have to deal with. As producer of the album, he pieced the music together cleverly—but problems linger.

The worst of these is the lack of continuity. As a glance at the song titles reveals, many of the pieces were assembled by splicing together short cues written to fit visual events. (Even as pastiches, five of the 10 cuts are under three minutes long.) The recurring *Lost In Madrid* theme helps to stitch the album together, but it still seems fragmented. Some of the most promising segments are cut short. It would have been exciting to hear *Theme For Augustine* and *Claire* really develop, rather than abruptly vanish into a synthesized haze.

Miles sounds strong and confident when he plays (he's only on about half the tunes), and his gorgeous muted tone comes across better here than it has on any of his funk albums. He's perfectly suited to this kind of setting: he doesn't just play solos; he creates moods. Miller takes some convincing solos on clarinet and saxophone, and his "flamenco funk" bass on *Conchita* is terrific.

Ultimately, *Music From Siesta* sounds best when you don't scrutinize it too closely. Although it may sound like an insult to say it's background music, that's really what it is—and it could be the best background music you've heard in a long time. —*jim roberts*



MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS

COLORS IN THIRTY-THIRD—Black Saint 0091: *Drumman Cyrille; Miss Richarda; Munktmunk; Soprano Song; Piano-Cello Song; Colors In Thirty-Third; Introspection.*

Personnel: *Abrams, piano; John Purcell, soprano, tenor saxophone, bass clarinet; Fred Hopkins, bass; Andrew Cyrille (cuts 1,3-7); John Blake, violin (4,6,7); Dave Holland, bass, cello (5-7).*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ROOTS OF BLUE—RPR 1001: *Time Into Space Into Time; C.C.'s World; Metamor; Roots Of Blue; Direflex.*

Personnel: *Abrams, piano; Cecil McBee, bass.*

★ ★ ★

The AACM's sage, Muhal embodies the ideals the Chicago co-op championed in the '60s: creative investigation of tradition; exploration of new instrumental combinations; the freedom to smash jazz line and rhythm into cubistic splinters, without sacrificing swing.

Abrams is a composer foremost; his band is his instrument, but his units keep changing. He strips his esthetic to the bone for *Roots Of Blue* duets with Cecil McBee. Despite the fragmentation of *C.C.'s World*, the fiendish asymmetry of *Metamor*'s unison line for bass and left hand (a favorite tack), or the circular movements that frame *Direflex*'s central 4/4, Abrams prizes rolling momentum. (His implicit thesis on either album is that no rhythm is too arcane to swing.) He dedicates *Time Into Space Into Time* to great bassists, but rather than giving the great McBee a holiday, Muhal challenges him to find his place, as the pianist churns out polyrhythms or dickers with the tempo.

Abrams draws on broad resources to draw connections. Fancy chromatics on a C♯ blues echo the blurred tonalities of barrelhouse piano; two-handed syncopations elsewhere echo ragtime. His forceful multilinear approach is closer to Powell, or even Tristano, than to the more vertical Taylor or Tyner.

But the austere duet setting is finally limiting. Muhal hits greater heights employing a flexible sextet: *Thirty-Third*'s music is for two, three, four, five, or six; no tracks use identical instrumentation. Again, Abrams doesn't shun overt Eurocultural strains—the notated *Piano-Cello Song* has Brahms behind it. But the lyrical *Miss Richarda* is more jazz ballad than chamber trio, given Fred Hopkins' throbbing harmonic rhythm, Muhal's idiomatic phrasing, and John Purcell's vocalized bass clarinet. High-art dexterity is a means, not an end. Perhaps the most striking sonority here is the simplest to achieve—unison violin and soprano sax on a whirlwind *Soprano Song*.

Thirty-Third is another gymkhana for rhythm players. Two bassists underpin the headlong *Colors* without stumbling; Hopkins and Holland phrase as one, merging to play impossible double-stops. The undersung rhythmagician at the traps swings *Munktmunk* and *Drumman Cyrille*, despite their jagged twists and Cyrille's own refusal to work the easy groove. Forsaking neither swing nor Euroharmonics, Muhal knows that to deny half of jazz's heritage is to deprive oneself.

—*kevin whitehead*

JEFF BEAL

LIBERATION—Antilles / New Directions 790625-1: *Missing You; Afterglow; Premonition; Skylight; Liberation; Elegy; Marching Through The Lion's Gate; Survival Instinct.*

Personnel: *Beal, trumpet, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn, keyboards, drum programming; Jay Azzolina, guitar (cuts 1-4,6); Ned Mann, bass (1-4,6); Larry Aberman, drums, drum machine, percussion (1-4,6); David Mann, alto, soprano saxophone (2,6); Joan Beal, vocal (4).*

★ ★ ★ ½

Jeff Beal—a multi-"deebee" Student Music Award Winner from 1982-85—is more than just a trumpet player. And when you add up what all he's doing—the composing, arranging, and bandleading as well as blowing—it's a pretty impressive debut. This would fall neatly into that oblique no-man's land called fusion—although a trumpet player who also programs, may be New Age. No, there's too much actual

MORE LACY

By Bill Shoemaker

HYOU VIELZ

This season's bumper crop of Steve Lacy recordings should send collectors not only into a buying binge, but also into discographical ecstasy, as this latest batch of albums include heretofore rare first recordings and new installments of such staples of Lacy's oeuvre as the art song, the Monk repertoire, and the recycling of material in two of his most familiar formats —soprano/piano duets and his long-lived sextet. There are also inviting points of entry into Lacy's work for new listeners in this lengthy menu, including a program of Ellingtonia, an experimental encounter with Indian musicians, and a retrospective of the progressive brand of dixieland Lacy was an exponent of in the mid-'50s.

The Complete Jaguar Sessions (Fresco Jazz 1) restores to print the 20-year-old Lacy's 1954 recording debut with trumpeter Dick Sutton's sextet. The sinuous phrasing, permutative timbre, and punctuating attack that are hallmarks of Lacy's sound are already in place. Though the wryness of his mature vocabulary was still budding, Lacy was fluent enough to navigate the heady proposition of progressive dixieland. While exhorting improvisational orthodoxy, this spinoff of the trad craze forced an arranger's studied precision upon an open idiom, using Tin Pan Alley ditties, bop shaded voicings, and knotty contrapuntal lines. Despite such talents as Lacy and Sutton, an agile soloist, it is plain why the movement did not survive, as its reactionary impulses were decorous compared to the radical agenda of the cool school and the hard-boppers. Yet, if for nothing else, fanatic Lacy collectors will seek out *The Jaguar Sessions* for *Jazz Me Blues*, which features Lacy's only recorded clarinet solo.

Lacy's poignant Ellington/Strayhorn program with pianist Mal Waldron on *Sempre Amore* (Soul Note 1170) is a reminder of these composers' early, and lasting, influence on Lacy; after all, it was Bechet's reading of Ellington's *The Mooche* that made Lacy a soprano zealot; and *Soprano Sax* (OJC 130), Lacy's 1957 debut as a leader, devoted more running time to their compositions than to Monk's. An album that simmers from start to finish, *Sempre Amore* is a distillation of a rich, if occasional, collaboration, which was first documented on Lacy's initial all-Monk program, *Reflections* (OJC 063). As a duo, Lacy and Waldron reinforce their respective strivings for economy, and this ballad-rich program causes them to cull the depths of their musicianship for statements of resonant simplicity. The duo more than fulfills the composers' intention to gently yank the listener's heartstrings on *Star Crossed Lovers* and *Prelude To A Kiss*, and to induce chronic toe-tapping on *Johnny Come Lately* and *To The Bitter. Sempre Amore* is an album to savor.

One measure of Lacy's intimacy with the Monk repertoire is the liberties he takes with the material, particularly in a solo recital such as *Only Monk* (Soul Note 1160). His licenses with motivic development, rhythmic shifts, and emotional projection far exceed what he takes on *Sempre Amore*. For a historical perspective of Lacy's artistic evolution with the Monk repetoire, compare the versions of *Work* on *Soprano Sax* and *Only Monk*; the probing, cadenza-like improvisation on the latter possesses a regard for space, an assimilation of non-Western phrase construction methods, and a mastery of harmonic tension, issues that had yet to be addressed by the 23-year-old Lacy. Still, the tender reading of *Pannonica*, the lithe swing of *Who Knows?*, and the gleeful train whistle effect that gooses *Little Rootie Tootie*, indicates that Lacy primarily champions the soulfulness and playfulness of Monk's music.

Lacy's most fruitful continuous relationship, however, has been with his sextet, the core of which—vocalist and string player Irene Aebi, saxophonist Steve Potts, and drummer Oliver Johnson—has remained intact for over 15 years. *The Gleam* (Silkheart 102) and *Momentum* (RCA/Novus 3021) are well-honed albums that accommodate both Lacy's passion for the art song and the running room a band like his deserves.

Even for some devotees, Lacy's deepening involvement with the art song is a prickly issue, as the art song has been the form Lacy has used to write some of the most illuminating, and the most turgid, music of his career. Lacy's penchant for wide intervals and quirky rhythms are occasional stumbling blocks for Aebi, who is an endearing singer when Lacy plays to her assets, as he does on *Momentum* and *The Gleam*. Aebi can project an erstwhile European hipness; except for the title piece of *Prospectus* (hat Art 2001), *Gay Paree Bop*, first recorded on *Songs* (hat Art 1985/86) and the opener for *The Gleam*, is the most effective vehicle Lacy has penned for this strength. A rhythmic roller-coaster ride with a coy Mideast-tinged bridge, the piece is also a tour-de-force for the entire sextet. Lacy also writes subdued and ethereal vehicles that are well-suited to Aebi. On the Novus date, *Art* draws upon her wistful elegance, while *Napping*, from *The Gleam*, is a cooed jazz lullaby.

Lacy's immersion in songwriting has not been at the expense of writing engaging instrumental works, or eliciting inspired performances from the sextet, regardless of context. The two textless pieces on the RCA/Novus program are quintessential Lacy. *The Bath* is a languid exposition of even eighth notes, which Lacy and Potts turn inside-out in patented close voicings; Potts' opening solo is a bracing statement that regears the performance with shouted melodic torque. The title piece, for Kenny Clarke, is a study of rhythmic compression and acceleration, using blocks of triplets that unleashes an intense collective improvisation, ignited by Johnson. Pianist Bobby Few has become the lynchpin of the sextet, whether stoking *Gay Paree Bop* and the driving, angular *The Gleam* with hard-hitting solos, or milking jazz ambiance from *The Bath* and *Napping*.

One of the fringe benefits of Lacy's prolific compositional output and performance schedule are unique exchanges of the type documented on *Explorations* (Jazzpoint 1020), a studio encounter with sitarist Subroto Roy Chowdhury. Coming from disparate musical traditions, Lacy and Chowdhury attempt a transfer of undiluted musical values rather than a compromising fusion. Unfortunately, the principles only play together on the sidelong title piece. The first half of the program finds Lacy and Chowdhury in respective trio features, soloing over Shibsanker Ray's tabla and Patricia Martin's tambura. Lacy's foray is in a floating *dadra*, a six-beat cycle Lacy alters by de-emphasizing the traditionally accented first beat. The results, once Lacy and Chowdhury actually play together, are more intriguing; the droning tambura and ricocheting tabla cadences mask, to a degree, Chowdhury's deviation from raga, as he establishes a rapport with Lacy that lingers beyond the parameters of genre.

The other benefit of Lacy's travels are albums such as *Deadline* (Sound Aspects 013), a concert recording with East German pianist Ulrich Gumpert that features compositions from earlier Lacy recordings. Like *Sidelines* (IAI 37.38.47), an 11-year-old duo program pairing Lacy with pianist Michael Smith, *Deadline* offers deliberate readings that border on the austere, a contrast for listeners introduced to Gumpert via his recordings on FMP. *Art* reappears, its fragile melody reduced to a stark skeleton in its initial statement, and then methodically fleshed out. Likewise, the Asian hues of *Blues*—which Aebi originally sung on *Troubles* (Black Saint 0035)—are stripped down, baring elemental emotions. Even *I Feel A Draught*, infused with whimsy on *Trickles* (Black Saint 0008), has a foreboding quality. Lacy and Gumpert delve into deep waters, and surface with a strange pearl. **db**

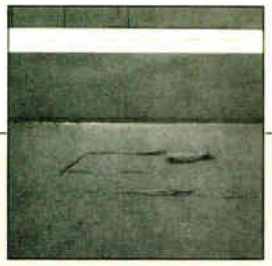
live playing done here in real time for that. That's one thing *Liberation* has going for it—good playing all around.

These are players new to my ear. There's not a deficiency anywhere, and it's a tight unit, at times reminiscent of the LA Express in its *Tom Cat* stage. The band shifts to a Miles Davis *Tutu* flavor on *Survival Instinct*, even dipping back to Miles' cool funk of the '70s for a minute. Beal's sound is good on piccolo and flugelhorn, and sinister when muting the trumpet.

Premonition brings new rhythmic undercurrents splashing into the fray—cymbal spurts, bass snapping off staccato jabs, some interesting stuff. Beal sometimes suffers from a determination to throw the old kitchen sink in with his tunes. Some sound like bits from movie scores. He has overloaded his sequencer-assisted tunes, succumbing to the temptations that those eager, flashing machines offer. There is a little bit of freedom in the song *Liberation*, but Beal also sounds confined at times by the technology. *Elegy* is a better attempt at blending live and sequenced playing, in a looping stride like the European group Passport might do.

Marching Through The Lion's Gate sounds totally programmed, except for Beal's trumpet. I can almost see it all flashing before me on the computer screen. The track never generates much emotion, and some of the orchestral sounds are terrible, especially compared to some of the rich organic sounds the live players get earlier. I'm personally a fan of as much live playing as possible on albums (from the '60s, you know), but if Beal wants to make sequenced music part of his act he should have done it sooner on the record. It might have made a nice change of pace on side one, where the arrangements are more predictable.

—robin tolleson



ZAKIR HUSSAIN

MAKING MUSIC—ECM 1349: *Making Music; Zakir; Water Girl; Toni; Anisa; Sunjog; You And Me; Sabah.*

Personnel: *Zakir Hussain, tabla, percussion, voice; Hariprasad Chaurasia, flutes; John McLaughlin, acoustic guitar; Jan Garbarek, tenor and soprano saxophone.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

For all his fire and bombast on electric guitar with his Mahavishnu Orchestras, John McLaughlin's most inspired playing has been in the strictly acoustic context of his East-meets-West band, Shakti. This album, led by former Shakti percussionist Zakir Hussain, recalls some of that heightened energy.

McLaughlin always seems to respond particularly well to great drummers. His exchanges with Billy Cobham in the early Mahavishnu days were legendary. Narada Michael Walden pushed John in later editions of the band. And while those two were monsters on the kit, neither has the total command, the full range of emotional expression, the sheer mastery over rhythm that Hussain has. This cat can burn a blue streak or walk on egg shells. Each digit tells a tale. Imagine Gary Burton with ten mallets, Max Roach with six arms. Hussain lets his fingers do the talking and his virtuosity inspires McLaughlin, as you can hear on the incredible title cut, a 12-and-a-half minute centerpiece highlighting each of the four in extended solo improvisations.

Hussain shows more range of expression on *Anisa*, a suite that begins with a gentle duologue between McLaughlin's guitar and Garbarek's sax then segues to an unaccompanied percussion-and-scat section by Hussain. And on *You And Me*, it's just John and Zakir, burning as usual.

Garbarek is an interesting choice here. At times his wailing sax recalls the violin of L.

enja

NEW RELEASES

5051 Countin' On The Blues
John Stubblefield ss, ts Hamiet Bluiett bs, Mulgrew Miller p, Charnett Moffett b, Victor Lewis dr. Rec. 1987 NYC.

Stubblefield and his singularly empathetic ensemble employ the structures of straightahead post-bop with an intimate understanding of the elaborations proposed by such searching improvisers as Hank Mobley, Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane. Stubblefield has arrived at an unmistakable pattern of rise and fall, a deep and flowing source of expressivity, and his very own cry.

(Howard Mandel)

5049 Joint Venture
Paul Smoker tp, Ellery Eskelin ts, Drew Gress b, Phil Haynes dr. Rec. 1987 NYC.

The music on this debut album embraces the free spirit of instinctive interplay, even as it covers well-travelled territory like *Lush Life* and *Just In Time*, tunes with rich melodies and set changes.

(Jeff Levenson)

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STEER HORNS

By Kevin Whitehead

More than anyone else, trumpet players demonstrate the triumph of musician over machine. With only three valves for begrudging help, everything they play is a matter of lip, tooth, lung, and determination. (By comparison, saxophonists have it easy.) Because taming the trumpet—or flugelhorn, on which all here but Hubbard and Koglmann double—requires such an act of will, horn players often lead an ensemble in more ways than one. The rhythm section may be the drive train, but the trumpeter steers.

Master Of Suspense (Blue Note 46905) demonstrates yet again how profoundly **Jack Walrath** was touched by Mingus' spirit. In this fat-sounding septet—Kenny Garrett on alto, Carter Jefferson on tenor, Steve Turre on trombone, plus James Williams, Anthony Cox, and Ronnie Burrage—solos are pointed, the players driven and committed. *A Study In Porcine*'s free breaks, hog-calling behind solos, and stop-on-a-dime structure have a strong Mingus flavor. No longer porcine himself, Jack still plays with heft—his mute work on *Monk On The Moon* is anything but weightless. Walrath the composer/arranger tends to move his horns in parallel blocks, a ploy which eventually grows a bit stale. It works best on his arcanely voiced, angular but hauntingly lyrical take on Hank Williams' *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*. After it was in the can, a producer decided to sandwich a singing Willie Nelson into the middle of the performance. Williams and Walrath keep Willie company, and Jack takes a nice chorus, but this literal interlude clashes with his radical rearrangement. (The joke would work better without Nelson blowing the punchline; if Jack hadn't named the tune, few would have identified it.) Walrath, Williams, and Willie toss off *I'm Sending You A Big Bouquet Of Roses*, too. Jack's obbligati don't ignore the blue notes, but even when Nelson takes a guitar chorus they never really interact. This unlikely collaboration has promise—Jack's *Hymn For The Discontented* shows his affinity for folksy changes. But next time they should plan ahead.

Freddie Hubbard's split personality is the subject of *Life Flight* (Blue Note 85139). Side one is undemanding groove music (*Battlescar Gallorica*) and generic funk (*A Saint's Homecoming Song*) with Stanley Turrentine, George Benson, and Idris Muhammad. Larry Willis is on electric keyboards, Wayne Brathwaite on electric bass. Side two is for straightahead quintet, with tenorist Ralph Moore, Willis on piano, Rufus Reid, and Carl Allen. Freddie's sound is as fat as a 20-pound cat, and about as lazy; save for the brisk post-bop title track (where he and Moore shine), the structures aren't very challenging, and the leader never feels the heat. He doesn't mess up but he's strictly on auto-pilot. As usual, a schizzy something-for-everyone ploy adds up to not quite enough for anyone. Will the rise of single-sided CDs augur the end of such two-faced discs?

Italy's **Enrico Rava** boasts neither the crispest phrasing, tightest intonation, nor the most sophisticated harmonic sense—yet there's something so warm about his tone and generous about his spirit he makes up for his failings. His quintet on *Secrets* (Soul Note 1164)—John Taylor's on piano, Augusto Mancinelli on electric guitar, Furio Di Castri on bass, and Bruce Ditmas on drums—sports a similarly ramshackle approach; each player proceeds at his own pace. They're looser than the net at a public tennis court, playing a tango (*Tomo Y Recuerdo*), the funkified *Da Silva* that segues into a brief *Holiday For Strings*, or a cross between a riff tune and a minimal exercise, *Cornette*. But their rambly impressionism finally works against them: a tighter arrangement would better serve *Monky Tonk*'s many melodic twists, shifts in rhythmic emphasis, and accelerating and decelerating passages. This quintet needs a firmer hand at the wheel; casual Rava would fare better in a more contrasting setting.

Bill Dixon's partisans argue he's the premier trumpeter of his time, but on the records I've heard he's too self-effacing to merit such claims. Anti-virtuosic, Dixon typically plays quiet, long tones without vibrato, or with vibrato so long one might wrongly mistake it for wandering pitch. Having gone his own way for two decades, well out of the limelight, at this point Dixon the leader sounds less like a pioneer than a stubborn throwback. *Thoughts* (Soul Note 1111), an hour-long live set, has the feel of a mid-'60s ESP date, right down to the distant sound; the structures are apparent but broadly limned. Dixon's septet is intrinsically distinctive; his own horns or stark arranger's piano and Marco Eneidi's squalling alto are joined by Lawrence Cook on drums, John Buckingham on tuba, and three fine bassists: Peter Kowald, William Parker, and Mario Pavone. The players don't resist the brooding air that bottom-heavy lineup suggests; the proceedings have a ritual air (as where sawing bass echoes dijiridoo, *Time II*). Dixon's not inclined towards sweetness and light to begin with, and a four-part suite *For Nelson And Winnie* Mandela hardly calls for levity. His music has undeniable power, but here at least his compositional range seems rather narrow; whether he's on horns or piano, this music's all of a piece. One longs to hear him play against type.

Austria's **Franz Koglmann** has employed Dixon and dedicates a tune to him on *Ich* (hat Art 2039). Koglmann's flugelhorn sound is as spare and seemingly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

Shankar, John's partner in Shakti. And when he weaves flowing lines with flutist Chaurasia, as on *Zakir* or *Water Girl*, the effect is chilling.

Sunjog is a clever piece highlighting some tight ensemble playing and culminating in some blazing fours between John, Jan, and Hariprasad. But *Sabah*, which loosely hangs together before fading out, seems to be more of an afterthought.

This is a very beautiful album. Some of the more restful tunes like *Toni* or *Sabah* may even appeal to New Agers. But the rest of the playing on *Making Music* is so burning that it would be a crime to hang Hussain & Friends with that lame label. —*bill milkowski*

FLIP PHILLIPS/ SCOTT HAMILTON

A SOUND INVESTMENT—Concord Jazz 334: *A Sound Investment; Comes Love; Blues For The Midgets; With Someone New; Mapia Elena; Great Scott; A Smooth One; The Claw.*
Personnel: *Phillips, Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Chris Flory, guitar; John Bunch, piano; Phil Flanigan, bass; Chuck Riggs, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

SPIKE ROBINSON/ AL COHN

HENRY B. MEETS ALVIN G., ONCE IN A WILD—Capri 61787: *Sippin' At Bells; Ballad Medley (Easy Living, These Foolish Things); Sweet's Blues; Rustic Hop; Once In A While; Low Life; Bye Bye Blues.*
Personnel: *Robinson, Cohn, tenor saxophone; Richard Wyands, piano; Steve La Spina, bass; Akira Tana, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★

Two-tenor groups in jazz have emphasized the similarities between the saxophonists rather than the differences. One thinks of Dexter Gordon/Wardell Gray, Gene Ammons/Sonny Stitt, Johnny Griffin/Lockjaw Davis, and Zoot Sims/Al Cohn. These records are in that tradition, with the greatest joy coming from hearing two like-minded swingers trade licks on compatible material.

The Robinson/Cohn set will be compared to Sims/Cohn sets, of course. The major difference is that Robinson is closer to Stan Getz than to Sims. This gives us interplay between a robust cool player (Robinson) and a darker, more emotionally demonstrative one (Cohn). Still the roots are similar (Pres).

Robinson, 58, has been showing these roots mostly around Boulder, Colorado, where until a couple of years ago he maintained a dual career as an engineer and musician. He's a case of a local musician with world-class abilities. Examples abound on this record: a breathy and thrilling *These Foolish Things*; his supply moves on *Sweet's Blues*, the slow blues by Harry Edison; and his floating-then-punching solo on Bob Brookmeyer's *Rustic Hop*; among others. Every track has good Robinson.

And Cohn's usual composer's approach wears as fine as ever on tenor. Those laidback melody lines encased in that dark, singing tone with the soulful edges are one of jazz's most personal sounds, consistently engaging on this record.

The rhythm section swings, as a Robinson/Cohn rhythm section should. Nothing fancy; just straightahead, although Tana is a shade too busy in places. But altogether, this record whets your appetite for more of this quintet.

The Phillips/Hamilton record can be described as "original Swing Era tenor meets Swing Era tenor born 40 years later." Here,

Phillips is the more aggressive member of the team: silky and swivel-hips slippery to Hamilton's more formal smoothness. But the gradations tend to blur between these two superb phrase-makers and rhythm players. *Maria Elena* is a case in point as the leaders trade fours with a single mind. All the great swing tenor references are on this record, from Flip himself to Ben Webster, Budd Johnson, Pres, Illinois Jacquet, Buddy Tate, and others.

The rhythm section, a most consistent unit within its chosen pre-bop groove, is Hamilton's regular band, of course. Flory, like Hamilton, keeps distinguishing himself with variations in the tradition. His single-string work à la Tiny Grimes on *Comes Love* and his Charlie Christian-like style on *A Smooth One* are two examples. As for the tenor men, they're most respectful of each other. Two of a kind, really.

—owen cordle

MANHATTAN TRANSFER

BRASIL—Atlantic 81803-1: *Soul Food To Go (Sina); The Zoo Blues (Asa); So You Say (Esquinas); Capim (Capim); Metropolis (Arlequim Desconhecido); Hear The Voices (Bahia De Todas As Contas); Agua (Agua); The Jungle Pioneer (Viola Violar); Notes From The Underground (Antes Que Seja Tarde).*

Personnel: *Tim Hauser, Cheryl Bentyne, Janis Siegel, Alan Paul, vocals; Djavan, vocals (cuts 1,4); Milton Nascimento, vocals (8); Jeff Lorber, synthesizer programming (1-3,5); Larry Williams, synthesizer programming (4,6,7,9); Wagner Tiso, synthesizer programming (8); Wayne Johnson, guitar (1,5); Dan Huff, guitar (3,7); Toninho Horta, guitar (4,6,8); Oscar Castro-Neves, guitar (4,9); Victor Biglione, guitar (8); Abraham Laboriel, bass (4,6); Nathan East, bass (5,7); Jamal Joanes Dos Santos, bass (8); Buddy Williams, drums (1); John Robinson, drums (3,4,7,8); Djalma Correa, percussion (1,6); Paulinho Da Costa, percussion (2,4,5,8); Frank Colon, percussion (8); David Sanborn, alto saxophone (3); Stan Getz, tenor saxophone (4); Yaron Gershovsky, piano (5); Uakti instrumental group (7,9).*

★ ★ ★

HERBIE MANN

HERBIE MANN & JASIL BRAZZ—RBI 401: *Guarde Nos Olhos; Beiral; Esquinas; Sonhos; Vitoriosa; Little Chick A Dee; Luas De Pequim.*

Personnel: *Mann, flutes; Mark Soskin, keyboards; Paul Socolow, bass; Romero Lubambo, guitar; Duduka Fonseca, drums; Claudio Roditi, trumpet (cut 4).*

★ ★ ★ ½

The past three years have seen a flowering interest in Brazilian music by American listeners. Milton Nascimento, Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, and other Brazilian notables perform in the States to appreciative audiences made up of a growing number of neophytes beside those long familiar with the special music emanating from the Amazon Basin and beyond. Certain major and independent labels serve the faithful and casual fans quite well, presenting for acceptance the work of *brasileiros* as well as trendy *nortes americanos* like the Manhattan Transfer and Herbie Mann.

The Manhattan Transfer's decision to embrace Brazilian pop music, resulting in the succinctly titled *Brasil*, seems an act of true fascination with the tropical sounds rather than a shrugged Ok-let's-try-this commercial move. Group singer and album producer Tim Hauser sought out kingpins Nascimento, Ivan Lins, and Djavan to involve in the album project; the first two contribute one song apiece (Nascimento singing on his *Viola Violar*) while Djavan has a greater presence, offering five tunes and two vocals. Also, several musicians from down Rio way, notably four Nascimento *amigos* collectively known as Uakti and percussionist Djalma Correa, are mixed in with the harmonizing Transferites and some L.A. pop-jazz fusion players. Since *Brasil* is meant for the ears of John Q. American, things never stray far from the accessible and it's the likes of West Coast studio denizens Jeff Lorber and Larry Williams who fashion the synth-charged musical arrangements of eight Brazilian-born songs.

As one expects, fine gentlemen Hauser and Alan Paul and belles Janis Siegel and Cheryl Bentyne sing with immaculate perkiness. They wisely refrain from trying to appropriate native Brazilian sensibilities, relying on trademark out-front cheeriness, not complex, subtle feelings. Yet problems arise when the Manhattan Transfer affably latch onto words that have been specifically written for the songs by stateside lyricists. They sound daft singing the fit-the-rhythm twaddle penned by Doug Figer for Djavan's *Sina* (now *Soul Food To Go*) and the same composer's *Asa* (*The Zoo Blues*). Furthermore, the foursome's out of their element handling Brock Walsh's sobering lyrics for Lins' *Antes Que Seja Tarde* (*Notes From The Underground*, concerned with the fight against apartheid) and Nascimento's *Viola Violar* (*The Jungle Pioneer*, about the rape of the rain forest).

Brasil does contain two stand outs: treatments of Djavan's *Capim* and *Agua*. On the former the Manhattan Transfer sings in Portuguese, enchantingly so in the company of bossa-veteran Stan Getz' tenor sax. *Agua* shimmers when lead singer Siegel lends the logic of her heart to pantheistic lyrics regarding water (agua); the words are credited to Walsh who may have translated Djavan's prose straight.

Herbie Mann has foreseen or followed many musical trends over the course of 30 years and the recently recorded album with Jasil Brazz—two Brazilians, two New York musicians—is his latest fling with Brazilian music. The soothing album is for the most part impressive, benefitting from good Lins and Djavan material. With crystalline-toned flute commanding the center of attention, Mann luxuriates in the attractiveness of the composers' melodies while alert to the necessity of shadowing their innate compositional blend of felicity and yearning. Mann and the clear-headed players maintain urbanities even when getting lively. One letdown: Sy Johnson's 13-minute *Little Chick A Dee*, which lacks dramatic continuity.

—frank-john hadley

BENNY CARTER

BENNY CARTER MEETS OSCAR PETERSON—Pablo 2310-926: *Just Friends; Sweet Lorraine; Baubles, Bangles And Beads; It's A Wonderful World; If I Had You; Whispering; Some Kind Of Blues.*

Personnel: *Carter, alto saxophone; Peterson, piano; Joe Pass, guitar; Dave Young, bass; Martin Drew, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

CENTRAL CITY SKETCHES: AMERICAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA—Music Masters CIJD 60126X (CD), CIJD 20126X (LP): *Doozy; When Lights Are Low; A Kiss; Sleep; Central City Sketches (Central City Blues, Hello, People, Promenade, Remember, Sky Dance); Lonesome Nights; Doozy; Easy Money; Symphony In Riffs; Souvenir; Blues In My Heart.*

Personnel: *John Ekert, Virgil Jones, Bob Millikan, Marvin Stamm, trumpet; Eddie Bert, Jack Jeffers, Jimmy Knepper, Britt Woodman, trombone; Carter, Bill Easley, John Purcell, Loren Schoenberg, Lew Tabackin, Danny Bank, saxophone; Dick Katz, John Lewis, piano; Remo Palmier, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Mel Lewis, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ½

Benny Carter's year to collect honors was 1987. And one of the events was this collaboration between Carter and the American Jazz Orchestra, a repertory ensemble organized to perform music normally heard only on records. It now comes out as a two-LP set (or a single CD) in a rich retrospective of Carter's career—along with Bud Freeman, the longest running major solo career in jazz history by the way; but a retrospective heavily weighted toward his later years.

The pioneering Carter is the most astonishing. *Symphony In Riffs* (1933) jumps out in incredible contrast to the rhythms, voicings, and the very grammar of other pre-Swing Era bands. It wasn't that it was ahead of its time; it was beside it. This was because Carter was the first—and arguably the only—virtuoso instrumentalist/arranger in jazz history to project the letter and spirit of his improvisations through orchestration. And being a reed player, his writing found its truest voice in the saxophone section. The double-time rush of reeds playing variations on the simple three-note motif of *Lonesome Nights* (also known as *Take My Word*), played superbly by the AJO, sounds as fresh in the '80s as it certainly must have 55 years ago.

Carter's middle years are summed up only in *Sleep* (1940), an express-tempo treatment of a Fred Waring waltz. *Sleep* is a wonderful chart, but there should be deeper representation here. The period produced much great Carter writing: *All Of Me, My Favorite Blues*, and *Skip It.*

The main emphasis lies in Carter's post-1960 period. There are two versions of *Doozy*, which began as a simple 12-bar unison blues in 1961 and has since acquired a bridge and developed into a full scale, but still hard-swinging, orchestration. The first version offers the full chart; the second exchanges 20 ensemble bars for a biting two-way tenor dialog between Loren Schoenberg and Lew Tabackin. *Easy Money*, written for Basie, is full of Basie trademarks; and *Blues In My Heart*, the oldest Carter number on the program, gets its first big band costuming in a contemporary Carter chart. The choice of a 4/8 meter puts the main theme on square wheels in the first chorus, but solos by Carter, Britt Woodman, and John Lewis are excellent.

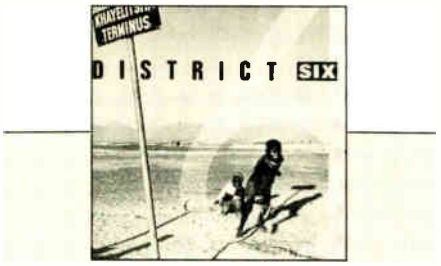
Central City Sketches is the umbrella title for six original Carter charts without any spe-

cial programmatic tilt. Although *Hello* is vintage Carter (and catch Schoenberg's quote from Lester Young's *Tickle Toe*), much of the rest is inclined to be laid back. The author's signature, while stately and fluent, seems written in invisible ink. (An added bonus is the producer's Gary Giddins' liner-note interview with Carter, whose non-commital answers sound like those of a man about to declare his candidacy for the presidency.)

In any setting, though, Carter's alto signature is pure India ink; and it stamps his collaboration with Oscar Peterson with a dazzling charisma. No one else manages to use quarter notes in contemporary improvisation as gracefully as Carter. They touch the tops of the beat in glancing, almost ghostly strokes. At slow tempos, he attacks as if he were trying to pry his notes open, and this gives his ballad readings an exaggerated lyricism—a mewing, almost whiney sound (*Sweet Lorraine*). His middle tempos, however, are consistently irresistable. And on *Whispering* and especially *Some Kind Of Blues*, we hear a masterful improviser in full flight.

Peterson's consistency, feel, and drive continue to confound criticism. The density and variety of his playing recalls—and extends—the textures of the famous Art Tatum-Carter sessions of 1954.

With last year's Swing Reunion and now these, Carter's on a roll. —*john mcdonough*



DISTRICT SIX

TO BE FREE—Editions 53: *Ke A Rona (Power To The People); Into The Light; Etlon-Tu; Songs For Winnie Mandela—a) Reasons Of The Heart, b) Kwa Tebugo, c) Unity Dance; Mbiso.*

Personnel: *Brian Abrahams, drums, percussion, vocals; Chris McGregor, piano, vocals; Jim Dvorak, trumpet, vocals; Bill Katz, bass guitar; Harrison Smith, tenor and soprano saxophone, flutes, bass clarinet, vocals.*

★ ★ ★ ½

More good sounds from the UK. The jazz scene is definitely happening over there and this vital five-piece outfit is one of the reasons why.

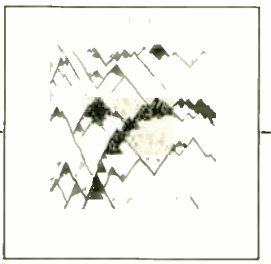
Drummer Brian Abrahams, an Elvinesque stylist, formed District Six in 1982 with some fellow South African musicians. (The name refers to that area near Capetown where refugees and so-called "undesirables" used to be placed by the South African apartheid government.) With this current lineup, Abrahams' propulsive, polyrhythmic swing is augmented by some fine soloing from saxophonist Harrison Smith (dig his free-blowing segment on the *Reasons Of The Heart* section of *Songs For Winnie Mandela*) and trumpeter Jim Dvorak (showcased on *Unity Dance* and *Mbiso*). Strong playing throughout on some thoughtful compositions, though the influences show at times (Gil Evans, Abdullah Ibrahim, Miles Davis).

This is a highly eclectic offering, a kind of hodgepodge. Some folks may appreciate the humor of a festive polka-high life-type rave up (*Etlon-Tu*) on the same album with more cerebral free jazz fare like *Reasons Of The Heart*. Obviously, others won't. Some may dig the bouyant Hugh Masakela dance beat of *Ke A Rona*. Free jazz fans will no doubt find it commercially slick and oddly out of place.

And there's more. Pianist Chris McGregor does his best Bill Evans imitation on the delicate, impressionistic *Into The Light*, which sounds a lot like *Flamenco Sketches* without a muted trumpet. On *Kwa Tebugo* he does a fine Keith (*Köln Concert*) Jarrett while on *Unity Dance* he shifts to a Dollar Brand mode.

There's a lot of gear-shifting here. Some of it segues smoothly, some of it seems jarringly disparate. It's all good for different reasons. Of course, in this age of specialization, such diversity is a no-no. But then, record label samplers seem to be selling well today. Consider this a South African sampler.

—*bill milkowski*



ROSCOE MITCHELL

ROSCOE MITCHELL SOLO—LIVE AT THE MÜHLE HUNZIKEN—Cecma 1008: *Circle 3; Cards For Alto; Dance Two; Variations On S II Examples; Encore.*

Personnel: *Mitchell, alto, soprano, and bass saxophone.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

THE FLOW OF THINGS—Black Saint 0090: *The Flow Of Things—No. 1; The Flow Of Things—No. 2; Cards For Quartet; The Flow Of Things—No. 3.*

Personnel: *Mitchell, soprano and alto saxophone; Jodie Christian, piano; Malachi Favors, bass; Steve McCall, drums.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There's just no ignoring Roscoe Mitchell anymore. Although the founder of the Art Ensem-

ble of Chicago has always been its least flamboyant member, and his own solo and group recordings are known only to a small circle of cognoscenti, no artist has pursued his muse with more dogged single-mindedness—a short-lived flirtation with dance rhythms notwithstanding. Two new albums, a quartet session from Chicago, and a solo performance in Rubigen, Switzerland find Mitchell still grappling with the same questions of intonation, texture, and technique that engaged him on his first recordings nearly 25 years ago, and still on the cutting edge of musical exploration.

On *The Flow Of Things* Mitchell is superbly accompanied by A.A.C.M. stalwarts Malachi Favors and Steve McCall, as well as pianist Jodie Christian, a founding member of that organization who later pursuec a more conventional course. The title track, an homage to John Coltrane, is heard in three different versions, all featuring Mitchell on soprano sax. Over a boiling maelstrom of rhythm, Mitchell recaptures the furious intensity of Coltrane's mid-'60s improvisations, employing his own elaborate system of fingerings to achieve an even greater suppleness and scalar fluidity. But where Coltrane appeared to merge with his music, Mitchell remains somewhat detached and analytical even in the heat of passion.

Mitchell has thoroughly mastered Coltrane's methods, but he's more of a commentator than an imitator, laboriously dissecting every convoluted twist and microtonal turn of Trane's modal approach without seeming to pause for breath. His command of timbre is amazing, and he uses his curved soprano to mimic everything from a synthesizer to bagpipes to an angry hornet. After two frenzied studio renditions of *The Flow Of Things* played back to back, the eerie, rarefied melancholy of *Cards For Quartet*, recorded live at Chicago's Goetz Theater, comes as a welcome respite, particularly as the concluding, live version of *The Flow* is the most tumultuous of the three.

Roscoe Mitchell Solo—Live At The Mühle Hunziken was recorded just a week after the studio portion of *The Flow Of Things*, but the overall mood is starkly different. On the airy, pensive *Circle 3*, Mitchell paints a picture with tone color, incorporating the rush of breath and even the clacking of saxophone keys into his palette. He extends the range of his soprano at both ends and creates orchestra-like ghost harmonies through controlled overblowing. Without the propulsion of a rhythm section, he maintains momentum by continually contrasting long tones with short, loud with soft, high with low, and coarse with fine.

Cards For Alto has the same theme as *Cards For Quartet*, with wide intervallic leaps that suggest such modern composers as Bartok, Ives, and Varese. Mitchell huffs and puffs his way through *Dance Two* on the bass saxophone, awkwardly at first but working up a remarkable head of steam toward the end. *Variations On S II Examples* harks back to a study in long tones Mitchell first recorded in 1978; here the material is more compressed and more varied, culminating in a series of ululantly braying tones so resonant that Mitchell's alto seems to be playing a duet with itself.

—larry birnbaum

record reviews

TOWER OF POWER

POWER—Cypress 661120-1; *Baby's Got The Power; Credit; Some Days Were Meant For Rain; Boys Night Out; Ball And Chain; Through Lovers' Eyes; Count On Me; On The One; Up Against Yourself.*

Personnel: *Emilio Castillo, tenor saxophone, vocals; Stephen "Doc" Kupka, baritone saxophone; Greg Adams, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals; Francis "Rocco" Prestia, bass; Willie Fulton, guitar, vocals; Ellis Hall, lead vocals, keyboards, guitar; Lee Thornburg, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals; Richard Elliot, alto, tenor saxophone, lyricon; Mick Mestek, drums.*

★ ★

The Tower of Power that grew in Oakland, California in the early '70s was not funky. They were FUNKY. At that time they were the world's most dangerous band. Tower has survived the '80s mostly as a horn section-for-hire and doing occasional gigs with the varying personnel.

Emilio still leads the band from the sax section, with Richard Elliot filling in for the departed Lenny Pickett. Pickett's spiralling astro-notes and uninhibited stage antics are missed, as is Bruce Conte's fluid bluesy guitar.

Baby's Got The Power and *Through Lovers' Eyes* could be practically any band with a horn section. *Credit* lets the rhythm section work out in a shuffle, with some wild horn lines, and "Rocco" Prestia keeps rocking on the edge of the beat with some rapid-fire bass work. *Credit* could have been off *Bump City* or *Back To Oakland*, complete with a *What Is Hip* ending. This is the best tune on the record, and it's the only one written by an original member, "Doc" Kupka. Much of the other material is so middle-of-the-road that I'm amazed Emilio let it be released as Tower of Power.

It's unfair asking them to sound like the Tower of old—these are different players. Mick Mestek is a good drummer, but the chemistry that "Rocco" had with David Garibaldi was something special. The way they would completely turn the end of a song around, give it life, a different edge, rather than just riding out the fade. With the new material there hasn't been much thought to writing "for the band" and maintaining the Tower tradition. The rhythm tracks seem squeezed out of a mold, without any trademark Tower daring.

The horns have also lost some of their daring (along with Pickett and Mic Gillette)—on *Ball And Chain* they've got enough guts, but sound like Blood, Sweat & Tears. At least on this tune they've got guts. Bands shouldn't be expected to stick to their old sound, but this band's tradition has been practically forgotten. They need to listen to some old Tower.

—robin tolleson

GLOBAL IMPROVISATIONS

By John Diliberto

Cultural synthesis is part of the heritage of jazz, from New Orleans to Duke Ellington to John Coltrane. It still continues and these four albums show how far it's come, from the jazz-classical-Indian-etc. chamber music of Oregon to Rare Air, a Canadian group using Scottish traditional music as a door to the East and Africa.

Kahil El'Zabar's The Ritual reveals roots deep in the mid-'60s aesthetic of John Coltrane and the Art Ensemble of Chicago on *Another Kind Of Groove* (Sound Aspects 016). Having Art Ensemble of Chicago bassist Malachi Favors along helps the comparison. El'Zabar (a former member of the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble) plays a variety of percussion instruments, creating a modal base for violinist Billy Bang's solos. On *Ocean Deep*, he plays a sansa (thumb piano) in a lyrical cycle while Bang solos freely in an Indian style with long sinewy lines gliding out into arabesques. *Little Gwen* has a Balinese flavor with El'Zabar's sansa melody and Favors banging sub-bass notes like a Balinese metallophone. And then there's the charging Ornette Coleman-inspired *Freedom Of Speech*, a headlong foray with Bang's dry, acerbic violin wailing madly across El'Zabar's car-chase rhythm.

Mark Nauseef plays a different game, coming more from the European avant garde than jazz, with reference points at Stockhausen rather than Coltrane. His group **Dark**, and their eponymously entitled album (CMP Records 28), creates a tribal industrial music that uses exotic percussion instruments from Ghana, India, and homemade devices like astro bells. These provide a textural, rhythmic carpet for Nauseef's whining Casio synthesizer solos and the wordless vocals of Catherine Guard. They move through crunching rhythms on *Dark* to percolating syncopations on *Happy Days*. Guard's vocals get a bit precocious at times, as with her wailing Arabian nights impression. Over-all, *Dark* is too self-conscious in its global interpolations.

The same could be said for **Rare Air**, who used to play Scottish traditional bagpipe music as Na Caberfeidh. This Canadian band has expanded the concept though, using other reed instruments like the bombarde and biniou-koz—whose ancestors are Persian and Indian reeds like the shenai—plus synthesizers and guitar to create a joyful carnival of sound on *Hard To Beat* (Green Linnet Records 1073). Like El'Zabar, they often improvise around a modal center, but they always circle the melody, solos spun out like rivulets of melody rather than full-blown inventions.

Of all these groups, it's **Oregon** who has been around the longest and most clearly defined their mission. *Ecotopia* (ECM 1354) is their first album since the death of percussionist Collin Walcott. Trilok Gurtu now holds down that seat and if he doesn't have the cultural eclecticism of Walcott, he does have an unerring sense of drive and color. Oregon defined an area of world music in the '70s, combining overt Indian and African elements with a classical chamber music and jazz approach. It was always a wonderfully intricate sound, full of melodic intrigue and deft arrangements. *Ecotopia* is no exception and illustrates how natural their music is. You don't hear the ethnic elements as much as you hear the sweet oboe of Paul McCandless soaring over Ralph Towner's marimba-like synthesizers on *Twice Around The Sun*, the interplay between Towner and McCandless on *Innocente*, the centering, earthy bass of Glen Moore, or Gurtu's spooky percussion scrapes and sighs on Moore's *Leather Cats*. Walcott's presence is heard on his composition, *Song Of The Morrow*, a sombre atmospheric piece with McCandless crossfading from oboe to his electronic Lyricon. **db**

New Releases

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

DELMARK: Carey Bell, *Cary Bell's Blues Harp*. Robert Jr. Lockwood, *Steady Rollin' Man*. Various Artists, *Blues Piano Orgy*. Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, *Crudup's Mood*. Various Artists, *Sweet Home Chicago*. Sleepy John Estes, *In Europe*. Big Joe Williams, *Piney Woods Blues*. Magic Sam, *Magic Sam Live At Ann Arbor & In Chicago*. Roosevelt Sykes, *Raining In My Heart*. Yank Rachel, *Chicago Style*.

ENJA: Franco Ambrosetti, *Movies*. Mark Helias, *The Current Set*. Jim Pepper, *Dakota Song*.

MCA/IMPULSE: Henry Johnson, *Future Excursions*. Mike Metheny, *Kaleidoscope*. Wilton Felder, *Love Is A Rush*. David Grisman Quintet, *Svengin' With Svend*. Lyle Lovett, *Pontiac*.

FLYING FISH: Moses Rascoe, *Blues*. Clyde Egderton, *Walking Across Egypt*. Sukay, *Mama Luna*. Tony Ellis, *Dixie Banner*. Geof Morgan, *Talk It Over*.

CONCORD JAZZ: The Gene Harris All Star Big Band, *Tribute To Count Basie*. Poncho Sanchez, *¡Fuerte!*. Monty Alexander/Ray Brown/Herb Ellis/John Frigo, *Triple Treat II*. Jack Sheldon Quintet, *Hollywood Heroes*.

WINDHAM HILL: Turtle Island String Quartet, *Turtle Island String Quartet*. Metamora, *Morning Walk*. Interior, *Design*.

SAVOY JAZZ/MUSE: Andre Hodier, *Essais*. Bill Barron, *Nebulae*. The Ray McKinley Orchestra, *The Most Versatile Band In The Land*. Cannonball Adderley, *Discoveries*.

FORTUNA: Steve Roach, *Traveler*. Richard Vimal, *Aquarhythmies*. David Michael & Randy Mead, *Petals In The Stream*. Malaysian Pale, *Nature's Fantasies*.

INDEPENDENTS: Tom Ball, *Guitar Music* (Kicking Mule). Peter Michael Hamel, *Let It Play, Selected Pieces 1979-83* (Kuckuck). Michael Hoenig, *Departure From The Northern Wasteland* (Kuckuck). Ralph Moore, *Round Trip* (Reservoir). Tommy Flanagan, *Nights At The Vanguard* (Uptown). Carl Fontana, *The Great Fontana* (Uptown). Joe LoCascio, *Gliders* (Chase Music). The Tom Cunningham Orchestra, *Yes Indeed!* (Eagle). Prudence Johnson, *Vocals* (Red House). Claudio Fasoli, *For Once* (Splasc(h)). Claudio Fasoli, *Welcome* (Soul Note). Mwendo, *Human Walk* (Dragon). Wavestar, *Moonwind* (Audion). Walter Beasley, *Walter Beasley* (Polydor). Mike Post, *Music From L.A., Law And Otherwise* (Polydor). *No Age, A Compilation Of SST Instrumental Music* (SST). Paolo Damiani, *Silenzi Osceni* (Ismez Polis). Lucilla Galeazzi, Giancarlo Schiaffini, *Per Devozione* (Ismez Polis). Bireli Lagrene, *Inferno* (Blue Note). The Bill Frisell Band, *Lookout For Hope* (ECM). John Abercrombie, *Getting There* (ECM). Biota, *Bellowing Room* (Recommended). Connie Crothers/Richard Tabnik, *Duo Dimension* (New Artists). Rob Silvan, *Leap Of Faith* (Rob Silvan). Dan Siegel, *Northern Lights* (CBS Assoc.). Gamalon, *Gamalon* (Amherst). Meridian, *Farewell To Fortune* (Mosquito). Gwynne Winsberg/Desperate Measures, *Without Boundaries* (Blue Room). **db**

MAIL ORDER SOURCES

If your local record store doesn't carry these records, try writing NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012; Daybreak Express Records, POB 250 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Roundup Records, POB 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140; or North Country Records, Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY 13679.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

uninflected as Dixon's. But no matter how oblique his harmonic extensions on *My Funny Valentine* (the only non-original here), his tone suggests intelligent appreciation for Art Farmer and Chet Baker. His ideas may be cool but his sound is warm. Koglmann the composer is that oft-cited, rarely sighted beast, a writer who mixes jazz with Berg/Webern exploded chamber music. His most adventurous charts are for Pipetett: three reeds, four brass, and rhythm (conducted by Gustav Bauer). Melodies come and go, hocketed from horn to horn; ideas vanish almost as soon as they erupt; color, direction, and mood change quickly. His harmonies can be lovely, the combinations striking. Yet no matter the setting—Pipetett, solo, duo with Klaus Koch's bass, trio (adding Phil Wachsmann's violin), heterophonic quartet—the vast majority of the music sounds carefully plotted, unspontaneous. *Take Steps* incorporates walking bass, riffing piano, and Roberto Ottaviano's sputtering soprano, but its jazz is cubistic, shattered, and reconstructed. Nothing continues in the same vein for long; moments of irresistible momentum are few and brief. The optimum mix of European and Afro-American musics remains elusive, but Koglmann sounds like he could pull it off if he'd allow himself the oldfangled luxury of a swinging pulse. I suspect Koglmann worries about sounding too conventional; with his keen ear for changing color, he needn't fret.

Mark Isham has forged a distinctive voice with—as opposed to *on*—two instruments. You may not recognize either his pealing brass (including piccolo trumpet) or his astringently airy synthesizers alone, but the sound of the two together is unmistakably his, and pleasingly atmospheric. (Which is why his film scores are so good.) But one thing Isham's music lacks is bite. *We Begin* (ECM 1338) reunites him with his old boss, pianist/synthesist **Art Lande**, who shares Mark's wholesome Anglo-American strain; his fanfare *We Begin* is ersatz Copland. For the most part this music is consonant without being inspipid, though the duo may wander perilously close to the New Age wheatfield. *The Melancholy Of Departure* is the latest in Isham's endless series of military tattoos. (The duo double on percussion.) His long *Surface And Symbol*, hermetic and echoic, offers still more evidence that Terry Riley's *In C* and Steve Reich's *Music For 18 Musicians* are seminal works for '80s improvisers. Isham's dashes of post-Milesian mutehorn keeps his gonging *Ceremony In Starlight* from drifting off to dreamland. Like Miles, he understands that with such a spare instrumental style, approach, setting is critical. Mark Isham can play—as he's shown in David Torn's quartet—but he and Lande don't write blowing tunes. And so this foreground music sometimes sounds like agreeable background music. **db**

MASTERFUL VOICES

This 14-strong batch of RCA/Bluebird compact disc-only reissues—which we'll tackle chronologically—spans 50 years of splendid music. Much of which has been painfully hard to come by.

An exception is the music of **Fats Waller**—but then it's hard to get too much of the flashiest, wittiest, most compellingly rhythmic and tuneful of stride pianists. *The Joint Is Jumpin'* (RCA 6288-2-RB, 69:12) is a respectable survey of his peak years: 23 tracks from 1929 to '43. There are dixieish and jokey-classical takes on *Honeysuckle Rose*, 10 chugging small group sides, 11 piano solos (but alas, no pipe organ), and a big band *Sheik Of Araby*, 1938, that wavers curiously between four-beat swing and two-beat stride. A piano extremist, Waller called attention to the far ends of the keyboard, with a boogie bass gone astray (*Alligator Crawl*), or with even highnote ripples; he got such a big sound, in part, by using so much of the keyboard. The CD sound is very good but not miraculous; the attentive notes are by George Winston. But this greatest-hits-ish release suggests it'll be a long wait before Bluebird's Complete Waller series turns up on CD.

Happily, RCA's Steve Backer and Ed Michel consul with living artists about reissues; **Lionel Hampton**'s *Hot Mallets Vol. 1* (RCA/Bluebird 6458-2-RB, 63:44) is a Hamp-picked batch of 21 small group performances for Victor, 1937-39, packed with luminaries. Cootie, Ziggy, Dizzy, and Harry James are among the trumpets; Ellingtonians include Stewart, Brown, Hodges, Procope, Carney, Taylor, and Greer. On four 1939 tracks arranged by Benny Carter, the band is Dizzy, Carter, Clyde Hart, Charlie Christian, Milt Hinton, Cozy Cole—and Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, and Ben Webster. (Hamp has said Gillespie's solo on the title track was his own introduction to bop trumpet.) *Twelfth Street Rag* features four-handed piano from Clyde Hart (bass vamps) and Hampton (impossible treble runs): imagine a Conlon Nancarrow piano roll playing Waller. Hamp sings here and there, alas, but vibes are his focus: that watery deposit-bottle sound, redolent of vaudeville, somehow makes his rhythmic force more impressive. Hampton is a shrewd judge of his own old classics; this set's a gem. A sequel is promised—but shouldn't this CD-only compilation have been longer to begin with?

Louis Armstrong's *Pops: The 1940's Small Band Sides* (RCA/Bluebird 6378-2-RB, 68:18) come from five 1946-47 live or studio dates. You don't have to be James Lincoln Collier to cringe at vocal novelties like *Where The Blues Were Born In New Orleans* ("Folks, come gather 'round my stand/ And hear Satchmo's happy Dixie band") or *A Song Was Born* ("And then someone played a wail/ All up and down the scale"). But the recurring charge that Armstrong's music had ceased to swing is groundless. Aside from the novelties, a businessman's-bouncy *Sugar* and an occasional wandering sideman, this music has a happy

Louis Armstrong

and unmistakable buoyancy—particularly the 13 proto-All-Star sides, from three 1947 dates, with trombonist Jack Teagarden (including two *Rockin' Chairs*). Armstrong's return to small groups certainly didn't eclipse his '20s classics, but he did cut some of the best sides to emerge from the '40s NOLA rev.val.

Moving on to the LP era, *Natural Rhythm* (RCA/Bluebird 6465-2-RB, 70:49) combines **Freddie Green**'s *Mr. Rhythm* with **Al Cohn**'s *The Natural Seven*—both 1955 sessions with Green, Cohn, Nat Pierce, Milt Hinton, and Osie Johnson among the sextet or septet, with charts by Cohn, Ernie Wilkins, and Manny Albam. Yes, Green takes a guitar solo—a big nine-second chorda. intro to *Little Red*. He's "featured" only when the engineer boosts his volume during Pierce's Basie-styled piano solos. (Freddie's self-effacement even on his own date makes the phrase "Green with envy" a contradiction in terms.) Or Freddie's date, Cohn plays token clarinet and bass clarinet as well as tenor. As expected, both groups sound like Basie's band in miniature (or—as on Wilkins' finale for Freddie's *Swinging Back*—in the flesh); they're both small band fleet and full of big band contrasts—as when Al's booting tenor plays off the chanting muted brass of Newman and Frank Rehak, on his own *Jack's Kinda Swing*.

Al Cohn and **Zoot Sims**' *From A To Z And Beyond* (RCA/Bluebird 6469-2-RB, 55:31) is the *From A To Z* Quintet/sextet LP, recorded in 1956, plus four newly issued alternates: *My Blues, More Bread, Tenor For Two Please, Jack*, and *Somebody Loves Me*). Though Al and Zoot had been crossing paths on the stand and in the studio for a decade, they weren't yet a formal team. Perhaps their affinity made them seem unsuited for partnership; the most famous tenor pair heretofore, Prez and Herschel, had been based on great contrasts. But contrast here—on 11 of 16 tracks—comes from the tart middle-register trumpet of Dick Sherman. Despite the return of Hinton and Johnson from the Basieish Cohn and Green dates—Dave McKenna or Hank Jones plays piano—this unit has its own ident ty. To hear Al and Zoot blend on *A New Moan*, riff-and-leap-frog through *Sandy's Swing* or intertwine on *East Of The Sun (And West Of The Moon)* is to hear their mutual destiny. *A To Z* captures these longtime blowing buddies when their mix still sounded—still was— absolutely fresh.

The **George Russell** Smalltet's 1956 *Jazz Workshop* (RCA/Bluebird 6467-2-RB, 56:03) adds alternatives of the Ivesian *Ballad Of Hix Blewitt* and cinematic *Concerto For Billy The Kid* to the original 12-tune LP. Russell's first album as leader boasts Art Farmer on trumpet, Hal McKusick on alto and flute, and Bill Evans on piano. Guitarists' guitarist Barry Galbraith plays electric, Hinton or Teddy Kotick is on bass, and Johnson, Joe Harris, or Paul Motian on drums. Russell's music sumultaneously caught the contrapuntal grace of West Coast jazz and the implied polytonality of the incipient avant garde; the rhythm sections keep his complex charts swinging. So the Smalltet sounds at once exploratory, delicate, and rich in traditional values. Bill Evans often plays against type—galloping over both takes of *Billy The Kid*, and sounding almost frantic on the first section of *Livingstone I Presume* (which highlights the links between Russell and Tristano). Evans' phrase repetitions at the end of *The Sad Sergeant* foreshadow '60s minimalism. Except on the industrial-jungle piece *Fellow Delegates*, where Russell works out on "boobams" (tuned drums that sound like synthesized percussion), the leader doesn't play. But listening to this complex but spirited music, you can almost hear him grinning from the booth.

To listeners who know only the Rocky **Maynard Ferguson**, *The Birdland Dreamband* (RCA/Bluebird 6455-2-RB, 62:00) will be a happy revelation. Recorded in 1956 (and released in two volumes), these 18 sides go remarkably easy on the stridency, given the top-heavy lineup. As many as six trumpets (and two or three trombones) face off against four saxophones, but the slinky reeds hold their own: Herb Geller on alto (superbly slippery in *Geller's Cellar*), Al Cohn and Budd Johnson or Frankie Socolow on tenor, and Ernie Wilkins on bari. (Arrangements are by Wilkins, Cohn, Albam, Jimmy Giuffre, Marty Paich, Bill Holman, Bob Brookmeyer, Johnny Mandel, Willie Maiden, and Jack Lewis—no lightweight cast.) Maynard's high-note work is authoritative, seldom forced or obsessive: one color among many. A few flagwavers point the way toward later showboating, but in general the Dreamband serves up excitement without excess. Hank Jones heads rhythm sections that don't have to strain to spark swing. Among the bassists and drummers are Milt Hinton and Osie Johnson, who seem to have spent the entire year in RCA's studios.

Singer **Jeanne Lee** and pianist **Ran Blake** are a fitting pair, she concerned with microtonal shadings, he with open spaces and subtle overtone manipulations. *The Legendary Duets* (RCA/Bluebird 6461-2-RB, 48:53) is 1961's *The Newest Sound Around*, plus four new tunes from the same sessions: the wordless dirge *Vanguard*, Mal Waldron and Billie Holiday's *Left Alone*, the Waldron/Abbey Lincoln *Straight Ahead*, and Lee's a capella *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands*. (However the CD regrettably omits the LP's *Summertime*, which the artists now nix, but which remains rewarding if a bit overwrought.) Approaching standards like *Laura* and *Blue Monk*, the prefree Lee seems inspired equally by Abbey Lincoln and Chris Connor. She sings the achingly sophisticated *Season In The Sun* straight,

making it seem all the more arch. (George Duvivier guests on bass.) In 1961, Ran Blake's singular piano concept was already formed, even if his sound wasn't as rigorously pared down as at present. Sources poke through. There's Monk in his gospel solo *Church On Russell Street* (formerly . . . *Wooster Street*); Ives' pictorial impressionism, brooding basses, and chiaroscuro shadings turn up even on *When Sunny Gets Blue*; Ran's chording is Tristano-dense on *Evil Blues* (with Duvivier again) and *Love Isn't Everything*. Nice stuff; how about a rematch?

Forms And Sounds: The Music Of Ornette Coleman (6561-2-RB, 44;21) brings back what is surely the most obscure of **Ornette Coleman**'s legit U.S. releases, a short-lived RCA Red Seal (recorded 3/67) presenting three scored chamber works. Best is the 21-minute *Forms And Sounds*, played by the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet; Ornette's numerous trumpet interludes—paramilitary fanfares or curved paintings in blank space—surely contributed to the LP's brief life or the classical shelf. But the alternation between impeccably played ensembles and roughhewn solo lines is simply effective; the independent lines and bright transparency prefigure John Carter's mature woodwind writing. (A 1965 draft, minus trumpet, is on Ornette's *Great London Concert*, Freedom.) The Chamber Symphony of Philadelphia String Quartet attack most of the threnodic *Saints And Soldiers* suite with thick, syrupy vibratos. Seemingly harmonically dense, it seesaws along without a real sense of motion—yet still sounds passably modern-academic. The Quartet's brief *Space Flight* is more spry and thrusting, closer to the charming quasi-naive vein of the woodwind movements.

JEAN-PIERRE LELOIR

Ornette Coleman

Buddy Rich's *Time Being* (RCA/Bluebird 6459-2-RB, 60:04) culls selections from three '71-72 albums: three cuts each from *Stick It* and *A Different Drummer*, four from *Rich In London*. The music typifies the rock-and-funk-tinged style adopted by big bands trying to stay current. (John LaBarbara did most of the arrangements; brother Pat, on tenor and soprano, is a featured soloist.) Rich was never noted for being laidback; sometimes this music slams you into submission. Phil Wilson's chart of Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge* is busy and Spillanish; *Straight No Chaser*'s on an amphetamine high; the interesting dissonances of Bill Holman's title track give away to screech-brass. Still, the leader distinguishes

himself as a team player, serving the charts more than he makes them serve him. (Not that he doesn't solo or show off on *Dancing Men*'s odd-meter episodes.) Sixteen years later—thuddy electric basses aside—this self-consciously with-it music doesn't sound too badly dated, a tribute to the eternal values espoused by the soloists and the hard-swinging drummer.

Gil Evans has substantially revamped his 1975 *There Comes A Time* album for CD (RCA/Bluebird 5783-2-RB, 64:34). Three cuts were added (*Joy Spring*, the plaintive 14-minute *So Long*, the desertscape *Buzzard Variation*); *Aftermath* was scrapped, and *Little Wing* set aside awaiting reissue of Gil's Hendrix album. The acid-rocky title-track has been abridged. But *The Meaning Of The Blues* has been radically expanded, into a 20-minute dissertation on the great arranger's inclusive career, from majestic snowfall chords to unlikely alliances (bells and koto) to distended psychedelia. Herb Bushler's on booming Fender bass, and there are five synth players scattered about—yet Evans opens with Morton's *King Porter Stomp*. Wacko juxtapositions are the norm. Whistling synth, cowbells, and Ryo Kawasaki's snarling guitar somehow coexist on *Makes Her Move*'s disjunct funk; Clifford's *Joy Spring* becomes a wah-wah march, quaintly rattling along like a Model A. For Evans, electronics don't supplant acoustic axes; they expand his already imposing command of ensemble colors. (He even sneaks in steel guitar.) Dave Sanborn again shows no one inspires him like Evans; tenorists George Adams and Billy Harper add bluesy heat.

The music on the remaining discs here was produced by Steve Backer for Arista, before he and his Novus label became affiliated with RCA. *Creative Orchestra Music 1976* (RCA/Bluebird 6579-2-RB, 40:16) is the only domestic album of **Anthony Braxton**'s big-band scores. (A loose 1972 concert is heard on a 3-LP box from Germany's Moers.) *Piece Three* may be the best of the many avant garde marches. Straightforward Sousa degenerates into dissonant stoptime, ushering in a Garrett List barnyard trombone feature, and a galoomphing gallop that leads the music back to the parade ground; Jon Faddis toots piccolo trumpet. *Piece Six* is a showcase for twin chattering saxes—Braxton's alto, Roscoe Mitchell's sopranino—over akilter punching discords and animal growls. Such touches, like the recurring use of bass and contrabass saxes, echo the early-jazz vocabulary, even as Braxton tests the limits of tonality and propulsive rhythm. *Four* and *Two* are AACM-style atmospheric studies, with Richard Teitelbaum's synthesizer playing key but discreet roles. Divorced from normal big band procedures, they stand up on their own. But in the Ellington-inspired *Five* and brass-vs.-reeds *One*, Braxton's squarish rhythms (Dave Holland's valiant walking aside) clash somewhat with the swing vernacular. Next time, Bluebird, how about Anthony's epic *Montreux/Berlin Concerts*?

In the late '70s, tenorist **John Klemmer** was the king of mellow saxophony. The twofer *Nexus* was his attempt to break the stereotype: a live set for duo (with drummer Carl Burnett) and trio (plus bassist Bob Magnusson). Half that music is back on *Nexus One (For Trane)* (RCA/Bluebird 6577-2-RB, 56:44). There's barnburning blowing on *Mr. P.C.* and *Impressions*, and on a marathon *Softly As In A Morning Sunrise*; *My One And Only Love* is the changeup. As Burnett turns up the heat, Klemmer's brawny tenor steams and scorches; he roars through the changes and makes his rhythms dance. Only on his own flatout but endless *Nexus* does he run out of gas. John falls back on some Coltrane routines, but his convincing falsetto squeals and howling bass notes suggest his appreciation of radicalism and gutsy immediacy isn't skin-deep. (Great Blindfold Test fodder, too.) Perhaps this music's merits will be better appreciated now that Klemmer's no longer the focus of controversy—even if *Nexus (One)* makes his more superficial outings seem that much more exasperating.

Available too briefly, **Air**'s 1979 *Air Lore* (RCA/Bluebird 6578-2-RB, 36:31) was one of the best albums to come out of the period's in-the-tradition craze. No perfunctory nods to bop for these men: they went all the way back to Scott Joplin (*The Ragtime Dance, Weeping Willow Rag*) and Jelly Roll Morton (*King Porter Stomp* and a mournful *Buddy Bolden's Blues*), for a stomping hoedown laced with gutbucket urgency and low humor. Back then, neither bassist Fred Hopkins nor altoist/tenorist/flutist Henry Threadgill worried much about playing in tune; their casual approach to pitch, and the skeletal instrumentation, make this music distinctively non-pianistic. Air observes the eight-bar divisions and the ABC's of Joplin's tripartite structures, but they stretch his forms and heretically vary the tempi. Steve McCall's drum conversation keeps the music rolling, as Hopkins lumbers agreeably in duple meter. Like Braxton's creative orchestra music, Air's rag-and-roll set returns to the basics. Piano rags, of course, led to stride-piano like Waller's, bringing this CD survey full circle. —*kevin whitehead*

FZ ON CD

It's hard to believe that Frank Zappa, guitarist, composer, bandleader, social critic, studio engineer, marketing strategist, filmmaker, defender of democracy, and inventor of the term "hot and bulbous," among other things, has been hanging around the fringe of the musical world for over 20 years now. But it's true; I've got the proof right in front of me—the first 12 CDs in the projected Complete Works Of Frank Zappa to be issued by Rykodisc, an adventurous CD-only company.

I say that Zappa's been on the fringe because he's always been an outcast; he's never had a hit single or (to my knowledge) a gold LP, if any of his music gets played on the radio it's only his most innocuous pop confections, and his attitude has been, over the years, one of, shall we say, dislike, for the record company execs and industry business types who often decide what music we hear—or don't hear. But make no mistake—Zappa's one shrewd hombre, and for years he's milked his "outcast" status and created a cult niche for himself, one which has evolved and grown so that today he stands as a "serious" composer and musical/social commentator. He appears frequently on tv talk shows (and he was rumored to replace Joan Rivers as host of her nationally syndicated *Late Show*. The mind boggles.).

Frank and some of his Mothers

It all began in 1965, with *Freak Out!* (Ryko RCD 40062, 60:34 minutes), a real shocker on its release. The Mothers of Invention (Zappa's band at the time) were the weirdest-looking band in rock, and the songs—blatant pitches for nonconformism, anti-censorship ditties, parodies of pop love laments, and a couple of long acid-noise jams full of pounding drums, tape manipulations, psychedelic Mideastern drones, and drug-induced hallucinatory raps (probably imaginary—Zappa's always had a strong anti-drug stance) were simply ahead of their time. Which is probably why, for the most part, they sound so good today. Musically, Zappa's borrowing of easily recognizable elements from r&b, doo-wop, teenybopper pop, L.A. barrio rock, and contemporary classical styles fits comfortably into today's neo-trad mood of rediscovering roots music for fun and profit, and the grungy, sloppy, garage band sound of the Mothers (reproduced well-enough on CD) was totally calculated, actually masking sophisticated arrangements and excellent musicianship (augmented by some of L.A.'s top studio cats).

Absolutely Free (not yet reissued) followed *Freak Out!*, but it was the third album which helped cement Zappa's reputation. *We're Only In It For The Money* (combined with *Lumpy Gravy* on one CD, Ryko RCD 40024,70:54), with its killer *Sgt. Pepper* parody cover, took Zappa's satire into the realm of sarcasm, as the lyrics registered disgust at cops, politicians, hippies, parents—virtually every layer of late-'60s society. Was it crude? Certainly. Vicious? Maybe. Effective? Well, in retrospect, it varies. But there's no doubt that *We're Only In It For The Money* is a period piece today, suffocating under the weight of '60s cultural references and icons. Musically it's much less interesting than *Freak Out!*, though here are the seeds (via song segues, interludes, interjected dialog, and the use of the studio as instrument) of many later, more successful sonic pieces.

Rykodisc has generously paired *We're Only In It For The Money* with *Lumpy Gravy*, proba-

bly Zappa's most ambitious and least commercial LP—a 32-minute montage (in Zappa's words, "a curiously inconsistent piece which started out to be a Ballet but probably didn't make it.") recorded by a small orchestra of L.A.'s finest. The quick cutting layered snippets of Zappa's musical world (echoes of Varese, Stravinsky, r&b, surf music, muzak, and jazz), with more (parody?) dialogs of drug-induced paranoia, and plenty of pig noises. Actually, there's more than curiosity value here—if you're looking for the structural model for John Zorn's collage pieces like *Spillane* and *The Big Gundown*, this is it.

Ruben And The Jets (Ryko RCD 10063, 41:28) is another conceptual album, but completely without pretension (save perhaps the almost unnoticeable reworking of the opening bassoon phrase from Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring* into a doo-wop chorus)—a slice of Zappa's high school nostalgia, a paean to East L.A. '50s r&b-flavored rock. Zappa obviously loves this music, while he so deftly parodies it, though in 1988 it's a one-trick pony.

By 1969 Zappa's interest in jazz began to manifest itself to greater degree; live concerts by this time featured plenty of hot soloing, and fans wanted to hear Zappa stretch out on guitar. *Hot Rats* (Ryko RCD 10066, 47:16) was the initial result, showcasing the proficient jazz-rock chops of Zappa, saxist Ian Underwood, and violinist Sugar Cane Harris. With the exception of one riveting vocal by Capt. Beefheart, this is a strictly instrumental outing that sustains listening today because of the quality of the solos and the distinctive nature of the compositions/arrangements. I have one nit to pick, however. While digitally remixing the music for CD, Zappa added a few minutes of music to the original and rebalanced a few instruments, to no great gain or loss except for the three-minute *Little Umbrellas*. Originally a slow, moody Mideastern melody exquisitely textured and orchestrated, this piece lost a great deal of its exotic charm in the remix, where Zappa brought up a number of inconsequential secondary parts out of the mix (piano comping here, a recorder part there) and obscured or buried evocative textures under too much busyness. I'm holding on to my LP for when I want to hear this cut.

Uncle Meat (Ryko RCD 10064/65, 57:23/63:26) dates from about the same time as *Hot Rats*, though the two-LP set contains a fascinating—and equally frustrating—potpourri of studio jams, carefully orchestrated interludes, random gab, written dialog, noise, improvisation, idiocy, banter, and excerpts from live concerts, sliced, spliced, chopped, channeled, reupholstered, and polished (in the CD mix) to a sheen. The three saxes in the band instigate a lot of jazzy soloing (especially on the sidelong *King Kong*), but much of the material is interrupted by Zappa's typical fragmented sense of montage. Added to the program for CD consumption is some 45 minutes of soundtrack (dialog only, no music) from the film *Uncle Meat*. These interviews, rehearsals, scripted passages, and asides were edited documentary-style (CD verité?) with the effect of us eavesdropping on the making of the film. Textual motifs reoccur throughout in musical variational fashion, but only the hardcore Zappaphile will listen to this more than once.

Despite its sloppiness and periodic inanity,

there's much of bizarre interest on *Uncle Meat*. Unfortunately, Zappa cleaned up his act on 1972's *The Grand Wazoo* (Ryko RCD 10026, 37:11). Apparently aimed at the fusion crowd, *Wazoo*'s clean, crisp sound delivers some rather bland instrumental arrangements and jazzy solos of marginal heat (none of the sizzle of *Hot Rats* here). George Duke energizes one cut, but most of the music is too ordered, too controlled, too (unthinkable for Zappa!) mellow. Hopefully Rykodisc will repackage *Burnt Weenie Sandwich* and *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*, two uneven but infinitely more exciting LPs from the period between *Hot Rats* and *Grand Wazoo*.

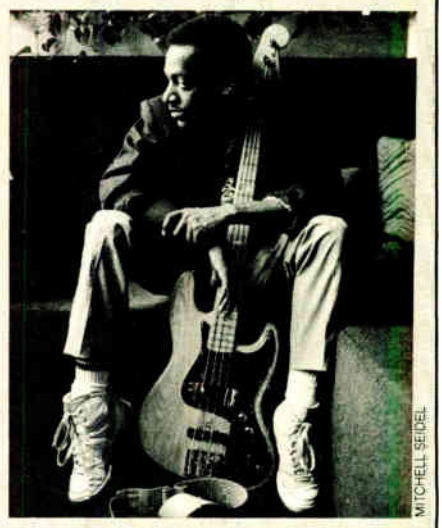
Jump to 1979, and *Joe's Garage Acts I, II, & III* (Ryko RCD 10060/61, 58:36/56:52), an ambitious musical (songs carrying the unified dramatic thread) decrying censorship in a futuristic society that tries to outlaw music. It's well crafted in terms of dramatic variety and scene setting (though given its, shall we say, risqué subject matter, it's doubtful to replace the next Andrew Lloyd Webber extravaganza on Broadway), the production is first-rate, Ike Willis has an expressive voice, and there're long guitar solos symbolizing the protagonist's sense of mental escape from his fascistic environment. There's also the usual digs at organized religion, record industry execs, music critics, and lotsa lewd language. Not for the kiddies.

Public clamour for more guitar apparently forced Zappa to release the multi-disc *Shut Up 'N Play Your Guitar* (Ryko RCD 10028/9, 53:23/54:13), longish instrumental excerpts from live concerts (sound quality is top-notch). Zappa *is* an extremely fine guitarist (for a revealing look at this aspect of Zappa, see the interview in **db**, Feb. '83) capable of anything—bluesy, modal, melodic, patterned, hot, cool, complex, convoluted, grotty, ad infinitum. With strong support from his circa '79-80 band (MVP honors go to drummer Vinnie Colaiuta), this is worth discovery by fusion fans, guitar fans, and Zappa fans; others are advised to marvel in small doses.

The most recent development in Zappa's multi-faceted musical career has been the emergence of his "serious" classical compositions. One senses that, given the fragmented orchestral interludes on so many of Zappa's rock LPs, this is the direction he's always wanted to go in. The three compositions on *Zappa/The London Symphony Orchestra* (Ryko RCD 10022, 62:16) reveal how Zappa's writing has grown much more assured over the years; themes are given real development, and sectionalized episodes hang together and flow naturally. Zappa has mastered the syntax of contemporary classical music, and you can hear traces of Varese, Bernstein, Copland, Ives, Stravinsky, and many more, but with a distinctive twist that is Zappa's contribution to the genre. There's a perhaps not surprising sense of ominousness to the music—danger and wariness fuel his drama—plus more than a few characteristic satiric touches deflating classical pretensions. Highly recommended for the adventurous listener. (Note: this CD represents the biggest programmatic change from the LP: two shorter pieces, *Pedro's Dowrey* and *Envelopes*, are dropped in favor of the long *Bogus Pomp*.) *—art lange*

MARCUS MILLER

by Bill Milkowski



In recent years Marcus Miller the bass player has established a reputation in the industry as Marcus Miller the producer. His production credentials include work with Aretha Franklin, David Sanborn, Luther Vandross, and of course, Miles Davis *(Tutu, Music From Siesta)*. His first professional gig as a bassist was with Bobbi Humphrey at the age of 16. A year later, he toured with Lenny White before beginning an intensive apprenticeship as a New York session player.

During that productive period, Miller appeared on dozens of projects, including LPs with Elton John, Bob James, Roberta Flack, and Grover Washington, Jr. That phase of his career came to a halt when Miles Davis asked him to join his 1980 "comeback band." In 1981, he played in the house band of *Saturday Night Live*, where he met saxophonist David Sanborn. That led to a fruitful musical relationship that continues to this day. Miller also plays in a pop-funk band with Lenny White, Bernard Wright, and Mark Stevens called Jam Boys. Their second Warner Brothers album is due out this summer. This was Miller's first Blindfold Test.

1 JEFF BERLIN. ***Manos De Piedra (from Pump It!, Passport Jazz) Berlin, bass; Ron Reinhardt, keyboards; Frank Gambale, guitar; Tris Imboden, drums; Brad Dutz, percussion.***

Late fusion, right? It's got that feel to it. It's like when you first had fusion, everybody didn't quite know what they were gonna do yet. So it was really adventurous. And then later on everybody knew what to do. It became a style of music. And this sounds like when everybody got comfortable with it. Everything is totally flawless, kinda like that guy Jeff from the West Coast. Jeff Berlin. Yeah, that guy has incredible technique. Jeff's an amazing bass player. Only thing, I didn't hear that "Lemme see how I feel" attitude. That "What am I gonna do next?" kind of thing. I gotta admit I was impressed by Jeff's technique. Jeff's really got that stroke. But the execution of the piece is so perfect . . . it doesn't breathe. Jeff's solo was amazing but I just wished I had heard some more "Where am I going next?" kind of thing.

2 BILL LASWELL. ***Activate (from Baselines, Elektra Musician/Celluloid) Laswell, bass; Ronald Shannon Jackson, drums; Michael Beinhorn, synthesizers; George Lewis, trombone; Ralph Carney, contrabass clarinet.***

I have no idea who that is, but the only thing I can guess from what I heard people talk about . . . Bill Laswell? They just talked about attitude, more than anything else. I mean, that was *baad*! It was like the total opposite of the first thing you played. It was like . . . raggedy. You could feel the funk even though the beat was irregular. I didn't like the solo very much. It was kinda like energy, just energy. I like to combine energy with something else. But as far as concept, it was *baaaad*!

3 BUNNY BRUNEL. ***Ivanhoe (from Ivanhoe, Inner City) Brunel, fretless bass guitar; Stanley Clarke, piccolo bass guitar; Tony Williams, drums; Ken Shima, keyboards.***

I liked that. That's like fusion where the guys are just goin' for the gusto. I'll take a guess and say Stanley Clarke. And Alphonso Johnson? Yeah, Stanley! That guy goes for it. He turned the bass around because before him, man, nobody played the bass guitar with that kind of aggressiveness. He always goes for it. He don't know what he's gonna play next, you know what I mean? There's a feeling that you get when you hear him play. See, that's what I like, that feeling. It doesn't have to be perfect. I want that energy to dominate. It's like, when Trane played, you knew he had been practicing his butt off but that's not what you thought about when you heard him play. You thought about the energy right there in the room. You felt that energy. And when Sly and them jammed, you felt that energy. And Miles. You know he practices but that's not what matters, you know? The same with Stanley. I enjoy watching him play and I enjoy listening to him play. He's got that nice mix of control and energy that I like.

4 CHUCK RAINEY. ***Got It Together (from The Chuck Rainey Coalition, Skye) Rainey, electric bass; Cornell Dupree, guitar; Eric Gale, guitar; Richard Tee, piano; Bernard Purdie, drums; Montego Joe, percussion.***

I don't know who that was . . . somebody out of that Chuck Rainey/James Jamerson school. It's definitely *bad*!

BM: It's Chuck Rainey.

MM: Well, he's out of the school alright. See, the accents, man. He had all the technique going but the accents were just so funky that all the notes didn't bother me. He had the 16th notes going but those funky quarter-note accents made it happen. You gotta mix that technique in there with some funk, some grits. And then it's happenin'. A lot of cats copped stuff from Chuck Rainey, Jaco, Will Lee, Anthony Jackson. It's deep. It's bad. See, that's what I wanna do. Have something there so that all the guys who are into technique can check it out and say, "Yeah, I like it." But then I also want all the soul brothers to like it too. That's the ultimate for me, to combine the two.

5 FRED WESLEY & THE HORNY HORNS. ***We Came To Funk Ya (from Say Blow By Blow Backwards, Atlantic) Bootsy Collins, bass; Fred Wesley, trombone; Maceo Parker, flute and alto saxophone; Rick Gardner, trumpet; Richard Griffith, tenor saxophone; Frankie Kash Waddy, drums; Bernie Worrell, synthesizer; Gary Cooper, vocals.***

Hey, man, you gotta get me a tape of that, man. Aw, man! That's so bad! See, that's when funk was closer to swing, 'cause those cats are shufflin', you know what I mean? Maceo, when he's playing, he's way back behind the beat on those bounce notes. Man! And that's Fred Wesley on trombone, right? Funkiest trombone player in the world. I never heard the cats stretch out so much like this. And all the elements were there from Parliament/Funkadelic. You got Bootsy doing his thing, Maceo blowing, Fred . . . man! And they were *swinging*! I can't say enough about this. I gotta get a copy of that to Miles. He would die to hear that, 'cause that's the way he hears funk too. That's the way he hears phrasing. I dug this. And it's good to hear Bootsy's bass without so many effects on it. You can hear his phrasing better here than on so many of his albums where he had all that distortion and stuff on his bass. Bootsy is a very, very funky person. **db**

HARRY CONNICK, JR.

FROM BOURBON STREET TO GREEN DOLPHIN STREET, VIA THE CLASSROOM, THIS YOUNG PIANO PLAYER IS MAKING SWEET, NEW MUSIC.

by Leslie Gourse

The Columbia Records album/tape/CD (40702) is simply called *Harry Connick, Jr.*, titled for a handsome, 20-year-old jazz pianist. His name has been a household word in New Orleans for some time. When he was five, he played *The Star Spangled Banner* at his father's inaugural as the New Orleans District Attorney. A year later, Harry Jr. began to sit in on Sunday afternoons on Bourbon Street in the Latin Quarter. Now Columbia Records is gambling on Harry Jr.'s musical talent and personal charm to put his homey-sounding name in bright lights internationally.

Harry should make Columbia Records' job easy. For performances, his draped suits look more Milan-ish than Armani's. Though they're in sedate hues of greys and browns, they have more to do with Cab Calloway's best threads than with yuppies' styles. And for musical background, Harry has been steeped in early jazz going as far back as Louis Armstrong's childhood.

Offstage and out for a casual dinner with his girlfriend on New York City's Lower East Side recently, Harry wore a little white carnation astride his left ear.

"Where did you get that?" a friend asked.

"My body sprouted it," he said with a radiant smile and went on with a few graphic details about how it happened.

So he is blooming, his friend and girlfriend agreed. The reviews of his Columbia record were favorable. And if one should appear that wasn't wonderful, it might give him pause for a moment, he said. But then he would remember that both Branford and Wynton Marsalis had telephoned to say they had listened to the album: "Your record is a killer. I loved it;" they said the identical thing to him.

"So that makes you feel good," says Harry, a tall, fair-haired youngster, who grows a little stubble of blond beard on his slender chin when he isn't working. "Because they don't have to say anything. And they just inspire me more."

Harry has known the Marsalis family since childhood in New Orleans, where he was lucky to have been born with a gift for playing piano. Before Harry was born, his parents owned a record store; it paid the bills for both of them to go through law school. They kept some records by Duke, Louis, and Erroll Garner. "I heard jazz from my infancy," Harry says. When he was three-and-a-half, a family friend gave the Connicks a piano for a Christmas present. The first thing he remembers learning to play was *When The Saints Go Marching In*. His mother tried to find a piano teacher, but no one wanted to take on a three-year-old.

Mr. and Mrs. Connick hadn't expected a prodigy. His mother's brother was a European-style composer and pianist; his maternal grandmother dabbled with singing. "Plus being in New Orleans, we were exposed to Dixieland," he says. And those are the primary explanations for his musicality. "I went to the French Quarter every Sunday and sat in with the bands when I was six. My father took me."

By the time Harry Jr. was nine, his father recruited some jazz musicians, whom Harry had been playing with anyway, to do a Dixieland album, including *St. James Infirmary*, with the *wunderkind* on a local label, Adco Productions. "They were great musicians, now in their 60's and 70's," Harry says about drummer Freddie Kohlman, bassist Placide Adams, clarinetist Peewee Spitelaro, trombonist Jim Duggan, and trumpeter Roy Liberto. Two years later, Harry did his second record, with bassist Walter Paton and trumpeter Teddy Riley—"More great musicians who played in the French Quarter," Harry recalls.

He kept playing there himself and doing whatever shows and parties he could find. "Extremely musically-active" even while he was in grammar school, he recalls, he sat in with Buddy Rich a couple of nights; at age 10 he appeared with Eubie Blake in a Japanese-made film; he played with Pete Fountain and Al Hirt, at parties, and on tv.

But high school and more formal musical study slowed down his professional jobs. A student in a private, Jesuit-run school, [his father is Catholic, his mother Jewish] he started going in the afternoons to a public school, the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts. Founded in 1974 with a grant obtained by an enterprising speech and drama teacher, the school taught only the arts; students had to get their high school diplomas from other schools.

Busy in school, Harry still answered calls to play on Bourbon Street until three a.m. "I was surprised my father let me do it," Harry recalls, because of the late hours. But the family gave him encouragement. And he learned hundreds of Dixieland standards —*The Butter And Egg Man, Struttin' With Some Barbecue, Bourbon Street Parade, Didn't He Ramble, Rampart Street Parade,* to name a few. (And when he chooses to let it show, the influence of Bourbon Street shines through with clarity in his rhythm and phrasing now.) "I learned a lot about music and performing from the musicians on Bourbon Street, and I had reached the age when I could play with some logic," he recalls.

But N.O.C.C.A. had an even greater influence on the only boy in the school with a Bourbon Street background. Harry took a vocal class, a theory class taught by Dr. Bert Braud, and a performance class that required him to perform four jazz and four classical pieces in a semester. He still took private piano lessons from Betty Blancq, mother of a young trumpeter named Kevin, a close friend of Harry's. And most important of all to him, he says, he studied sightsinging with Ellis Marsalis, learning early in his career that if you could sing it, then you could play it and swing it.

"I learned everything from Ellis. In four years he brought me from an undirected goof-off to a very directed, potential jazz musician. And he impressed upon me the seriousness of the music."

Ellis picked Harry as a talented kid to play in a quartet performing for a National Association of Jazz Educators meeting. Harry recalls that George Butler, an executive in charge of jazz and new music at Columbia Records, said to him after the performance: "Call me when you get to New York."

That was all that Harry dreamed of from the time he was 14, knowing that the Big Apple was home to so much good music. "New York City was where all the great musicians were, and I wanted to be a part of that," Harry says. So, after a brief stint at Loyola University, he convinced his father to let him head north, with the proviso that Harry go to school in New York. Harry kept his word, halfheartedly anyway.

First, at Manhattan School of Music, he auditioned and passed all the tests through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51

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two-and-a-half years of courses, with the exception of history. But he felt that he didn't fit in at the school. So he moved along to history and economics courses at Hunter College. But they conflicted with his schedule. During 1986 he made four or five trips to California with a group including Charles Neville of the New Orleans Neville Brothers group, playing New Orleans funk and other types of popular music. And when he was in New York, Harry kept scuffling and calling George Butler.

"I called him everyday," Harry recalls. But he couldn't connect. Messages fell into a great corporate void for six months.

One night, Wynton Marsalis was playing to a packed house at Mikell's on Manhattan's Upper West Side, with such jazz luminaries as Billy Eckstine and Betty Carter and—GEORGE BUTLER!—in the audience. Wynton spotted Harry in the audience, put his horn down calmly and made little motions of piano playing with his hands. "Want to sit in?" Wynton was gesturing. Harry had been shaking with desire. And so he played a few tunes. Afterwards, Butler said, "I'm very interested in you. You were supposed to call."

"I called at nine a.m. the next day," Harry says.

Once Harry had connected with Butler, Butler said, "Let's go into the studio and make a demo."

At the last minute, the bassist and drummer backed out of Harry's audition. Harry had to go to the studio alone. He was so tense that his hands began to hurt as if he had mild tendonitis. In the studio he was dazzled by "a big white Yamaha" and "a heavyset black sound technician," he recalls. The tech bolstered Harry's confidence, assuring the lone, nervous pianist that the music sounded fine. He then relaxed and played well. When Butler heard the tape, he offered Harry a contract.

So at age 19, Harry pulled a "Wynton," signing his first Columbia Records contract and making a record. And just as they had done with Wynton, jazz musicians—whose grapevine can get a message around the world in a few days—began to talk about Harry's talents: his clean, clear touch, his ability to swing, his fresh, fiery approach during live performances. He was swift, easeful, and adaptable; he could fascinate as a soloist, and he could fit in with any group's style. He could also sing with old-fashioned, bluesy-soulfulness—and a hearty dash of humor. There was, occasionally, a hint of Satchmo's gravel in Harry's voice. Harry put it there on purpose, of course, and his audiences were often reminded, by his rhythms and phrasings, that he had immersed himself in the lessons of Bourbon Street.

Harry kept auditioning for every piano room in town, while he was making his record. He worked in several rooms, including Chelsea Place, which has been a crucible for many newcomers to rock, jazz, and blues. There Harry startled the house trumpet player, John "Tasty" Parker, a veteran local musician, who had played years earlier with some swing and bebop legends. Parker began to tell his friends: "Harry inspires me." Then Harry's name appeared among the stars in a concert sponsored by Columbia Records during the JVC Jazz Festival in June, 1987. Harry came out on stage, played only one pretty tune, with fine technique, and then was gone.

On the album, he plays the familiar standards, *Green Dolphin Street*, which every jazz musician learns, and *Our Love Is Here To Stay*, sprinkled among his own compositions. One of them, an incredibly fleet, intensely modernistic yet melodic song called *E* can make you want to call it "EEEEEEE-eeeeeeeee!!"

The album cover shows the tall, slender, fairhaired youngster with a haircut straight out of *The Great Gatsby* and with a full, rose-colored mouth as pouty as any rock idol's. The style belies his warm, natural, courtly-mannered social grace. When his record came out, rumors began circulating around Columbia Records that Woody Allen might sign Harry to play the soundtrack for a film about New Orleans jazz.

"I'm emotional," Harry said about the rumor. "Ha ha ha, I didn't come to New York to make movies. But if it's true, it will be great. And it will help make this music better known."

The record contract alone has excited this charming, quick-witted young musician. "I think Columbia is the greatest record company in the world. It gave me more direction and made me want to expand and play the music even more." Because he considers himself primarily a pianist, not a singer, he's baffled when customers in such rooms as the Knickerbocker and Chez Josephine insist that he sing for them. He sings just for fun, he says. That's undoubtedly why the customers keep asking him to. Even when he sings and plays softly, his delightful musicality and vitality rivets attention. **db**

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book reviews

JAZZ by William Claxton (Altadena, CA: Twelvetrees Press, 1987, $40.00, hardcover).

Simply put, this is the finest book of its sort to originate in the U.S. since Dennis Stock's *Jazz Street* in 1960. Some of these images, all shot in the decade 1953-63, were included in Claxton's *Jazz Life*, published in Europe in 1962 (and now even harder to find than the Stock book), but he is most widely known for being to the Pacific Jazz label what Chuck Stewart was to Impulse!—house photographer. His most familiar pictures are those softly romantic renderings of the pre-dentures Chet Baker, but these have unjustly linked Claxton in many eyes to the West Coast Cool School.

This exquisite volume, printed in Japan—where they evidently treat books with the same care given records (and priced accordingly), should correct any such incomplete impressions of Claxton's vision. While Stock was in fact a member of Magnum, Claxton shows an easy familiarity with and mastering of the Magnum school of reportage; which remains today the basis of all worthwhile photojournalism on any subject, best exemplified by its founders, Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson.

It doesn't matter *who* is in these photos, for they are carefully composed and interesting unto themselves. Duke Ellington on stage at Monterey and an itenerant banjo player in Washington Square Park are treated with equal respect. Both are artfully placed within the visual context that already existed. Claxton didn't contrive the settings, he merely noticed them and waited for a right moment.

Telling use of context is Claxton's strongest suit. Donald Byrd playing trumpet on a New York subway attracts the attention of only two of the six visible bystanders not for the music, but because someone was taking pictures. Gil Evans sits comfortably on his floor, between an electric piano (in 1960, mind you) and an older acoustic model. On the wall above him is a map of Spain. In all likelihood, Claxton was already sitting on the floor with him, in conversation. It looks so natural, so easy.

While Claxton caught some superb performance photos, such as Bill Evans (you can't even see his face, but no one else has ever played with that posture), he gets more unique results off the bandstand. From Joe Williams trying to rub a headache away in a dressing room to Philly Joe Jones and Lawrence Marable schmoozing with someone not fully visible but obviously a young female; from Monk at the piano so clearly *hearing* himself to a smugly junked-out Gerry Mulligan smirking at the camera past a soloing Ben Webster in a studio, Claxton tells us something about all of us, not just the particular human beings he reveals in action.

Book format being what it is—two page spreads with that unavoidable chasm between—and the technical limitations of the era—slower, grainier films and less precise lenses—this volume is not as ideal a means of presenting these photographs as a set of prints hanging on a wall would be. Many are blown up too far and if that isn't enough, most of those are importunely split across

Helima and Chet Baker, 1955

pages. So hold them at arm's length for minimal loss of Claxton's original intent. That is my only complaint, and a minor one. Expensive? Yes, but I don't know of any three CDs on the market which could possibly be more rewarding.

Now if someone would just reissue *Jazz Street*. . . . —*w. patrick hinely*

JAZZ ON COMPACT DISCS by Steve Harris (New York: Harmony Books, 1987, 176 pp., $13.95, paperback).
ROCK 'N' ROLL ON COMPACT DISC by David Prakel (New York: Harmony Books, 1987, 176 pp., $13.95, paperback).

Given the hype, hope, mystery, magic, and sheer expense surrounding compact discs, clearly written, informative consumer guides could be a boon to the slightly stupified buyer like myself—one who still doesn't fully understand the digital process and who, when confronted by ever-bulging bins of the shiny silver discs, balks at paying premium prices on speculation. Of course, I'm not looking for someone to *tell* me what to buy—rating records is a subjective business, to say the least . . . that's the *fun* of it—but a few well-argued suggestions, mixed in with warnings about what to avoid, and some decent descriptions of unfamiliar material would be greatly appreciated.

These two books only partially fill the bill. Both are oversized (five-and-a-half-inches by 11-inches), colorful (chock full of photos of album covers and various musicians—the latter supplied by the renowned British snapper David Redfern), and thorough as far as they go (including a list of phono equipment used to audition the CDs, a bibliography of info sources, some interesting drawings of the inner workings of a CD player, and a list of the 100 "Best" CDs in each category). They are *not*, however, comprehensive, and make no claim to be. Both authors are highly selective in what they choose to review, which is understandable, considering that the availability of many CDs is still overdependent upon the whims of record company moguls (not always the best judges of aesthetic value or audience appetite), the schedules of CD pressing plants, and the floor space of retailers looking for quick turnover of product.

Though Harris—editor of the British mag *Hi-Fi News & Record Review*—is far from being an apologist for the CD format, he won't be confused with Ralph Nader either. He admits right off the bat that convenience—as opposed to uniform improvement in sound quality—is the primary advantage of CD, and even states "The absolute superiority of the digital transfer should not be automatically assumed." He especially dislikes "tampering" with the integrity of the original sound source material (giving low marks, for example, to Robert Parker's BBC refurbishings of classic jazz 78s—see Jack Sohmer's CD Review in **db**, Dec. '87), though elsewhere he goes to great pains to avoid controversy, in essence trying to find something good to say about *every* disc, which eventually weakens his credibility.

A careful reading of Harris' text reveals a great deal of received opinion, a couple of big gaffes (the ultra-organized Anthony Braxton as a "prime mover" in the "free jazz" movement? Ornette Coleman as the primary influence on Archie Shepp and Albert Ayler, and not Coltrane?), some questionable calls (Miles' "deliberately understated" trumpet a "perfect foil" for Bird?), and more than a few wishy-washy evaluations (Ornette's *Of Human Feelings* gets only one star each for performance and recording quality, but still "is a powerful collective performance that should be heard"?).

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of value here for the conscientious consumer. Harris' 250-plus reviews are solid in description—substantial to the novice and reassuringly precise for the aficionado. His taste seems to lie in the mainstream; fusion is given short-shrift (only a handful of albums by Weather Report, the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Stanley Clarke, Al Di Meola, and the electric Chick Corea are covered—you'll have to look elsewhere for Spyro Gyra &

Co.), as is the avant garde (though this might be due to the music's relative unavailability on disc). The most thoroughly covered artists are the obvious ones: Miles, Coltrane, and Duke (eight reviews each), closely followed by Rollins, Bill Evans, Blakey, Gerry Mulligan, Wes Montgomery, Dizzy, Keith Jarrett, and Monk. Benny Goodman receives only two reviews of subpar recordings, and Lee Konitz, Steve Lacy, and John Scofield (to name just three) are nowhere in sight—though there's no shortage of their music on CD. Best of all, however, is the sheer amount of information conveyed by Harris: hefty artist bios, song titles, personnel, recording date, performance and recording grades, and timing for each CD reviewed—none of which seem to be as prominently displayed on CD packages as on LP jackets.

Prakel's rock guide shares these informative virtues and design, and adds a relatively simplified explanation of the digital system (sorry, I still don't get it), while changing his grading category from "Performance" to "Desirability"—suggesting the CD's improvement in sound or other intangibles over the LP version. His descriptions are even more concerned with sound quality than Harris', possibly because of the engineering unevenness of recording electric instruments over the years. (For example, Prakel is able to applaud the "spontaneity and freshness" of a J.J. Cale CD "recorded in just six [!] days.")

While one trusts Prakel's judgment on sound matters—unlike Harris, he isn't afraid to condemn a CD totally for sonic shortcomings—his selecion process seems to be a little curious, to say the least. His choices range from Abba (innocuous pop) to Hendrix (psychedelic hard-rock), but with a perverse emphasis on "light rock." The Beatles and Rolling Stones receive their due (eight reviews each), but runners-up, spacewise, are Stevie Wonder, Elton John, and Billy Joel. Token space is given to such popular and critical biggies as Prince, the Kinks, Neil Young, the Velvet Underground, Tom Petty—and Status Quo (who?) gets the same amount as the Doors and Jefferson Airplane/Starship. And he too often reviews a group's most recent—as opposed to most important or most popular—releases.

And yet, regardless of their strengths or shortcomings, both books are useful for consumers in that they reveal the timings of each CD reviewed—and in so doing indict the record companies on every page. I'd estimate over 90 percent of the 500-plus CDs covered in these two books contain less than 45 minutes of music—approximately 60 percent of its capacity. It's like, as another critic said to me, record companies charging full price—or more—for LPs with music on only one side. I wonder what Ralph Nader would have to say about that? —*art lange*

BOB WILBER SALUTE TO BENNY GOODMAN

CARNEGIE HALL/NEW YORK

When clarinetist Bob Wilber first mentioned his plans to "recreate" Benny Goodman's original Carnegie Hall concert on its 50th anniversary, January 16, 1988, I kept my mixed reactions to myself.

Aside from Lionel Hampton, no major member of the original band remains active. Wilber himself is not widely known outside the jazz world. And if there's anything that resists recreation more than a night of jazz, it's one that was recorded and went on to become the largest selling acoustic jazz LP in history (Columbia OSL 160; Columbia G2K 40244). Goodman at Carnegie Hall in 1938 is no misty legend in 1988. Millions have committed every nuance of every note to memory. And 2,000 of them would be in Carnegie Hall, ready to correct Wilber's slightest misstep.

But when the tickets went on sale in November, it was clear Wilber and the New Jersey Jazz Society, which sponsored the night as a fund raiser for a Jazz Hall of Fame project, were are onto something big. Within a week the sellout signs were up. In the days before the concert, the national press gave it big play—USA Today, the Sunday New York Times, CBS This Morning, even The Wall Street Journal. And as I walked along 57th Street toward Carnegie Hall on the night of the concert, five people, all under 35, asked to buy my tickets.

All this for a concert offering no big names, no opportunity to star gaze. But then, as they say 10 blocks south in the theater district, the play is the thing. And on this night, Wilber and his men are like a repertory company of actors playing Shakespeare. Under concert lighting and without microphones, the band gathers on stage and—after a brief intro from Bob Porter—begins with *Don't Be That Way*. This was the way bands once sounded before they became inflated, caricatured, and distorted by the filterings of superfluous technology. And it sounds absolutely gorgeous. Wilber, wearing tails as Goodman did a half-century ago, walks out from stage right in time for his first solo.

The air is charged with a rush that transcends even nostalgia. An event that had long since been cut loose from its own time to wander freely through time in the realm of legend suddenly rematerializes in human scale and dimension—13 men occupying a small living room's worth of floor space on this famous stage. As the sounds of the old records leap to life, one can imagine it is 1938 and there are Harry James, Gene Krupa, Ziggy Elman, and all the others up there. Why do they seem so innocent though? Maybe because we know a future which they don't. In our God-like omniscience, we have the infinite wisdom into the fate of men once young but today mostly gone. This is more than a concert. It is pure theater.

The "20 Years of Jazz" sequence is particularly curious—a recreation within a recreation. As Goodman's young players paid homage to history in 1938, Wilber's men conjure second-generation copies of copies. Although Glenn Zottola seems to lose the thread of Louis Armstrong's *West End Blues* cadenza leading into *Shine*, Norris Turney evokes Johnny Hodges' soprano beautifully in *Blue Reverie*, with Doc Cheatham playing Cootie Williams. And Randy Sandke's portrayal of Bix Beiderbecke's *I'm Coming Virginia* is thoroughly lovely.

STEVE J. SHERMAN

Bob Wilber

Recreation vies with recreation. The charts are all originals but the soloists are on their own. Loren Schoenberg's tenor fills eight bars of *Life Goes To A Party* with a burst of enthusiasm. Sandke makes *Sing Sing Sing* his own while keeping the jittery essence of Harry James close by. And Mark Shane does a kind of variation on a theme of Jess Stacy as he evokes the evening's most famous single solo. To Wilber, of course, Goodman is almost second nature. His phrases tend to run on longer, but his attack and sound are full of uncanny echos of the late '30s Goodman style. His *I Got Rhythm* is ferocious.

Much credit too to drummer Dave Ratajczak throughout. His press rolls and choked cymbal accents are true to the original music, but never self-conscious or campy. And his long solo on *Sing Sing Sing* is as musical and hypnotic in its power as it is apparently unexpected by the other musicians.

Just before intermission Isaac Stern receives one of Goodman's clarinets from his daughter, Rachel Edelson, who introduces Harry Goodman, bassist in the original band, from the audience.

But it's in the jam session on *Honeysuckle Rose* and the concluding *One O'Clock Jump* (taken out of sequence and used as the final number because of its elasticity) where the concert takes on a life of its own. Cheatham, Al Casey, Al Grey, Heywood Henry, and Zottola bring fresh validating energy to a concert of the familiar. And when Buddy Tate, Schoenberg, and Antti Sarpilla (a Wilber protegé who was unable to play in the band because of union red tape) get into a three-tenor sequence on *Jump*, you can hear the evening pulling away from the past and race into the present. If the original music has an almost mystical nostalgia about it, these are the moments that earn the experiment its standing ovation.

Mercifully, the whole night was recorded by the New Jersey Jazz Society . . . with one microphone. —*john mcdonough*

STING

U. OF SOUTH FLORIDA/TAMPA, FL

"This is what it looks like," ex-Police chief Sting said of his unkempt mop of straw-blonde hair early in the show to the cavernous Univ. of South Florida auditorium packed with more than 8,700 fans. "Like a sheepdog. I can't do anything with it."

Sting, circa . . . *Nothing Like the Sun*, is affecting the drunken poet look, complete with a three-day beard, oversized, ill-fitting garb, and floppy tumbles across the stage. Meet self-styled noble savage-genius Gordon Sumner.

Sting and his newest pop-jazz ensemble failed to create many sparks at the kick-off for the band's current United States tour, following several sold-out arena dates in South America. The nearly two-and-a-half-hour show, despite moments of inspiration, was less dazzling than it might have been.

Mino Cinelu opened with an extended percussion offering, and the band quickly moved into the rhythms of the moody, entrancing *The Lazarus Heart*, followed by a sluggish workout on the Police's *Too Much Information* and five tunes from the new LP: the jump-start funk of *We'll Be Together*, infused with a few unexpected unison breaks; the bouncy *Englishman In New York*, bolstered by a modified reggae beat and adorned with Branford Marsalis' soulful, angular soprano saxophone fills; *Sister Moon*, with more inspired solo work from

JAY NOLAN

Sting

Marsalis; the rap-meets-blues of *Rock Steady*; and the tricky rhythmic maneuvers of *Straight To My Heart*.

The stiffness of the earlier numbers was left behind on *Consider Me Gone*, topped with second keyboardist Delmar Brown's George Benson-ish piano/vocal improvisation, and on *If You Love Somebody Set Them Free*, a pair of *Dream Of The Blue Turtles* tunes on which the band began to hone in on the missing groove.

Did the band's later greater ease stem from a halftime pep talk given to three noticeably underconfident, integral new members—ex-Waitresses bassist Tracy Wormworth; guitarist Jeff Campbell, a University of Miami alumni; and French-born drummer Jean Paul Ceccarelli, a last-minute replacement for Marvin "Smitty" Smith?

They Dance Alone, a measured, latin-influenced piece protesting political persecution in Pinochet's Chile, prompted a brilliant solo excursion from Kenny Kirkland, while the band tacked on a few bars of Herbie Hancock's *Chameleon* to the end of *Be Still My Beating Heart*. *Fragile*—dedicated to Jaco Pastorius and dominated by Sting's acoustic guitar picking and strumming—used a riff from *Voodoo Chile* to segue into Hendrix's *Little Wing*, a showcase for Campbell's metal-oriented *sturm und drang*.

Those with dreams of the Police were treated with the show's best moments. Sting, after asking "What do you want me to sing?," wielded his guitar and plunged into a solo version of *Roxanne*—by any account one of the most infectious, streamlined, perfect pop nuggets of the '70s. Marsalis walked onstage a few minutes later in order to bounce a few cheery soprano lines off of his boss' lyrics.

Sting ended the show in a similar fashion, invigorating *Message In A Bottle* with jazzy chord substitutions and some guitar popping and slapping, and prompting the audience into a sing-along on the chorus: "Sending out an SOS."

The new LP and tour seem much like *Blue Turtles II*. The plan: gather a group of hot, young-ish jazz and rock players, and offer elegant, lyrical songs given to romance and a certain enlightened left-wing political stance. And the plan works. Most of the time.

Sting's jazz-fusion project has been a grand experiment, and has yielded some complex, engaging music that has indeed broken barriers. But, by the measure of his solo LPs and his recent stage shows, the Sumner work destined for long-term survival will be the cleanly constructed, invigorating reggae-inflected pop anthems of the Police.

—philip booth

pro shop

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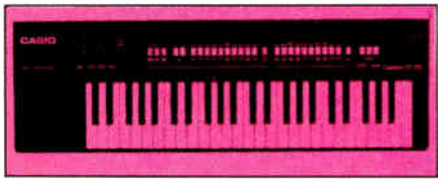


CASIO'S "TONE BANK" KEYBOARD

CASIO INC. (Dover, NJ) introduces its new "Tone Bank" electronic keyboard. It features 49 full-size keys and is 10-note polyphonic. It has a 12-bit PCM instrument sound generator. The keyboard has 20 PCM instrument sounds with "Tone Bank" capability that enables the user to play a combination of up to 210 different sound combinations. In addition, the CT-370 has 20 rhythms, using 46 PCM sound sources and the Casio chord system with 16 sounds. The unit operates on D batteries (included) or an optional AD-5 AC adaptor.

WIND WAREHOUSE

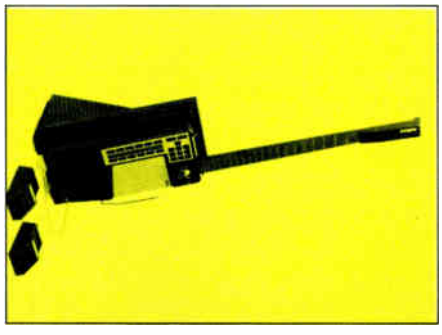
MIRAFONE'S NEW S-186

MIRAFONE CORP. (Valencia, CA) is proud to introduce their new student version of the popular 186-4u model, the S-186 tuba. Made by craftsmen in the West Germany factory, it features four rotary valves and the same dimensions as the professional model. It has a sixteen-and-a-half inch bell and is installed with a nickel silver trim around the horn and in the mechanics. Borrowing from their professional instrument, the S-186 has the patened DVS (Direct Valve Stroke) linkage. It is available in BB♭ or CC and priced for any student's budget.

TASCAM'S NEW MIDI/FSK

TEAC (Los Angeles, CA) Tascam has introduced its new MTS-30 MIDI/FSK translator, designed to provide the perfect link between MIDI equipment and multitrack recording. The MTS-30 offers reliable MIDI/FSK conversion and, using MIDI Song Position Pointer Data, synchronized playback from any point within a composition in a compact, easy-to-use, and affordable unit. The Tascam MTS-30 includes powerful error-correction circuitry, an easy-to-read LED measure number display, and an automatically switched MIDI OUT/THRU terminal. The OUT/THRU terminal allows the operator to drive the drum machine while recording the sync tone from sequencer to tape, and to drive both the drum machine and sequencer on playback without repatching. An AC adaptor is provided with the portable unit.

GUITAR WORLD



GROUP CENTRE'S STEPP DGX

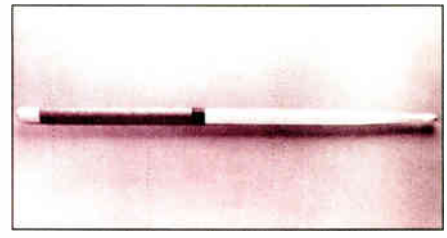
GROUPE CENTRE INNOVATIONS (Calabasas, CA) announces the release of the new MIDI Guitar Controller, the STEPP DGX. The DGX is a pure MIDI-Controller. It incorporates the same patented SCI (Semi-Conductive Intelligent) frets developed for Group Centre's DGI (the world's first digital electronic guitar). The DGX has six real-time performance controls. The Whammy bar, Strum Dynamics, and Fret Bend are all MIDI assignable as are the two body controls and one of the footswitches. Using these controls, Pitch Bend, Aftertouch, or any of the 95 MIDI-Controllers can be accessed in any combination. The DGX will store chords, select different tunings, programs, and MIDI channels for each string, chain patches, and even split the fretboard. All controls are on the guitar body with all messages displayed on a large backlit liquid crystal display.

ELECTRONIC GEAR

NEW PICKUPS FROM RICKENBACKER

RICKENBACKER CORP. (Santa Ana, CA) announces new high output humbucking pickups. The components which utilize new technology in squeal prevention easily retrofit all Rickenbacker guitars. The pickups are harmonious with their existing electronics, offer high output for heavy-metal music, hum-cancelling characteristics, and can be easily retrofitted to existing Rickenbacker instruments. Another feature is the new humbucking pickups do not cancel critical harmonics as with traditional hum-cancelling coils. The pickups are offered in two configurations. One configuration is recommended for the company's 200 series instruments. The other (shown in picture) is intended for Rickenbacker guitars.

PERCUSSION SHOP



PRO-MARK'S "STICK-RAPP" TAPE

PRO-MARK CORP. (Houston, TX) proudly introduces "STICK-RAPP", a new innovation in stick gripping tape. This new material is designed especially for drummers that experience sticks slipping or falling from their hands. Unlike other stick tape products, it is not "sticky." Stick-Rapp is reusable, too. When a stick is broken or worn out, Stick-Rapp is easily removed and used again. It may also be washed with warm soap and water without being removed from the stick. Each package contains enough tape for four sticks (two pair), all precisely precut to fit perfectly. It is available in five colors: pink, yellow, blue, green, and black. **db**

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BILLY COBHAM PIECING TOGETHER THE PICTURE—BYTE-BY-BYTE

by Robin Tolleson

Like a true jazz musician of conscience, Billy Cobham learned valuable lessons from masters like 'Trane and Bird. But the drummer, who's put in stints with Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner, and John McLaughlin, says, "Although it's necessary to keep that in the eye of the young person who's coming up, it's also very necessary to present what's happening right now. And it ain't 'Trane."

On his latest release, *Picture This*, Cobham shows what is happening in the world of computer music, including material programmed and run on his Mac Plus. Nothing personal against the old rhythm section, but the idea of being able to chronicle, refine, and ultimately record music while sitting at a computer keyboard is desirable to a lot of musicians. On three songs on *Picture This*, BC has ditched his Glass Menagerie band via MIDI hookups from his computer to several sophisticated drum machines, samplers, and synthesizers. He's still playing drums live, but on the programmed tunes he goes back afterwards to lay an awesome human part on top, or bring in a friend on an occasional trumpet or keyboard solo.

Cobham uses a Macintosh (20 megabyte, soon to be upgraded with an additional 40, he says) and Performer Mark of the Unicorn software. He wrote all the music out on Professional Composer software, then transferred the information to the sequencer software Professional Performer. "It's like a word processor, except that it's notes," says the drummer. "You can look at everything. You can write out all the parts and play a lot of the information back. You can get a bass line and chords happening over the Mac itself, and you really don't need a keyboard to play it. With the mouse you call up notes you want, set it up the way you want on the whole grand staff, and then listen back to it. And whatever you don't like you can change, just go into the chord change itself and separate all the notes and experiment."

Cobham describes the making of *The Juggler*, a loping, even-strided tune on *Picture This*. "I started with a sequenced bass line, looking for something that sounded unique, that would work in the low end, something that would be constant but would keep moving. That's sort of a throwback to my Mahavishnu days. From there I wanted something that I could just drop on top that would groove and flow over it, and make some strong funky musical sense. I wanted it to be really danceable, and have this constant line flowing on the underside."

Aside from Cobham's drums, Gerry Etkins does a keyboard solo also, and everything else is sequenced. "I played purely acoustic drums on that song, but I used an Emu SP-12 machine to run the track, and it was like wood drums, congas, and all the auxiliary percussion. And the rest of it was like a simulated band."

Thanks to the new software, Billy had something he never had before when doing a record—time. And that opened up new doors of creativity. "I had time to go back and really change some things. I could hear a lot of things well in advance and change them, quite often because the material was already done before we walked into the studio. To a great degree it's choosing sounds. My material is expanding, my concept is expanding because I have the library to do that, in that I'm necessarily going to go with the conventional bass, guitar, rhythm section, whatever. I want to sample some things and use sounds that would otherwise not be available to use in a situation like I'm playing in. That to me is the present, if not the future. In order for instrumental music to really stand up for itself, it's got to be something really unique, and stand away from what has already happened."

The new technology is helping Cobham when he's away from the studio too. "Now I'm on the road. I hear things, and I go . . . 'This could use something else.' I sit down with the computer, which is with me on the road doing the business and everything for me, and I write out another part. I hear it before it prints out. I give it to the band. They can hear it because I can also tape it from the computer, and everybody goes, 'Okay, fine, solid. We'll do this here.' And boom. This is on the fly. We discuss it, go in, the music's in front of us. We read, but we already have a concept in our minds of what's happening sonically, and we play the thing. All of that saves many hours.

"It used to be painstakingly difficult for me to write all the material out, and I'd be scared to death that I'd transposed things improperly. So I'd end up going to rehearsal with the band and hoping that I did the right thing. I was lucky, I was working with some really good cats who were very understanding in Michael and Randy Brecker and Glenn Ferris. But now what's really hip and a time-saver is that you can even have the staff transposed on the computer for a specific instrument. Let's say you want to hear a bass clarinet or E♭ clarinet

part, you name the staff and it'll automatically be transposed into the range of that instrument."

Cobham's also using the available software to create his own sounds, like the ones triggered from his drums during the extended solo on *Picture This, Danse For Noh Masque*. "We used the Digidesign software, and sampled the sound of rubbing your finger around the rim of a crystal wine glass. We put it through a reverb system and put it on disk. We've sampled log drums, gunshots, basketballs, a lot of stuff." The new technology has given Cobham unlimited flexibility, and made him even more sound-conscious. "With the Digidesign you can see the sound wave, you can alter it and you can store it," he says. "You can really modify and personalize your sounds."

Cobham's musical arsenal includes a Prophet T-8, Emulator II Plus, two modified Yamaha DX-7s (grey matter), two Yamaha TX81Zs, and a GDS Synergy. He has an Emu SP-12, an Oberheim DMX, and uses a Roland SDX-10 sync box to run it all. The computer is a Mac Plus with a 20 megabyte hard disk. "Within the next few months we're going to run to 40 megabyte internal and maybe another 40 megabytes external, because I want to start to use a new program which is a 32-channel digital recorder for the Macintosh," says Cobham. "You can do just about everything you need on that and not even use any tape."

Cobham, who used his first electronic drums while touring with Horace Silver's group in 1968, is still technology-friendly today. "Those musicians, especially percussionists, who don't take advantage of it in some way are doing themselves a great disfavor. The last thing a percussionist should be afraid of is a machine. Learn how to use it, so you won't be afraid of it. You can probably use it to your own benefit." **db**

on the beat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

their Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller studio sides. Vanguard issued the first Spirituals to Swing Carnegie Hall concerts of 1938/39. And "collectors" labels began issuing hundreds of uncopyrighted live concert and air-shot performances, including priceless early moments of Count Basie and Lester Young at the Famous Door; Charlie Christian and Dizzy Gillespie at Minton's (recorded by Jerry Newman, a latter-day Mapelson); and Duke Ellington on a night in Fargo, ND in 1940. Equally important, contemporary artists were recorded in live venues: Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and the live classic of them all, Ellington at Newport 1956.

Live recording developed in many stages. And this year marks the half-century mark of one of its most critical landmarks . . . Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall. **db**

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auditions

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BRIAN McDERMOTT is a 19-year-old drummer/marimbist from Oak Park, Illinois. He began studying percussion at the age of 12. Throughout high school, McDermott played professionally for various theatrical companies in the Midwest, and was in numerous productions. He also played in the Chicago Classical Symphony, and was a substitute for the DePaul University pep band. His rhythm and blues band, Mobius Blues, has played professionally in the Chicago area. He received the Nancy Follet Award for musical progress in his junior year in high school and was named an Illinois State Scholar.

McDermott is now a sophomore at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, where as a music major, he has received the highest music talent scholarship awarded by the University. McDermott is the principle player in the Marimba band at Millikin and the drummer in a fusion ensemble known as Spridle And The Chim Chims. They will be appearing at the Greeley Colorado Jazz Festival as well as the Millikin University Jazz Festival. McDermott also plays with a jazz trio in a Decatur lounge.

ROBERT PIPHO, 25, one of the few vibraphonists Detroit has produced since Milt Jackson, is a native of Monroe, MI. Pipho heard jazz and classical music from his father—a french horn player and pianist—and his mother, who sang. Starting as a left-handed drummer, Pipho went on to xylophone, then to the vibraharp. By high school, he was playing casual gigs and parties. Pipho played with a group that won best group honors at the 1984 WEMU Radio/Depot Town Association (Ypsilanti, MI) Jazz Competition.

Pipho has just completed a four-year program at Wayne State University in Detroit, one of the few colleges in the country that offers a full-time jazz curriculum. Lately Pipho has been performing with the top Detroit ensembles, including those of Donald Walden, Wendell Harrison, Marcus Belgrave, and Kenn Cox. Pipho toured Europe with the W.S.U. Big Band under the direction of Dennis Tini and Matt Michaels as exchange ambassadors for the Montreux-Detroit festival in 1986.

OCEANS, a jazz fusion band from Milwaukee, has been receiving rave reviews with their performances at NBA basketball games. Led by saxophonist Warren "Vito" Wiegratz, Oceans plays at all of the Milwaukee Bucks' home games and has been dubbed the team's "house band." Last February, Oceans performed at the 38th Annual NBA All-Star Game in Chicago, playing their original songs during warmups, halftime, and timeouts. Oceans has been named Wisconsin's best jazz group the last three years by the Wisconsin Association for the Music Industry (WAMI). Wiegratz has twice won the "Best Instrumentalist" award.

Oceans, known as Sweetbottom in the early 1980's, regularly performs at the top music clubs in Milwaukee and Minneapolis and has recently ventured into the Chicago club scene. In addition, Oceans plays at summer jazz festivals including Milwaukee's Summerfest. The band's latest album, *Second Chance*, has sold extremely well with only regional distribution and was recently re-released on compact disc. Oceans will return to the studio this spring for work on their next album. Band members include: Warren Wiegratz, saxophonist, keyboards; Duane Stuermer, bass, vocals; Brian Nielson, keyboards; Ernie Adams, drums; and Mike Standal, guitar.

ANDY MIDDLETON, 25-year-old saxophonist, flutist, and composer, started on alto sax at age nine, but wasn't serious until his last year in high school. At the University of Rochester, he took up soprano sax and composing. Transferring to the University of Miami, Middleton switched to tenor sax and started studying flute, composition, and arranging. After finishing his bachelors degree he went on to receive a masters degree in studio/jazz writing. He played tenor in the Concert Jazz Band for three-and-a-half years, and played on two of their records. He has studied at the Banff Jazz Workshop for two summers.

In high school Middleton won several best solist awards at jazz band competitions. In college he won several academic awards and scholarships, including a **down beat** outstanding performance jazz soloist award. He has worked with Flora Purim and Randy Bernsen, among others. He played on Bernsen's latest record, and in a horn section on Gregg Allman's latest record. Currently, he lives in New York and performs in an original music quartet that is working on a record demo.

RICK BOHNHORST, 29-year-old percussionist, began his music studies at age 10. Bohnhorst progressed from rock & roll to become more accomplished at jazz-rock fusion. He is currently playing the New York City circuit with the band Detour, warming up for such artists as Larry Coryell, Percy Jones, and Randy Coven. Bohnhorst has devoted more than half his life to music. He has sharpened his skills with many hours of intense practice. His tuning technique, which creates a powerful and supportive sound, allows Rick to get his share of attention. Bohnhorst's lightning-fast double-bass foot work, along with a busy and well-coordinated snare, make him a most unique and extremely powerful percussionist.

MARK BRAUN, 29, known to his audiences as Mr. B, is a boogie pianist who reflects the great tradition of the barrelhouse and box car blues. A native of Flint, MI, he learned piano by ear at age 16. His mentor was Boogie Woogie Red, a legendary Detroit musician who has played in the area for 35 years. Ann Arbor News Jazz Writer and new **downbeat** correspondent for Detroit Michael G. Nastos wrote, "Mr. B knows the complete legacy of blues piano. Not many pianists in this style play with more conviction." He has also been championed by jazz historian and pianist Jim Dapogny, a University of Michigan music professor.

B has three LP's, his debut *B's Bounce* on the independent Ann Arbor Boo-Kay label, *Detroit Special* on the European Oldie Blues label, and his most recent *Shining The Pearls* on Blind Pig Records. He has also made a recent appearance on a record by Steve Freund. The pianist has just returned from a trip to northwestern Canada, where he toured for several weeks. He recently recorded a live date with master jazz drummer J. C. Heard, which he hopes, with additional recording, will complete his fourth LP.

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

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